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STRUCTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL HOTEL CHAINS

International chain hotel business is a phenomenon with hotel chains going beyond national borders, which has been actively developing since the 1970s. The main feature of this phenomenon is the creation of a form of hotel business organization capable of providing clients with an expected level of hotel service quality, regardless of the country of residence.

Leading experts in the field of hotel business claim that the understanding of the standard in the creation of a hotel product was initiated and developed to the current level precisely in hotel chains [1, p. 23].

Today, hotel corporations are focused on the development of standards, adaptation to the quality offer of their product. Improvement of standards by chains of hotel business occurs as a result of the transfer of important management technologies, know-how, resources of the organization. Hotel chains develop unified systems of marketing and promotion of their product to new markets, achieving optimal geographical expansion. Chain forms of the hotel business reduce costs thanks to centralized procurement, a single database formed during the booking process, and in general, it is the optimal toolkit for brand formation and successful positioning, forming loyal customers [2; 4; 6; 7].

Two structural and functional levels are distinguished in the internal organization of hotel chains:

- internal – functional and technical level formed from procedures, processes, unified systems of information interaction between hotels of the same brand;
- external chain, in which all partners of the chain are united, as well as partners of other brands that interact within the chain's brand portfolio.

The basis of the international hotel chain is formed by the central company, which develops and implements the chain strategy (general goals, resources, orientation to the priorities of long-term development), the chain-wide concept, creates a brand culture, supports the standards of the offer, and creates a strong brand (brand portfolio). For established hotel chains, the central company closely cooperates with the developer company, which studies new markets for the expansion of the hotel chain, monitors real estate according to the chain's criteria, develops a mechanism for its acquisition, reconstruction, construction of new hotels, etc. In this combination, the developer deals with various aspects of real estate management – the main component in the strategic development of the hotel chain.

An important role for the central office is played by the system of automated information interaction for operational management of all chain hotels. Based on the latest information technologies in the hotel business, information exchange systems provide control over booking and guest accommodation, simplify and improve the work of hotel staff, automate the process of managing financial accounting, obtaining quick access to distributors, and optimizing marketing activities.

For the brand of the central company of the hotel chain, internal and external marketing play an equally important role. The basis is formed by internal marketing, built on

corporate culture, features of relationships between employees and partners of the chain, which generally affect the quality of the chain's offer and external marketing. And external marketing is manifested in the interaction of the hotel chain with customers, intermediaries who provide the hotel chain with customers (tourist companies, organizers of business meetings, etc.).

Internal and external marketing is formed from material, objective and tangible components ("hardware") in comparison with intangible ("software") components, which are abstract, subjective in nature and difficult to compare, they create expectations of guests from the chain. "Software" means the hotel atmosphere, service features, pricing, qualification and compliance with the principles of hospitality of the staff, etc. All elements of internal and external marketing must be considered in combination and interaction. If managed effectively, their combination will provide strategic advantages for the hotel chain.

The evolution of international hotel chains led to the formation of hotel associations – the union of hotel chains with independent hotels on the basis of a common brand and service standards. Hotel associations are characterized by a two-level organization of the central company.

The first, higher level of management of the association is based on a unique brand – a guarantee of the quality of hotel services. On its basis, hotel enterprises with a brand that correspond to the general brand and concept of the association are attracted to the association. The competition for access to the well-known distribution system is developing between the association and the hotels that are part of it.

The second level of management is formed by hotel chains, under which hotels scattered around the world are subordinated. Thus, the association, as one form of corporation, is a consequence of significant competition, the efforts of hotel chains and independent hotels to gain protection in the competition.

Hotels in the structure of the international hotel chain are diversified geographically between different countries and continents, according to the organizational form, type of hotels, category (star rating). The structure or collection of hotels in a chain can be characterized by internal homogeneity (classic chains) or a significant variety of enterprise types.

The form of organization of hotel chains is most often implemented on the basis of a management contract, franchising or full ownership of the hotel by the central company. The economic efficiency of choosing the form of organization depends on the competitive environment, the level of diversification in relation to the category, type of hotels.

The structure of many hotel international operators also includes suppliers, intermediaries, travel companies, consulting companies, financial intermediaries, companies supporting electronic booking systems, manufacturers of various groups of functional support products and offers for customers. The positioning of international hotel operators in the category of fashionable 4-5 star hotels, which are characterized by a significant variety of material and non-material provision of each service, leads to a significant branching of the network of suppliers. The complementarity of goods and services in the relationship between hotel operators and suppliers led to the emergence of sub-sectors of providing hotel enterprises with goods, resources of the internal advantages of each hotel and the chain in general, an important component of strengthening the chain-wide brand [3; 5].

Consolidation of high-class hotels into international chains is not accidental. It is due to the significant diversification of the final product, as well as the need to develop the brand. In the hotel service, the complexity of production, significant differentiation of demand, taking into account all service standards, necessitates the consolidation of the capabilities of independent hotels. The peculiarity of the hotel industry has an equally important

influence – the high dependence of services on personnel training, the influence of seasonality in demand, the high investment attractiveness of 4-5 star hotels due to higher profits compared to other categories.

Therefore, the following regularity is observed: as the category of hotels increases, the probability of consolidation increases. For hotels of a high category, taking into account their organizational and functional specifics, the most optimal is a chain structure. Such an organization is the most effective in using the opportunities of the external environment, such as geographical dispersion, and the internal environment, primarily for complementing resources between partners in the process of creating a high-quality hotel product, forming advantages over independent hotels, other chain forms.

Thus, the development of hotel chains is due to the peculiarity of the hospitality industry, with the complexity of the final product – clients expect the maximum number of components of both intangible and material nature in its structure. Difficulty and complexity in the creation of a hotel product is the main reason for joining forces in the hotel business.

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