

## Guidelines For Improving an Event Tourism Product

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### Abstract

*This article examines EVENT tourism as a specialized type that has seen rapid development in recent years, not only globally, but also in Bulgaria. However, the successful implementation and realization of its product is associated with the knowledge of a number of features and effective management of the destination for events. In this regard, the author's aspiration is to derive and systematize the guidelines for improving the event offer, following the example of the Saint Constantine and Helena resort.*

*Keywords: Event tourism, Event tourism product, Event destination, Event destination management*

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### Introduction

The purpose of this article is to examine the possibilities for improving the development of event tourism in two hotels in the resort complex of St. St. Constantine and Elena. "Astor garden Hotel" and "Aquahouse Hotel & SPA" are located in one of the most picturesque and attractive areas in Bulgaria and are known for their luxurious atmosphere, delightful scenery and variety of services.

**The subject** of research in the current development is the improvement of the development of event tourism in the selected hotels.

**The object** of research are "Astor garden Hotel" and "Aquahouse Hotel & SPA".

**The main thesis** of the present development is that "Astor garden Hotel" and "Aquahouse Hotel & SPA" have specific competitive advantages that, if used correctly, could contribute to the improvement of the event product of the hotels as well as the complex.

Within this article, the key aspects of event tourism will be examined, a number of factors will be studied and the possibilities for its improvement and development will be explored.

The purpose of this article is to offer specific guidelines that will help the resort complex of St. St. Konstantin and Elena to strengthen its presence as an event destination and attract a greater number of MICE tourists.

### 1. Theoretical basis, role and importance of event tourism. Thesis statement and literature review.

In recent decades, the impact of globalization on tourism worldwide has led to increased competition between destinations in search of optimal positioning. The analysis of the possibilities of creating a distinctive image that attracts more and more visitors determines the importance of events as a purposeful and organized form of impact on the attendance of destinations. Literature studies and practice show that organizing events attracts a large number of visitors, encourages investment, improves image and supports the local economy. Events have the potential to generate a vast amount of tourism when they cater to out-of-region visitors, although definitive data on the impact of event tourism is not available due to the complexity and diversity of the industry.

The literature review gives reason to define the events as special celebrations that can be planned and organized by different public institutions or private organizations and can include a variety of activities. Usually, the events take place on the basis of a pre-planned program according to the natural assets, tourism resources and carrying capacity of the place. Various criteria are used for the classification of events, the main ones being their content, location, purpose, size and

importance of the events. By definition, an event can be defined as a gathering of people, usually lasting from a few hours to a few days, designed to celebrate or celebrate certain human achievements (Velikova, 2017). Getz has a similar definition, namely that "an event is a well-planned temporal phenomenon with a beginning and an end" (Getz, 2007). In most cases, events are held irregularly and have a certain period in which participants can interact outside of their routine activities. Events can be defined as a planned moment that occupies a special place in people's daily lives, is organized to mark a special occasion and provides participants with a unique experience (Dimitrova, 2019). Special events have a multi-layered nature, usually perform several parallel functions, exerting multiple impacts on different target audiences and can be interpreted in different situations in different ways (Crowther, 2010). All scheduled events are created with a specific purpose in mind. Organizing them requires training and practice dedicated to design, production and management.

There are many economic benefits to be realised from events tourism and events can be big business for destinations. Getz (2005) identified several travel motivators for tourists which fell into four categories: physical, cultural, interpersonal and prestigious/status, and argued that events were able to satisfy all of these motivations. Getz and Page (2016) further highlight that: *Event tourism is not usually recognized as a separate professional field. Mostly it is seen as an application of, or speciality within national tourism offices (NTOs) and destination marketing/management organizations (DMOs). Event development agencies (as opposed to agencies focused on protocol, arts and culture which also deal with planned events) embody event tourism completely, and there are a growing number of associated career paths or technical jobs.*

Historical studies show how the events evolved from the primitive gathering of people for agricultural or religious reasons to the modern types of events, as well as their long journey of attracting tourists and creating host communities as tourist destinations. The event represents that phenomenon of tourism of the last few decades, through which the specific needs of the market, caused by the increasingly demanding requirements for uniqueness, unity and growth, are most successfully met (Getz, 2007). The term "event tourism" was not widely used, if at all, before 1987, when the New Zealand Department of Tourism and Promotion reported that: "Event tourism is an important and rapidly growing segment of international tourism". A 1989 article by Getz in *Tourism Management* ("Special Events: Defining the Product") developed a framework for planning "event tourism". Previously, it was normal to talk about special events, distinctive events, mega events and specific types of events. "Event tourism" is now generally recognized as encompassing all planned events in an integrated development and marketing approach (Getz, 2002).

