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**KAZAKHSTAN TOURIST BRAND CREATION –
FROM COUNTRY TO REGION!**

The current stage in the development of the world tourism market shows that competition between tourist destinations regarding investments, information, transport and tourist flows, environmental, economic, social and cultural projects, ideas and, of course, specialists with value in the labor market is becoming more acute. Further, according to experts' forecasts, interregional competition will intensify, and in the best position will be those of the tourist regions that not only possess the claimed regional resources, but also will be able to use them with benefit for their development. In the conditions of such interregional competition, the role of the formation of one's own individuality, allowing the tourist destination to attract and increase resources for its development, increases. Thus, the relevance of the theme of creating a tourism brand is determined by a new stage in the development of society, accompanied by the growth of the influence of mass media and the formation of brand perception as a new intangible asset creating added value and a new competitive advantage. The creation of a tourist brand is, in a sense, also a requirement of time, determined by the growing strength of market relations in the context of globalization.

The purpose of the article is to demonstrate the primary role of the construction of the country's tourism brand in the development of the Kazakhstan tourist industry. The authors provide a multi-level system of marketing strategy for promoting the country's tourism brand at the level of the country, region and product; suggest specific steps and mechanisms for its creation; give examples of foreign practice; outline the vision of the country's tourism product line at the regional level and with a single link to the common brand.

The construction of the country's tourism brand and high-quality effective implementation of the marketing strategy for its promotion will increase the flow of foreign tourists and bring the industry to a more developed level.

Key words: brand, branding, tourist brand, destination, tourism, logo, travel product.

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Қазақстанның туристік брендин құру – елден өңірлерге!

Әлемдік туризм нарығын дамытудың қазіргі кезеңі туристік бағыттар арасындағы инвестициялар, ақпарат, көлік және туристік ағындар, экологиялық, экономикалық, әлеуметтік және мәдени жобалар, идеялар және, әрине, еңбек нарығындағы құндылығы бар мамандар арасындағы бәсекелестік күрделене түсуде. Бұдан басқа, сарапшылардың болжамдарына сәйкес, аймақаралық бәсекелестік күшейе түседі, ал ең жақсы жағдайда, аймақтық ресурстарға иелік

етпей, сонымен қатар оларды дамытуға пайдасы бар туристік аймақтардың жағдайы жақсы болады. Мұндай аймақаралық бәсекелестік жағдайында, туристік бағытты тартуға және оны дамыту үшін ресурстарды ұлғайтуға мүмкіндік беретін жеке даралықты қалыптастырудың рөлі арта түседі. Осылайша, туристік бренд құру тақырыбының өзектілігі бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарының ықпалының өсуімен және брендті қабылдауды қосымша құнды және жаңа бәсекелік артықшылықты құрайтын жаңа материалдық емес актив ретінде қалыптастыруымен бірге қоғам дамуының жаңа кезеңімен анықталады. Туристік бренд құру – бір жағынан, жаһандану тұрғысынан нарықтық қатынастардың күшеюімен айқындалатын уақыттың талабы. Мақаланың мақсаты қазақстандық туристік индустрияны дамытуда елдің туристік бренді құрылысының басты рөлін көрсету болып табылады. Авторлар елдің туризм брендин – елдің, аймақтың және өнімнің деңгейін көтермелеу үшін маркетингтік стратегияның көп деңгейлі жүйесін ұсынады; оны құрудың нақты қадамдары мен тетіктерін ұсынуға; шетел тәжірибесінің мысалдарын келтіру; аймақтық деңгейдегі туристік өнімдер желісін және ортақ брендке бірыңғай сілтеме арқылы көзқарас қалыптастыру. Елдің туристік брендин құру және оның маркетингтік стратегиясын тиімді іске асыру үшін шетелдік туристер ағыны артып, индустрияны барынша дамыған деңгейге жеткізеді.

Түйін сөздер: бренд, брендинг, туристік бренд, тағайындау, туризм, логотип, туристік өнім.

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Создание туристического бренда Казахстана – от страны к региону!

