THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ORGANISATIONS TOWARDS CUSTOMERS.
CASE STUDY - ROMANIAN TRAVEL AGENCIES

Olimpia State, Claudia Gabriela Baicu and Delia Popescu

1) The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania
2) Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

Organizations’ responsibilities towards consumers and consumer rights gained increasing attention during recent decades, alongside with intensifying competition on the market of goods and services, increasing their complexity and diversity, evolving of technology and transport means, growing population, etc. Within this context, increasing consumer protection, promoting sustainable consumption, rapid and efficient resolution of complaints, education and consumer awareness represent imperatives of a modern organization, aware that its existence on market depends on meeting customer requirements in the best way.

Particular area where competition is increasingly fierce, and the number of consumers is continuously growing is the tourism sector. Moreover, recent changes in the Internet development have raised new issues regarding tourist protection.

Based on these considerations, in this article we have analysed and assessed the responsibility of travel agencies in Romania towards customers. The research has been achieved from two perspectives: both from the point of view of tourism employees and tourists. The survey results have brought to the attention of travel agencies certain directions that should be considered in their relationship with the tourists in order to increase tourists’ protection and promoting sustainable consumption.

Keywords: responsibility, travel agency, customer protection, sustainable consumption.

JEL classification: D18, M10, O10.

Introduction

Growing competition on the market of goods and services has urged goods producers and service providers intensify efforts to meet consumer demands in the best way. Consequently, being competitive requires organizations to take responsibility towards consumers regarding: protection of life, health, and safety; promoting sustainable consumption; providing complete and highly accurate information; rapid and effective resolution of complaints; consumers’ education and awareness of their rights and obligations.

* Corresponding author, Olimpia State – state.olimpia@com.ase.ro
Tourism represents a sector where recent developments require increasing responsibility of organizations and intensified consumer protection. A proof in this respect is the recent initiative of the European Commission, which, in July 2013, has made a legislative proposal to revise Directive 90/314/EEC on package travel, package holidays and package tours, adopted in 1990, in order to protect consumers who buy a holiday package. (European Commission, 2013a).

We consider our study on responsibility of Romanian travel agencies towards clients as necessary and appropriate within this context. The need to apply such an analysis is proved by the fact that travel agencies competitiveness depends on the number of its loyal clients as well as the growing attention that such a subject requires in the Romanian scientific literature.

Consequently, we have structured the article into three parts. In the first section, we presented the current guidelines of some international bodies on the responsibilities of organizations towards consumers and their rights. Considerations related to protection of travel packages consumers were developed in the second section.

In the third section, based on two surveys, we analysed and assessed the extent to which travel agencies in Romania assume responsibilities towards tourists, as well as the perception that tourists have regarding agencies responsibility. Finally, based on the surveys’ results, there were presented recommendations that travel agencies in Romania should follow in different areas of responsibility, to provide, in the future, products and services according to the tourists’ expectations.

1. The responsibility of organizations towards consumers – guidelines of some international bodies

A milestone in the development and promotion of consumer rights is the document adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 1985 - United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP). The importance of this document lies also in the fact that, subsequently, the Guidelines adopted by the UN have led to the creation of the legal framework on consumer protection in many countries.

The document adopted in 1985 underwent improvements in 1999, when awareness of environmental and sustainable development issues imposed the introduction of approaches on sustainable production and consumption.

According to the UNGCP, the "legitimate needs" of consumers are:

- the protection of health and safety;
- the protection of economic interests;
- adequate information;
- consumer education;
- effective redress;
- freedom to create consumer organizations;
- sustainable consumption patterns (UN, 2003, Article 3).

As already noted, the current version of the UNGCP is a useful tool and a reference point in promoting consumer protection worldwide. However, the evolution and changes that have occurred in the recent years have prompted the United Nations Conference on Trade and
Development – UNCTAD revise the UNGCP in 2012. Among the new approaches that the UNGCP revised document will have to include are: e-commerce, financial services and multilateral cooperation (UNCTAD, 2012).

Consumers International, an international organization created to promote consumer rights across the world, “translated” the UNGCP in eight basic consumer rights: “the right to the satisfaction of basic needs; the right to safety; the right to be informed; the right to choose, the right to be heard; the right to redress; the right to consumer education; the right to a healthy environment” (Consumers International, n.d.).