Destinations develop, facilitate and promote events to achieve several goals: to attract tourists, especially in the off-season, to serve as a catalyst for urban renewal and to improve the infrastructure and capacity of the destination, to promote a positive image of the destination and to contribute to a better place to live, work and invest. The events play an important role in tourism destination management and create physical products and services, which include the infrastructure, facilities, local community festivals, musical attractions, hospitality and transportation. The events play a critical role for the destination by attracting visitors to a host destination and having an impact on the local hospitality industry and transportation. These visitors enhance the destination marketing publicity by creating a tourism economy for the host cities. Getz (2005) believes that many countries and destinations fail to recognise the advantages of events and are often unable to manage negative images and publicity. Getz also states that due to rising competition, tourist regions and communities should strategically plan in order to achieve their environmental, social and economic objectives. Special events are above all an effective form of public relations and contribute to the formation and confirmation of the attractive image of the organizations that hold them. Special events develop partnership relationships, help attract investments, optimize relations with the state authority, the population, local authorities, etc. Events also play an important role in

the development of corporate communication, as well as in working with the media. In many cases, special events are organized to help solve demographic, energy, environmental, ethnic, social, cultural, health and other global changes. This group includes events from campaigns such as: "Let's clean Bulgaria in one day", "Earth Day" and others (Rafailova, 2020). Usually, when determining the effect of the impact of events, the emphasis is placed on the economic and financial aspects, as they are the justification for the budgetary targets and expenditures, but the social, cultural and environmental benefits, which are essential in the calculation of the overall impact on society of an event. (Allen, 2011)

Events attract audiences from different communities who are carriers of other values, traditions, etc., and can have a positive or negative change on the culture of all participants. Cross-cultural contacts that can take place at an event usually have a limited impact on the participants given the time limitation of the event, language barriers, etc. It is necessary to limit the inequality and highlight the differences between hosts and guests and to look for similar and close topics and needs in order to achieve the maximum good social effect of the event. Otherwise, there is a real prerequisite for the emergence of conflicts caused by the divergence of goals, values, needs and, last but not least, the sharing of different beliefs. Government policies are essential to achieving the event's objectives, therefore knowing and complying with the line of government is mandatory before planning and organizing events. It refers to the normative base and rules, strategic guidelines and political attitudes, in accordance with which it is necessary to organize a given event - observance of public order, preservation of the environment and natural environment. Environmental elements are an essential factor for the success of an event, including infrastructure (road network, transport, communications), sufficient awareness, cultural heritage and, last but not least, environmental security.

The economic effects of organized events are not only direct investments, but by increasing the number of participants, visitors to the specific area increase and, if the events are well planned and organized, additional income can be generated by increasing the demand for goods and services. Primary economic effects are the result of business sales, and secondary effects are the infusion of additional financial resources into the region's economy. Positive economic effects of the events are the creation of new business opportunities, the attraction of participants, the increase in demand and the sale of goods and services. The negative effects are expressed in the campaign commitment of human resources, which is associated with additional costs for providing a temporary material base and the necessary infrastructure.

## **2. Analysis and evaluation of event tourism product in "Astor garden Hotel" and "Aquahouse Hotel & SPA".**

Aquahouse Hotel & SPA and Astor garden are luxurious 5-star hotels located in the center of one of the oldest and established resorts on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast "St. St. Constantine and Elena". The hotels offer modern and stylishly furnished rooms and suites that are designed to satisfy the most sophisticated tastes of consumers. All rooms are spacious, bright and equipped in a way that guarantees comfort and satisfaction. The properties have a spa, fine restaurants and bars. In addition to superior service and amenities, Aquahouse Hotel & SPA and Astor garden provide the client with a key location close to the beach as well as the city of Varna, allowing guests to take advantage of additional opportunities for entertainment, culture and active recreation.

The hotels offer excellent conference services that are suitable for organizing successful business events, conferences, seminars, trainings and more. With its modern and functional Aqua Vista Hall conference hall, Aquahouse Hotel & Spa provides a comfortable working environment and sophisticated customer service. The hall is equipped with a movable wall, which allows the division into two smaller parts, which makes it possible to hold two parallel events. Its capacity is variable depending on its arrangement. The hall can be arranged in several ways: divided into two

separate conference rooms with 133 seats each, a ballroom with 174 seats, a conference hall with 251 seats.

