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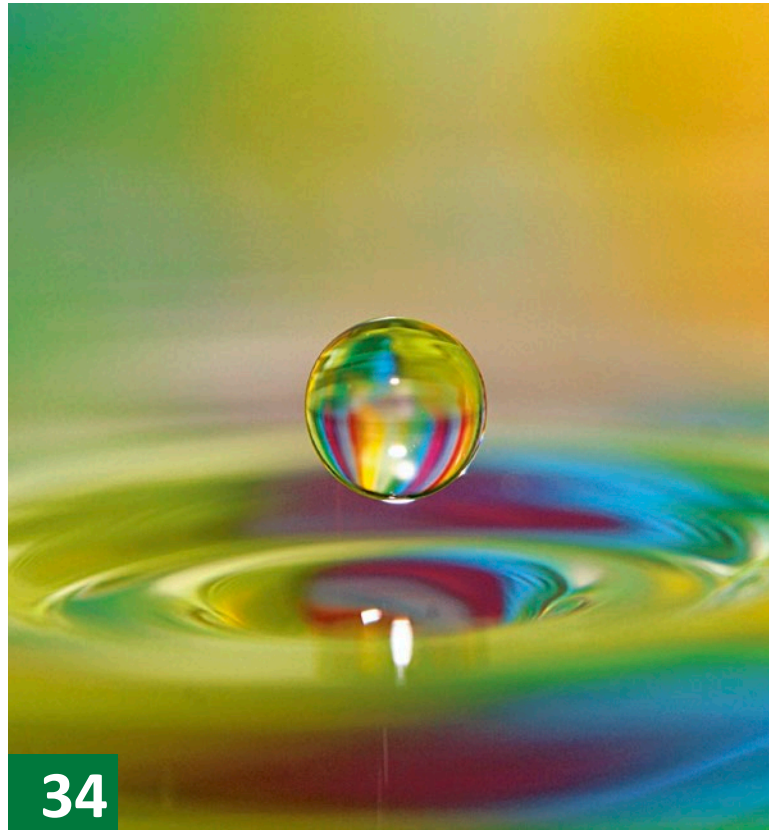
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INHALT

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# The world of work in tourism

## Figures please!

Marion Rauscher

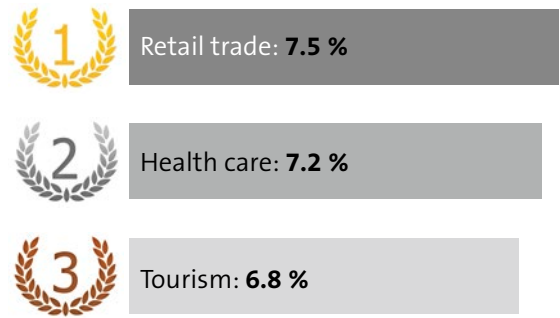
Indirect and direct contribution of the tourism industry to employment:

	2017	2010
Macau	53.6% (27.6%)	70.8% (38.8%)
Greece	24.8% (12.2%)	19.5% (8.6%)
Spain	15.1% (4.9%)	13.4% (4.6%)
Germany	13.8% (7.1%)	14.4% (7.2%)
South-East Asia	11.8% (4.7%)	9.4% (3.9%)
Worldwide	9.9% (3.8%)	9.2% (3.6%)
Europe	9.8% (3.8%)	9.3% (3.5%)
USA	8.9% (3.4%)	8.9% (3.6%)
Turkey	7.4% (1.6%)	8.2% (2.0%)

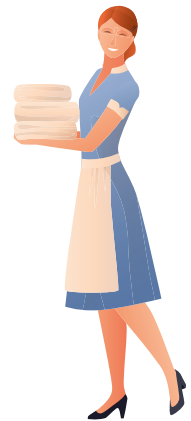
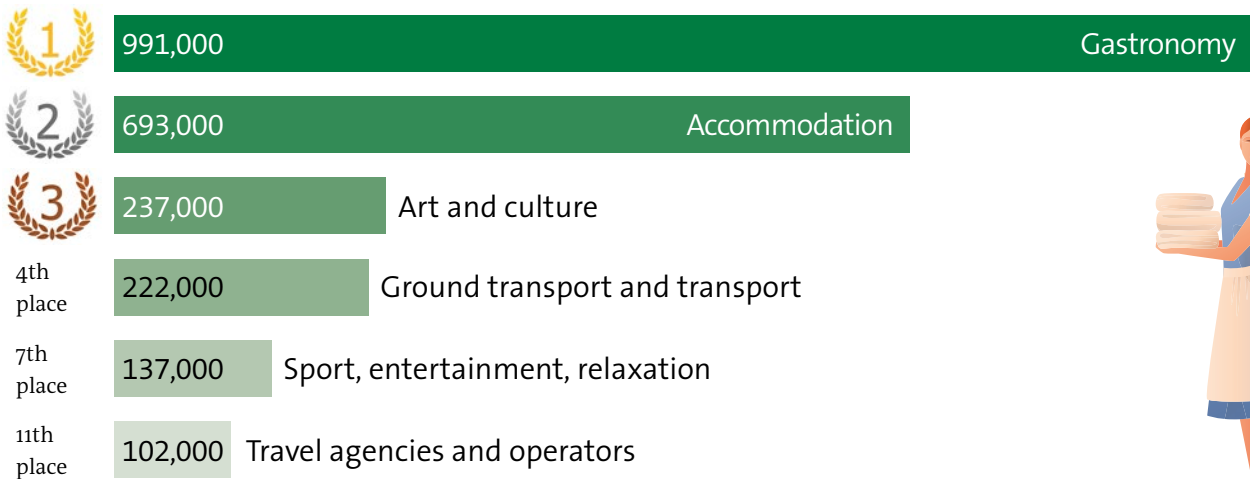
Note: direct contribution in brackets



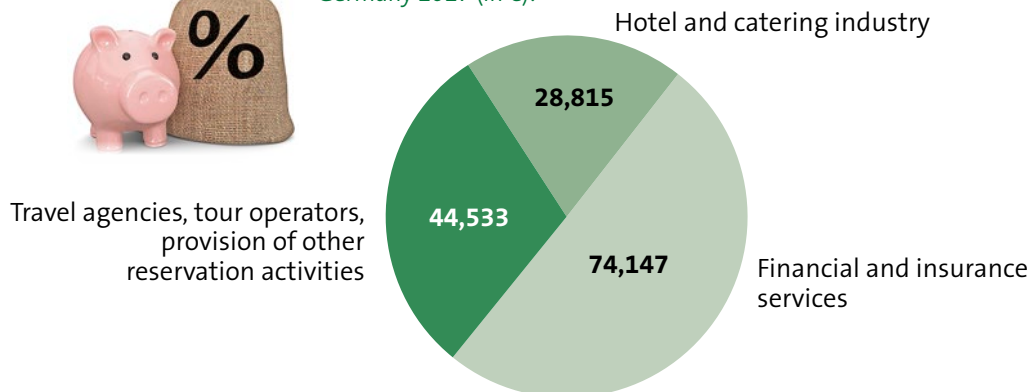
Percentage of gainfully employed persons in Germany by sector 2015:



Direct and indirect employees (total) in tourism according to branch of production in Germany 2015:



Annual gross earnings of full-time employees in Germany 2017 (in €):





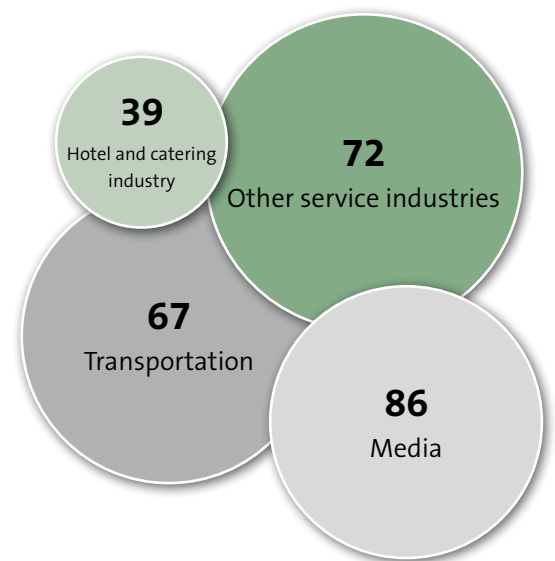
Qualification structure in Germany. Hotel and catering industry (gastro-nomy and accommodation) in a sector comparison (as at: 30.06.2016)

	Hotel and catering industry	All branches
With recognized training qualification	50.4 %	64.8 %*
Without vocational training qualification	19.5 %	8.8 %*
Training not known	26.2 %	4.3 %*
With academic training qualification	4.0 %	17.9 %*

\* Remainder (4.2%) trainees

Percentage of those companies interviewed in Germany in 2016 who were able to fill all offered apprenticeship training positions (according to industry, in %)

**Total: 69**



Turnover per employee and personnel costs in air transportation  
End of 2017 business year:



	Lufthansa	Emirates	Ryanair
Turnover/employee	276,114 €	231,218 €	510,363 €
Personnel costs (% turnover)	23 %	ca. 18 %	10 %



Number of employees in tourism and guest arrivals on Mallorca 2016, in quarters:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of employees in tourism	82,317	132,595	125,133	59,565
Guest arrivals	853,687	3,599,266	5,056,945	1,397,348

Maximum number of passengers and number of crew members per cruise ship:

	Costa Crociere (Carnival Corp.) Costa Smeralda	Royal Caribbean Symphony of the Seas	Costa Crociere (Carnival Corp.) AIDAnova
Max. number of passengers	6,600	6,870	5,200
Number of crew members	1,682	2,175	1,650



Deutsche Fassung

Average number of inhabitants of all Bavarian municipalities on 31.12.2016: 6,289

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Source:

