

Chapter 1

Trends in Hospitality and the Leisure Industry: How Social Welfare and Spending Power Influence Holiday Trends

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ABSTRACT

Trends in hospitality in the leisure industry always have been strongly linked with family welfare indicators. In addition, economical, emotional, and sometimes state-enforced restrictions are diminishing in exchange for more freedom of choice in holiday destinations and activities. This chapter describes the characteristics of trends and trend development in Europe versus upcoming countries. Five trends are discussed: sustainability, glamping, wellness, well-being, and the need for adjustment of hospitality offer to the Chinese market. In the next five to ten years, the hospitality and leisure industry will have to come up with more innovative high quality service offers. Their offer will have to at least satisfy, but hopefully exceed, expectations of a large number of international travelers with a good holiday budget in search for more unique individual travel and leisure experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Trends are trendy. A marketing trend by definition is a phenomenon or product that, when proven successful and profitable, is copied by many others through time. A trend is not easily explained, usually hard to predict but nevertheless a very popular word to use worldwide to promote innovations or introduce new product offerings. Trends are fluid, which means they change over time, travel over the world and can adjust to local requirements or habits. When a certain trend is commonly applied and accepted over time, it becomes a commodity - then the trend is over and other trends take over in the fight over public attention. It is obvious that trends are always there and it is in the nature of human beings to keep changing and developing, thus introducing innovations that might be picked up by early adaptors and

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turn into trends. Therefore new trends are born anywhere, anytime and in any industry. Often, you see that history repeats itself when comparing larger trends in different countries through time. The trends discussed in this chapter are not all global trends, but they have started in one part of the world and are spreading to other parts now, but not necessarily in a similar fashion or at the same time.

BACKGROUND

Trend developments in Europe versus upcoming countries show large differences. In the 1960's, Europe was coming out of an economical crisis and became more prosperous. The middle class was growing, the amount of people that possessed a car was increasing with double digits and labor laws changed allowing people to have free weekends and more holidays. During this time of change camping, which was a trend in those years, found good humus to flourish and grow and today it is a large mature industry in Europe: In 2008, over 15 per cent of all tourist nights spent in collective accommodation establishments were spent on campsites, corresponding to an estimated 353 million nights (Demunter & Dimitrakopoulou 2010).

When we look at synergies in upcoming countries like India and China, we see a similar pattern appearing to that of Europe in the sixties. Changes in society (increased income, more flexible labor laws, family planning, possession of cars) happen relatively quickly however; this does not imply that leisure and hospitality trends will follow the same route of development as in Europe fifty years ago. Usually attractive products and new trends are picked up quickly in these markets, get developed at high speed or local entrepreneurs will try to copy what is currently present and successful in Western countries. For example in China today we see camping sites that have been developed but they are empty as they are unattractive or lack leisure facilities. In these countries trends have not had the time to develop in a normal way. They miss the opportunity to get embedded slowly and become part of a culture. Products based on these trends are therefore not adjusted to local culture but copies of Western products and therefore unsuccessful. Trends can therefore be more fluid and commercially risky in countries like China and India.

Trend 1: Sustainability in Hospitality

Hotels, motels and all the various forms of accommodation comprise the largest sector of the travel and tourism industry and have been shown to have the highest negative influence on the environment, of all commercial buildings (Sloan, Legrand & Chen, 2013). In recent years, many holiday resorts and hotels have made sustainability part of their company mission. Most of the companies that are least serious about being sustainability use it just as a commercial tool to simply reduce costs in energy, laundry and labor. Examples of smaller initiatives in this regard are the cards in hotel bathrooms and on bedside tables that stimulate guests to re-use bed sheets and towels. An increasing number of companies go beyond these standard measurements and are now looking for more integrated long-term sustainable solutions for instance in their building methods and heat regaining systems for swimming pool and hot water and try to reduce their waste streams. In addition to the three core areas of facility development and operations (energy, water and waste) where large sustainable improvements can be achieved, other emerging areas of focus include sustainable procurement, indoor environmental quality (focusing on air quality and chemical/cleaning product use), and staff training programs (which can facilitate improved performance and higher levels of employee satisfaction and retention) (Goldstein & Primlani, 2012). The hospitality

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