Современный этап развития мирового туристического рынка свидетельствует о том, что обостряется конкуренция между туристическими дестинациями в отношении инвестиций, информационных, транспортных и туристических потоков, экологических, экономических, социальных и культурных проектов, идей и, конечно же, специалистов, имеющих ценность на рынке труда. В дальнейшем, по прогнозам экспертов, межрегиональная конкуренция будет усиливаться, а в лучшем положении окажутся те из туристических регионов, которые не только обладают востребованными региональными ресурсами, но и сумеют с выгодой для своего развития воспользоваться ими. В условиях такой межрегиональной конкуренции возрастает роль формирования собственной индивидуальности, позволяющей туристической дестинации привлекать и наращивать ресурсы для своего развития. Таким образом, актуальность темы создания туристического бренда обусловлена новой степенью развития общества, сопровождающейся ростом влияния средств массовой коммуникации и формированием восприятия бренда как нового нематериального актива, создающего дополнительную ценность и новое конкурентное преимущество. Создание туристического бренда – это, в некотором смысле, также требование времени, определяемое усиливающейся силой рыночных отношений в условиях глобализации.

Цель статьи – продемонстрировать первоочередную роль построения туристического бренда страны в развитии казахстанской туристской отрасли. Авторы приводят многоуровневую систему маркетинговой стратегии продвижения туристического бренда страны – на уровне страны, региона и продукта; предлагают конкретные шаги и механизмы по ее созданию; приводят примеры зарубежной практики; обрисовывают видение по туристической продуктовой линейке страны на региональном уровне и с единой увязкой к общему бренду.

Построение туристического бренда страны и качественная эффективная реализация маркетинговой стратегии по его продвижению позволит увеличить потоки зарубежных туристов и вывести отрасль на более развитый уровень.

Ключевые слова: бренд, брендинг, туристический бренд, дестинация, туризм, логотип, турпродукт.

Introduction

Throughout the world, tourism demonstrates high growth rates, contributes to a significant improvement in living conditions of the population and sustainable development of the country. Thanks to tourism, cash flows to the country are increased, new jobs are created. In Kazakhstan, tourism is at the stage of its formation. The presence of rich natural resources, historical monuments and attractions can not yet be represented in a worthy manner in the world tourism market in conditions of high competition. The development process is significantly hampered by the lack of a positive image of the country formed. Currently, preliminary work is being done to create a Kazakhstan tourist brand at the state level.

The object of the study is Kazakhstan, as a brand-destination. The subject of the study is the creation of a tourist brand of Kazakhstan. The purpose of this study is to determine the principles of building a tourist brand of Kazakhstan at the level of the country, region and product. The objectives of the study include: analysis of current problems in the construction of the country's tourism brand; a review of foreign practices; Proposal of the main mechanisms and principles for the construction of the country's tourism brand.

Materials and methods

The methodological sequence of the study is presented in the article as follows. Initially, the theory of research of the tourism industry and its role in the development of the country on the basis of the method of generalization of the studied data is considered. The result is the proposed structure for the creation of a tourism brand in Kazakhstan. The main result is the identification of the necessary sequence of the formation of a tourist brand – from the country to the region and tourism products, where a single idea, a single slogan and a single message to the consumer should be through. At the next stage of the research, an attempt is made to consider the main directions for the formation of a brand transforming into a comprehensive strategy for its development. The result of the research is the determination of the directions of the brand development through the increase of the activity of market subjects. Further, the key ideas for the development of a tourist product are substantiated in the context of its improvement and modernization. In accordance with this sequence of studies, we will consider the creation of a tourist brand in the Republic of Kazakhstan in theoretical and practical aspects.

Literature review

Unlike many management technologies, the concept of constructing a tourism brand is not a product of fundamental or applied research, but arises from the rapidly growing number of disparate practices of specific territories that, based solely on their experience and calculations, are engaged in brand building. Often this happens almost spontaneously, intuitively, without project development and budget planning. However, despite the fact that there is already a lot of branding practice in the world, the system theory of territorial brandbuilding, which would summarize practical experience, gave an assessment of tools and technologies, based on specific successful examples, is still missing. In the works of such specialists as S.Anholt, K.Asplud, T.Ahelis, T. Burtseva, I.Vazhenina, T.Mihan, I.Oleinik, A.Pankrukhin, there are studies of only certain areas of territorial branding, however, the system theory of brand management of the tourist Destination is currently not formed.

There are several directions in the theory of branding. One of them is connected with the name of David Ogilvy and the concept of “brand image” proposed by him in the first half of the 50s. Here, the brand is understood as a combination of impressions produced by consumers (Randall J., 2003).

