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Study on hotel management model from the perspective of low carbon tourism

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ABSTRACT

The concept of “low carbon tourism” was proposed in the report of towards a low carbon travel and tourism industry at the World Economic Forum in May, 2009. After that, more and more countries have paid much attention to low carbon tourism. Hotels are the indispensable part and also the vehicle of traveling. Hotels play an important role in spreading and developing low carbon tourism. This paper aims to analyze and explore the problems of current hotel management model from the perspective of low carbon tourism. This paper will try to put forward some feasible and effective measures to solve these problems as well.

KEYWORDS

Low carbon tourism; Hotel management model; Problems and measures.



INTRODUCTION

In order to respond the increasingly popular “low carbon tourism”, State Council’s Suggestions on Accelerating the Development of Tourism (Guowuyuan guanyu jiakuai lvyouxue fazhan de yijian) was published in 2010. It came up with the demand that tourism should be more environmentally friendly and more related to low carbon. Hotels are the essential facilities of tourists attractions as well as the important place for tourists to relax. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to combine low carbon tourism and hotel management for further analysis and exploration.

Status quo of low carbon tourism

Low carbon tourism is a green and environment-friendly tourism that lowers carbon emission and integrates low energy consumption, low pollution, low carbon emission and tourism. Fundamentally, low carbon tourism is one kind of low carbon lifestyle, which will be the significant way of realizing sustainable economic development of tourism in China, even all over the world in the future. Low carbon tourism mainly includes changing the way of traveling, advocating thrifty and environmental friendly way of traveling, strengthening intelligent tourism and establishing the economic model of achieving sustainable development of tourism.

In fact, some China’s tourist attractions have already employed low carbon tourism. For instance, ZhangJiaJie prohibited private cars from running in the scenic spot in 2000. Instead, ZhangJiaJie started to use environmental friendly tour buses, which effectively reduced the automobile exhaust emissions in the scenic spot and protect the environment of ZhangJiaJie. What’s more, the relevant departments of ZhangJiaJie has conducted the program of restoring farmland to forest and grassland and completed more than 500 hectares of planning area. These departments invested a great sum of funds to support the program. Figure 1 shows the local governments investment in the program of returning farmland to forest.

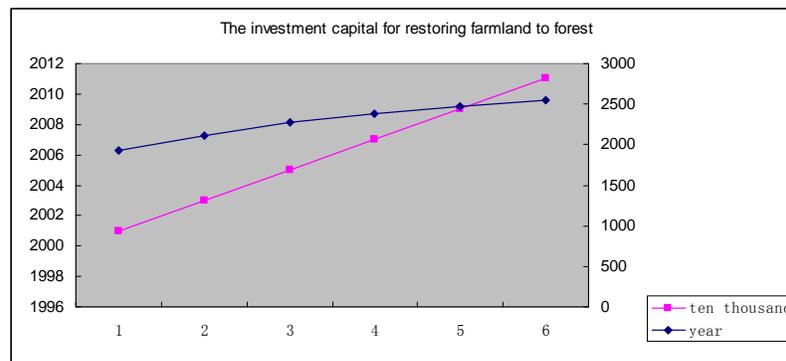


Figure 1 : The investment capital for restoring farmland to forest

There are many other tourist attractions employing low carbon tourism, such as Mount. Tai, Mount. Huang and Longmen Grottoes.

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND REQUIREMENTS OF IMPLEMENTING LOW CARBON HOTEL MANAGEMENT

Hotel industry is the service industry that characterized by high technology, intelligent system and comprehensive functions. Nowadays, low carbon tourism becomes more and more popular. Choosing and implementing low carbon and environmental friendly hotel management model is not only hotels’ responsibility as the members of the society, but also the significant measures for hotels to reduce operating costs and increase incomes. Implementing low carbon management model is also the

requirement of achieving ecological civilization. With China’s adjustment and upgrading of the industrial structure, tourism, as a sector of the third industry, has been developing rapidly. As a result the number of hotels increased dramatically. Figure 2 shows the number of Stars Hotels in China from 2007 to 2012.