Ensuring consumer protection is one of the priorities of the consumer policy at the EU level, as proved by the EU strategy for 2007-2013, which has settled three main objectives regarding consumers:

- empowering EU consumers, with positive effects for both citizens and enhancing competition;
- increasing EU consumers’ welfare in several respects, such as: the price, quality, safety etc.;
- consumers protection against serious risks and threats, which is essential for consumer’s confidence (European Commission, 2007).

There are studies which consider that consumer’s protection and management of consumer’s protection represent a new stage of human civilization, a new way of life that is highly superior. (Petrescu et al., 2010)

In 1994, the Oslo roundtable discussion on sustainable production and consumption defined the sustainable consumption as being: “the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations” (Norwegian Ministry of the Environment, 1994).

In its report on the guidelines for consumer protection, the United Nations mentions: “Sustainable consumption includes meeting the needs of present and future generations for goods and services in ways that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable” (UN, 2003).

The document also highlights the role that governments, along with business and civil society play in promoting sustainable consumption. To this end, regulations and other policies, including economic and social instruments, sectorial policies, information programs, discouraging unsustainable consumption patterns, and promoting best environmental management practices are considered very important (UN, 2003).

Starting from the premises that sustainable consumption and production are an important part of sustainable development, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has established a report regarding the best practices in promoting sustainable consumption in the member countries (OECD, 2008).

According to this study (OECD, 2008), the main initiatives in the OECD countries to promoting sustainable consumption are:

- including performance standards, such as energy efficiency standards;
• mandatory labelling for health reasons or with other purposes, like: indication of the energy efficiency of household appliances, providing information on the consumers obligations regarding collection and recycling of products and packaging waste;
• the application of taxes and charges (fuel taxes, congestion charges to diminish the impact of automobiles on environment, waste disposal taxes, taxes to reduce consumption of tobacco and alcohol, taxes and charges on polluting products, water supply tax, etc.);
• subsidies and incentives to encourage consumers to choose sustainable products and services (for example, subsidies and incentives to increase homes energy efficiency);
• communication campaigns to enhance consumer information and awareness on sustainable consumption (for example, campaigns to promote environment-friendly purchases;
• development of educational schemes for promoting sustainable consumption (for example, designing school curricula to include topics relating to sustainable consumption);
• use of voluntary labelling to promote sustainable consumer choices;
• corporate reporting is a tool through which corporations provide information on sustainable development;
• use commercial advertising (television, radio, flyers, etc.);
• use of sustainable public procurement (such as green public procurement) as a way to encourage producers to provide sustainable products and services, and consumers to follow the same consumption pattern;
• improved understanding of consumer behaviour for designing sustainable consumption policies;
• use of a combination of instruments, depending on the particularities of various products, services or classes of consumers. For example, promoting sustainable consumption in tourism can include a combination of tools such as: communication campaigns, certification and verification of sustainable destinations, fines for unsustainable activities, subsidies for sustainable energy etc.;
• institutionalizing sustainable consumption through: adequate legal framework, programs to promote sustainable consumption, sustainable development strategies.

One of the guidelines set by UNGCP refers to the right of consumers to obtain effective redress where appropriate, and the measures that governments should take to enable consumers to obtain such redress. The procedures for obtaining redress should be "expeditious, fair, inexpensive and accessible" and should take into account, in particular, low-income consumers (UN, 2003).

Development of the EU, modern economy and modern methods of commerce through Internet have created the prerequisites for a large number of people to be affected by the same illegal practices. Based on these considerations, there are initiatives at the EU level about the adoption of common principles for redress in case of collective prejudice. In this regard, the recent initiative of the European Commission should be mentioned, which made recommendations on collective redress: Commission Recommendation of 11 June 2013 on common principles for injunctive and compensatory collective redress mechanisms in the Member States concerning violations of rights granted under Union Law.

Recognizing the critical role that consumer education plays under the current conditions of enhancing the markets complexity, the OECD defines consumer education “as a process of
developing and enhancing skills and knowledge to make informed and well-reasoned choices that take societal values and objectives into account” (OECD, 2009).

Governments should play a key role in consumer education by developing educational and information programmes. In this educational process, governments should encourage the participation of other entities such as consumer organizations, other organizations of civil society, business and media (UN, 2003).