Lufthansa annual report, Emirates, Ryanair jeweils zum Geschäftsjahresende 2017; <https://www.logitravel.de/kreuzfahrten/>; Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik und eigene Berechnungen; WTTC Travel & Tourism Economic Impact, BMWi (2017); Wirtschaftsfaktor Tourismus in Deutschland; Statista; Ibestat Institut d'Estadística de les Illes Balears (FRONTUR)

# A concept for attracting and retaining skilled labour for health tourism regions

Findings of the EU Interreg project “Trail for Health Nord”

Celine Chang und Katrin Eberhardt

**Continuing urbanization and the concomitant loss of living in natural surroundings, demographic change and the increase in modern lifestyle diseases are reflected in an increasing demand for health tourism services. The regions participating in the “Trail for Health Nord” project, namely Abtenau/Tennegau, Bad Reichenhall/Bayerisch Gmain, Tegernsee/Bad Wiessee, can boast natural medicinal resources as well as a health-promoting climate and areas of unspoiled nature. One of the project’s main aims was to establish medical evidence of the effect of these medicinal resources and to develop target-group specific product and service chains and position them on the health tourism market. The skilled labour perspective and the climate change perspective were also integral parts of the project. Both perspectives have an important influence on tourism, not only in Bavaria and Austria. The Munich University of Applied Sciences was in charge of developing a concept for sustainably attracting and retaining skilled labour for health tourism. The following article gives a summary of this together with findings from the surveys carried out.**

## 1. The skilled labour situation in tourism

The skilled labour situation in the tourism industry has become more acute in the past few years. For example it is often not possible to fill job vacancies or to fill them adequately (e.g. bsw 2014). Moreover there is a shortage of trainees, in particular in recognized jobs requiring formal training in the hotel and catering industry (BMBF 2017). The shortage of skilled staff is also felt in Austria. Thus 62% of the Austrian tourism enterprises say they are affected by the shortage of skilled staff, three quarters of the enterprises are currently



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looking for staff (Kapferer et al. 2018). By “skilled staff” is meant people who have successfully completed their vocational training or have a recognized academic qualification. The reasons for the shortage of skilled staff in tourism are manifold. In addition to demographic change, the migration of skilled labour to other branches

and to urban conurbations as well as the trend towards academization, the industry has to contend with unattractive working conditions and a poor image (e.g. 2014; cf. Gardini 2014). Employers in the tourism industry even consider the latter to be one of the main reasons for their staffing problems (e.g. bsw 2014).

## The EU Interreg Austria-Bavaria 2014 – 2020 Project “Trail for Health Nord”



**Project duration:** 01.09.2015-31.12.2018

**Project volume:** € 1.08 m

**Project aims:**

- to develop sustainable, cross-border, health tourism concepts
- to establish medical evidence for natural medicinal resources
- to develop a skilled labour concept for (health) tourism regions
- to examine the effects of climate change on the project regions

**Project partners:**



If they want to find skilled labour in an employee market in the future, employers will have to invest in their human resources management, in particular in recruiting, in employer branding, personnel development and retention. Although most employers in the industry are well aware that these challenges can in the long term only be overcome by professionalizing their human resources management (Verlemann et al. 2013) they have to date largely failed to do so. All in all the industry, also in comparison with other industries, can be said to still have a “substantial need to catch up” (Gardini 2014, p.63) in terms of strategic human resources management. This is also illustrated by the academic debate on the subject. Although there is a lot of empirical evidence for the connection between staff competence, service quality and customer satisfaction (see Gardini 2014 for an overview), the type and requirements to be met in the tourism industry and thus by the employees change (Baum 2015) and the staffing problems are a reality, the tourism enterprises overall do not do enough (Baum 2017, 2015; Gardini 2014). We must however differentiate between the large international tourism enterprises and the majority of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs; Baum 2007). The SMEs in particular quickly reach the limits of their resources (e.g. bsw 2014). Only very few enterprises have a human resources expert. They frequently lack the time, money and expertise for strategic human resources management (Chang & Konzack 2016).

## 2. Skilled labour concepts in tourism

Skilled labour concepts for the tourism industry have up to now been difficult to find. Scientific literature to date has not discussed the subject; in practice there are only a few examples to be found. Independent of tourism the topic of sourcing and retaining skilled staff for regions is however on the agenda, especially in rural areas (e.g. Kräußlich & Schwanz 2017). For example, a survey of business promoters and those responsible for location marketing carried

out by the index agency (2018) shows that the biggest challenge faced by 33.1% in the year 2018 is the recruiting and retention of skilled staff. Due to demographic change and the migration of skilled workers to urban conurbations, many regions are forced to recruit skilled workers from outside. If skilled workers are to be recruited and retained in the region, cooperation between the enterprises is necessary. Cooperation between medium-sized enterprises in the field of human resources management is still however not very widespread. According to a cross-industry survey by Ernst & Young (2011) only 25% cooperate on these issues. At the same time resources here can be bundled and synergies created to provide opportunities for SMEs in particular.

## 3. Research objective

To summarize, it can be said that to date there has been a lack of skilled labour concepts for tourism regions. In the literature on the subject, human resources issues are mainly discussed only from the organizational and management perspective (Baum 2015). Due to the challenges outlined, in particular the staffing problem, a regional approach with bundled resources seems to be a sensible one not only for small and medium-sized enterprises. The challenges outlined above mean that it will be difficult to implement a regional tourism strategy without a skilled labour concept.

The aim of the “Trail for Health Nord” project, using the participating health tourism regions as an example, is to work out how such a skilled labour concept could look like and as a result what actions can be recommended on a company, regional and inter-regional level. To do so, a precise analysis of the actual situation must first of all be carried out.

## 4. Methods

As there is little literature available, an explorative and multi-perspective research approach in three stages was adopted for the project (see Figure 1). To get a comprehensive picture of the field of research, in the first stage an explorative survey using semi-structured interviews with 54 experts from

## Munich University of Applied Sciences: Research questions

- What competency profiles are required in health tourism?
- What challenges do employers in (health) tourism face in terms of their human resources management and how do they deal with these challenges?
- How do employees experience the current situation and what action do they recommend, also in terms of the region as a living and working environment?
- To what extent are cooperation projects in human resources management already being carried out? What approaches are required?

the tourism industry, politics, education and diverse other labour market protagonists in Austria and Bavaria, in particular in the project regions, was carried out. The interviews were evaluated using the Mayring (2010) qualitative content analysis and MAXQDA software. Based on the findings of the interviews with the experts, a questionnaire for employers and a questionnaire for employees in health tourism were prepared. Companies of the hotel, catering and tourism industries, health tourism service providers and medical institutions were represented in the samples.

The employers in the project regions were contacted via the mailing lists of the project partners. As the response rate was very slow, additional (health) tourism employers were contacted through various associations, but this however did not substantially increase the number of participants. In the end, a total of 106 usable online questionnaires for evaluating the employer responses were received, of which 60% came from the hotel and catering industry, 28% from the health sector and 6% from the tourism industry (rest: others). In the project regions, the response rate for the employee survey was 64%. The response rate across all establishments contacted was 37%.

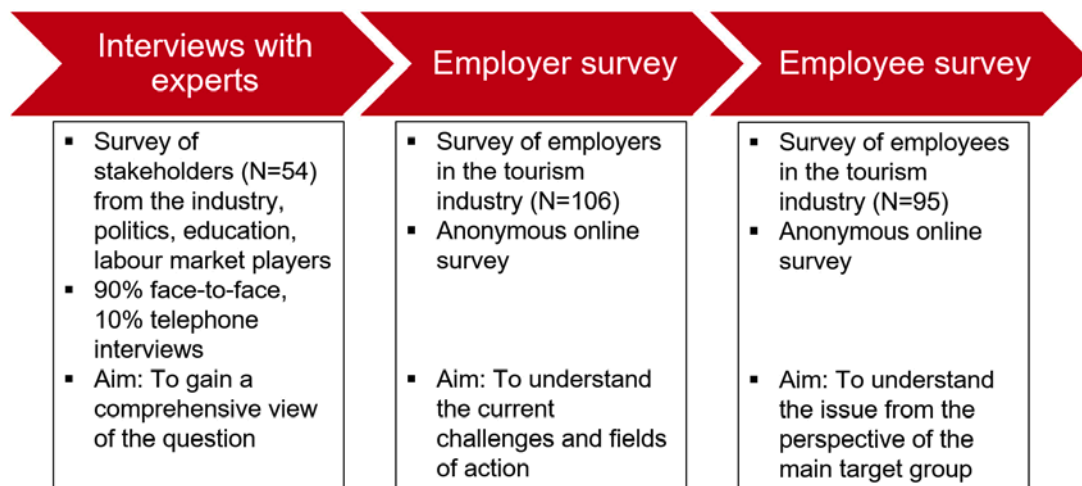


Figure 1: Overview of the surveys

Source: Own diagram

The employers who participated in the survey were asked to encourage their employees to take part in the anonymous online survey. The response rate for the latter survey was also low. A total of 95 questionnaires were suitable for evaluation. 95% of the employees surveyed work in small and medium-sized enterprises, 44% are in the hotel and catering industry and tourism, 12% work in medical institutions or for health service providers.

When the evaluation revealed no indication of significant differences between the individual regions or between employers in the health sector and employers in tourism, an evaluation across all cases was carried out. The same procedure was used for the employee survey.

On the basis of the findings of the survey, it was possible to derive seven strategic fields of action for developing the skilled labour concept. For each field of action, relevant measures and recommended actions for implementation on a company, regional and inter-regional level were laid down. The skilled labour concept was validated in a workshop together with the project partners from the regions.

## 5. Findings

Below only the main findings can be considered. For better understanding, the individual findings are presented in 5.2 under the respective strategic fields of action for the skilled labour concept. First of all however, some important general findings are presented.

### 5.1 Selected higher-level findings

*"We lack service personnel, chambermaids, cooks. We lack people who simply love the catering industry and love serving and looking after guests."*  
(A health tourism expert, spa town).