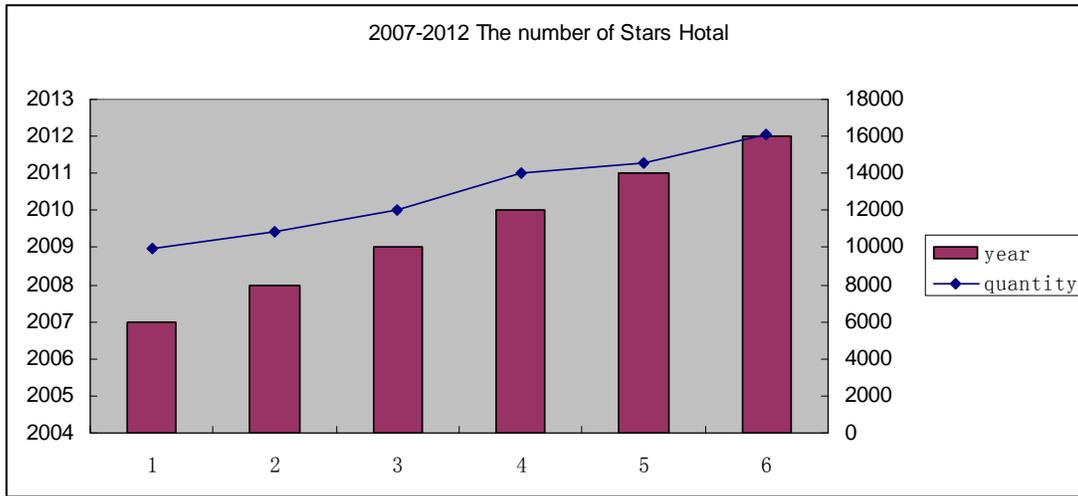


Figure 2 : 2007-2012 the number of stars hotel

Hotels are the essential component of tourism and the significant part of tourists’ consumption and carbon emission. According to the research of World Tourism Organization, carbon dioxide emission of world tourism in 2008 was 1885Mt. Hotels’ carbon dioxide emission was 432Mt. The reason why hotels’ carbon dioxide emission was so high is that hotels can indirectly produce carbon dioxide in every process. Using gas or coal to provide tourists with dishes and using the electrical appliances like lights, air conditioners and elevators in hotels can cause indirect carbon emission. Using the power plant in hotels is the direct way of producing carbon dioxide. In addition, hotels are the major sources of garbage. Therefore, immediately the concept of low carbon tourism was formulated, the requirement that hotel management model should be more environmental friendly and more related to low carbon was set. Figure 3 shows the hotel costs of Mhotels in China.

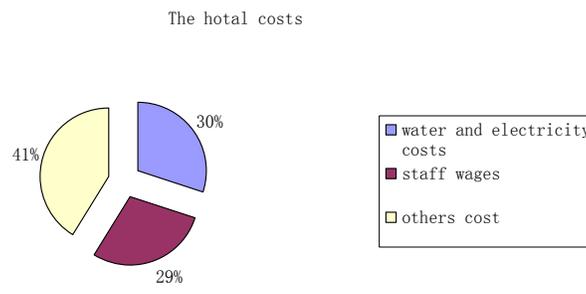


Figure 3 : The hotel costs

The monthly staff wages is near to two hundred and fifty thousand yuan, while the monthly charges for water and electricity is about three hundred and one thousand yuan, which takes up 30% of the total costs of running hotels. So it is high time to implement low carbon hotel management.

Compared with the management of ordinary hotels, the management of hotels in scenic spots is more special and more complicated. Hotels industry is a sector of service industry and its purpose is to offer public service. According to the concept of low carbon tourism, the core idea of hotel management

is “Consumers are the supreme; services come first; services should be people oriented”. Hotels should combine the core idea and “low carbon, low energy consumption and pollution-free” service model and provide tourists with quality services. In addition, implementing low carbon tourism sets some new requirements for the management of hotels in scenic spots. First, internal environment of hotels must be clean, environmental friendly, green and safe. Second, hotels should attach importance to their corporate image, which means they should integrate social benefits with economic benefits. Third, hotels ought to use the concept of low carbon tourism to offer green and environmental friendly services. Fourthly, hotels must use clean and green materials, pay more attention to environmental protection, and be in harmony with the environment.

THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF LOW CARBON HOTEL MANAGEMENT

High tech facilities need spreading; services need improving

In China, many High Stars hotels can reach the international level in terms of basic facilities and services. But the gap of employing high tech facilities between Chinese hotels and foreign hotels is quite huge. For example, it is difficult to deal with the indoor temperature for hotels. Because the changes of the number of people in a room has some influences on the indoor temperature and the changes can not be handled well only with a central air conditioner. Fundamentally, hotels need to improve their facilities and service from the perspective of high tech and low carbon. Basically, the essential purpose of hotels is to offer service. It is the level of services that can decide whether a hotel can run for a long time. Meanwhile, the services of quite a few hotels in scenic spots cannot match the facilities of the hotels. In a word, a great number of China’s high star hotel has quite a few shortcomings in terms of facilities and services.

The level of internalization needs upgrading

After China joined WTO, its international status has been improving gradually. More and more western countries have a better understanding of China, and more and more foreigners pay a visit to China. However, some China’s hotels don’t make thorough and adequate preparation for foreign tourists. For instance, the difficulties in language sometimes cannot be solved satisfactorily. If hotels cannot deal with language barriers, foreign tourists will be less satisfied with the scenic spots and hotels.

Hotels lack qualified personnel; the quality of the staff needs improving

China’s hotels badly need qualified personnel in the field of management and services. China’s hotel industry began to emerge in the 1980s. While, because of the profound influence of Chinese feudal ideology, few people took hotel industry as a “normal” industry. In terms of attracting qualified personnel, hotels are not as comparable as other industry. Many employees in China’s hotels are middle-aged people. Most of them are not well-educated and their qualities are relatively low. They don’t have a clear idea of new things and high tech products, which reduces the overall level of China’s hotel. As for some scenic spots in Western China, the local economy is undeveloped and the infrastructure is under development. There is no doubt that the hotels there can hardly attract qualified personnel.

