

CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE ROLE OF THE MARKETING SPECIALIST IN THE TOURISM ORGANISATION

CLAUDIA-NICOLETA DOBRESCU, MIRELA COSTENCU
UNIVERSITY "EFTIMIE MURGU" OF RESITA, P-ta Traian Vuia No. 1-4 Resita
dobrescu_cld@yahoo.com; costencumirela@yahoo.com

Abstract:

This paper intends to point out the role and importance of the marketing specialist in tourism organisations, the human resources working in the marketing department/compartment. At the basis of this efficient development tool there are the very activities describing the specific actions, namely the specific occupational standard, by which quality criteria are set in order to reach the qualitative results expected in a professional activity. The development of an accurate job description (based on specific activities), combined with the efficient delivery of activities highlights the special role of the marketing specialist in developing and promoting the tourism organisation.

Key words: marketing specialist, tourism organisation, occupational standard

JEL classification: M10, M12, M31, M53

1. Introduction

In order to comprehend and shape as accurately as possible the role of the marketing specialist within a tourism organisation, we need to find as many answers as possible to the question "*Why is it necessary to have a marketing specialist/marketing specialists in a touristic organisation?*", and the arguments should be most relevant for the correct construction of the role of such a specialist.

A first answer to this question can be found in the dimension of the need for adequately trained human resources, in our case the specialists in the field of marketing, who, due to their professional competencies acquired as a result of professional training and/or qualification, can rise up to the requirements of this field of activity. Another orientation should be analysed from the perspective of tourism, which, due to its complex and dynamic character, leaves on the space where it is applied and developed a strong print, where human resources are omnipresent, both as tourists and as target group.

So that tourism be applied adequately in a certain area, with foreseeable short-term, medium and long-term effects, it is necessary that the marketing specialists make their presence felt, and through an exemplarily provided activity they should offer the landmarks for the construction and consolidation of the touristic activities which can lead to constructive results, especially on the medium and long term. Professor Aurel Manolescu considers that "*human resources are unique as regards their growth and development potential, as well as their capacity to know and surpass their own limits, in order to cope with new challenges as well as present or future requirements*" (Manolescu, A., et al, 2004), and more and more specialists consider that human resources are seen as the foremost resources of an organisation, replacing, as vision and approach, the financial capital. This aspect leads to the idea that it is rather hard to build and develop an organisation for the long run if only the appropriate financial resources are present, to the detriment of human resources. That is why we also agree with the author of the book "Communication and human resources", who claims that "*human*

resources are the only resources capable of producing all the other resources at the disposal of an organisation". (Păuș, V.A. 2006).

In other words, all that happens in an organisation, from idea to implementation, obtaining results and assessing actions, is achieved by the human resources, and the presence of specialists is necessary for an efficient reaching of goals.

Taking into account all the above, we may affirm that neither the tourism sector in general nor the touristic organisations in particular should be an exception to this rule. This aspect supposes the mandatory existence of a marketing specialist within any touristic organisation, who has the task to build an efficient direction of action for its development.

2. The occupational standard of "marketing specialist"

The marketing specialist should carry on his activity in a marketing compartment/department existing on the level of the organisational structure where, together with the other specialists, he should form multidisciplinary work teams that, through their activities, are expected to significantly contribute to the development of the organisation. The existence of such a department is rather avoided by the managers of tourism organisations, perhaps for exclusively financial reasons, however the effort of implementing certain marketing activities only at certain moments is generally very straining. This aspect is supported by the fact that any touristic organisation permanently needs marketing activities and actions, whereas the choice of only some activities specific to marketing, that may be subcontracted, is wrong.

Therefore, we consider that the marketing specialist who operates in a marketing compartment/department is the best solution available, as this specialist may, in accordance with his professional training, carry on specific marketing activities in an efficient manner.

Nevertheless, in order to get positive results in this field of activity, the marketing specialist must complete all the stages of his professional training, which should be appropriate from the viewpoint of acquired competencies. These types of competencies suppose the existence and validation of certain important aspects referring to the knowledge already acquired, practical experience, a set of skills necessary for the fulfilment of tasks, as well as a set of attitudes leading to the mobilisation of the human resources in the sense of an efficient accomplishment of the specific tasks. That is why the professional training should be completed, especially in the field of tourism, in accordance with well-defined standards, which may constitute the premises for the permanent development of this sector of activity.