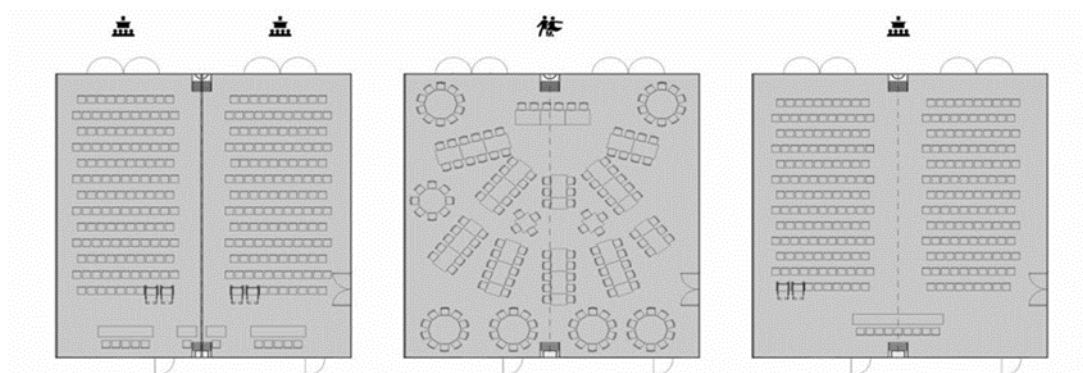


Fig.1 Layout of the conference hall "Aqua Vista Hall"  
Source: Official website of Aquahouse Hotel & SPA

Conference hall "Varna" in Hotel Astor garden is a sophisticated choice for conducting business events, press conferences, presentations, seminars, conferences and other types of events. The hall has seats for 200 people and is fully technically equipped with high-class sound, internet, lights, microphones, screens (3x3 meters), multimedia, conditions and high-tech equipment. There are also designated spaces for holding coffee breaks, informal meetings and private parties, organizing a press center and an office center: computer, printer, scanner, fax, internet. The hall can be arranged in several ways: divided into two separate conference rooms with 133 seats each, a ballroom with 174 seats, a conference hall with 251 seats.

Ballroom "Romance" brings a dose of aristocracy with unadulterated glamour, elegance and charge in a contemporary art style. The hall is a suitable place for a social event, a sophisticated cocktail party or a wedding. The ballroom has a capacity of 100 people and is adjacent to the Monty gourmet restaurant. The symbiosis between the two separate rooms makes it possible to combine the enjoyment of gourmet cuisine with a wide space for dancing, formal events, performances. The hall can be arranged in several ways: conference hall cinema with 200 seats, U-shaped with 30 seats, conference hall - classroom with 60 seats, conference hall - animation with 200 seats.

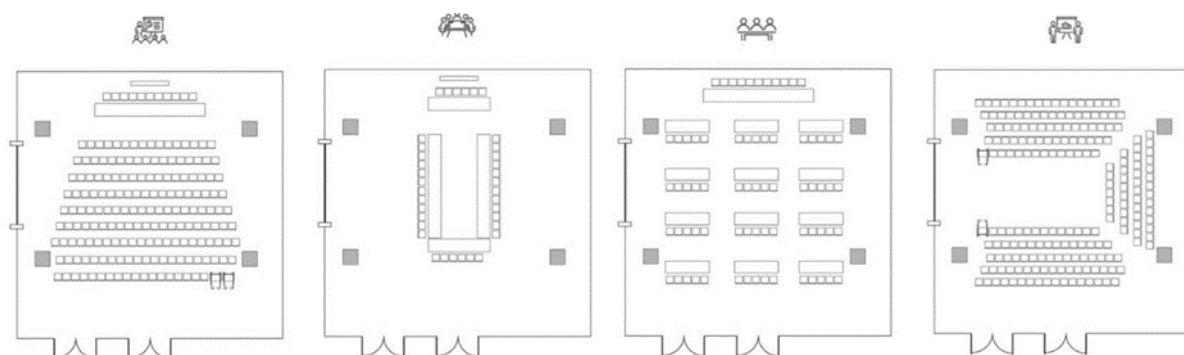


Fig.2 Layout of the "Romance" conference hall  
Source: Astor garden hotel official website

The ability to hold events provides options for hotel income diversification. The organization of conferences, seminars, meetings and other business events allows attracting new groups of customers who are looking for specialized premises for their holding. The well-equipped conference rooms manage to attract corporate clients, who book not only them, but also

accommodation for the other participants. Guests who rent the conference rooms also benefit from the additional services offered in the hotels, which contributes to increasing revenue and at the same time provides them with a more comfortable and fulfilling experience. Last but not least, organizing events provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships with business partners and customers. When the hotel offers comfortable and professional conditions for conducting business meetings and events, this in turn helps to create a favorable and productive working atmosphere.