As the theory of branding evolved, many interpretations of the term “brand” arose. If earlier the term was interpreted mainly as a sign promoting the identification of goods and bearing a certain meaning and association, then the understanding of the brand as a complex phenomenon involving many components (Anholt S., 2008) came to replace it. The fullest disclosure of the meaning of the term “brand” in the works of Jeffrey Rendell, who combined two different approaches: the brand as the core of the rightholder's strategy for it and the brand as a whole image in the mind of the target audience. Thus, in the broad sense, the term “brand” can be understood as a stable impression, a whole image that arises in the consciousness of the target audience at every contact with the trademark (own name), symbolic means associated with this trademark (own name) and contributing to the most full achievement of the goals facing the rightholder of the trademark (own name). And branding will be understood as the management and control of the process of creating a whole image in the minds of the target audience (Randall J., 2003). If as the main object of the process of building a brand to consider a tourist destination,

then the brand will be understood as a unique and competitive image of the territory for domestic and international positioning as an attractive place for visits and tourism. And branding will be called a systematic process of coordinating the actions, behavior, investments, innovations and communications of the territory to implement a strategy of competitive identity (Hall D., 1999). The term “tourist brand” has not been methodologically studied in full measure and, as a rule, the tourist destination is perceived more as a commodity, and tourists as buyers (Pankrukhin A.P., 2006). World practice shows that the most desirable

type of relationship between a tourist destination and a target audience is when consumers become actively cooperating partners, and the territory is transformed into a single image with a developed infrastructure and services.

An integrated approach to brand development was proposed by Simon Anholt. The Territory brand by Anholt Hexagon includes 6 elements, the work with which contributes to the formation of a complete competitive identity of the territory: tourism, exports, investment, management systems, heritage and culture, and local residents, as shown in Figure 1 (Anholt C., 2004).

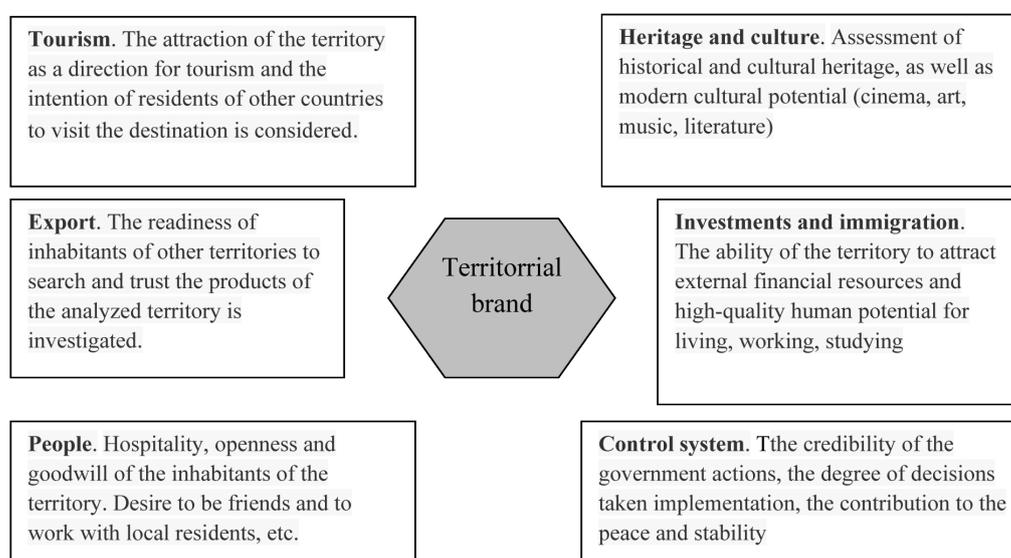


Figure 1 – Model of the hexagon of the territorial brand by S. Anholt (Anholt C., 2004).

This model translates the position that the development of tourism is not the only priority goal in the development of the brand: there are so-called “sub-sections” in the brand architecture aimed at destroying unfavorable opinions and stereotypes in various areas of the life of the destination. The authors of this article consider the creation of a tourist brand on the basis of a hierarchical model from the country level to the regional one with a single product idea, which will be considered below.

Results and discussions

To assess the role of the tourism industry for the economy of Kazakhstan, we suggest turning to the figures of the World Council for Tourism and Travel. The amount of gross added value, created by tourism, grows annually. So, in 2013, compared

to the previous period, its growth amounted to 51 billion tenge, reaching 415.1 billion tenge, compared to 2010 – the amount increased by 155.6 billion tenge. (Tourism of Kazakhstan 2008-2012: a statistical compilation). Direct contribution to the economy in 2014 amounted to 629 billion tenge, more precisely 1.7% of GDP. The total contribution of tourism to GDP in 2014 was KZT 2.041 billion or 5.6% of GDP. In addition, according to the World Council, the country’s tourism industry in 2014 alone created 152,000 jobs, 1.8% of the country’s total employment. The service of one tourist generates about 9 jobs in total (Albekova A., 2016). According to the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index, Kazakhstan has improved its position in this sector, rising from 93rd place in 2011 to 88 in 2013 from 140 countries (Blanke J., 2013: 214p.).