This quote clearly illustrates the current challenge as regards the personnel situation in the enterprises in the project regions. The employer survey shows that in 57% of enterprises the skills shortage is already being felt. The companies have difficulty filling vacancies as not enough people apply and those who do are often not adequately qualified.

The migration of skilled labour also presents a challenge to the companies. For example, 70% of them said that migration of skilled staff to other industries was a problem, in second place 36% cited the migration of regional skilled employees to the cities. Accordingly, better job alternatives (46%), the gaining of experience working for other employers (44%) together with an unattractive region as a working and living environment (29%) were among the most frequently stated reasons for staff handing in their notice.

The employers concerned were mainly small and medium-sized enterprises. Only 20% of the enterprises interviewed have their own human resources expert. Many do not have the time (55%), the personnel (40%) or financial resources (29%) to practise professional human resources management and face the above-mentioned challenges. 87% of the employers are however aware that good hu-

man resources management increases staff competence and thus satisfaction among the predominantly 50- to 70-year old guests. The need for action in this field has indeed been recognized, but not enough action has as yet been taken.

If we consider the responses to the question asked of the employees "What motivates or demotivates you in your current job in the company?" we see that it is above all those factors typical of this industry that are motivating: the job itself (97%) and the contact with the guests (83%). 74% of the employees stated that they could imagine working in the industry until they retire. 63% of those interviewed said that if they handed in their notice they would only change their employer but not the industry. The main reasons for changing employer, as the employers themselves correctly assumed, are to gain experience (57%), an increase in salary (57%) and to carry out new and interesting tasks (53%).

### 5.2 Skilled labour concept and findings per field of action

When developing the skilled labour concept it quickly became obvious that it does not make much sense to concentrate on one segment of tourism such as health tourism. Instead, tourism as a whole in the region has to be considered. This was reflected not only in the responses given by the experts, but also in the fact that in the surveys conducted neither the type of enterprise nor the supply of touristic services were decisive to human resources competence. For this reason



the skilled labour concept was developed for the health tourism sector but can however also be applied to tourism as a whole in a region.

Figure 2 gives an overview of the seven strategic fields of action for the skilled labour concept. They can be grouped into three different levels: company level, regional level and inter-regional level. The main protagonists on the company level are the companies themselves, to which on the regional level are added representatives of the region such as for example tourism associations and bodies for promoting business as well as regional policy representatives. On the inter-regional level these are supplemented by e.g. representatives of associations, other protagonists on the labour market such as the Employment Agencies Chambers of Industry and Commerce or economic development councils, representatives of (federal state) policy as well as universities. Each strategic field of action was allocated realizable recommended actions for all three levels, examples of which are shown below. The aim of the company-based measures is to professionalize human resources management in companies and to make employers more attractive. Regional measures are aimed at making the region more attractive as a working and living environment and to establish regional cooperation

in the human resources field. Finally, the measures on a national level are intended to create a suitable framework for implementing the above-mentioned points.

### (1) Competence requirements in health tourism

The aim of the first strategic field of action is to address the competencies required in health tourism. In health tourism there are on the one hand skilled staff whose professions traditionally fall under the heading of tourism (e.g. service personnel, tourism information staff), on the other hand there are staff who work in professions classified as health sector occupations (e.g. physiotherapists, doctors). Individual training courses in health tourism do indeed exist, but they are however not chosen very often. Most experts consider sound training in the medical field or in tourism, followed by further training in the areas important in health tourism (e.g. advanced training to become a dietary cook) to be more important. Skilled staff in both these overlapping sectors have to have special competencies in order to fulfil their tasks well in health tourism. The competence requirements were examined more carefully as part of the study.

In the assessment of the employers, the multidisciplinary competence requirements made of skilled

## (1) RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

### For employers

- ✓ Use of competence profiles to describe roles
- ✓ Use of competence profiles for recruiting purposes
- ✓ Use of competence profiles for developing further education programmes and training courses

### For educational institutions

- ✓ Preparation of customized further education services for health tourism

### Desired benefits

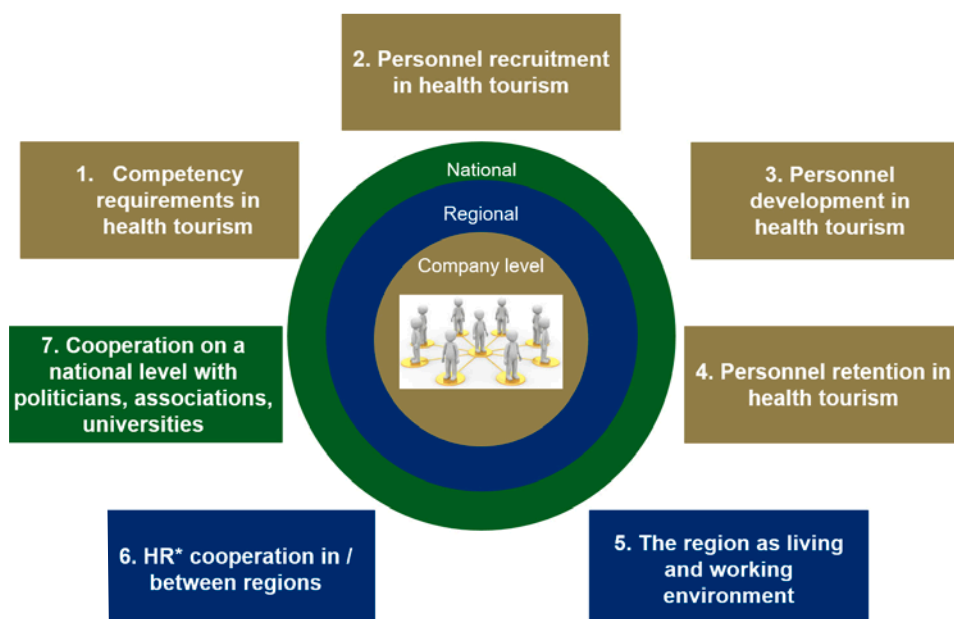
- ✓ Customized HR management
- ✓ Avoidance of false expenditures

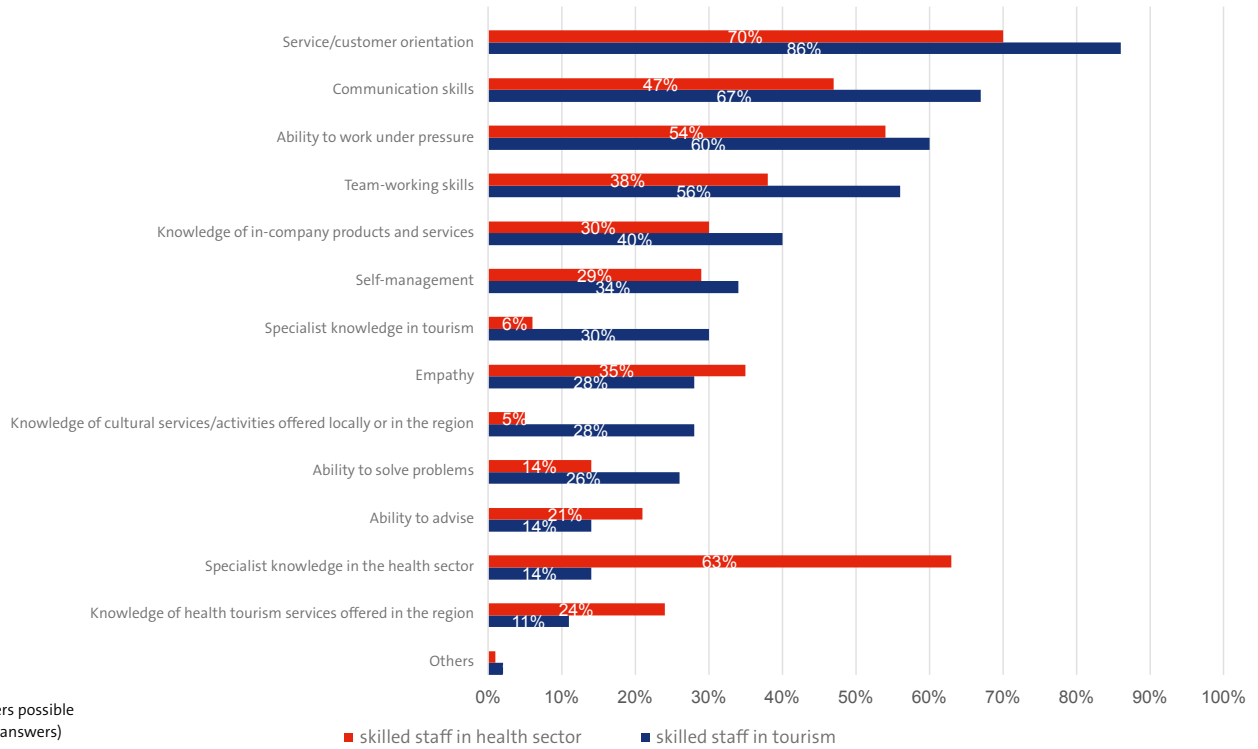
staff in the health sector do not differ from those made of skilled staff in the tourism industry (see Figure 3). The specialized knowledge of skilled staff in the health sector is ranked important by more employers than is the specialized knowledge of skilled staff in tourism. Fewer employers consider specialized knowledge of the respective other sector to be important. Another surprising point is that only some of the employers consider knowledge of the products and services in their own company or knowledge of the services supplied in the region to be important. The potential for a good ability to advise guests in this area is apparently not recognized.

If we consider the employers' assessments, competencies such as communication skills (64%), self-management (62%), team-working skills (59%) and the ability to work under pressure (58%) are ranked the top four. They thus correspond almost completely with the employees' assessments. If on the one hand we focus on those areas of competence where the employees see themselves in most need of further training, we see that these are above all the subject-specific areas: specialist knowledge in tourism (31%) and specialist knowledge in health tourism (31%). The findings with regard to competence requirements are to be seen as the basis for developing the further education and training programmes.