One of the main goals of the "Events" department in the investigated sites is to maintain diversity in the types of events that are organized. This contributes to covering a larger segment of customers and increasing hotel occupancy throughout the year. According to the data of the "Events" managers, an average of 10 to 15 events are organized in both sites during the winter months, and between 5 and 7 during the summer months. The average number of guests per event is 60 participants, which means about 6,000 users of the event tourism product annually. The events held in the hotels are divided into several main groups:

- Corporate events - this includes all types of events and meetings related to staff training and motivation, product meetings, seminars, trade conferences, trade exhibitions and fairs, MICE events, civic events, team building, international events, political meetings, scientific and thematic congresses etc. Factors such as interior, hall size, location, technological equipment, team of specialists, etc. contribute to hotels attracting a large percentage of corporate clients.

- Events related to people's lives - to this group belong events such as family and personal holidays, anniversaries, weddings, etc.

- Sports events - a number of national and international sports events, such as the International Bridge Festival, are organized in the hotels. The annual Spartakiad, International Fitness Festival, etc.

- Political events - they include debates, marches, demonstrations.

- Religious events - which include religious festivals and tourist pilgrimages.

Serving a wide variety of events, Aquahouse Hotel & SPA attracts guests in different seasons, and this is a motivator for site attendance even outside the high season.

Day	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Octob.	Nov.	Dec.
1						∨ ∨			∨ ∨			
2						∨ ∨			∨ ∨			
3						∨ ∨			∨ ∨			
4						∨ ∨			∨ ∨			
5						∨ ∨			∨ ∨			
6						∨ ∨	∨ ∨		∨ ∨			
7						∨ ∨	∨ ∨		∨ ∨			
8						∨ ∨	∨ ∨		∨ ∨			∨ ∨
9						∨ ∨			∨ ∨	∨ ∨		???
10						∨ ∨			∨ ∨	∨ ∨	???	???
11						∨ ∨			∨ ∨	∨ ∨	???	???
12						∨ ∨	∨ ∨	∨ ∨	∨ ∨	???	???	
13						∨ ∨	∨ ∨		∨ ∨	???	???	
14						∨ ∨	∨ ∨		∨ ∨			
15						∨ ∨	∨ ∨		∨ ∨			???
16						∨ ∨	∨ ∨		∨ ∨			???
17							∨ ∨		???		???	
18						∨ ∨	∨ ∨		???		???	
19						∨ ∨	∨ ∨		???	???	???	
20						∨ ∨	∨ ∨		???	???	???	
21						∨ ∨	∨ ∨		∨ ∨	???		
22						∨ ∨			∨ ∨	???		
23						∨ ∨		???	∨ ∨			
24								???	???			∨ ∨
25								???	???			∨ ∨
26								∨ ∨	???			∨ ∨
27								∨ ∨	∨ ∨	∨ ∨		???
28								∨ ∨	∨ ∨	∨ ∨		???
29						∨ ∨		∨ ∨	∨ ∨	∨ ∨		???
30						∨ ∨		∨ ∨	∨ ∨	∨ ∨		∨ ∨
31						∨ ∨		∨ ∨				∨ ∨

Legend:

	Past events
	Full occupancy of the hotel
∨ ∨ ∨	Confirmed events
???	Event inquiries

Fig. 3 Calendar of events at “Aquahouse Hotel & SPA” 2023

Source: Figure compiled by the author based on data from Aquahouse Hotel & SPA

Table 1 illustrates how organizing events helps to cope with the seasonality of tourism and allows the hotel to operate year-round. The continuous operation of Aquahouse Hotel & SPA has a number of benefits, such as ensuring a steady stream of income throughout the year, which contributes to financial stability and greater predictability in the business. Year-round operation of the hotels allows maintaining a higher level of staff employment. This creates stable jobs and contributes to the economic development of the region. Attracting diverse groups of guests to participate in an event increases opportunities to work with new and different market segments. Constant operation of hotels allows better utilization of resources such as rooms, restaurants, spas and others. Instead of being used only during seasonal periods, these resources can be used throughout the year, which improves the profitability of the hotel's operations.