However, despite the fact that Kazakhstan has a huge tourist potential, we can speak about the tourism brand of Kazakhstan at the moment only in the long run, unfortunately. What do we mean by the tourist brand? A travel brand is the creation of a positive image of the country, both in the international tourist community, and the promotion of a strong national image within the country. This is also a certain way of communication, establishing trustful relationships with target audiences (investors, tourists and local residents). We suggest turning to the experience of Western

countries in building a tourism brand through the analysis of logos as the basis of the strategy.

Spanish tourist sign “España – I need Spain”. The logo in the form of an image of the sun in colors of the national flag allows to completely transfer associations with Spain (Tourist brands: Western experience, 2016). In our opinion, this is one of the most successful and recognizable logos and slogans, besides the skillful combination of the logo in variations using situational slogans does not lose the integrity of the brand recognition.



Figure 2 – Tourist logo and slogan of Spain

Tourist brand of the USA. The slogan “Discover America” attracts tourists not to separate regions of the USA, but to the country as a whole. The logo is a “USA” inscription consisting of numerous multicolored dots. The creators of the brand said that the United States provides unlimited opportunities for everyone and the brand as it says: “The US welcomes everyone!” (Anholt S., 2010). This is an example of a successful, in our opinion, construction of a tourism brand on the basis of a single understandable recognizable idea and a clear message to the consumer.



Figure 4 – Tourist logo and slogan of Great Britain



Figure 3 – Tourist logo and slogan of USA

Great Britain has as a sign “Welcome to Great Britain” with a relatively long history, and more modern signs of the series “Visit Britain” (Dinnie K., 2003). In our opinion, the unique unique style of the brand is not very clearly expressed here.

The Finnish tourist brand “Visit Finland”, recently rebranded, has a logo in the form of a somewhat abstract image. Perhaps, in this way, the creators portrayed the image of silence with which Finland is associated. Trips to Finland for quiet and calm are advertised on many marketing channels in Europe and Asia (Gronow K., 2017) But full of confidence that the sense of positioning is conveyed visually in the logo is not, perhaps because the image is not supported by the slogan. “Visit Finland” – this is a general enough wording against a background of not quite clear image.



Figure 5 – Tourist logo and slogan of Finland

However, tourism brands are created not only for countries, but also for individual cities and localities (Kavaratzis M., 2005). In this case, it is necessary to clearly understand the hierarchy of brand building – the brand and sub-brand should not contradict each other, but rather maintain a single message, strengthen it, remaining unified and recognizable as a result of situational variations.

Turning to the Kazakhstani realities, it should be noted that while Kazakhstan does not have its own tourism brand, but work on this is actively carried out. In this article, we propose to consider the creation of a tourist brand of Kazakhstan from the position of integrated marketing communications at different levels: country, regional, cluster and grocery.

Here are the main vectors at the country level in the creation of the tourist brand of Kazakhstan.

1. Kazakhstan needs an effective and memorable tourist brand, which will clearly convey the specifics of our region. Kazakhstan is a multinational, friendly country with a stable political situation in the world community. It is very important to consolidate behind Kazakhstan the image of a secure country that pays much attention to the development of international tourism. In addition, Kazakhstan tourism – it's beautiful nature, a variety of leisure (from mountain to beach holidays), national flavor and identity, the attendant modern infrastructure. It is important to single out a single cross-cutting idea at all levels from country to region and product, as well as to have the possibility of further variations of the logo and slogan depending on possible events and events.

Also an important step is to develop not only the tourism brand of Kazakhstan, but a marketing strategy. It is very important to go from the image of the country as a tourist object to individual regions and clusters, not vice versa. In Kazakhstan, this is happening now, when there are numerous attempts to create a tourist image of individual regions and clusters without the existing base of the formed tourist image of the country.

2. It is necessary to ensure the qualified work of a single body for the management of the country's tourism industry. During the period from 1990 to 2016, the tourist industry was transferred from the department to the department six times. And with the regular change in departmental subordination, both the internal structure and continuity, as well as the progress in the implementation of plans and programs, took into account changes in the budget. In July 2017 the national company of JSC «Kazakh tourism» was established (Albekova A., 2016). Its main functions are:

- promotion of Kazakhstan as an international tourist destination (territory for visiting tourists);
- professional management of the tourist brand of Kazakhstan;
- formation and implementation of marketing strategy;
- attraction of inbound and internal tourists;
- stimulating the flow of foreign and domestic investment in the tourism industry;
- Minority participation in investment projects;
- Creation of centers for training qualified specialists for the tourism industry.