As outlined in OECD (2009), the rights and obligations of consumers, personal finance management and sustainable consumption are among the main areas of today consumer education. Beside these areas, a new area covered by consumer education refers to digital media and technology.

One area in which education and consumer information have become increasingly important, especially in the context of the global crisis triggered in 2007, is the financial sector. The crisis has shown that the increasing sophistication of financial products and services, the modern techniques of risk transfer and developments in technology require increased consumer financial education. Besides, banks in many countries have changed their traditional business models and developed new models that, in addition to some benefits, have involved risks and organizational changes (Baicu and State, 2012).

A praiseworthy initiative in this respect belongs, for example, to the central bank of Malaysia (Bank Negara Malaysia), whose official website contains, in addition to information on the financial sector developments, monetary and financial stability, the system of payments or the management of foreign exchange reserve, the heading “Consumer information”. The latter includes a distinct section dedicated to education and awareness of consumers with respect to financial products and services - ”Consumer Financial Education & Awareness” - , which aims to provide consumers of banking and insurance products with knowledge meant to allow them to make informed decisions, namely:

- to select the best banking or insurance products and services that meet their needs or correspond to their risk profile;
- to know their rights and obligations deriving from their quality as consumers of banking or insurance products and services.

Moreover, a website (“duitsaku.com”) is built specifically for financial education of Malaysian children. Children are helped to understand the role of financial planning through attractive methods and activities (games, quizzes, e-cards, etc.).

Besides the rich and useful information provided on the official website, the central bank of Malaysia offers training programs aimed at increasing consumers' financial literacy.

The website educates consumers also on the settlement of a possible litigation and how to prepare a complaint against a provider of financial products and services that is regulated by the central bank. (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2013).

The importance of financial education for the sustainable development of the general public is also recognized in Romania. The financial education program "BaniIQ" was initiated by Visa Europe with member banks in Romania and it aims to improve the financial literacy of the participants in a number of areas such as: financial planning and personal budget, financial and banking products and services, opportunities and risks associated to the
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financial investments. The pilot project took place in 2012. (Project financed by Visa Europe and the member banks in Romania, 2012).

Beside education, information is essential in order to make the appropriate choices and increase consumer protection. Information is increasingly important especially in the current conditions in which diversity and complexity of the products and services have increased. At the European level, the European Consumer Centres Network (ECC Net) plays a key role in providing information on consumer rights and support in the event of a conflict between consumers and traders. (European Commission, 2011).

2. Consumer protection in tourism

According to the international statistics, since 1950, tourism demand has been increasing. At the same time, the need for experienced travel agents, determined to improve their skills in order to meet the requirements of customers who wish to receive high quality services, has also been increasing. (Stânciulescu and State, 2013)

If in 1950 the statistics have recorded about 25 million people who spent their holidays abroad, today the interest in such travels has become so great that it has reached the figure of 1,035 million tourists in 2012, according to the World Tourism Organization statistics. (UNWTO, 2013)

In Romania, the number of travel agencies has been increasing until 2008, year after which their number has been constantly decreasing. In February 2013, there were 2932 licensed agencies, of which 88% of them were tour operators, the rest being retailers. Almost 23% of the agencies in the country were grouped in Bucharest. (Stânciulescu and State, 2013)

According to consumer scoreboard (European Commission, 2012), consumers trust the Romanian market (63% of consumers give grades between 8 and 10 on a scale from 1 to 10 for travels packages & organized excursions). Moreover, packages travels are ranked better in 2011 compared to 2010. However, complaints to the National Consumer Protection Authority reveal shortcomings. Even if complaints are not made towards producers (0%), they are made towards suppliers (64%).

The available Romanian legislation includes regulations regarding tourism agencies’ responsibility towards customers and touristic services consumer’s protection. In this respect the Government Order no. 107 of July, 30th, 1999 concerning the activity of purchasing travel packages (including later modifications) and, respectively, The Minister of Tourism Order no. 235 of June the 6th, 2001 on tourists assurance in case of insolvency or travel agency bankruptcy (published in The Official Monitor no. 433, August, the 2nd, 2001) are required.

