ACCESS IT

ACCESS-IT
Innovation for Accessible Tourism
in Natural and Rural Areas

Project No: 2019-1-PL01-KA202-065140

How to address the requirements of the target customer segments

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Project Partners

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1. The WHAT

Activities aimed at developing the offer in the field of accessible tourism contribute not only to the development of the offer of individual institutions or companies, but also strengthen the attractiveness of rural and natural regions in the long term.

A properly prepared offer of accessible tourism contributes to the enhancement of the attractiveness of places and enables them to be directed to new target groups.

However, it is important to properly identify recipients of accessible tourism services and to verify that the offer properly meets the expectations of customer groups with special requirements.

In this context, it is important to understand concepts such as: target market, segmenting the market, target group.

1.1. What is a Target Market?

A target market refers to a group of potential customers to whom a company wants to sell its products and services. This group also includes specific customers to whom a company directs its marketing efforts.

- A target market is one part of the total market for a good or service.
- Consumers who make up a target market share similar characteristics including buying geography, buying power, demographics, and incomes.
- Identifying the target market is an essential step for any company in the development of a marketing plan.
- Not knowing who the target market is could cost a lot of money and time for a company.

1.2. Segmenting the Market

Each target market can be divided into groups that are classified based on various characteristics. These features could be age, gender, place of residence, earnings, relationship status, religion, origin, etc. It can be assumed that consumers who share common features, e.g. are of a similar age, live in the same geographical space, have similar education, will be interested in buying similar products or services. Therefore,

the preparation of the offer of each company should take into account the features of its potential clients.

1.3. Target Group

The target group is the group of customers who directly benefit from the service or product. Customers classified in the target group are linked by common features, such as: age, gender, origin, place of residence, education, etc. Based on the analysis of common features of customers, it can be assumed what products or services they will need to meet specific needs.

2. The WHO

There are various groups of consumers in the market of tourist services. They are classified based on specific needs. There are also consumers with special preferences resulting from the need for a specific type of communication with the environment, moving around, obtaining information, paying particular attention to physical or mental health, etc. These people are the target group of accessible tourism.

There are four subgroups of customers looking for accessible travel services:

- people with access requirements related to physical impairments;

- people with access requirements related to sensory impairments (e.g. vision, hearing);

- people with access requirements related to cognitive impairments;

- people with access requirements related to long-term health conditions.

Institutions identifying themselves as accessible should analyse their offer strictly taking into account the specific access requirements of people who belong to these groups.

Institutions that may be interested in extending the offer with accessible tourism services may include:

- hotels, hostels, motels, holiday homes;

- tourist information agencies;

- cultural institutions: community centres, theatres, cinemas, museums;

- restaurants, cafes, bars, eateries;

- places of recreation and relaxation: swimming pools, gyms, playgrounds, public gardens, parks;

- public places: shops, toilets, parking lots;

- travel agencies;

- other.

3. The HOW

3.1. Identification of target groups needs

The desire to create a place that will be accessible to people with specific access requirements calls for a detailed analysis of the needs of the target group. The analysis of the needs of the target group should be designed by taking into account the specificity of the place and its potential guests. It is worth reviewing the list of general guidelines for arranging available facilities that take into account the needs of four target groups, people with access requirements related to:

- physical impairments
- sensory impairments (e.g. vision, hearing)
- cognitive impairments
- long-term health conditions.

A good strategy for verifying whether a company or institution meets the special needs of its clients is an accessibility analysis. The material describes basic facilities, taking into account the specific access requirements of people belonging to the four target groups.

3.2. Addressing access requirements related to physical impairments

3.2.1. Accessible parking

The organisation of the available parking space should take into account the space that is easily accessible for a wheelchair user. An accessible route should be adjacent to the car park, allowing for uninterrupted access to the parking space (pavement, street). A parking space should allow easy movement to the venue to which it belongs. Parking should be properly labelled.

3.2.2. Accessible communication routes

On the premises of the facility (inside and outside), there should be properly prepared communication routes, for example, paths or corridors. The routes of travel should be wide. Any obstacles to movement should be removed. If there are doors on the routes,

they should be automated or equipped with handles that are easy to use by wheelchair users and others with mobility impairments.

3.2.3. Accessible bells, switches, elevator buttons

The accessible building should be equipped with doorbells, light switches, contacts, elevator buttons. All these items must be accessible to wheelchair users.

3.2.4. Accessible doors

A very good solution is to introduce doors that open and close automatically. If it is not possible, e.g. due to the high costs of such solutions, it is worth verifying the location of the handles. All door handles in the building should be located within the reach of the hands of people who use a wheelchair. It is also necessary to ensure that they are easy to use and allow a person with a weaker grip to open the door.

3.2.5. Accessible toilets and bathrooms

The toilets and bathrooms in the building should be large enough to allow people with wheelchairs to move around. The location of washbasins and toilet bowls should be verified so that they can be comfortably used. Access to shower cabins should be possible for people with mobility impairments. It is worth equipping the facility with contactless taps and flushing cisterns. If this is not possible, they should be easy to operate.

3.2.6. Handrails and grabrails for easy movement

It is worth ensuring that the premises of the facility are equipped with handrails to facilitate movement. Grabrails are indispensable in bathrooms and toilets. They can be helpful in bedrooms, on stairs, in corridors.

3.2.7. Rest areas

Providing rest areas within the facility will be of value to all visitors. If such a space is equipped with armchairs and chairs, they should be designed for users with mobility impairments. It is good if the space to rest allows you to safely leave the equipment that facilitates movement.