The year-round operation of Aquahouse Hotel & SPA and Astor Garden makes it possible to:

- Building a stronger marketing strategy. Conducting promotional campaigns and advertising activities is carried out throughout the year, which helps to attract guests and retain regular customers;

- Greater flexibility in management. Carrying out long-term development and investment plans, conducting detailed market analyses, preparing to deal with seasonal fluctuations. These benefits create a more sustainable and successful business model that can adapt to changing conditions and meet the needs of different groups of guests throughout the year.

### **3. SWOT analysis of the event tourism product in "Aquahouse Hotel & Spa" and "Astor garden Hotel".**

#### *A) Strengths*

- Combining a stay and an event:

One of the strengths of event tourism in hotels is the possibility of combining the stay of the participants with the event. Guests can stay in the same hotel where the event is taking place, providing convenience and efficiency. This option saves time and effort for participants in terms of organizing transportation or finding accommodation after the event. Meetings and socializing during the stay help to create connections and expand the professional "network" - one of the key aspects that make event tourism in hotels attractive for organizers and participants.

- Informing all departments about an upcoming event through BEO:

The BEO (Banquet Event Order) is a document used to organize and plan the events in the researched sites. It contains detailed information about the event and the requirements that must be met by the hotel or organizing organization. The main elements that are included in the BEO are: event information - the BEO starts with basic data about the event, including date, time, duration and type of event (conference, wedding, gala dinner, etc.); premises and equipment - BEO contains information about the selected premises for the event, such as conference rooms, banquet halls, exhibition areas and others; indicates the necessary equipment, such as audio-visual systems, projectors, sound equipment and others; food and drink - the BEO includes information about the food and drink that will be served during the event (menu, number of participants and special dietary requirements to be taken into account); table layout and event layout - BEO provides table layout and event layout, which includes information on table layout, traffic lanes, registration area and other important details; additional services and conditions - the document also includes additional services offered by the hotel, such as portable audio-visual equipment, decorations, floristry, transport services and others. It also states specific terms and conditions for the event, including schedule, payment, cancellation, etc. The BEO is an important communication tool between the hotel and the client, providing clarity on the tasks and responsibilities of both parties. It helps ensure the success of the event and customer satisfaction.

- Flexibility and customization of the offered product:

Flexibility and customized product are expressed by adapting to customer needs. Hotels offer various types of events, such as conferences, seminars, exhibitions, weddings and others, and thus the product offered satisfies the specific requirements and preferences of customers such as customization of decoration, menu, program and entertainment activities. Customers have the opportunity to select specific product elements and create a unique experience for their guests. Flexibility is expressed in the distribution of space and the offer of various services and options for holding events such as catering, technical support, entertainment programs, coffee breaks, etc. Professional service and coordination is the other important factor contributing to the customization of the final product. The facilities have experienced staff who are trained and able to provide professional service and coordinate all aspects of the event.

- Good management of the "Events" department:

The good management of the events department in the sites contributes significantly to the successful organization, implementation and overall service activities of the events. The event

department manager is well versed in the process of planning and organizing events, determining the goals and target group of the event, choosing suitable dates and times, budgeting, resources, etc. The Events Manager demonstrates excellent communication skills with clients, internal and external service providers, and staff, and provides clarity and detail regarding requirements and expectations for each event. He demonstrates strong creative skills and offers innovative and creative ideas for events such as conceptualizing themes and designs, selecting appropriate decorations and arrangements, and providing unique experiences for guests. Other professional qualities and skills demonstrated in the work process are good time management, planning and coordination of activities, effective management of resources and quality service with the aim of excellent event execution and satisfied customers.

B) Weaknesses

Insufficient storage capacity:

The limited storage capacity at Aquahouse Hotel & SPA sometimes presents a challenge for organizing events. The lack of large enough storage rooms reduces the possibilities for storing equipment, materials, decorations and other necessary elements for the events. This leads to situations where it is necessary to use storage facilities of other departments such as F & B, Housekeeping etc. Not having enough space to store event materials poses a risk of damage or loss, which could delay or even harm the running of the events. When storage capacity is limited, hotels reduce the ability to offer a variety of events to their customers. For example, if there is not enough space to store special equipment or decorations for certain types of events, it will be difficult to attract customers who are looking for such specific services.