Following the increasing number of tourists and the changes related to Internet development and means of transport, operations carried out by travel agents are becoming increasingly complex. In addition, intensifying competition in the tourism sector has imposed increase responsibilities towards customers, who have become a priority for agencies wishing to maintain and grow in the market. The importance of travel agencies derives also from the fact that they can offer customers advice and special rates.
There are studies that emphasise the need to know the tourists’ preferences and the satisfaction level of tourists when we analyse the demand for tourist services. (Ţigui and Călăreţu, 2013)

Increasing the number of both tourists and travel agencies, enlarging tourism products and technology progress have determined growing consumer protection of travel packages, at the same time.

To this end, in July 2013, The European Commission has made a legislative proposal to revise Directive 90/314/EEC on package travel, package holidays and package tours, adopted in 1990, in order to protect consumers who buy a holiday package.

According to the Commission, the revise of the legislative framework is necessary due to the development of the Internet and low-cost air carriers, as well as the tendency of consumers to purchase different holiday components disparate from multiple providers, instead of choosing a package offered by a single organizer. (European Commission, 2013a)

While 23% of European tourists make a traditional booking of the package holiday, being protected by the 1990 Directive, another 23% opts for customized packages that are not covered by the 1990 Directive or covered "in an ambiguous manner". By referring to the Commission's proposal to modernize holiday packages, the Vice-President of the European Commission, EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding said: “EU package travel rules need to be fit for the digital age and meet consumers’ expectations”. According to calculations in Brussels, by adopting the new regulations, a total of 120 million tourists, as consumers, will have improved rights. (European Commission, 2013b.)

The revision of the Directive 90/314/EEC on package travel, package holidays and package tours was also considered positive by the ECTAA - The European Travel Agents 'and Tour Operators' Associations, an organization founded in 1961.

Currently, the organization represents national associations of travel agents and tour operators of EU Member States. Romania became a member of the ECTAA in 1999.

According to its mission the ECTAA has monitored the European Commission legislative proposal, highlighting the fact that: the Directive extends its scope; better information to consumers about the packages they buy and their rights; the possibility of facilitating cross-border sales, by mutual recognition of national insolvency schemes. (ECTAA, 2013)

3. The responsibility of travel agencies in Romania towards customers

In order to analyse and evaluate the extent to which travel agencies in Romania assume their responsibilities towards tourists, but also their perception, we conducted two pilot studies: the first was a study on the employees of travel agencies, and the second on the clients of travel agencies.

3.1 Methodology

These studies have used statistical survey as method and they are based on the following assumptions: travel agencies are aware that their existence on the market depends on the number of clients, therefore they assume responsibilities towards tourists; tourists expect the travel agency to fully satisfy their requirements and to be responsible; increasing
information and education of tourists is an essential requirement for increasing consumer protection and promoting a sustainable consumption.

Based on these assumptions, the objectives of the research aimed to identify the extent to which travel agencies meet the customers’ requirements and assume responsibilities towards them, as well as the degree of satisfaction of tourists regarding products and services offered to them. The survey has been performed from two perspectives: (1) from the point of view of tourism employees regarding the responsibility of their organizations towards consumers, (2) in terms of consumers’ perception about the extent to which travel agencies were found to be responsible.

The study of the most relevant and current sources of information from scientific literature dealing with the main areas of responsibility the organization has towards customers offered initial support in understanding the general concepts related to the protection of tourists as consumers, solving the litigations, informing and educating them and raising their awareness. Subsequently, it was necessary to use primary sources of information collected directly from the field by investigating employees in tourism as well as tourists. Among these sources, the documents established by the international organisations the UNCTAD, the OECD and the European Commission should be mentioned.

We have used primary sources of information, following an accurate analysis of the literature review; for this, we have investigated both tourism employees and tourists, based on applied questionnaires.

In order to analyse and assess the responsibilities of travel agencies, two types of questionnaires were administered and filled in: a type of questionnaire was filled in by tourism employees and the second one, by customers. The questionnaires included 24 questions each, mainly, closed questions, related to: the tourists’ sources of information, the criteria for selecting an agency, the services a tourism product should include, the identifying the extent to which agencies meet the requirements of customers and the way the assuming of responsibility is perceived both by employees and tourists.

The research was conducted from March 15 to May 30, 2013. A number of 40 students were available as interviewers. Out of 102 questionnaires administered to employees, 92 questionnaires were valid, and, out of 120 questionnaires administered to tourists, 110 were valid.

