


Chapter 7

Leveraging the Metaverse for Transformative Talent Management in the Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry is highly sensitive and volatile, constantly being influenced by global trends and emerging technologies. One major change is the emergence of the metaverse, an extension of augmented reality, virtual reality, and 3D simulations. This digital innovation not only offers new ways to deliver tourism services but also offers significant potential to enhance human resource management within the sector. Talent management (TM) is a significant challenge in tourism, and this chapter explores how the metaverse can be used to address this issue. It discusses the different types of metaverse, their relation to tourism, and their role in improving TM. The metaverse can also help address challenges such as data security, employee well-being, and work-life balance by creating immersive virtual environments. Additionally, chapter reviews how the metaverse has been applied in other industries

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-0071-9.ch007

and identifies future opportunities for its use in tourism. Ultimately, it shows how virtual spaces can transform TM and strengthen the resilience of the tourism sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

American science fiction author Neal Stephenson originally used the word “metaverse” in his 1992 book “Snow Crash.” (Faraboschi et al., 2022; Ioannidis & Kontis, 2023). The term Metaverse is a Greek word that is divided into two words “Meta” and “Verse” (Kye et al., 2021) suggesting that there is a reality outside of the one in which we all live (Ioannidis & Kontis, 2023). The World Economic Forum (2022) defined the term “metaverse,” which forms the foundation of transforming consumer interaction and company processes. It creates new channels for communication between companies and clients, creating chances to offer distinctive goods or specialized, tailored services. One of the main sectors gaining from the use of the metaverse is the tourism and hospitality sector, which can be used to add a competitive advantage (Chi et al., 2024). The metaverse has implications in many different fields (Piñeiro-Chousa et al., 2024) including healthcare, engineering, education, finance, marketing, and the environment.

The idea of the Metaverse has drawn interest from the corporate, technological, and scientific communities in recent years (Kim, 2021). With the possibility for a virtual and technologically immersive world, the Metaverse is becoming a topic of research and investigation across several fields (Buhalis et al., 2023). The concept of the metaverse was first introduced in the book *Machine Stops* by E. M. Foster in 1909. An environmental catastrophe renders the world unusable, forcing nearly all people to live underground in separate pods, based on the brief science fiction narrative “Machine Stops”. Every human need and want is met by an intricate global machine in Foster's hypothetical society, ranging from 75 fundamental demands (pure air, light, food, and shelter facilities) to more upscale desires (such as leisure, literature, melody, and social contact). When Facebook changed itself from Facebook to “Meta,” a metaverse firm, the metaverse recently attracted renewed attention; about a century after the initial publication of the “machine stops” (Kim, 2021; Gursoy et al., 2022). Metaverse can be best described as the evolution of today's internet activities, this is something with which we are completely involved, and it's not something that we look at primarily but something in which we are completely immersed today.

The use of metaverse in the tourism industry has many potential benefits they may include:

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