

Book Review

Sustainability, Social Responsibility, and Innovations in the Hospitality Industry

KEYWORDS

Hospitality, Innovation, Social Responsibility, Sustainability, Tourism

Reviewed by George Ferrara, College of Graduate Education and Counseling, Niagara University, Lewiston, NY, USA

ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, corporate social responsibility and sustainability are the key competitive advantages. With the increased competition in the business world today, organizations must derive ways to remain relevant and competitive in their respective industries (Shintaku, 2005). This book ambitiously explores the use of sustainability and social responsibility innovations as elements of maintaining a competitive advantage in the hotel and tourism industry. The author has gathered talented scholars to write a 15-chapter book, which is applicable both in the classroom and in the industry to solve problems. The essays in this book are very relevant to the issues existing in the tourism industry today.

REVIEW

Visually, the book is properly laid out, appealing, and well organized into eight sections including forward, about editors, contents, a list of contributors, preface, 15 essays, appendix, and the index. These sections are arranged appropriately and in accordance with the intended audience. The different chapters of the book contain essays by different contributors addressing the sustainability and social responsibility as used by organizations in the tourism industry to gain a competitive advantage. The book offers readers a comprehensive coverage of the main concepts from the perspective of different businesses and countries. Due to the constraint of space, this review will only touch on 5 of the 15 chapters in the book.

In chapter 1, Darnall looks at how certification and eco-standards can be used to create a competitive advantage for a luxury resort. The chapter concentrates on the Damai Resort located in Indonesia. Such a resort should be accessible by any interested person. The chapter describes how eco standards are applied in the resort to attract more guests. To maintain a competitive advantage, the resort must increase occupancy and other revenues. The intent here is to attract more guests by setting high eco standards and then sustaining those standards. The idea of sustainability is key in such a scenario. With the introduction of the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) back in 2011, all businesses must report their sustainability activities (Parsa, 2015). Organizations are expected to integrate sustainability activities into their operations. Darnall shows how the Damai is integrating sustainability activities into its operations to create a competitive advantage.

In chapter 2, Sorensen et al. look at how one can improve community-based tourism without affecting the high-quality experiences that tourists come to experience in such places. For community-based tourism, people experience cultural backgrounds and other authentic experiences. Developing such a place to meet sustainability and competitive advantages is not easy. The chapter focuses on a Viking village located in Denmark where ecotourism is not yet fully embraced. In recent years, ecotourism has expanded, but not all people have fully embraced it (Fennell, 2014). To remain competitive, all tourism destinations must develop without affecting what attracted people to the site in the first place. The chapter explores how to study such a community-based tourism initiative and make it sustainable. The chapter adopts the definition by Wallace and Pierce [6] that ecotourism is traveling to undisturbed natural areas for enjoyment, study, and offering assistance (Parsa, 2015). The change from the traditional view of ecotourism can be used as a competitive advantage for community tourism.

Chapter 6 introduces the importance of tourism in Tennessee and incorporates the definition of sustainability. As defined by the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism is tourism that accounts for its current and future social, economic, and environmental impacts by addressing the needs of the customers, industry, and the environment of the communities. For sustainability, one must consider the customers, the community, and the environment for social responsibility is very important. The chapter offers a new view on the use of the terms sustainability, sustainable development, and sustainable tourism. Though some people tend to use the terms interchangeably in their literature, the chapter elaborates on the difference between the terms. The chapter also explores the different problems faced by tourist destinations affecting their sustainability efforts. The study conducted identifies areas which marketing teams can explore in attracting tourists, and how sustainable green attraction is, in fact, the image of the Ruby Falls. The study demonstrates how sustainability can create a competitive advantage.

The environmental impacts due to tourism development are presented in chapter 7. With a direct view on the coastline tourism development in Spain, the chapter explores the negative effects tourism development can have on the environment. Though there is a need for tourism development for sustainability, doing so at the expense of other economic areas is not viable. Spain depends largely on its coastline for tourism. However, over the years, as defined by Manning et al. [4], sustainable tourism development should meet the present and future needs. Developing the present at the expense of the future is not sustainability (Parsa, 2015). The chapter explains the major environmental problems derived from developing tourism in the coastal areas and how they can be improved to keep up with the coastal integration while avoiding environmental deterioration. Most of the countries depend on coastal lines for tourism development, which makes this chapter relevant to the issues facing tourism today.

Cultural heritage attracts many tourists today. As discussed in Chapter 15, Cultural heritage tourism results to many people visiting specific areas and causing irreversible damages. To prevent the deterioration of resources, attention must be paid to the heritage type and its tourism entailment (Du Cros & McKercher, 2015). Chapter 15 presents such cases and how the law can ensure that resources are not depleted. Sustaining cultural heritage tourism can only be done by protecting the resources using law. Consider a monument heritage. For sustainability, the monument should be protected by law to sustain it as a tourism attraction. Given that cultural heritage tourism exists in many countries, sustainability of such places thus becomes an important aspect of discussion in this century. Such heritages must be preserved and protected from individuals and communities willing to destroy them for personal purposes.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the contributing authors, editors, support staff, and everyone else involved in the making of this book did a commendable job. This book is worth reading not only by people in the field but also by those in the tourism classroom. Different studies undertaken by researchers in different countries show the diverse management of emerging issues in tourism. The major aim of the book was to demonstrate how sustainability of tourism differs depending on the tourism type, country, and the impacts of tourism development on the environment and economy. The book contributes in closing the knowledge gap between tourism development and sustainability in different environments. It offers a general view on how innovation and sustainability can play a role in creating a competitive advantage.

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H.G. Parsa and Vijaya Narapareddy

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