Insufficient number of staffs

The disadvantages for hotels caused by this weak side are associated with:

- Limited operational capacity - If the event department has insufficient staff, it may face limitations in its ability to organize and execute events.
- Reduced efficiency and quality of service - When the event department is understaffed, difficulties may arise in providing quality customer service, leading to reduced satisfaction and a negative customer experience.
- Difficulties in coordinating events - Insufficient staffing can cause difficulties in coordinating and managing events. Responsibilities and tasks will be distributed inefficiently, which in turn will lead to gaps and inconsistencies in the execution of events.
- Limited opportunities for development and innovation - When staffing is insufficient, it can be difficult to implement new ideas, innovations and improvements in the events department. Lack of time and resources can limit the ability to develop new services, improve processes and invest in the event department. All of these factors have a negative impact on the hotel's reputation, customer satisfaction and events department results. Therefore, an important condition is the provision of the necessary adequate number and qualified personnel who can handle the events and provide high quality services.

Lack of staff training

Main weaknesses are:

- Reduced quality of service. Trained staff are able to provide a higher quality of service to guests. Without proper training, staff may not fully understand guests' expectations and needs, leading to dissatisfaction and reduced satisfaction with the hotel stay.
- Negative image of the hotel. If guests have negative experiences due to poor service or unprofessional staff, this can lead to a bad reputation for the hotel. Online guest reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations are critical to attracting new customers, and negative experiences can hurt a hotel's business.
- Low efficiency and productivity. Trained staff are more efficient and productive in performing their tasks. A lack of training can lead to a lack of confidence, lack of knowledge and skills, which will ultimately slow down hotel operations.



• High staff turnover. When staff do not receive the necessary training or feel unappreciated, high staff turnover can occur. Employees feel unsatisfied and look for development opportunities elsewhere, leading to constant instability in the hotel departments. Staff training also includes imparting certain procedures and standards that must be known and followed. Lack of training can lead to incorrect performance of tasks, lack of coherence and inefficiency in hotel operations.

□ Poorly developed animation for children and adults.

One of the main complaints from guests of Aquahouse Hotel & SPA and Astor garden Hotel is the too little variety of animation activities for children and adults. Poorly developed animation leads to a number of problems, such as:

• Dissatisfaction, which leads to disappointment and a lower evaluation of the overall hotel product;

• Reducing the frequency of visits to the hotel;

• Negative reviews about the hotels;

• Missed opportunities.

C) Opportunities

• The developing event tourism sector offers the opportunity for a variety of events that can attract different groups of tourists. From music festivals and sporting events to conferences and exhibitions, there is a wide range of event management options to keep an eye on.

• Partnerships with event organizers: The hotel may seek partnerships with event planners, event planning agencies and other industry professionals. This can increase the number of events held and contribute to improving the reputation of the hotel.

• Technological innovations: The continuous development of technology has an impact on event tourism. Advances in communications, social networking and travel applications can impact the way events are planned, marketed and executed.

• Demographic factors: Demographic changes, such as population size, age structure and cultural trends, can affect event tourism. For example, a growing elderly population may create more demand for events related to health, relaxation or participation in cultural events.

• Environmental factors: Growing awareness of environmental protection and climate change can have an impact on event tourism. Tourists are increasingly choosing environmentally responsible and sustainable events and destinations.

D) Threats

□ Economic instability - The state of the economy at the global, regional and national level strongly affects event tourism. During economic crises or recessions, tourism spending shrinks, leading to a reduction in travel and events.

□ Political instability - conflicts in the political environment can lead to a decrease in interest in a given destination and withdrawal of events there. Tourists tend to avoid places with an unstable political environment and a high risk to their security and safety.

□ Competition of other hotels and event venues - organizations to maintain competitiveness by offering unique services and events with excellent quality characteristics, as well as constant tracking and adherence to market trends in the field of event management.

□ Changes in legislation and regulations related to event tourism can create challenges for hotels. (egg changes in licensing, health and safety requirements, tax regulations, etc.)

#### **4. Guidelines for improving the opportunities for development of event tourism product**

The first guideline for improving the quality of the event tourism product is related to the *attraction and retention of highly qualified personnel*. Event tourism, although largely influenced by technology, still relies primarily on the skills of employees. Productivity can be increased only on the basis of quality, which is due to the strong dependence on the human factor, i.e. we serve more customers, but at a lower quality with employees who are less qualified. The competencies of

employees employed in the event industry are very specific. The business expects that the basic minimum has already been acquired during training in specialized secondary or higher schools. The event industry, regardless of the specific type of event, needs personnel who can quickly develop the skills, competences and competences initially acquired through education. The event industry is a practice of fast turnover and requires specialists who "know how" to work, considering the specifics of each geographical latitude or culture, possessing a high level of soft and communication skills. In this regard, education in the field of tourism should develop the main aspects of the skills and competencies of students, as well as adapt its curricula to current trends in the field of event tourism. Aquahouse Hotel & SPA and Astor garden hotel have predominantly young staff, which inevitably leads to the need for training and upskilling.