Checklist:

- The property has available parking

- Spacious and clean communication routes

- Bells, elevator buttons, alarms available for people with mobility difficulties

- Fixing the wash basins and toilet bowls at the appropriate height

- Spacious bathrooms with convenient access to a shower

- Touchless cisterns and taps

- The building is equipped with handrails enabling movement

- Common place to rest, adapted to the needs of people with mobility impairments

3.3. Addressing access requirements related to sensory impairments

3.3.1. Communication strategies with people with hearing impairments

Contact your local deaf association to get in touch with sign language interpreters or for support in designing strategies for communicating with deaf people and people with hearing impairments. If possible, provide information materials about the company or institution prepared in sign language. If this is difficult, it is good to prepare transcriptions of film materials that are used in the organisation. Captions can be helpful for hearing impaired people to receive video messages. Organizing sign language training for company employees is a good practice. If this is not possible, written communication with people with hearing impairments should be facilitated.

3.3.2. Loop system

An audio induction loop (sometimes called a hearing loop) is a system that helps people communicate with hearing-impaired people who use hearing aids. It's a kind of special sound system. The loop uses a magnetic wireless signal that is picked up by the hearing aid and helps you hear the sound properly.

3.3.3. Face to face communication with people with hearing impairments

Disseminate knowledge to staff about good practice for communicating with deaf people and people with hearing impairments. Apply good communication practices, for example: keeping your face visible when talking to a lip-reader; preservation of eye contact, talking to a deaf or hard of hearing person, not an interpreter, use body language to emphasize statements, adapting the method of communication to the request of a person with a hearing impairment (written or verbal), patience and respect will be the best way to reach an agreement.

3.3.4. Guide dogs and other assistance animals

Ensure that a blind person can travel with a guide dog. The same applies to others who have an assistance dog. The dog should be able to accompany them at all times. It cannot be exposed to distractions, e.g. in the form of harassment by other people. The guide dog must have drinking water and a resting place near the accompanying person.

3.3.5. Communication strategies with people who are blind or have visual impairments

All materials used to communicate with customers should be accompanied by an audio commentary or published using Braille. Familiarize yourself with the WCAG rules for the preparation of written information on a website for people with visual impairments (font size, colour contrast, verbal comments, navigation, interaction).

3.3.6. Face to face communication with people with visual impairments

Disseminate knowledge to staff about good practice for communicating with blind people and people with visual impairments. Apply good communication practices, for example: Respect for the space of the guide dog.

Before providing help, make sure that it is needed. Other good practices are: communicating directly to a visually impaired person, describing the events taking place around during communication, creating a safe space without unnecessary obstacles and threats, avoiding unnecessary stressors, e.g. being late.

Checklist:

- The company has a system supporting communication with people with hearing impairments, e.g. a loop system
- Video content in the company is transcribed
- The company established contact with the local deaf association
- The company has visual information materials
- Employees know good practices for communicating with people with hearing impairments
- The website was developed according to the WCAG – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
- Guide dogs/assistance dogs are allowed in the institution or enterprise
- The company provides information materials in audio and/or Braille format
- Employees know good practices for communicating with people with visual impairments

3.4. Addressing access requirements related to cognitive impairments

3.4.1. Easy-to-follow information

Use communication strategies that are simple and easy to understand. If a person has difficulty concentrating and remembering, it is worth providing support in the form of graphic support materials, e.g. pictograms.

3.4.2. Friendly time and space

It is important to allow time and space for communication with people with cognitive impairments. The space should be free of distractions, allowing a quiet conversation without stress. Patience and time are essential.

3.4.3. Communication materials

It is worth preparing a stock of graphic materials, pictograms, charts and diagrams that can support conversations. The building and the area should be equipped with simple visual messages to help users understand the purpose of particular places and equipment.

Checklist:

- The company has visual material supporting communication
- Signs of places and equipment inside and outside the building are easy to understand and legible, with large, clear fonts and good colour contrast.
- There is a distraction-free place in the building/facility where people can rest or talk in peace
- Information materials have been prepared that can be kept by the client if needed.

3.5. Addressing access requirements related to long-term health conditions

3.5.1. Nutrition offer

People suffering from specific health conditions often need a special diet. Some diets require the exclusion of certain nutrients. This often requires appropriate backup facilities in the kitchen, e.g. separate cookware for cooking and preparing meals. Preparing meals for customers who need special diets is a sought-after service.

3.5.2. Contact details for medical emergencies

Have a list of local medical services in case of emergencies. This can provide a sense of security for guests, especially those with long-term health conditions.

3.5.3. Smoking is strictly forbidden

It is important to clearly and categorically announce that smoking is prohibited in and around the premises. Additionally, it is worth providing systems that ensure high air quality in the building. These are important for people with breathing difficulties, e.g. asthmatics.

3.5.4. Rehabilitation and therapy

Rehabilitation facilities, where present, should be accessible for all guests. These can be, for example, activities related to physical rehabilitation, but also various types of therapies: art therapy, hippotherapy, dog therapy, etc.

3.5.5. Volunteers

It is worth inviting volunteers to cooperate with the organisation. Students of various specialised disciplines or professions will be happy to gain experience and, within the framework of cooperation with the organisation, they can support the visitor services, e.g. for people with long-term health conditions, during therapy or rehabilitation.

Checklist:

- Kitchen equipment allows you to prepare meals for people with special nutritional needs
- The company has a range of meals tailored to special needs
- There is a list of cooperating specialists in the organisation and it is regularly verified
- The organisation ensures adequate air quality
- The organisation works with volunteers.

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