Figure 2: Skilled labour concept with strategic fields of action

Source: Own diagram





N=99  
Multiple answers possible  
(min. 3, max. 5 answers)

Fig.3: Competencies required of skilled staff in the health sector (red) and in tourism (blue) from the employers' point of view (N=99, multiple answers possible, min.3, max.5)

Source: own diagram

### (2) Personnel recruitment in health tourism

57% of the employers interviewed say they have difficulty filling job vacancies. At the same time 66% of the companies have job vacancies. Furthermore, 47% of the employers state that it is becoming increasingly difficult to fill apprenticeship training positions and 61% of the companies interviewed provide apprenticeships. Finding staff for the following positions is a particular problem: service personnel (52%), cooks (43%) and kitchen personnel (38%). Among the recruitment strategies most often

mentioned were the use of print media (73%) and recommendations from staff members (65%). Also used are job portals and job vacancies advertised on their own websites as well as on social media channels (53%). Some staff are also recruited abroad, for example in Spain. In addition to trained skilled staff, 66% of the enterprises also employ temporary staff, 55% employ interns and 54% employ trainees in order to cover personnel requirements. A surprising finding is that 70% of the enterprises do not have their own career page and thus cannot convey to potential candidates what the company stands for as an employer and why a candidate should choose them as employer in preference to other companies. Career pages and the company website are however among the most important sources of information for job seekers (cf. Seng et al. 2012).

### (3) Personnel development in health tourism

Personnel development is a key area for staff retention. The results of the employer survey shows for example that career prospects and opportunities for development are among the top 5 motivation factors for staff in their current job. Furthermore, for

### (3) RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### For employers

- ✓ Develop training and further education opportunities tailored to requirements
- ✓ Create individual development and career prospects
- ✓ Work together with other employers to provide a wider range of further education and training courses

#### Desired benefits

- ✓ Qualified staff
- ✓ Internal staff recruitment and retention
- ✓ Further training of staff for new tasks and positions
- ✓ Staff retention

better development and career prospects 51% of respondents would consider a change of employer. Appraisal interviews (66%) and measures to promote active shaping of the company (48%) are also very important to the respondents.

As regards the employers, 75% of the companies said that they offer internal and external trainings for their staff in equal measure. On the other hand, only 35% implement a comprehensive range of education and training courses as well as a systematic

### (2) RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### For employers

- ✓ Create a meaningful career page which includes "know-why information" (Why should someone work for us?)
- ✓ Create own employer brand
- ✓ Increase social media presence in order to increase awareness of the company as employer
- ✓ Define and use target-group specific recruiting channels

#### Desired benefits

- ✓ Increased reach of employer information
- ✓ Professional company website convinces more job applicants

Personally important measures	Measures already implemented
1. Appraisal interviews	1. Team events
2. Flexible working hours	2. Appraisal interviews
3. Comprehensive range of further education	3. Flexible working hours and training courses
4. Monetary incentives	4. Measures to promote active shaping of the company
5. Measures to promote active shaping of the company	5. Non-monetary fringe benefits

Table 1: The five personally most important and the five most frequently implemented human resources management measures from the point of view of the employees (N=95)

staff and management development programme. 41% of companies spend on average €100 up to a maximum of €300 per year and employee on training. 20% of the employers in the project regions are of the opinion that insufficient development and career prospects is one of the most frequent reasons for staff handing in their notice.

#### (4) Personnel retention in health tourism

In the survey, employees were asked what factors motivated them in their current job. The results show that above all the actual task (97%), job security (78%), the working hours (65%) as well as career prospects (55%) and possibilities for personal development are motivating factors. Moreover, personally important measures and human resources management measures already implemented by the employer were elicited, as Table 1 shows. It is evident that the measures only partly coincide with what is important to the employees.

#### (5) The region as living and working environment

Both employers and employees were asked how they perceive their region as a living and working space. In general, both employers and employees consider their regions to be attractive places to live and work in. All three project regions offer a wide range of sporting activities as well as leisure and medical facilities and services.

The employers see room for improvement in particular with regard to development of the local public trans-

### (4) RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### For employers

- ✓ Tailored staff retention through retention measures geared to staff requirements
- ✓ Integration of staff in decision-making processes in order to increase empowerment and involvement
- ✓ Creation of affordable housing space

#### Desired benefits

- ✓ More satisfied staff
- ✓ Lower staff fluctuation
- ✓ Increased employee length of service in the company
- ✓ Motivated and hard-working staff

### (5) RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### For employers

- ✓ Provision of accommodation for staff

#### For destination marketing organizations (DMO)

- ✓ Bundling of information on living and working in the region for job-seekers

#### For politicians

- ✓ Improvement of the infrastructure, i.e. provision of housing, development of the local public transport system, provision of places in child day-care centres

#### Desired benefits

- ✓ To attract attention as a region and as a working and living area
- ✓ To make it easier to attract skilled labour from outside the region
- ✓ To increase the attractiveness of the region through improved infrastructure

port system, available housing and family-friendly services (e.g. childcare facilities). The findings from the employer survey confirm this assessment. In addition, they see a need for improvement as regards collaboration between the players on the services provider side and the marketing of the region in all three project regions.

It is always important, especially for potential job applicants from outside the region, to present the advantages of the region as a working and living space and also to convey a realistic picture of the overall setting. To date all this information was not available as a package and interested applicants had to research the details themselves on websites. In the context of a course taught at the department, a group of students developed a concept for the Tegernsee Tal which could serve as an information page for skilled staff in the tourism industry. The idea was taken up and developed by the Tegernsee Tal Tourismus GmbH ([www.dahoam-am-tegernsee.de](http://www.dahoam-am-tegernsee.de)).

#### (6) HR cooperation in/between regions

In the survey, employers were also asked to what extent they already cooperate in the field of HR with other stakeholders. As Figure 4 shows, the number of companies who do not cooperate on HR issues and do not plan to are in the majority. A smaller percentage are planning cooperation on HR issues. In most cases, employers cooperate with associations, external

consultants and trainers as well as with educational institutions. 34% work together with other tourism enterprises in their region, 24% with tourism enterprises outside the region. Only very few consider cooperation with non-tourism enterprises in and outside the region to be relevant. One way that is seen for regional cooperation projects is to provide staff benefits:

*“Cooperation between infrastructure companies for low-cost and attractive use by our staff. Staff benefit card for leisure activities!”*

*(Quote from employer)*

The experts in the interview study also considered regional cooperation in human resources issues to be a sensible field of action. At the same time they were sceptical as to its feasibility as the competitiveness would lower the willingness to cooperate. It was recommended to begin with a few “strong enterprises”, as the following quote makes clear:

*“I do of course believe that cooperation and networking make sense and that working together one could improve the qualifications of the employees and provide a lot of leverage. However, I am a little sceptical because I know the typical range of enterprises and entrepreneurial personalities. If I have perhaps a handful of powerful enterprises in the region who are behind the idea and thus also promote it, then I do believe that they can attract others to do the same. When I imagine the classical hotelier with the picture of themselves that many establishments still*

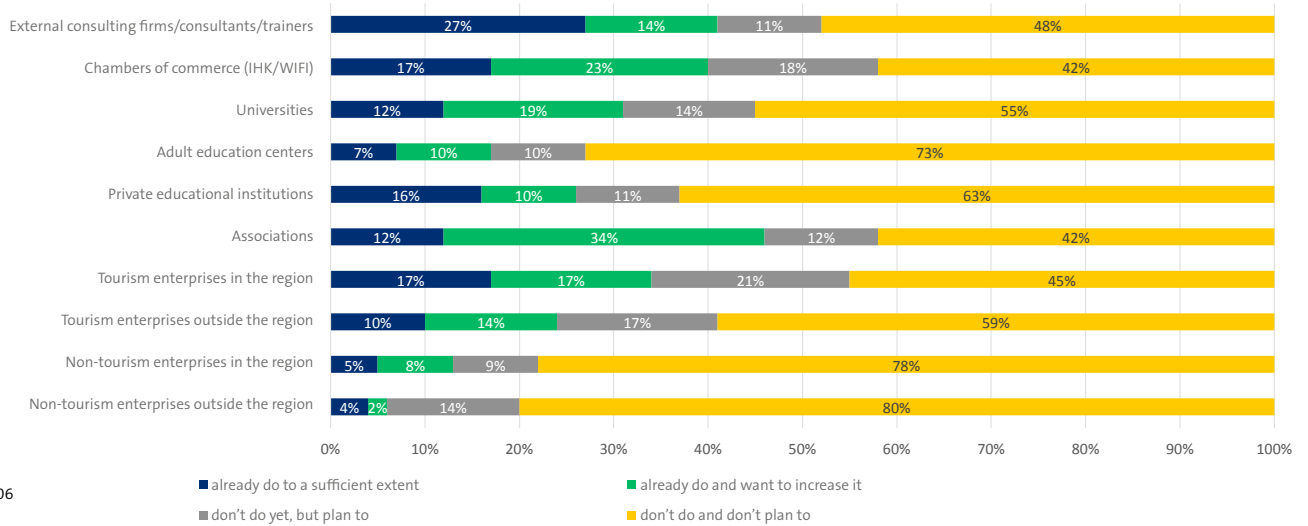


Fig.4: Overview of existing and planned cooperation in the HR sector  
Source: own diagram

*have and which is basically very hierarchical, I imagine it to be extremely difficult.”*  
(Expert in health tourism))

**(7) Cooperation between enterprises, labour market protagonists, politicians and educational institutions on an inter-regional level**

Figure 4 also gives an insight into cooperation with stakeholders such as associations, educational institutions and universities on an inter-regional level. Inter-regional level cooperation

could be across-boarder, state or national bound. In principle, there is still development potential here. The advantage of cooperation on an inter-regional level, in particular with associations and labour market protagonists, may lie in bringing together contacts and skilled labour from other regions, e.g. under a skilled labour rotation scheme. Moreover, labour market protagonists such as the employment agencies and political participants are also contact partners and intermediaries for promotional programmes.