The “funnel technique” was used in the placement of the questions into the two questionnaires, due to the fact that the complexity of the questions gradually increased. As a result, the questionnaires began with general, simpler questions. The questions regarding the perceptions on the responsibility of travel agencies towards consumers and the opinion scales were positioned in the second half of the questionnaires. The questions of identification were placed at the end.

Out of the 24 questions of the first questionnaire, 12 questions were aimed to identify the opinions regarding tourists and other 9 were aimed to identify their habits, using a five steps Likert scale. 3 of them were identification questions.

Regarding the second questionnaire, out of 24 questions, 15 questions were aimed to identify the clients’ opinions and other 6 were aimed to identify their habits, using a five steps Likert scale; 3 questions were meant to identify the individuals interviewed.
The novelty of the research lies in the fact that: (1) it identifies the extent to which the travel agencies in Romania deem to have responsibilities towards tourists; (2) it assesses how the assumption of travel agencies responsibility is perceived by clients.

The research aimed to capture the opinions of tourists on products and services offered by agencies, their requirements regarding tourism products, the perspective of employees related to customer expectations, solutions to achieve future products and services that meet the tourists’ expectations.

3.2 Survey Findings

The results of the two researches will be analysed, in the first stage, comparatively, and, subsequently, the specific aspects will be revealed.

If 98% of employees state that the agencies are responsible towards their customers, only 93% of clients admit that the agencies have a responsible behaviour towards them (but the difference is not very large).

By analysing the tourists’ sources of information on the offer of travel agencies, from the two perspectives, we have obtained the results according to the following table (table no. 1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From where do tourists get information on the offer of agencies:</th>
<th>The employees’ opinion (%)</th>
<th>The customers’ opinion (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st place Internet (54%)</td>
<td>Internet (45%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd place Brochures (26%)</td>
<td>Friends/family (32%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd place Television and the press (17%)</td>
<td>Television and the press (19%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Developed by authors*

We can notice that the Internet represents the main source of information for tourists, consequently, travel agencies should rely less on brochures and reconsider the importance of satisfying old customers’ requests which greatly influence future consumer’s decision.

By correlating this result with the fact that 90% of employees admit that their customers have the possibility to provide feedback or request information on the agency's website or social networks, it results that agencies should carefully study the customers' satisfaction for a sustainable consumption. As one can see from table no. 1, television and press are placed on the 3rd place. The difference up to 100% is represented by other sources of information.

If we were to analyse the outcomes of the two researches in terms of the underlying criteria of choosing a travel agency, we have the results in table no. 2.
It follows that the ratio between quality and price is more important to customers than the employees of agencies believe; also, the opinions of online customers are more important than the employees believe. Increasingly more tourists check what others say online about the destination before purchasing a package. Consequently, agencies should become more aware of this influence. According to the figure no. 1, one can notice that although the competence and kindness of the staff are important for customers, they do not appear equally important in the employees' perception.

The differences between the results of the two surveys were also identified regarding the choice of the travel packages (figure no. 2).
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Thus, while employees perceive optional excursions, the guide and recreational services as being more important than they really are, customers still consider the basic services - accommodation, transport and food - more important.

It should be noted that, although employees do not believe that there will be future demand for week-end packages, it seems that future tourists, in proportion of 10%, are thinking about such a vacation.

By analysing the results of the first survey in terms of identifying the extent to which travel agencies meet the requirements of customers and how employees perceive the assumption of responsibilities, the following observations have resulted:

- services offered to customers are diverse (100%);
- agencies have a high degree of flexibility and timeliness (95%);
- agencies check the opinions of customers in the online environment (68% daily; 21% of them in maximum 5 days; 8% weekly and only 3% more rarely);
- employees consider that comments in the online environment are useful, particularly for understanding customers’ preferences and opinions and to get feedback;
- employees claim that they inform tourists on the importance of insurance (92%);
- employees consider that agencies perform surveys among customers (89%), offer discount to loyal customers (85%), and provide brochures and other means of information to customers (96%);
- only 15% of employees state that they have never received complaints from dissatisfied customers and 65% of employees admit that they rarely receive complaints. There is an alarming percentage of 6% of those who admit that they often receive complaints;
- major enhancements requested by customers are regarding holiday offers (39%) and prices (38%). However, 15% of customers are already unsatisfied with the attitude in the online environment.