The second direction for improving the quality of the event tourism product is related to *training for human resources in the event industry*. The preparation and conducting of trainings for those employed in the sector is done in order to improve the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the staff. Training initiatives/programs that Events departments launch, implement and develop should clearly reflect what specific needs, capabilities, knowledge and experience will be provided, in what period, for what duration, with what resources, which workers and employees may be involved, what are the specific responsibilities of line managers, managers and training specialists. The various questions that arise in connection with this direction are systematized in several main groups: formation and structuring of the content of the learning material in accordance with the learning objectives; determining the main characteristics of the trainees; selection of appropriate training methods; selection of trainers/teachers and organization of resources for the relevant program/training initiative. With the introduction of information technologies and the popularization of electronic training, direct managers have a decisive role, both in the formation of the content of the training, and in the periodic evaluation of its effectiveness with appropriate tools. Learners are the most important element in this process. Their characteristics predetermine to a significant extent both the content of the study material and the selection of appropriate trainers and resources for the relevant program. In this regard, it is necessary to study in advance the main characteristics of the trainees - educational level, work experience, place in the organizational-management structure, age, attitude to learning. The most widespread training method (independent study of appropriate information and training materials - instructions, manuals, rules, presentations, regulations, etc.) requires purposeful and systematic selection, preparation and updating of specific texts (with appropriate structure, content, layout) to be provided to the people in the relevant departments.

In order for the hotel event tourism product to be competitive, it is necessary to *maintain and offer a rich palette of additional services* (restaurants, spa and wellness, cultural program, etc.), one of which is the development of an authentic and unique animation product. A characteristic feature is that the life cycle of this product is short and needs constant renovation due to the changing tastes and preferences of tourists as well as current trends. Modern animation is an essential part of any marketing plan in the event business. Along with other communication tools, its mission is to inform and convince potential customers to prefer a certain product/service or organization. The presentation of hotels through the possibilities of event management and animation, made in an attractive and non-standard, but well-thought-out and effectively implemented way, can lead to the desired results:

- creating a positive image of the tourist complex;
- raising the reputation and enforcing the brand;
- gaining consumer approval, preference and loyalty;
- confirmation of competitive advantages of products and services;
- building trust among all interested parties;
- achieve sustainable competitiveness.

Hotels that strive to remain on the positive scale of the spectrum of possibilities manage their communications purposefully and improve the work of their entertainment teams.

*The purposeful construction and development of the event tourism product is a factor in ensuring the stability and success of the organization in a competitive environment. Accomplishing this task is an investment in the development of the company that supports, develops and promotes it. The activities of hoteliers in the direction of investments, planning and management of communication programs, training of human resources, together with the modeling of the existing material base and the construction of a new, modern and modern one with appropriate architecture, functionality and optimal capacity, contribute to increasing the quality of the products and services provided in the field of events and stimulate their demand.*

Today, the traditional method of communication is not enough to attract the attention of consumers. Even with the best guests, speakers and venue, every event needs promotion to get as many people as possible. *Event marketing* is becoming one of the tools designed to solve this problem. Event marketing is that type of integrated marketing communication, which is a set of activities aimed at promoting goods, services, brands in the internal and external marketing environment by organizing special events. The biggest advantage of the events is their active impact on the emotional state of the participants. Through special events, companies are participants in the social life of their target audience. Due to the changing reality that surrounds us, competitors use new non-standard approaches in their activities, and consumers become more and more demanding in the choice of goods and services. One of the ways to overcome this crisis situation is the use of event marketing by hotels. The scope of event marketing is extremely wide and includes: marketing of corporate, commercial, special, thematic events, Edu-marketing, etc. Specific guidelines in event marketing that can be applied when organizing events in hotels are:

- Improvement of the "events" section in the hotels page;
- Use of authoritative sources of information about an event (media that dominates the local market, popular television and radio media);
- Sending direct emails to potential customers;
- Use of Social Media- Using social media marketing tactics increases interest in an event. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and recently Tiktok represent a huge online space where hotels can advertise their event products;
- Use of the YouTube video platform;
- Use of Influence Marketing.