Although the regions are in border areas (Austria/Bavaria), cross-border cooperation in HR issues has to date been rather limited. To date for example 21% of the employers interviewed cooperate on HR issues on a cross-border basis. Of the in total 79%

of employers who do not cooperate on a cross-border basis, 19% at least plan to do so.

**6. Discussion**

The studies conducted reveal a core problem which most employers in the tourism industry face. The situation in terms of available skilled labour is tense. Moreover, if we consider a specific segment such as health tourism it becomes clear that it is difficult to find trained and skilled workers in the health sector as well. The employers are suffering from the strain and the enterprises are also aware of the measures needed.

The question of recruiting and retaining skilled personnel through a professional HR management system however does not seem to have yet been given the priority it needs (cf.

**(6) RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

**For employers**

- ✓ Setting up of regional HR networks
- ✓ Cooperation in particular in training and further education for employees
- ✓ Defining rules for the cooperation (e.g. no poaching of employees)

**For regional stakeholders**

- ✓ Support in the setting up and execution
- ✓ Support for employing an independent coordinator

**Desired benefits**

- ✓ Bundling of resources and cost savings
- ✓ Creation of development potential for employees
- ✓ Increased attractiveness of the employer

**(7) RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

**For employers and regional stakeholders**

- ✓ Cooperation with other tourism regions (e.g. exchange of skilled staff for changing seasons)
- ✓ Utilization of cross-border offerings (e.g. further education and training courses offered)
- ✓ Cooperation with employment agencies as regards applications for support/funding, recruiting from abroad, information on instruments for SMEs
- ✓ Cooperation with research institutions such as universities as academic supervisor

**Desired benefits**


- ✓ Knowledge of support/funding possibilities and HR instruments
- ✓ Financial support programmes, e.g. setting up of a HR network
- ✓ Quality management through evaluations

Gardini 2014). Cooperation on HR issues as well as topics concerning regional employer branding when defining action strategies have to date been not taken into consideration much either. Looking back at the findings it becomes clear that, in addition to focussing on effective recruiting strategies, employers have to concentrate on their existing personnel and take suitable measures to develop and retain them. To do so it is important for employers to understand what motivates their employees and in what direction the latter want to develop. Moreover, it is precisely personnel development and retention that can be realized well working together in a human resources network and create attractive prospects for the employees.

The preparation of a skilled labour concept for (health) tourism enterprises and regions is a first step towards a holistic approach to recruiting and retaining skilled workers. The characteristic feature of the concept is its multi-level structure and it illustrates the importance of cooperation on HR issues, in particular for SMEs. The basic conditions for setting up a successful HR cooperation scheme are on the one hand that the partners in the network show their willingness to pursue the same goals by working together instead of independently. Furthermore, the partners should profit from pooling existing competencies and resources and agreeing on what common measures should be carried out and who can participate and in what role (BMWi 2013). The setting up of a HR network takes time as mutual trust has first of all to be built (Möhring-Lotsch & Spengler 2009). In the cooperation scheme the DMO also plays an important role: "It can be both an initiator or take over organizational and moderation tasks" (ibid. p.12). Moreover, it has to be clarified what role the location marketing and business promotion agencies should assume and whether a branch-specific or rather a cross-branch approach should be adopted. Finally, there is the question of whether, and how, an independent coordinating body can be set up and financed. The "Work for us" example

in Austria ([www.workforus.at](http://www.workforus.at)) shows that it is possible to implement the idea of a HR network with a central coordinating body and that the enterprises participating can positively benefit from the cooperation.

As is the case with any study, this one too has limitations. On the one hand the sample size must be questioned critically. Only a very limited inferential-statistical data analysis was possible. A larger data base should therefore be used in future studies. Cooperation with more project regions and the inclusion of multipliers is recommended. Moreover, the very broad approach followed in the project has its disadvantages. Although it did give an overall view, in some subject areas it was not possible to go a little deeper. Further explanatory studies on individual subject areas should now build on the explorative research approach. In the process the employees' viewpoint should also be taken into consideration. Moreover, further research projects on subjects such as HR networks and HR cooperation schemes in tourism destinations are necessary.

The skilled labour concept prepared does however provide a framework for action for the tourism industry. It should be piloted and evaluated in a future project with scientific support. This is the only way to reliably test the feasibility of the skilled labour concept and identify any fine-tuning needed. 

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# People and services

## Roles throughout the ages



Felix Kolbeck

### Services

The English and French word for the German “Dienstleistung” is service, which is also commonly used in the German language. When used in German however the word has additional meaning in the sense of maintenance and after-sales service. In information technology with its own terminology, the two (German) terms “Dienst” and “Service” are to a large extent synonymous and describe connected technical units which bundle particular functionalities to make them available to third parties, such as for example system services or web services.

Many core spheres of work in the tourism industry can be allocated to the service sphere. From an economic science point of view, a service is considered an intangible, marketable commodity which makes one economic unit available for another for a fee. This making available can take place in the form of providing something (e.g. overnight accommodation) and/or through the use of service capabilities (e.g. tour management).

Services can be structured according to different criteria. In research work on market-related business administration in particular, many schools or schools of thought on service management and marketing have arisen in the past few decades. According to Meffert/Bruhn/Hadwich they include activity-, process-, result- and potential-oriented approaches, whose core elements are without doubt reflected in the provision phases of any service.<sup>1</sup> It is always about optimizing an individual economic calculation.

In economic and sociological research on services on the other hand, approaches to typology and the assessing of working conditions, welfare effects and social changes which accompany services and the rendering thereof predominate. After initial (in the 1950s) optimistic visions of a services economy, today there are noticeably negative connotations of services: service proletariat, precarious services, service wastelands and many more. The term “service proletariat” for example draws attention to the “division in modern working communities (...)”, “within which the working world of one category of service is in contrast to a ‘simple’ services sector.”<sup>2</sup>

1 Cf. Meffert, H/Bruhn, M/Hadwich, K (2018): Dienstleistungsmarketing, Grundlagen-Konzepte-Methoden. Completely revised and enlarged 9th edition Wiesbaden, p.14.

2 Bahl, F. (2014): Lebensmodelle in der Dienstleistungsgesellschaft, Hamburg, p.24.

An ideal picture of touristic service – taking the guest to new heights

Deutsche Flugtouristik,  
Ferien-Flugreisen 1959/60

## Tourism and services

The points of contact between tourism and service are manifold, and seen against the background of the wide range of meaning and the problems associated with service outlined above, are worth taking a closer look at. It is often asserted that tourism from the provider point of view is overall a service. This point of view however falls short, as a touristic product may in addition include the making available of mobile or immobile physical assets, as well as of information.

It falls to the provider of tourism services to weight up whether they want to purchase the touristic relevant physical assets (airplanes, buildings, ships, coffee machines...) or just the right of use to them. The potential-oriented definition of service which focuses on the ability of the service provider to provide specific services for the consumer suits this point of view.<sup>3</sup> For the guests, on the other hand, it is immaterial whether the physical asset used by them is the property of the tourist company or not – as consumers they are only interested in enjoying its use.

Services in the tourism industry, similar to those in health care and in the retail trade, are still characterized by a high level of interactivity with consumers and colleagues.<sup>4</sup> The associated occupational and training paths show a comparatively high level of differentiation and certification requirements. The working environment in e.g. the postal and package services, cleaning companies and discounter systems on the other hand have the character of “job markets for anyone where no certification is necessary (...), and in which the qualifications, wage and requirements levels remain low for the employees.”<sup>5</sup> But they too of course play a role in tourism, be they the cleaning and laundry services in the hotels or carried out by a considerable percentage of crew members on board cruise ships.



Services 1.0? Slaves in a household in ancient Rome

© akg / North Wind Picture Archives

If we take an even wider view and consider tourism as a system together with the political, sociologic and ecologic and other spheres it becomes clear that the service component in tourism can be defined and delimited in very different ways. It depends on what individual view is taken of the phenomenon service on the one hand, and of tourism as a system on the other hand.

### A look back

Moreover, the picture we have of services has changed a lot down the centuries. At the same time, albeit within a shorter space of time, the tourism industry and the tourism services offered have developed and changed. This historical perspective will be adopted in the following in order to find elements which can explain modern society's understanding of services – also in tourism. To do so, by way of example four points in history, which can be seen symbolically as giant leaps forward in society's understanding of service, will be picked out. At the same time, parallels can be derived from these points in history which characterize the development of the service sectors today and in the near future.

#### 1. Slaves performing services: 150 BC, Roman Empire

Due to the increasing number of conquests more and more prisoners of war came to Rome, where they were

usually employed as slaves. Their working world was extremely hard and full of deprivation. The Latin word for bondservice was *servitium*. The first service industry was born.

In a figurative sense *servitium* also stands for bondage and servitude, also in the following centuries long after the decline of the Roman Empire. Slavery as a widespread phenomenon of legal exploitation and exercise of power survived until 1865 when it was finally ended in the USA by the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. In Mauritania, slavery was not legally abolished until 1981.

As a rule slavery is characterized by serfdom, the impossibility to escape and by its inherited nature, often accompanied by deprivation of personal liberty and coercion. To summarize: in ancient times service meant extreme exploitation and very low social standing. This may be seen as a congenital defect and a burden for any modern understanding of service: serving individual people and a large group of people receives less recognition than other activities.

