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Catering training in tourism and hospitality: the positive perspectives for the field specialists

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Abstract. Great deal of attention have long been paid to various issues of tourism and hospitality. Although there is a current need of more thorough focus on the main promising prospects of the catering industry. Therefore, the aim of the study was due to the comparative analysis of the internet resources to reveal the key positive perspectives for catering in tourism and hospitality, which are to be considered in training the staff in the industry.

Keywords: *hospitality, tourism, perspectives, consumer, catering.*

Nowadays, the culture has stretched to every corner of the world as small, middle-sized, and large food firms carry on giving the service more up-to-date characteristics. Catering businesses have moved from their traditional sectors to provide first-rate services to corporate clients, special events, etc.

In order to understand how catering began, we have to go back to the 4th millennium BC in old China. In those early days, the Chinese had special inns where people could check in and get served. The idea of providing food services among

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the Chinese was consistent with their tradition of being kind to strangers [1].

Catering prospered significantly as men and women of honour began recognizing the value of the particular kind of relaxation and the spirit of hospitality, which characterized the services. The beginning of the monetary economy facilitated to increase the importance of catering.

The catering industry is comprised of businesses that provide food, beverages and other services to a variety of clients, usually for special events. Catering industry jobs vary from small intimate affairs to large events that involve providing not only food and beverage service but also tableware, linens, service personnel and other aspects of the event. Companies that provide catering services might be as large as a business with several locations or as small as an individual who provides catering services on his or her own. A caterer might be part of a restaurant or have his or her own business. Caterers might make use of independent contractors for some aspects of their catering service [2].

In tourism and hospitality, catering is one of the supreme categories. It makes up the majority of the sector and can exist as restaurants, fast-food joints, catering businesses, and many other variations. The industry can co-exist together with other enterprises. When a restaurant is a component of a hotel then catering can significantly improve the general guest experience by providing the first-rate cuisine service for the customers.

The world as we know it is constantly evolving and changing. Prompted by safety concerns, hygiene requirements and the impact of national lockdowns, there has been a considerable shift in consumer attitudes and behaviours. Agility has never been more important for hospitality and foodservice operators as they find new routes to market and adapt to an ever-shifting landscape. Technology plays a massive part in this evolution for hotels, restaurants and catering operations, and the kitchen environment will become more efficient than ever in managing and preparing food [3].

Although great deal of attention have long been paid to various issues of tourism and hospitality [5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10], there is a current need of more thorough focus on the main promising prospects of the catering industry, thus becoming the aim of the study.

The comparative analysis of the internet resources [2; 3; 4] reveals the key positive perspectives for catering in

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tourism and hospitality, which are to consider in training the staff, to be the following.

Changing consumer behaviour. The hospitality industry directly deals and depends on customer experiences. Each customer of the hospitality industry exists because of a different purpose and expectations. Some went to the hotel for dining purposes, some for room stay and many others. Extended-stay hotels and home-sharing facilities are doing well even during the pandemic as more people are looking for a change of work environment. People using hotels as makeshift offices is leading to a rise of bleisure, a new buzzword among hoteliers and travellers indicating the combination of business and leisure. By 2025, an estimated seventy percent of the workforce will be working remotely at least five days a month. This is a fantastic opportunity for hotels to capitalise on this trend and tailor their offering to meet the demands of this new segment.

Automation and robotic services. Labour shortages in different parts of the world accelerated the need for robotic services and automation in the kitchen. This trend may look like a robotic arm in the kitchen that may end repetitive tasks. Some major cities of the world are also testing or using robots for food delivery, the robots carry orders from a cloud kitchen to the designated delivery points. Although robotics will not ever completely replace workers, these labour shortages will increase the appetite for trialling new automated foodservice offerings. Cloud kitchens and food delivery have become more popular during the pandemic. However, there is a massive opportunity for them to become more sustainable through reducing fuel consumption and packaging. This provides some great prospects to apply automation and technology in these services.

Accelerated digitalization. Corporations have also embraced machine learning and artificial intelligence at a corporate level. Various hotels, casinos and catering companies are making strides towards efficiency in the foodservice industry by adopting artificial intelligence to improve data accuracy in their kitchens. To protect the health and safety of customers and employees alike, the touchpoints within the food services and hospitality sector will move online while also building on the convenience of digital experiences. Top three priority areas of going digital as mentioned by industry leaders are digital analytics, front-end customer experience, and e-commerce. Travel and

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hospitality organisations are prioritising digital systems and tools that will help them gather better insights about customers and use that information to better satisfy their needs.

Sustainability. More and more people are focusing on simple everyday actions to live sustainably. Behavioural science teaches us that positive messaging is much more effective than messaging that causes guilt. For foodservice businesses, it is important to show consumers how the brand is making sustainable choices and how their bigger sustainability goals are being broken down into actionable steps. If you are able to show people the impact they can have by choosing your product, they will feel that much more invested in it. Data-driven decision making and digitalisation drive efficiency to pave the way for a brighter future. Food waste has negative consequences for the environment and business profits. Reducing food waste is where the profitability, data and sustainability intersect. The good news is tools are present and accessible; what we need now more than ever is action.

New ways of serving food. We are currently in a period of considerable change in the hospitality industry. We can expect continued transformation of the kitchen environment and a rapidly evolving relationship with customers. The trends touch on a range of topics. The first trend highlights the importance of sourcing ingredients from farm to fork. Added customer interest in where the food is sourced from matches a widening selection of sustainable products. People also believe unique dining experiences are worth paying more for. Customers are more interested than ever in the provenance of the food they are served. As people go out to have their expectations exceeded, diners are leaning more and more towards interactive restaurants and kitchens. The experiential dining is a culinary catchphrase, which is inspiring restaurants to think beyond tasty food and stunning interiors. With the ease and affordability of home delivery models, people need more incentive to step outside the comfort of their homes.

Crises are often said to represent new opportunities. Despite some decline among the catering businesses, with the right countermeasures to strengthen their financial and operational management systems they can be better positioned for the consumption rebound to come. Some of them started moving production to centralised kitchens and we saw a sharp

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rise of ghost kitchens and virtual brands. As the world reopens, businesses are looking for opportunities to become more efficient. New trends in technology have no doubt been accelerated by the pandemic. From seismic shifts in consumer behaviour through to the complete digitisation of the customer experience, it has never been more important for operators to embrace innovative ways of working.

In conclusion, working in the field of tourism and hospitality requires a lot of different skills which are all important aspects of the job training in order to provide excellent customer service. Catering industry is comprised of various sectors that provide a wide range of services, therefore it is important to build an understanding of what each sector does and how they relate to one another. The key positive predictions for the catering industry expect the businesses to step up and focus on their environmental responsibility with investments into innovative technologies and working to meet their sustainability goals. The global crisis also presents us all with an opportunity to redefine and shape our future.

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