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CONSUMER LOYALTY – A COMPONENT OF COMPETITIVENESS OF RESTAURANT BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

The ability of a restaurant business enterprise to compete in the restaurant business directly depends on the competitiveness of the restaurant services offered and the set of economic methods of the enterprise's activities that significantly influence the results of competition.

In recent years, there has been an economic and political crisis in Ukraine, a decline in real incomes, a change in social standards and basic values of the population.

Mentioned aspects are increasingly relevant the search for effective methods and tools for improving the competitiveness of the restaurant business enterprise. Considering the specifics of the restaurant business enterprises, we can say that the level of consumer loyalty is a competitive advantage of the restaurant business enterprise, and the determinant of valuation is its competitive asset. Awareness of these circumstances has led to increased scientific interest of scientists and practitioners in the issue of assessing the strength of the influence of competitive pressure on consumer loyalty.

The degree of consumer loyalty to a restaurant service depends on the ability of the restaurant business enterprise to ensure that it meets the consumer's expectations. If the properties of the restaurant products do not meet the expectations, the consumer is dissatisfied and the probability of visiting the restaurant establishment is reduced to zero.

If the property of the received service meets the expectations, the consumer becomes satisfied, therefore, loyal to the restaurant establishment, and if the properties of the received restaurant service exceed the expectations, the consumer enjoys, and the probability that he will become a regular customer of the restaurant establishment, approaches 100%.

Consumer loyalty is a dominant factor in ensuring a constant demand for the products of the restaurant business enterprise. Features of the restaurant service are the complexity of its structure and the duality of its nature. The complexity of the structure is the fact that the restaurant service consists of a large number of components and parameters, different in nature and importance for the consumer. The orientation of restaurant businesses to increase the level of loyalty of their customers gives grounds to draw conclusions about the stability of their competitive position.

The key determinants of the level of loyalty of consumers of restaurants are the products, staff, atmosphere, price and image.

The main indicators of the determinants:

- «Products» are the complexity of the menu, the variety of dishes, the quality of dishes, the quality of dishes' decor, the sufficiency of dishes, the uniqueness of dishes, the environmental friendliness of products for the cooking of dishes;

- «Staff» - the level of professional training of service personnel, staff's compliance with hygiene standards, skill of service, friendliness of staff, staff ethics, speed of service staff response to customer requests, knowledge of menu dishes and their composition, tact and correctness of service personnel;

- «Atmosphere» - the originality and harmony of hall design, the stylistic unity of equipment, tableware, table sets, sanitary condition of rooms, tableware, linen, microclimate, corporate identity, the efficiency of table placement;

- «Price» - the level of prices for dishes, fair price to quality ratio, the development of a system of price discounts, the presence of a permanent customer card, the conversion of questioned customers into real customers, the effectiveness of marketing campaigns;

- «Image» - the business reputation of the restaurant business enterprise, the popularity of the restaurant business enterprise, the image of products and services of the restaurant business enterprise, the level of innovation of the restaurant establishment, the intensity of reports about the restaurant establishment in the media and the Internet, the participation in various social events, the volume of satisfied customers.

These determinants and indicators make it possible to comprehensively assess the level of consumer loyalty to a restaurant business establishment. Carrying out such an assessment in comparison with competitors will allow to determine both the competitive advantages of the restaurant business establishment and the possible directions of increasing customer loyalty, which should be taken into account in the formation of the competitive strategy of the restaurant business establishment.

Knowledge about consumer loyalty is of strategic importance in ensuring the stability and success of the restaurant business establishment. The results of the assessment of the level of consumer loyalty are the basis for the formation of an effective competitive strategy of the restaurants and the target sales volume.