– As additional functions, it is planned that in 2018 the Organization will act as a lessee operator under the Support Program of the domestic manufacturer.

- The organization will act as coordinator of the pilot project on hunting and trophy tourism within the framework of PPP.

The most important, in our opinion, is the budget of the national company and its phased development. From the point of view of marketing, the priority items of expenditure should be attributed not to advertising on international sites, but first of all, the creation of a tourist brand of Kazakhstan: the development of a logo, a slogan, an image and a strategic concept. Otherwise, advertising costs will be in vain – first brand, then promotion. This work requires high qualification of the developers, immersion in the national specifics. It is important here not to repeat the practice of neighbors, confining ourselves to holding national competitions to create a tourist logo of the country. Yes, such contests are useful as a common vision of the people that can inspire developers, but it should be understood that not just a picture, a logo is created, apart from an integrated marketing strategy for the tourist brand of the whole country, in which sub-brands – regions, clusters and further on the hierarchy themselves tour products. In addition, the strategy includes a full view of the development of each region and cluster, planned investments and costs for each, thus creating a general marketing budget. It is important to have a common marketing strategy and budget for each individual region.

3. It is necessary to more effectively promote the tourist image of the country, which Kazakhstan lacks in the international tourist market during international events. Kazakhstan regularly conducts international level events of political, sporting, cultural significance. Among the most important events can be noted the OSCE Summit 2010, the VII Winter Asian Games 2011, the World Weightlifting Championship 2014, the winter stages of the World

Cup in ski jumping from the springboard of 2016, the world championship in women's boxing in 2016, negotiations to resolve the situation in Syria 2017, Winter Universiade-2017, and one of the major world events in Kazakhstan is the international exhibition EXPO-2017 (Abilmazhitova A., 2017). Of course, the maintenance of an influx of visitors within the framework of such events increases the competition between the subjects of the tourist industry, as well as the regions of Kazakhstan, which improves the quality of the services provided (Albekova A., 2016). But if the holding of these events had a strategic approach to building the tourist brand of Kazakhstan, then the effect from them would be much more significant both on the external and internal markets. For example, it is proposed to include a mandatory block for covering tourism products in Kazakhstan, taking into account the seasonality, themes and relevance of the product, the uniform format, purpose, image, and the possibility of a brief «test-drive» excursion for all participants and guests of the event. So, in the framework of EXPO, in addition to standard stands, tour packages, it would be appropriate to make a «living corner» with several hour free trips to the farms with eco-products presented at the exhibition, on eco-tours, with the target audience not only international guests, but also internal customers. In the construction of a tourist brand is an orientation of actions not only to the foreign market, but also to the internal market as well. The inherent pride of the local population over the holding of such large-scale events at their home destination should be supported at the product level, then this will have a wide social impact. Thus, it should be noted that it is very important to actively use alternative marketing tools in product development at similar events, considering their significance for both foreign and domestic tourists, and not only at the expense of the means and efforts of local travel agencies, but with a qualified submission of the main supervisory authority.

4. A key question in this subject is qualified personnel who have the skills of hospitality, management, marketing, sales, and organizing events in the field of tourism. If we talk about existing personnel and, in general, about the educational program, then the following figures should be cited. At present, there is a tendency to reduce the number of universities that train specialists for tourism. If in 2012 there were 54 such educational institutions, in 2013 – 51, then in 2014 they significantly decreased – to 40 (Albekova A., 2016). Partly this is due to the closure of the specialty,

in part because the universities themselves have not confirmed compliance with the requirements of the MOES and have not extended the licenses. One can also note the isolation of the existing educational program from the requirements of the modern tourist market. We are experiencing an acute shortage of qualified personnel.

To tour programs were interesting to the tourist of any level, professional work of guides, interpreters, guides is necessary. That's why regular trainings, motivational programs for freelancing workers of this sphere, for young specialists are so important at this stage. At the same level as the work of the main department for tourism, which should form similar programs for tourism workers, the question arises of attracting foreign experts for obtaining advanced experience and knowledge.

Now let us consider the regional level, which in terms of marketing, in our opinion, implies the following transformation:

1. Identify the tourist identification feature of the region and present so that it is at the same time integrated with the general tourist brand of the country, but has additional value. It is important to understand that no region can not go in isolation from the general tourist image concept, it should be an umbrella principle, but disclosed at the regional level in more detail.