#### 2. Compulsory labour: Europe in the late Middle Ages (ca. 1300 AD)

In the Middle Ages agriculture was by far the most important sector of the economy. People lived in extended families consisting of several generations on an estate, usually together with the animals. In feudal society

3 Cf. Meffert, H (Bruhn, M/Hadwich, K (2018 see above), p.13

4 Cf. Staab, P (2014): *macht and Herrschaft in der Servicewelt*, Hamburg, p.254.

5 Bahl, F (2014 see above), p.24



Deutsche Fassung



one was born into a social class; rule by the lord of the manor was the key instrument in the (rural) economic system. The landlord, who was frequently of the nobility, disposed of the land and leased it out to the farmers to husband.<sup>6</sup> In central Europe there were very different versions of what was fundamentally the exact same principle, and for a very long time at that: the mezzadria for example in central Italy (the landlord provided the land, bore half of the costs and received half of the yield from the farmers) survived up until the 1940s.<sup>7</sup> In Germany, the Zehnthöfe farms were in part similarly organized forms of the leasing system.

An important element in this type of economy was also compulsory labour which the farmers had to do free of charge for the landlord. This work included manual services (e.g. weeding) or with yoked animals (ploughing) on the landlord's fields. Only when they had finished all these tasks were the farmers allowed to cultivate their leased fields.

Germany 1958:  
In tourism, great importance is still attached to personal service.

 Touropa holiday guide 1958

### 3. Domestics in urban life: 1910, Munich

In the second half of the 19th century and particularly at the turn of the century, middle-class life in the cities of central Europe developed with unprecedented dynamism. The cities not only attracted masses of industrial workers, but also armies of service personnel. In addition, new special service sectors had grown up in the fields of finance, insurance and administration and they were concentrated in the cities. The exodus from rural areas to the cities reached historic proportions, intensified by the waves of emigration to the New World across the Atlantic. In the average middle-class family and even more so in the well-off sections of the urban middle classes it was normal to employ service personnel for various household and private business activities, especially as the women also had mostly business or private jobs outside the home as well. "Housewife" only became a determining lifestyle for women in western societies in the 1920s and remained so up to the 1960s.<sup>8</sup>

The high demand for qualified service personnel did not however lead to any great shortage of skilled labour as the waves of people looking for work from the, in part, very poor rural areas seemed to be never-end-

ing. It took the caesura of two world wars together with rapid technical progress, a war economy and subsequent destruction, a drop in population in the towns and cities and extreme hardship to end this first boom phase of a "partial service society".

If in the year 1910 you had a look at the satirical weekly magazine *Simplicissimus* published in Munich, you quickly found the divisions in society which resulted from these developments. On the one hand there were clear indications in the texts and in the advertisements of the, in part, high standing enjoyed by urban service personnel. A wide range of service providers in the cities advertised for customers "on an equal footing" with the consumer goods industry. The spectrum ranged from private tutors, service personnel agencies, psychologists and singers to hypnotists and other "charlatans". At the same time Käthe Kollwitz published her "Bilder vom Elend/Pictures of Misery" cycle of pictures in the *Simplicissimus* editions. In her etchings she harrowingly shows exploitation, hopelessness and brutality in the world of those who were not able to make a living for themselves working in industry or in the service sector.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> cf. Abel, W (1995): *Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft vom frühen Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert/History of German agriculture from the early Middle Ages to the 19th century.* Stuttgart and <https://www.leben-im-mittelalter.net/kultur-im-mittelalter/wirtschaft/landwirtschaft.html>[07.09.2018]

<sup>7</sup> cf. Mátá, F (2007): *Die Hügel der Toskana: Mein neues Leben in einem alten Land / The hills of Tuscany. My new life in an old country.* Munich.

<sup>8</sup> Bartmann, C (2016): *Die Rückkehr der Diener. Das neue Bürgertum und sein Personal (The return of the servants. The new middle classes and their servants).* Munich, p.225.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Simplicissimus* (1910), year 14, no. 43 of 24 January 1910, p.747.



#### 4. Mechanization of services during the “economic miracle” 1958, Germany

In the years of the economic miracle an interesting two-way division in the development can be observed. At home “the heyday of electronic household appliances resulted in a further exodus of servants who, in turn, set up their own servant-less households.”<sup>10</sup> The tourism industry on the other hand still set great store by personal service and consciously marketed it as a luxury, as the following quote from the Touropa holiday guide of 1958 based on journeying out and back by train, which was common at the time, illustrates: “How pleasant it is to be a well-looking-after, carefree guest in these trains! Start and end your holiday with Touropa in a festive way, be your destination near or far.”<sup>11</sup>

From the 1970s on the use of information technology in the service industry was increasingly discussed. Levitt’s essay on the industrialization of service<sup>12</sup> and its positive influence on the success of companies was a breakthrough in research on this subject.<sup>13</sup>

#### The present: New domestics in today’s global digital age (2018)

History shows that not only services but also the concept ‘work’ usually had negative connotations, from antiquity right up until the 20th century. And changes in the structure of society and the world of work always resulted in mobility and migration movements of the production factor ‘work’.<sup>14</sup>

In today’s world of work there are also many examples of unequal opportunities and unequal income development. This is however nothing new and it is questionable whether these tendencies are more pronounced today than they were in the past. In the wake of the digitalization of many areas of life and work, the picture of the service industry will continue to change.

Digital services offer the potential to open up new markets, win new customers and provide new sales channels. The barriers to market entry in the case of digital services may be relatively low,<sup>15</sup> protection from imitators admittedly too.

In the case of many services the challenge that providers face is to weigh up at what point the automation of services or even the “shifting of performance” onto the customer leads to a negative image for the provider. Already today some services are no longer offered but are quasi forced onto the customers for them to perform: check-in at a hotel, placing orders in a restaurant, scanning in insurance receipts etc.


And very soon it was realized that customers who use a self-service facility, a robot or a website lose that psychologically important feeling of being served, which is very essential to them when they are served personally.<sup>16</sup> With the continuing development of digital services one often has the impression that responding to the concrete needs of people in general and the customer/the guest in particular is becoming more and more neglected.

Likewise, one suspects that the importance of artificial intelligence in people-related services is massively overestimated. “The new smart products offer convenience in those areas where it is of no help, but offer very little in those areas where customers could do with some help.” Techniques that reliably remove rust, dirt and mould in the home or in the hotel do not exist any more than sen-

sitive, automated travel agents or tour guides do.

Digitalization will not mean the end of the really “dirty” jobs, in particular those associated mainly with private households, but of the abstract jobs in companies, banks, insurance companies and administration offices which are already to a large extent computerized.<sup>17</sup>

For tourism as a system characterized by people-oriented services this presents several opportunities at once. It can offer high-quality, valued service jobs which are lost elsewhere. Moreover, in many of these activities noticeably better opportunities may result for identification and for meaning than it is the case with the more technology-dominated or purely scheduled services.

Recent research work and related publications suggest that not technology but people will take centre stage again: “Human is the next big thing!”<sup>18</sup> Hopefully then not as exploitation, but as appreciation. 

10 Bartmann, C. (2016, see above), p.230

11 Touropa Ferienführer 1958, p.3

12 Cf. Levitt, T (1976): The Industrialization of Service, in Harvard Business Review, Vol.54, No.5, pp.63-74

13 Cf. Bruhn, M/Hadwich, K (2017): Dienstleistungen 4.0. Erscheinungsformen, Transformationsprozesse und Managementimplikationen. In: Bruhn, M/Hadwich, K (publisher): Dienstleistungen 4.0. Geschäftsmodelle – Wertschöpfung – Transformationen, Volume 2 Wiesbaden, p.5.

14 Cf. DGB/Hans-Böckler-,Stiftung: Atlas der Arbeit. Daten und Fakten über Jobs, Einkommen und Beschäftigung /Atlas of Work. Facts and Figures on Jobs, Income and Employment. Berlin 2018.

15 Cf. Bruhn, M/Hadwich, K (2017, see above), p.5

16 Cf. Simon, H/Butscher, S.A. (1997): Automatisierung von Dienstleistungen – Gefährlicher Spagat, in: Absatzwirtschaft, 40 Jg, Nr.2, p.47

17 Cf. Bartmann, C (2016, see above) p.249

18 Title of the Travel Technology Symposium of the Travel Industry Club on 7th February 2019.

# Connecting destinations and its visitors

## Interview with a tourist guide

Olga Junek

**Before our field trip neither the students nor I knew very much about Linz, the third largest city in Austria (population approximately 200,000). At the end of the very full 2-day programme for the competence field “Culture in Tourism” we were all enthralled and fascinated by this amazing city. Selected as the European Cultural Capital in 2009, Linz has come a long way from its image as an industrial city struggling to compete with the grandeur of Vienna and the charm and musical offerings of Salzburg. Linz has made a significant mark on the tourism map with its creative arts and culture, media and innovation, science and “sharing heritage”.**

Much of this change is no doubt due to the proactive and innovative strategies of Georg Steiner, the director of Linz Tourism. Herr Steiner and his staff have worked hard and succeeded in making Linz a vibrant and

interesting tourism destination. But of course, a destination is very dependent on the people in the tourism industry, all those people with whom visitors come into contact, be it the hoteliers, restaurant owners and information centre staff, among others.

One of the people to whom we owed our wonderful experience in Linz was Sebastian Frankenberger, our tourist guide. Tourist guides are one of the main connectors between a destination and its visitors.

Sebastian Frankenberger has a fascinating personal story and has done many things for his relatively young age of 36. His name may sound familiar to many Germans because of his political activism, membership and leadership of a political party. I wanted to know how his journey has taken him to where he is now, not only a tourist guide but also a trainer for the Austrian tourist guides ([austriaguides.com](http://austriaguides.com)), an owner of a

tour company and heavily involved in tourism organisations. Despite June being a high season for the tourism industry, Sebastian very kindly agreed to answer my questions.

