

Marketing strategies for developing tourism companies during martial law

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Despite being one of the most vulnerable sectors of the economy, the tourism industry has shown remarkable resilience in times of political instability and armed conflict. Since February 2022, the war in Ukraine has become a critical factor, leading to a dramatic decline in tourism activity among domestic and international consumers. Ukrainian tourism companies have faced unprecedented challenges that require swift adaptation to uncertainty.

Amidst the uncertainty brought about by the war, marketing strategies have emerged as important tools for sustaining business operations and upholding tourism's socio-cognitive and entertaining role. A tourism enterprise's marketing strategy is a comprehensive system of measures to achieve long-term goals, shape a positive image, and attract clients. Its implementation involves conducting market analysis, studying the target audience, developing tourism products, establishing effective pricing policies, and enhancing customer service.

One key consequence of the war has been the destruction of tourism infrastructure, including hotels, cultural and historical landmarks, museums, and transportation networks. Restoring these facilities requires significant resources, which complicates the operation of tourism businesses in the short term. Additionally, the decreased level of security in several regions limits access to otherwise attractive tourist destinations [1].

Despite these challenges, inbound tourism has not ceased completely. Ukraine continues to receive visitors from international organizations, volunteers, and journalists. Tourism companies have shown remarkable adaptability by tailoring their services to this category of clients. Furthermore, a growing need for humanitarian transport, evacuation, and temporary accommodation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has been growing. This has led to a partial reorientation of the industry toward the domestic market.

An example of effective adaptation is the increase in state budget revenues from tourism, which reached UAH 616 million in the first quarter of 2024 – 61% higher than in 2023 [2]. Tourism companies now focus on domestic tourism by offering excursions to historical and cultural sites, weekend tours, and notable routes for volunteers and charitable organizations.

Despite the ongoing conflict, there remains a significant interest in travel, particularly to the western regions of Ukraine. Tourism companies are currently providing a range of offerings, including short excursions, visits to cultural and historical sites, weekend getaways, and specialized tours designed for volunteers and philanthropists. In order to safeguard tourists, comprehensive rules and guidelines have been established for each region of Ukraine, aiming to ensure visitor safety and enhance their experience [3].

Digital marketing tools have taken center stage in promoting tourism services. Social media, video content, blogs, podcasts, and mobile applications have proven effective communication channels. Special attention should be given to the development of flexible pricing systems that consider safety levels, seasonality, and population purchasing power. Companies offer discounts for specific customer groups, such as families with children, students, military personnel, volunteers, and IDPs.

Partnerships with government, humanitarian, and volunteer organizations are crucial in recovery. They contribute to expanding services and forming a socially responsible image for tourism enterprises, reassuring stakeholders of the industry's commitment to recovery.

Thus, marketing strategies for tourism companies under martial law must be based on adaptability, digitalization, a focus on domestic tourism, social responsibility, and partnerships. In the long term, these approaches may lay groundwork for the revival of the tourism sector in the post-war period.

Keywords: tourism, marketing strategies, digital marketing tools.

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