When it comes to human resources, the training standards refer to the qualifications built on the basis of an occupational standard, which, according to the National Authority of Qualifications, represents *"the document describing the professional activities specific to the occupations from a certain occupational area and the quality criteria associated to their successful performance in accordance with the requirements of the labour market"* (definition of the occupational standards adopted by the NAQ for the elaboration of a National Framework of Qualifications). Furthermore, the occupational standards comprise a detailed description of the tasks, knowledge and skills necessary for an efficient performance at the place of work, including the legal liabilities (www.skillsactive.com/training/standards).

A closer analysis of the existence of occupational standards for different fields of activity in our country's economy resulted, on the level of the sector of activity including Tourism, Hotels and Restaurants, in finding only 40 standards elaborated and approved by the competent bodies (www.cnfpa.ro), compared to the actually very large number of activities specific to the domain of tourism, found in the register of qualifications.

In this respect, we considered it useful to elaborate an occupational standard in the field of tourism for the sector of activity Tourism, Hotels and Restaurants, standard called "*marketing specialist*", with the purpose of providing the generally accepted quality criteria, taking into consideration all the mandatory requirements specific to the place of work. The elaboration of this occupational standard is based on the "methodology of elaboration and revision of occupational standards and professional qualifications" (www.cnfpa.ro/standard/methodology), as well as on the application guide for this methodology.

The mechanism of elaborating this occupational standard supposes several activities, as follows:

1. Identifying the competency items, which should include the following specific elements: title (position), competency elements, fulfilment criteria, range of variables, contexts, knowledge, liability level;
2. Establishing the types of competency items by defining the following types of competency items: key competency items, general competency items and specific competency items;
3. Identifying the competency elements representing a coherent set of activities with quantifiable results, necessary for the achievement of the respective activity;
4. Revising the structure of the occupational standards which supposes ensuring coherence between competency items and elements;
5. Elaborating the content of a competence item which supposes the formulation of the achievement criteria; clarifying the contexts in which the activity described in the competency item is carried on; specifying the range of variables, clearly stating the necessary knowledge; setting the level of liability and autonomy;
6. Performing the final revision of the competency items supposes an overall verification of the standard content in the standard elaborated from the methodological viewpoint (required format).

The present occupational standard describes the activity of the marketing specialist employed by a patrimonial entity. The marketing specialist carries on his activity within the marketing compartment/department of the patrimonial entity, in close co-operation with the other structures within the organisation. The occupational standard is made of 15 competency items (*Cuciurean, C.N., 2011*), i.e.:

- 4 key competency items, with a level of liability and autonomy of 6;
- 4 general competency items, with a level of liability and autonomy ranging between 5 and 7;
- 7 specific competency items, with a level of liability and autonomy ranging between 6 and 7;

For each individual competency item one has identified the competency elements, the achievement criteria associated to the result of the activity described by the competency element, as well as the achievement criteria associated to the manner of fulfilling the activity described by the competency element. Moreover, each competency item describes the corresponding contexts and variable ranges; and, last but not least, the knowledge required for the optimum completion of the activity.

The marketing specialist dedicates his efforts to the following activities (*according to Cuciurean, C.N., 2011*): promotion of the organisation image; administration and management of specific documents, organisation of specific events; study of the market of products and services; demand evolution, elaboration of marketing strategies, performing the publicity campaigns, elaboration of marketing programmes; promotion of organisation's products and services; elaboration of promotion programmes, consulting on the issues specific to the marketing field, elaboration of reports.

Moreover, the marketing specialist will have competencies in assertive communication at the place of work, activities in multidisciplinary teams, IT skills, as well as communication skills in a foreign language. Last but not least, the marketing specialist will know how to organise his own activity and will learn how to develop his lifelong professional training in order to reach the set goals.

3. Conclusions

Taking into consideration the ensemble of the aspects presented above, we consider that the marketing specialists employed in a touristic organisation play a very important part in the reaching of the direct and complementary goals set by the organisation for its development.

Nevertheless, the activity of such specialists should be efficiently directed, on the basis of the specific occupational milestones. Moreover, this occupational standard represents the strong point in the elaboration of the position chart for the human resources employed in such a position, but also relevant landmarks in the construction of the professional training.

A crucial aspect in shaping the role of the marketing specialist refers to the fact that he works independently and/or in co-operation with the other compartments/departments of the organisation, in accordance with the theoretic and practical knowledge his specialisation relies upon.

These interdependencies are necessary for the grounding of decision-making, for the good operation of all activities corresponding to the major functions and positions and especially for the reaching of the ultimate goal. Furthermore, he may co-ordinate the activity of the other persons in the organisation's department/compartment, if there are comprised in its organisational structure.

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