The employees of travel agencies who participated in the survey were randomly selected in accordance with the requirements of the probability principles in terms of the size of the
travel agency, the period they have operated in the market and the position held by the employees within the agencies.

By analysing the results of the second survey, in terms of the degree of tourists’ satisfaction related to the products and services offered, the following findings have resulted:

- although the percentage of customers who have encountered problems when they purchased a package is very small (5%) similar with those who say that the services they received were not consistent with the tourism offer package (6%), travel agencies should be careful with them because precisely they are the first ones that offer feedback in the online environment;
- most customers consider that the travel packages offered are diverse (85%) and employees are prompt (81%);
- most of them are satisfied with the knowledge and competence of employees (79%) and with the design of the agency's office/website (76%);
- customers have identified the travel agency "Happy Tour" as the most known and appreciated (28%), being followed by "Eurolines", with 21%, and then by the agencies "Marshal Tourism" and "Parallel 45", both with approximately 18%; 10% have identified the agency "Eximtur" and the remaining respondents have mentioned other agencies;
- according to the respondents, the least organized tourist product components were leisure (35%), food (33%), and transport (16%). Accommodation has raised issues only to 13% of the consumers of travel packages. These are aspects that travel agencies should take into account and remedy in order to reduce the number of complaints and to promote sustainable consumption.

The profile of the client - respondents: the majority were under 36 years old (72%), employees (58%) and willing to spend between 1000 and 5000 lei for their upcoming holiday (66%). These are customers who have used the services of a travel agency (98%), they would recommend the services of the agency (88%), and in the future they will choose the stay-type travel packages (32%), they will prefer a holiday ranging from 4 to 9 days (65%) and they will spend, in average, the equivalent of one salary for their vacation per year.

In conclusion, we can state that the assumptions of this study are confirmed, because: 93% of customers believe that the agencies have a responsible behaviour towards consumers; 98% of employees consider that the agencies are preoccupied with their customers; education and awareness of consumers can help them choose a package closer to their expectations, so as to reduce the number of complaints expressed, especially, in the online environment.

Conclusions

Intensifying competition in the goods and services market has determined increase of the responsibility of organizations towards consumers regarding the protection of health and safety, promoting sustainable consumption, quick and efficient resolution of complaints, consumer education.

The need to increase consumer protection and the responsibility of organizations providing services is also reflected in the tourism sector, due to the increasing number of tourists and travel agencies, increasing the complexity and diversity of products and services, developing the Internet, means of transport, etc.
The directions that should be followed by travel agencies in Romania, which have resulted from the surveys analysed to achieve future products and services according to the expectations of tourists, are:

- agencies should rely less on brochures and reconsider the importance of the satisfaction of elderly customers, which influences to a greater extent the decision of the future consumers;
- agencies should carefully study their customers’ satisfaction, in order to promote sustainable consumption;
- agencies should become more aware of the influence of online customers’ opinions, whose comments are useful, especially in order to understand the customers’ preferences and opinions and to get feedback;
- agencies should pay attention to their customers who have encountered problems when they purchased a package and stated that the services they received were not consistent with the tourism package offer, because they are the first tourists who provide feedback in the online environment;
- according to the respondents among customers, the least organized components of tourism products were leisure (35%), food (33%) and transport (16%);
- in the future, customers of travel agencies will choose the stay-type travel products in proportion of 32%, they will prefer a holiday lasting from 4 to 9 days (65%), and they will spend, in average, the equivalent of one salary for their vacation per year;
- agencies should take weekend tourism into consideration, because 10% of the future tourists are considering such a vacation.

These are the main aspects that travel agencies should take into account or to remedy, in order to increase consumer protection and to promote sustainable consumption.

Regarding complaints, while 65% of employees admit that they rarely receive complaints, only 15% of employees state that they have never received complaints from dissatisfied customers and only 6% of them admit that they often receive complaints, which represents an alarming percentage.

On the other hand, the main enhancements requested by customers refer to the vacation offers (39%) and prices (38%), but already 15% of customers are dissatisfied with the attitude in the online environment.

In conclusion, agents have to know how to quickly identify the reasons of the customers’ dissatisfaction and effectively manage complaints. This way, through good management of complaints, these customers can become loyal and one can eliminate conflict and stress in the relationship with customers.

Another conclusion would be that more action should be taken for consumers’ education and awareness, in order for them to choose a package that best meets their expectations.

References


