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DEVELOPMENT TENDENCIES IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY OF THE SOUTHERN REGION DURING MARTIAL LAW

The imposition of martial law in Ukraine, which has been in place since 2022, has had a considerable impact on all sectors of the economy, including the hotel industry. The industry has undergone substantial transformation as a consequence of the prevailing circumstances, including the disruption caused by hostilities, a decline in tourist arrivals and a shift in the demand for hotel services. In such circumstances, hotels were compelled to adapt their practices to the new realities, devising innovative solutions to maintain their operations.

One of the initial responses of the hotel industry to the imposition of martial law was to relocate its business operations. A considerable number of hotels situated in areas characterised by a high level of insecurity either ceased operations or relocated their business activities to regions in western Ukraine perceived as relatively safer. In response to the crisis, hotels have initiated collaborative efforts with humanitarian organisations and government agencies to provide temporary accommodation for internally displaced persons (IDPs). Concurrently, a considerable number of hotels provided premises for humanitarian headquarters and volunteer centres [1, 4].

Furthermore, the hotel industry was compelled to re-examine its business models and management approaches. The expeditious implementation of flexible work arrangements, such as the provision of temporary accommodation, constituted a pivotal strategy for the survival of the business. Hotels commenced offering long-term room rentals at more competitive rates, taking into account shifts in demand among the population.

The war has had a profound impact on the nature of demand for hotel services.

Prior to the conflict, the primary clientele were tourists. However, the current majority of hotel rooms are occupied by internally displaced persons (IDPs), volunteers, representatives of international organisations, and military personnel. This has resulted in a significant number of hotels diversifying their offerings to include long-term accommodation, with the aim of providing temporary or permanent housing solutions [3].

In the context of ongoing hostilities, budget accommodation options have assumed greater significance, given the considerable number of evacuees requiring affordable accommodation. Hotels are engaged in the development of special offers, including discounts and loyalty programmes, for these categories of customers.

The objective of this paper is to examine the principal areas of relocation of the hotel sector in the southern region during the period of martial law, and to present an overview of future prospects.

Koblevo is the most substantial resort situated in close proximity to the border between the Mykolaiv and Odesa regions, specifically within the Berezansky district of the Mykolaiv region of Ukraine on the Black Sea coast. Koblevo acquired its status as a resort in the latter half of the twentieth century. At that time, enterprises from Mykolaiv and neighbouring Moldova initiated the development of the land, which resulted in the establishment of numerous vineyards in the vicinity of Koblevo. Subsequently, the settlement's appearance underwent a transformation, accompanied by a rapid expansion of the tourism and recreation sector. The favourable trajectory of the tourism industry between 2018 and 2019, and the subsequent recovery during the post-pandemic period in 2021, was almost entirely reversed in 2022 as a consequence of the war. Until the beginning of 2022, Koblevo was the largest resort situated on the Black Sea coast in the Mykolaiv region. Koblevo boasted a plethora of accommodation options, including over 50 hotels, hotel complexes, recreation centres and campsites, in addition to numerous private sector services.

Since the outbreak of the full-scale war in Ukraine, Koblevo has undergone significant changes. The hotel industry, which previously constituted the primary source of revenue for the region, has been confronted with unparalleled challenges.

Nevertheless, even in the present circumstances, a considerable number of hotels in the southern region are proactively adopting digital technologies with a view to enhancing customer service, optimising business processes and increasing the appeal of their accommodation.

A considerable number of hotels in the resort town of Koblevo have already implemented new technologies and services, including contactless check-in, smart room management systems, and an expanded range of entertainment services. One of the primary areas of focus has been the implementation of contactless technologies and online services that permit guests to reserve accommodations and access services remotely. Furthermore, the digitalisation of hospitality services has enabled hotels to integrate their offerings with humanitarian platforms supporting IDPs, thereby facilitating rapid and effective resource allocation.

Furthermore, the advent of mobile applications has facilitated the streamlining of communication between guests and hotel management. This guarantees the utmost convenience for customers residing in challenging wartime circumstances.

The hotel industry in the Mykolaiv region was confronted with significant staffing difficulties during the course of the war. A considerable number of employees sought employment opportunities abroad or were called up for military service, resulting in a dearth of qualified personnel. In the context of the crisis, the role of crisis management specialists in assisting hotels to adapt rapidly to new circumstances has become increasingly significant.

Furthermore, Koblevo hotels have initiated measures to provide psychological support for their employees, who are subjected to persistent stressors in their work environment. In order to maintain staff stability, the hotels are implementing motivation and retraining programmes.

The government is actively engaged in providing support to the hotel industry during the ongoing conflict, offering a range of programmes designed to assist businesses adversely impacted by the hostilities. Furthermore, collaboration with international organisations, such as the UN, is instrumental in facilitating the development of infrastructure and providing assistance to those affected by the

war[2].

In particular, international organisations provide financial and material assistance to hotels in the southern region that provide temporary accommodation for IDPs. This enables hotels in the resort town of Koblevo not only to maintain their operations but also to make a substantial contribution to humanitarian aid.

It can be argued that, despite facing significant challenges, the hotel industry in Ukraine has demonstrated resilience and the capacity to adapt to new conditions. The imposition of martial law has compelled hotels to modify their business models, implement novel approaches and expand collaboration with governmental and international organisations. Following the conclusion of hostilities, the hotel industry in Ukraine will need to prioritise the restoration of tourist flows, the attraction of investment and the modernisation of infrastructure. The insights gained will assist the Ukrainian hotel industry in becoming more resilient to external crises and in responding more effectively to future challenges.

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