*First, thank you so much for the wonderful introduction to Linz through your eyes and for the information and good time we had on the day. The students had fun, actively participated in the tour and learnt a lot as well. So, from firsthand we know you are a very competent and engaging tourist guide but can you tell us a bit about how you ended up being a tourist guide, especially considering you entered the tourism industry from quite different previous positions.*

I started tourist guiding while studying at the university of Regensburg and later in Passau. I studied theology in Passau and we did regular church tours and other students informed me about „Stadtfoch“ („city fox“), an agency in Passau which offers guides in costumes.

In 2006 I completed the *austriaguide* training for tourist guides because guiding gave me great pleasure. I realized that even though being a priest would be my dream job, I didn't want to live with the bigotry inside the Catholic Church.

In 2008 I started my political career. I also guided but just from time to time. After some years as the head of my party there were unsolvable conflicts and again I was not willing to accept bigotry so I stopped being a politician in 2014 and focused on my guiding company. I have always been somebody who spoke out when I noticed injustice. This is how I also became engaged in tourism politics and since 2015 I have been the Upper Austrian spokesman for *austriaguides*, in charge of organizing the *austriaguide* trainings and one of the Austrian representatives at FEG and WFTGA (European and World Association of Tourist Guides).

Linz, a city of contrasts, of old and new, and of creativity and innovation

Olga Junek



What makes a great guide and how does the training provide this? In other words, can you train guides to be all those things you showed us in Linz – fun, dramatic yet informational and inspirational?

The most important for a guide is enjoying time with other people and having the wish to find out about the guests' wishes. So, a good guide needs empathy and a feeling for the guests' needs.

Many guides like guiding because they like teaching. But teaching others is not important for guiding in the first place. Most of all it is important to take all your guests' needs and wishes seriously.

In addition, a good guide should have a wide range of knowledge, be interested in many themes, have his own opinion on politics and religion but be able to balance different perspectives. This makes a guide someone who can describe and interpret sights and events in a neutral way. As much as possible this should be done in an entertaining as well as in a self-reflective or even self-ironic way.

It is impossible to learn all of this at once but as part of the training we can explain links, develop a better understanding for the kinds of skills needed and offer many practical tips and examples.

The danger in our job is that we are mostly getting positive feedback from our guests and we tend to think that everything was alright, although perhaps our performance wasn't that good. Getting feedback from col-

leagues, exchanging knowledge with each other gives us the chance to improve with the help of the practical training. This way we learn many different approaches to look at history, culture and society and we see that every guide has slightly different skills for the various types of groups. We as tourist guides are not rivals but we need each other. Guides also learn from their guests, not just vice versa.

Tour guiding involves close contact with people of different cultures and nationalities. How do you tailor your tours to not only appeal to these different groups but also make sure you do not cause any inter-cultural tensions or problems both within the groups and in visiting culturally sensitive places such as concentration camps?

I do speak about politics and religion. I try to give a neutral commentary and I try to provide information and interrelations from many different perspectives. There is often a good amount of self-irony in my guiding which allows me to play with stereotypes and to thwart them. It is important to have an opinion but to be able to question it and to be open-minded about other opinions.

At a dark tourism site it is vital to keep to the facts. Objectively clarifying – not overrunning people by emotions – so that they want to know more about it. Much more important is showing the contexts of today. The essential question is how could something like that happen and can it happen in future again? What is

necessary for moral courage? It's not about blame or judgements but it is all about bringing people to self-reflection.

How important is tourist guiding within the tourism industry and in your opinion, is it given the importance it deserves?

We are experiencing an increase of populists and nationalists even in governments. Therefore, it is vital that we think about our history and past. Knowing our past and history and education in general reduces fears, makes us more open to foreigners and neighbouring countries. Guides are not only important for tourism but also for social change. Especially on travels people are open-minded towards new things and can be deeply touched by information. Guides are very often the only ones with whom the guest is in personal contact for a longer period during his or her travel. A guide can touch visitors and inspire them.

Guides are the visitor or business card of a country and the prolonged arm of the tourism associations and of tourism politics. Only together we can offer a collection of well-designed experiences for our guests.

Often local authorities don't see the value and positive effect of good guides for their region. The reason for this has to do with the self-understanding of guides as well as the public perception of guides. This goes back to the past training when guides were trained to be a wikipedia on two feet

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Sebastian Frankenberg, our informative, fun and engaging tour(ist) guide in Linz

© Olga Junek

but not necessarily in an entertaining and fun way.

**What are the best things about tourist guiding? What about the not so good things?**

Every day is a challenge to handle the guests' wishes and needs. There are many interpersonal, exciting experiences and guides work in the most beautiful places in the world. When the guides meet on European (FEG) or World level (WFTGA) every year, they immediately have a feeling of community and are making and meeting friends from all over the world.

Guiding is a profession and not only a summer, or a student job and not only for retirees. Very often the payment is still insufficient to be self-employed and to cover all costs. This low payment can lead to jealousy, fears and in a local context, to difficult relations between guides, tourist associations and agencies.

**If a student is considering a career in tourist guiding what would be your advice to him or her? Would they be able to progress within the tourism industry after being a tourist guide or is guiding something that one does for a limited time?**

If you're doing this profession from your heart, with ambition and passion and you are staying open-minded toward your own progress, then it won't be boring, not even after years

of guiding. Of course, good guides are often welcomed later to work in tourism associations, agencies and in tourism politics. People who appreciate being a free-lancer and the freedom which goes with guiding, will love this profession because it keeps you physically and mentally going and is multi-faceted.

**How do you see the development and challenges of the tourism industry in general and in Linz, considering some of the emerging markets such as China and also in light of the problems associated with overtourism?**


The big challenge for us all are the Chinese. In the next years there will be many more Chinese travellers who speak little English. That's why we need enough Mandarin-speaking guides to be trained and build up knowledge about this Far-East culture. We may not betray our own identity but we need to learn thoughtfulness and consideration for each other.

In terms of overtourism, we need to have strong community involvement. We need collective solutions for cooperation in and between the cities. Travel agencies could arrange the timings of tours throughout the whole day (not mainly in the morning) or could offer more options to reduce the number of guests in single groups.

In Linz there is fortunately still a big potential concerning visitor num-

bers. It is more about developing a reason for guests to come to Linz. Maybe it's about how we understand teaching and how we discuss it, that we are talking less about history and old cultures but we do consider the past to understand what is happening nowadays and to give impulses to the visitors for the future.

**Would you like to add anything else to this interview or perhaps tell us whether you personally also do a tour when visiting a new destination and are you very critical of other guides who may not be as competent as you?** I see many cities during our conventions of tourist guides (BVG, FEG, WFTGA) with other guides guiding. I am often disappointed by not getting guides who are more innovative. As a result, we introduced the topics of methodology and didactics at every convention to try and introduce the learning of more innovative ways of guiding and presenting information. When I am travelling privately, then I'm happy to be alone and I explore cities with many books, audio guides and at my own pace.

Thank you very much Sebastian for your time and insightful interview. I would like to share with you and the readers some of the feedback I received from students regarding the field trip and your guiding. 

I learnt and laughed a lot during the tour!

Our guide was competent, funny and friendly, I could have walked with him all day.

I didn't expect to dance during the tour, I will keep that in my mind for a long time.

# Teaching 2.0 – Practice-oriented learning in step with the times

## The ABC of SEO: visibility on the web

Nina Thoma

**More visibility on the web through search engine optimization: on an excursion in the summer semester the students on the specialist course “Digital Marketing and Management” delivered by Prof. Dr. Ralph Berchtenbreiter gained an exclusive view behind the scenes of Blue Summit in Munich and at the same time received a practice-oriented introduction to the world of SEO.**



Blue Summit is one of the leading performance marketing agencies. Among its around 140 well-known customers are the Deutsche Lufthansa AG, Swiss International Airlines, Media Markt, Fujitsu, TUI Cruises and the Otto group. The company focuses on Search Engine Advertising (SEA), Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Programmatic Research and Affiliate Marketing which are used in more than 75 countries worldwide.

### Daily routine of a SEO specialist

Yasin Durmus, Senior Consultant for SEO at Blue Summit and himself an alumnus of the specialist course “Digital Marketing”, gave a fascinating talk on the fundamentals of search engine optimization. The students were not only able to increase their knowledge of SEO, but also gained an insight into the daily work routine of the SEO specialists and received first-hand information on current trends and developments in the industry. With a market share of around 86%, Google is worldwide the most used search engine (as at: May 2018)<sup>1</sup>. In Germany, about 95% of all search queries in 2016 even started on

The students with Yasin Durmus (front, fifth from right) and Prof. Dr. Ralph Berchtenbreiter (back, centre) of the specialist course “Digital Marketing” at Blue Summit in Munich.

© Prof. Dr. Ralph Berchtenbreiter

Google<sup>2</sup>, this search engine is thus the undisputed number one. Working with Google AdWords is therefore part of the SEO specialists’ daily routine.

### SEO – key instrument in digital marketing

SEO stands for all measures necessary to make a website and its contents appear in the search engine ranking among the top spots. It stands for optimization of signals which link to a website, with the aim of generating conversions, i.e. the converting of purely interested parties into customers from the organic, free-of-charge area of a search results page, abbreviated to SERP<sup>3</sup>. This means that in our digital age the subject is of great importance to companies and is considered to be the key instrument in digital marketing. Whoever is not found on Google is invisible and whoever is invisible does not generate any turnover. That is at least the theoretical calculation. At the same time the aims of SEO are quite clear: the primary aim is to win “conversions”, through which turnover is [then] generated. One of the secondary aims is to generate “traffic” or “page impressions”, meaning requests for the web-

site. The more requests there are for the website, the higher the probability of generating conversions. Moreover, rankings and the brand reputation are further, secondary aims.

