

MARKETING INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN TOURISM COMPANIES

Janja Štokelj

janja.stokelj@gmail.com

Aleksandra Brezovec

aleksandra.brezovec@turistica.si

Doris Gomezelj

Abstract

Over the last two decades, organizations have faced significant changes in business processes. Due to the globalization of markets and strong international competition, companies are continuously forced to seek innovative solutions. Consequently, marketing managers need a constant flow of new information for effective decision making. The development and diffusion of information and communication technologies (ICT) has enabled a rapid dissemination of information in large quantities among the users all over the world. Hence, managers face difficulties caused by information overflow. One of the possible solutions to these problems is information management within marketing information system (MkIS).

This paper presents a survey of marketing information systems characteristics and marketing information usage within Slovenian tourism companies. First of all, a review of the literature of information systems, MkISs and tourism marketing has been made. In order to investigate the MkIS overall status, a questionnaire based on theoretical background and previous studies was created, which contained two general and two specific sections of questions. The research has focused on marketing information management investigation – gathering, processing, distribution, usage and storage of information. Additionally, it examined the sources of marketing information and the content of information that companies collect. A further question arises as to whether the information systems have been used by marketing departments and if the MkIS has been used for decision making. The results of survey descriptive analysis were compared to those of preliminary studies on MkISs. Finally, the satisfaction with MkIS was evaluated and an exploratory factor analysis was carried out, which suggested five variables for the evaluation of MkIS effectiveness.

The findings have revealed that marketing information and MkISs within Slovenian tourism companies are not used only by the managers but also by non-management employees. The companies most often collect information about local competitors, existing and potential customers. Moreover,

the large proportions of information within Slovenian tourism companies are quantitative and gathered mostly from internal and formal information sources. As regards hardware and software usage, most of the companies use personal computers and general end-user software to assist their MkISs. While the majority of tourism subjects use the MkIS support for marketing management functions and marketing-mix decisions, managers rarely use computer-assisted decision models.

The major problems that MkIS users face are the lack of information timeliness, reliability, conciseness and information inaccessibility. Although the MkIS proved to be effective in some marketing processes and activities, certain weaknesses that should be eliminated still exist. One of the main shortcomings of MkIS is its incompatibility with other information systems. Also, a lack of cooperation between MkIS users and technical support has been identified.

As suggested by the factor analysis, five new dimensions for the measurement of MkIS effectiveness have been introduced: marketing processes support, marketing information quality, employee support, MkIS flexibility and compatibility, and technical support quality. Based upon the research findings, a model of MkIS suitable for tourism companies has been developed. Furthermore, the limitations of the study have been presented and directions for future research have been proposed.

Keywords: marketing, marketing information, information systems, tourism, Slovenia