Hotels’ enterprise culture is undeveloped

Enterprise culture is the core factor of an enterprise’s development, and the hotel is not an exception. The enterprise culture of hotels is the values that hotels should take their actual situation into consideration and set a certain long-term goals. China’s hotels have been backward in constructing their enterprise cultures. The reasons can be concluded as follow. To begin with, hotels managers pay little attention to the construction of enterprise culture and ignore the huge impact of enterprise culture. Second, some hotels have formed their enterprise cultures, but the cultures do not fit their actual

situations and meet the need of their employees. As a result, the enterprise cultures fail to convince the employees and cannot be expressed by the employees. Last but not least, some hotels' enterprise cultures only focus on economic benefits and set aside social benefits and environmental protection, which is not up to the requirements of low carbon tourism.

SPECIFIC MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTING LOW CARBON HOTEL MANAGEMENT

Performing relevant provisions of low carbon; Formulating clear quality standards and supervision system

With low carbon tourism raised, the relevant principles of low carbon tourism were put forward. Hotels should consider their current situation and set clear and strict quality standards to meet the specific requirements of these principles. Hotels products are the combination of intangible and tangible goods, and it may not be easy to formulate clear standards. For instance, how do customs about the hotel, whether they are satisfied with the services are intangible, and there is no clear standard to judge these intangible products.

This paper comes up with several suggestions for hotels to establish strict low carbon hotel management. First, hotels should give consideration to the current service environment, service quality, equipment and employees and then work out an integrated, strict and standardized quality supervision system. Second, hotels ought to have a clear idea of their service processes and then set service supervision standards, which can make it easier to supervise the services, judge the performance of the employees and improve the quality of the services. Third, hotels must establish complete and integrated quality supervision system and guarantee the execution of the system. *Hotels* should design, organize, and manage the supervision system. The supervision system should be divided into different levels, and each level can supervise other levels. Fourth, hotels ought to find their shortcomings and learn from the advanced ones, making their management more standardized and more objective. Only if hotels have strict quality supervision system can their performance be improved.

Strengthening employees' service consciousness

As a service industry, hotel industry needs high quality service. Service quality is a comprehensive concept, which means whether the services provided by the hotels can meet the demands of customers in terms of use value (mentally, materially). The level of customers' satisfaction can decide hotels' market share and performance. Services should aim at putting consumers in the first place and making full use of the staff. As the paper has mention before, hotel industry is a service industry, and the products of hotels are services; the buyer and user of the services are customers and the providers of the services are the staff. From this point of view, services offered by staff connect hotels and customs, so the relationship between staff and customs are very close. Staff should have a clear idea of their significance in the hotel services, and be clear about their responsibility. Staff also need to insist on the idea that "customers are the supreme" and provide them with high quality service, making every customers of hotels feel at home.

Forming the team of professional staff

Taking an overall view of the current and future development trend, qualified personnel is and will be the focus of the competition between enterprises in every industry. As for hotel industry, qualified personnel are badly needed. According to a survey on "the reason for job-hopping", 48% employees changed their job because of low salary. It can be concluded that a reasonable salary package is very important in attracting and keeping qualified personnel. The assessment of staff salary should include their performance, quality of services and the judgments of customers. The outstanding staff can get high salary. Moreover, hotels should provide staff with well-equipped working environment as well as places for relaxation. Hotel mangers should keep in high spirit and make employees believe that they can have a bright future there. Mangers also need to assign employees the work fits their personalities

and characteristics. There should be some recreational activities in hotels, because these activities can make staff's lives more colorful and promote friendship between them.

Developing enterprise cultures of hotels; establishing the core values

Hotel culture is the culture formed in the long-term operations and featuring values. It mainly includes code of conduct, code of ethics, staff consciousness and customs and habits. Hotel culture influence the working style of managers, and it can also influence the relationship between managers and staff. What's more, hotel culture is the key factor of improving market share and keep qualified personnel. Since low carbon tourism has become more and more popular, hotels ought to focus on low carbon and environmental protection and establish their characteristic culture and values. Only in this way can hotels enjoy both the economic and social benefits.

CONCLUSION

Low carbon tourism is the development trend of hotel management model. Nowadays, many tourists start to try the low carbon, low energy consumption and green way of traveling. Based on this tendency, hotel management model needs changing. The improvement can be achieved through several perspectives, like service quality, qualified personnel, services for foreigners and enterprise culture. Hotels should study cases and do field investigation on low carbon tourism. They ought to learn from advanced foreign hotels and work out hotel management model. Hotels must improve themselves by improving the quality of services, attracting and keeping qualified personnel, establishing the service quality supervision system and forming hotel culture.

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