Among other things, ratios are used to measure aims. These include visibility, conversion rate, bounce rate, number of backlinks and the time spent on site. Search engine optimization is a continuing process and thus also a continuing investment. The ranking factors in SEO are divided into three areas: onsite, on-page and offpage. Whereas onsite concentrates on optimizing the factors in the background, onpage rather means the optimization of the factors in the area visible to the user. Offpage on the other hand optimizes the factors from external sources.<sup>4</sup>

### A day full of impressions

The atmosphere at Blue Summit was experienced as very pleasant by all the students. After the talk some of the students wanted a private conversation with Yasin Durmus, not only to ask him some questions about SEO but also to talk about potential entry possibilities. The student group thanked Yasin for a day rich in impressions. ■



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1 Statista: <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/225953/umfrage/die-weltweit-meistgenutzten-suchmaschinen/>

2 Statista: <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/167841/umfrage/marktanteile-ausgewaehlter-suchmaschinen-in-deutschland/>

3 Durmus, Y. (2018). Einführung in die Grundlagen der Suchmaschinenoptimierung (SEO), p. 22.

4 Durmus, Y. (2018). Einführung in die Grundlagen der Suchmaschinenoptimierung (SEO), p. 39.

## The ABC of SEA: achieving the best possible advertising position

Nina Thoma

**In the summer semester 2018 the students on the specialist course “Digital Marketing” delivered by Prof. Dr. Ralph Berchtenbreiter went on an excursion to Hamburg. The destination? Google Headquarters. As a contrast to the visit to Blue Summit in Munich on the subject of SEO, in Hamburg the students learned first-hand the basics of SEA. For the first time since the co-operation agreement between Google Germany and the Department of Tourism, the students were able to visit the “sacred halls” of Google in Hamburg. Eva Klöpfer, Senior Industry Manager Retail with Google Germany and contract lecturer of the Munich University of Applied Sciences led the two-day workshop.**

Search Engine Advertising, in short SEA, is a part of online marketing and, together with Search Engine Optimization or SEO, it forms the two pillars of search engine marketing. SEA means the running of paid advertisements on the results pages of search engines, the so-called search engine result pages, or SERP in short. In principle, the SERP consists of the organic, unpaid results which are created on the basis of the ranking algorithm (SEO) as well as the paid search results (SEA). These paid advertisements appear on principle at the very top of the search results page. Today, Google AdWords is the most used tool for paid advertisements in Germany.

### Conferences in beach chairs or lunch in the sports bar

Google is located between the City Hall and the Gänsemarkt in ABC-Street in Hamburg Neustadt. The in total six-floor office building has realized a different theme world on each floor, which are there for all to discover. The staff can spend their lunch break in a sports bar or in real Lufthansa seats,

go to the in-house fitness studio after work and hold conferences in beach chairs or in a walk-in barrel. Breakfast, lunch, snacks and drinks are free to all. On the tour through the building, the students were however impressed not only by the unique and innovative facility but also by the noticeable and extremely positive working climate radiated by the always good-humoured staff.

### Google Digital Garage: moving forward digital education

According to the Digital Atlas Germany 2018, a study carried out by the German Economic Institute (Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft), only 20 percent of German companies are digitalized and have virtualized their processes and/or products. To move digital education forward, Google founded the Google Digital Garage. In the rooms of the Digital Garage, free workshops and training courses to acquire digital competencies are run in Hamburg too. In cooperation with the Department of Tourism at the Munich University of Applied Sciences, Eva Klöpfer had up to now travelled down to Munich every semester in order to pass on her knowledge about Google and SEA to the students. This semester however students were able for the first time to go to Hamburg and use the rooms of the Google Digital Garage for the two-day SEA seminar given by Eva Klöpfer.

### Applying theoretical knowledge

The workshop communicated the basics of search engine marketing and its relevance today. Subsequently, the students learned among other things the mode of functioning of the Google search engine and the structure of SERP. In preparation for the upcoming student project for [www.baby-walz.de](http://www.baby-walz.de) after the seminar, in which they will have to apply their theoretical knowledge, Eva Klöpfer



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introduced the students to the functions and structure of Google AdWords: How do you achieve the best possible ad position with a product? The students learned a lot about the possibilities to improve this but also gained an overview of the content guidelines which have to be observed when placing advertisements.

### Unique, practice-oriented insights

In these two very practice-oriented days the students were not only able to significantly deepen their knowledge of SEA and Google, but were also given a unique insight in the work of Google Germany. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Eva Klöpfer sincerely for the invitation to come to Hamburg and for her unparalleled commitment, her contagious motivation and for the excellent and informative workshop. ■

The Department of Tourism students of the specialist course “Digital Marketing” together with Prof. Dr. Ralph Berchtenbreiter (front right) in front of the main entrance to Google Germany in Hamburg.



# Employer Branding

## Key to the internal customer?

Moana Sax

**Hidden Champion ... first of all some questions for readers with a good knowledge of hotels: What is the name of Germany's biggest holiday hotel business and why, in spite of excellent qualifications, does it keep a low profile on the market and politely allows its competitors to grab the headlines in the media, especially with regard to the competition for the best employees? This issue occasioned the author of this article, as part of her bachelor thesis on the subject of brand development, to use the Travel Charme Hotels & Resorts as a case study. This excerpt cannot treat the issue in great depth and simply offers a brief insight into the subject of Employer Branding.**

For many guests staying at a hotel during their holidays gives them

the opportunity to get away from it all and experience a lifestyle that does not seem possible in their daily environment. The hotel guest experience is therefore similar to a play in the theatre. As soon as the curtain goes up, each guest experiences their own story and the hotel serves as a backdrop. To win over the hearts of the audience and conjure up a fascinating play, you need brilliant actors who identify with their role, who even become one with it.<sup>1</sup> In terms of the quality of the hotel, tangible and intangible factors play a major role in the eyes of the guests. A unique holiday hotel experience results from, among other factors, inspiring design and innovative architecture. In the hotel business however the

1 cf. Paton Developments (2017). Paton Developments, online at [www.patondevelopments.co.uk/psychology-behind-hotel-interior-design-guests-really-want/](http://www.patondevelopments.co.uk/psychology-behind-hotel-interior-design-guests-really-want/) [23.12.2017].



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For 25 years Travel Charme has been a synonym for tradition and individuality – now, however, through the takeover by the Hirmir Group at the beginning of 2018 – for innovation as well.

 Hirmir Group

intangible factors are of particular importance.<sup>2</sup>

*“You can have the best strategy and the best building in the world, but if you don't have the hearts and minds of the people who work with you, none of it comes to life.”<sup>3</sup>*

### Passionate Hosts

There is a close relationship between the enthusiasm of the guests and the passion the hotel staff show for their job. People who enjoy their work communicate this euphoria to others, can respond completely differently to guests and through the extra service offered stand out from their competitors. Above all in the holiday hotel business, particular closeness to the guest is cultivated. Great importance is placed on personal encounters, authentic service and responsiveness to individual needs. Hoteliers ideally wish for hosts who are emotionally attached to the company, who identify with its philosophy and who think ahead. But before this wish can be fulfilled, the fight against staff shortage has first of all to be won. The fact is that statistically only 15 percent of employees match the companies' picture of what an ideal employee should be. The huge majority of 70 percent simply work to rule. Almost every fifth employee is emotionally detached from their job.<sup>4</sup> The reasons why the hotel industry in particular needs to face these challenges are well-known: lower potential earnings when compared to industry in general, irregular working hours, split working hours, dependency on seasonal work, weekend work, high stress

2 Cf. Freyberg, Burkhard von/Zeigfang, Sabrina (2014), Strategisches Hotelmanagement, Munich, p.27.

3 West, Renee (O.J.). Hire Rabbit, online at [www.blog.hirerabbit.com/17-insightful-hiring-quotes-for-recruiting-hr-professionals/](http://www.blog.hirerabbit.com/17-insightful-hiring-quotes-for-recruiting-hr-professionals/) [14.06.2018]

4 Cf. Tödtmann, Claudia (22 March 2017). Gallup study. Management are detrimental to the company if they don't know how to lead, online at [www.blog.wiwo.de/management/2017/03/22/gallup-studie-vorgesetzte-schaedigen-die-firma-wenn-sie-das-thema-fuehrung-nicht-beherrschen/](http://www.blog.wiwo.de/management/2017/03/22/gallup-studie-vorgesetzte-schaedigen-die-firma-wenn-sie-das-thema-fuehrung-nicht-beherrschen/) [14.06.2018].



factor, a usually strict and outdated hierarchical structure as well as the concomitant generally unattractive image of the industry.

#### Attractive, credible employers

A situation that Travel Charme also has to master. Initial research efforts raised questions on brand effect and on reputation as employer brand, the employer branding. The focus here is on the notion of seeing the employees as internal customers to whom the job vacancies have to be sold. A company has to present itself as an attractive and credible employer if it wants to win over the best workers. As a comparatively unknown brand name, Travel Charme is probably not initially the first choice here. Young employees in particular decide in favour of the lifestyle hotel sector such as the 25hours hotels, or for traditional companies with a first-class reputation such as the Four Sea-

sons Hotels or Meliá Hotels International. People prefer to work for an employer whose brand they can identify with and of whom they can be proud. A brand however does not live entirely off its marketing image. It has to offer benefits and services that make it stand out in a positive light from other companies. Employer branding begins with the corporate strategy and is firmly linked to the corporate identity. Above all, rather old-fashioned companies like Travel Charme have to show that they are willing to change.<sup>5</sup> For 25 years Travel Charme has stood for tradition and individuality – now, however, after the takeover by the Hirmer Group at the beginning of 2018, for innovation as well. With the excellent quality of its service, the family-run Hirmer business has been the embodiment

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Schuhmacher, Florian/Geschwill, Roland (2009), Employer Branding. Human Resources Management für die Unternehmensführung, pp. 37-51.

of lifestyle and tradition for almost a century. The aim is now to work together to shape the future and create the preconditions for Travel Charme to become one of the leading brands in the holiday hotel business. For a company needs a strong brand if it wants to not only win over customers, but also and above all staff long-term. ■

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