2. To provide a worthy quality of tourist service in each tourist region in the field of food, transport, hotel services. The subjects of the tourism industry do not fully take advantage of the opportunities of the country's advantageous geographical position. Taking into account that the most popular tourist places, such as resort areas, tourist bases, sanatoriums, national parks, tourist routes, are located outside the regional centers, one of the main factors in choosing a place of rest is the conditions for a comfortable and safe journey to the destination (Kiryanko A.V. , 2009). But, according to the Committee of Roads of the MIR RK, in the country only 19% of regional and regional roads have a good condition. In other words, today many of Kazakhstan's sights are difficult to access.

3. Develop a unified structure for tourism management in the regions. At the regional level, the tourism industry often refers to a tourism department with a staff of two or three people to various administrations under akimats: sports, entrepreneurship, trade and external relations. So, tourism is in charge of independent management at akimats of Almaty, Almaty, Akmola and Mangistau oblasts. At the same time, there is no single approach to organizing the management of tourist activities in the regions.

Considering the product level directly, the following should be noted:

1. It is necessary to develop package tour products, various ready-made integrated circuits for their combination within the framework of a single holistic concept, as well as a motivation program for tour operators to work in the domestic market. Kazakhstan has both infrastructure and products for tourism development. But the institutional framework is not sufficiently integrated, making Kazakhstan, as a destination, that is, as a center with all sorts of amenities, facilities and services, suffers from poorly developed tourism products and lack of advancement. The issues of marketing promotion of tourism products should also have a common format and purpose. It is important to understand that the end user has a clear message from different communication channels.

2. One of the most attractive tourist products that exist in each region is ecological tourism. This is one of the priority areas, including travel to places with relatively untouched nature. According to a survey conducted by the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs in 2015 as part of a study of the mechanisms for the development of entrepreneurship in the field of tourism, an increase in visitors was revealed in all state national nature protected parks (SNNPs). For example, in Bayanaulsky National Park in 2013, 97175 people visited, and in 2014 the number of visitors increased to 134600 people. The Ile-Alaute National Park in 2013 was visited by 91310 people, and in 2014 already 119547 people (Albekova A., 2016). The development of ecological tourism in remote settlements, positively affects the welfare of the local population. Since ecotourism implies the maintenance of the traditional way of life, the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, accordingly, tourists consume local products, goods and services. Taking into account the availability of natural healing sources in various regions of Kazakhstan, such as therapeutic mud baths, hot rodon springs, medicinal mineral waters, pantoherapy, salt mine and medical holding in Astana, Kazakhstan has the potential to develop medical and health tourism, attracting not only Kazakhstani people, but also foreign citizens. According to the Committee on Statistics of the Ministry of National Economy, in recent years the number of visitors served by hotels and hotels, the purpose of which has been the

medical and recreational procedures, has more than doubled.

3. Business tourism also occupies one of the most important segments of the market. In 2014, the number of visitors served in accommodation sites that visited Kazakhstan for business and professional purposes was more than 54%. Of the total number – 3.8 million visitors came for business purposes – 2.1 million people (Albekova A., 2016). In this regard, Kazakhstan is attractive for investing in the construction of high-end business hotels. So, in recent years, such large hotel chains as Hilton, Marriott and Ritz-Carlton have come to the market.

Conclusion

Thus, summarizing all of the above, let us cite the advantages that the creation of a strong tourist brand entails:

- tourists who know about the destination-brand are more willing to travel long distances to visit the respective territory;
- the presence of the brand contributes to the greater success of new products, activities or services, both within the sectoral tourism level and within the country image;
- a successful brand provides additional leverage when establishing partnerships with investors, as well as for obtaining international grants and public investments;
- Strong brand has a serious social aspect in the country, creates a sense of pride, loyalty to the tourist destination;

But it should be noted that only in case of competent well-coordinated work at all levels, we will be able to count on a full-fledged return in figures from the creation of the country's tourism brand. Do not forget about the stage of implementation of planned activities, because the brand and its promotion will do its job – the flow of foreign tourists will increase, but the most crucial period will come later when tourists receive real information on the spot and ensure either subsequent tourist flows by including “word of mouth” or all efforts can be considered vain. It is important that all systems work as efficiently as possible, then we can get an increase in the flow of tourists from all potential markets and have a synergistic effect on both internal socio-economic aspects and external ones.

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