The time in which we live and the speed with which the surrounding world develops is the basis for looking at *technological innovations*. Properly implemented, they would be extremely useful for the improvement and development of event tourism in hotels. When it comes to technology in the 21st century, an association with the word artificial intelligence immediately appears. For some time now, he has been able to penetrate quite deeply both in everyday life and in the professional organization of events. Whether we fully understand it or not, experts believe it can completely change the event planning process and the attendee experience. It is true that artificial intelligence (AI) and event tourism are two different fields that can be connected in different ways. Like any other industry, event tourism benefits from the use of AI and new technologies by:

- Machine learning algorithms - to analyze data from previous events and show future trends in event tourism. In this way, the events department can plan future events more effectively, focusing on customer preferences and interests;
- Personalization of tourist experiences. For example, AI-based recommendation systems to analyze tourists' preferences and past experiences and offer them personalized recommendations for events and activities that would be of interest to them.
- Mobile applications to provide information about events, programs and visitor amenities, personalized recommendations, ticket purchases and up-to-date event news or updates.

- Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) to create interactive experiences for visitors, such as virtual tours of hotels or adding visual effects and information to the real environment of the event.

- Virtual tours and experiences: Visitors can immerse themselves in a virtual environment that reproduces different event locations or attractions. (e.g. virtual tours of museums or even experiencing a concert or sporting event). Visitors can use mobile applications or special devices that will show them additional visual elements such as animations, characters or interactive games related to the event.

- Combining AR and interactive games to create fun and engaging experiences for visitors. They can engage in games or missions that take them to different points of the event, collecting items, solving puzzles or participating in virtual events.

- Internet of Things (IoT) - to connect various devices and sensors to provide better management of events. For example, smart wristbands can provide access to different areas of the event, provide personalized messages and collect visitor data.

- Sensors and monitoring devices to monitor and analyze visitor behavior. For example, sensors can read the movement and occupancy of different areas of the event, which can help optimize the flow of people and improve the allocation of resources. The collected data can be used to analyze and make better decisions about the organization of events.

- Smart energy and lighting management systems: IoT can be used to manage the lighting and energy supply systems in the conference hall. For example, lighting and air conditioning can be controlled automatically, depending on availability and visitor preferences, contributing to energy efficiency and participant comfort.

- Data analysis and personalization: Collected data from IoT devices can be used to analyze visitor behavior and provide personalized services. For example, by analyzing visitors' preferences and interests, recommendations for events, areas to visit, food and drink, etc. can be offered.

- Subtitling technologies: New speech recognition and machine learning technologies can also be used to automatically subtitle speech during events. This is especially useful at large events or conferences where visitors can follow the translation on screens or on their mobile devices.

- Virtual translators use a combination of speech recognition to provide instant translation during interactive events. This can include virtual conference rooms or platforms where participants can communicate in their native languages and translation is done automatically in real time. These technologies help create multilingual events where visitors can communicate and understand the event content in their language. This contributes to better inclusion of different cultures and languages, as well as improving the visitor experience and satisfaction. (AI for Events, 2023)

- Information Support: Chatbots can be used to provide visitors with information about events, such as date, venue, program, participants and other details. They can answer frequently asked questions and provide helpful guidance, ensuring quick and easy access to information.

- Ticketing and Reservations: Chatbots can be integrated with ticketing and reservation systems, allowing users to purchase tickets or make reservations for events. They can provide available information on availability, prices and other details, while providing a quick and convenient way to close deals.

- Interactive games and contests: Chatbots can be used to host interactive games and contests that engage visitors and challenge them to participate in the event. This can include riddles, quizzes, hidden object hunts and other fun activities that increase the excitement and engagement of participants.

- Visitor feedback and support: They can be used to get feedback from visitors after the event by asking them questions about their opinion and experience. This provides an opportunity to assess satisfaction and improve future events. Chatbots can provide hotel guests with a convenient, fast and personalized way to communicate with hotel staff. They improve user experience and facilitate access to information, while reducing staff workload and improving service efficiency.

### **Conclusion**

In this article, an attempt has been made to present Aquahouse Hotel & SPA and Astor garden hotel as sites with potential for development and improvement of the event tourism product. More methods and techniques are presented by which hotels can overcome weaknesses and threats from their surroundings. In this regard, the definitions of event tourism are presented, the objects, their location, as well as the main activity related to the management of events are presented in detail. An event calendar for 2023 is also attached, which proves how, in practice, by holding events, the hotels maintain their activity outside the main summer season. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the teams of the "Events" department have to deal with are highlighted. On this basis, the guidelines for the future successful development of the event tourism product, based on marketing, human resources, technologies, the development of additional services, etc., are presented.

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