The research of gastronomic brand role in St. Petersburg promotion as a tourist destination.

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Tourism - one of the most important resources for the cities, regions and countries development. In today's highly competitive struggle for attention to tourist destinations need to develop new tools to attract the attention of tourists. Such a possibility is widely seen in the development of gastronomic brand territory.

The aim of this paper is a research of the gastronomic brand role of St. Petersburg in the general brand of the city. Gastronomic component - one of the most important resources of tourist area. This confirms the relevance and practical importance of this paper.

The author poses the objectives to find out if existing gastronomic city brands influences on the attractiveness of the tourist area, to identify those gastronomic components who enables to form a complete gastronomic city brand.

The information base for the research are the websites of Russian and foreign travel agencies, data from the website [http://www.tripadvisor.ru], as well as online resources on the main gastronomic events St. Petersburg for 2013, 2014.

At the beginning of the research the main hypothesis was formulated. It has been suggested that the current gastronomic factor of St. Petersburg is not the attractive element in attracting tourists to the city. However, we suppose that the reasons for creating gastronomic city brand are available, but they are not used by travel agencies.

For a more detailed description of the role of the gastronomic brand in the formation of the tourist attraction of St. Petersburg the research was held by Russian and foreign travel companies offering tours to the city. In addition, we analyzed the reviews of individual tourists, posted on the internet portal [http://www.tripadvisor.ru]; were also considered the main gastronomic festivals of St. Petersburg, held in the city during this year and last year.

As a result 71 Russian travel agencies and 50 foreign travel agencies were analyzed that allowed us to obtain a fairly complete picture of the use of the brand in the formation of gastronomic tourism attraction in St. Petersburg. Were reviewed travel agencies in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Omsk, Yekaterinburg, Chelyabinsk, Ryazan, Samara, Perm, Kaluga. During the analysis of travel agencies websites we took into account any mention in the description of the tour of the restaurant, food, product, gastronomic festival associated with gastronomic brand of Saint - Petersburg. According to the results of analysis of Russian travel agencies, a table 1 was compiled.

Table 1 Frequency of gastronomic brands in advertising Russian tourist firms

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Brand | The percentage of companies reporting this brand in its advertising (%) | Total number of links in the advertising of travel agencies |
| Traditional St. Petersburg products | - | 0 |
| Traditional St. Petersburg dishes | - | 0 |
| Restaurants that can take part in the gastronomic brand formation | 7 | 7 |

Source: compiled by the author.

Based on the data obtained from this table, we can conclude that the role of traditional gastronomic St.Petersburg brands such as smelt, candies “Krupskaya” in the promotion of St. Petersburg as a tourist destination is very small. These products are hardly mentioned in the advertisement of Russian travel agencies.

  The same little impact on the brand of St. Petersburg have traditional dishes such as рассольник по-питерски, котлета по-пожарски. During the analysis of Russian travel agencies websites we have seen the similar references.

The St. Petersburg restaurants are in the better position. Despite the fact that 7% of travel agencies mention some restaurants in its advertising, it is not enough to have a strong impact on attracting tourists to the city.

In addition to Russian travel agencies 50 websites of foreign travel agencies have been analyzed (the United States, England, Scotland, Germany, Canada) and the results were also compiled a summary table 2.

Table 2 Frequency of gastronomic brands in the advertising of foreign tourist firms

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Brand | The percentage of companies reporting this brand in its advertising (%) | Total number of links in the advertising of travel agencies |
| Traditional St. Petersburg products | - | 0 |
| Traditional St. Petersburg dishes | - | 0 |
| Restaurants that can take part in the gastronomic brand formation  | 32 | 23 |

Source: compiled by the author.

On the basis of the data presented, it is possible to sum up that the traditional St. Petersburg products as smelt, candy factory “Krupskaya” have the very little importance in the attractiveness of tourist destinations formation. The same conclusions can be drawn about the traditional dishes of St. Petersburg (St. Petersburg rassolnik, Pozharsky cutlet). Russian travel agencies do not point it in advertisement.

The next step of the research the famous online resource with reviews of individual tourists was investigated [http://www.tripadvisor.ru]. Analysis of reviews of individual tourists took place in the "Forum" and in "restaurants of St. Petersburg." In this case, consider the number of tourists references of branded restaurants in the city ("Russian Vodka Room", "Palkin", "Pyshechnaya", "Confectionery North"), of branded products (smelt, donuts, candy factory them. Krupskaya) and branded dishes St. Petersburg (St. Petersburg rassolnik, Pozharsky cutlet). In addition, the number of reviews posted on these restaurants was counted.

The author takes into account mentions the references of those restaurants in St. Petersburg, which could take part in St. Petersburg brand formation.

For instance, restaurants such as "Palkin", "Russian Vodka Room № 1", "Dostoevsky", "The Idiot". These restaurants we attributed to St. Petersburg cuisine. This is primarily due to the general concept of these restaurants and a general theme, besides a dishes range was taken into account, as well as the important role of the interior. As a result, a table 3 was compiled.

Table 3. Frequency references gastronomic brands in a review of individual tourists

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The brand | Number of references in individual tourists reviews |
| Smelt | 7 |
| Candies “Krupskaya” | - |
| Pozharsky cutlet | - |
| St. Petersburg rassolnik | - |
| Palkin | 7 |
| Pyshechnaya | 75 |
| Russian Vodka Room №1 | 3 |
| Comfectionary “The North” | - |

Source: compiled by the author.

The greatest number of gastronomic component references accounted for branded restaurants in the city, particularly in the café "Pyshechnaya" - 75 references. The majority of people associate it with the image of city, indicate that every time during the travel to St. Petersburg come here and it is highly recommended to include this café in the city route.

Over the last 6 months the restaurant "Palkin" has only 7 references. All the tourists have noted a high level of service, delicious food (some positions remained since before the Revolution) and classical interior in the palace style. Visitors also note that such outstanding people as Dostoevsky, Tchaikovsky, etc visited this restaurant. Thus, the cultural component of the restaurant has also an impact on the tourist choice.

As for the "Russian Vodka Room", only 3 references were founded. Moreover, they do not have any references to the image of the city.

Thereby, the greatest influence in forming the attractiveness of St. Petersburg as a tourist destination have the city restaurants. Therefore, we assume that the restaurants could have the basis for the gastronomic city brand formation. But in this case, apart from culinary component a cultural basis should be included. Only in this case it is possible to talk about strengthening the existing city brand.

At the final stage of the research the main St. Petersburg gastronomic events 2013, 2014 were considered. At this stage, a table of events, which displays the name of the event, the date of its scale, the description of the program of events and contact information, was also created.

As a result, the following activities were analyzed:

1. XII Festival smelt

2. Restaurant Day

3. "Eat together! Live tasty !" Vyborg

4. Restaurant Week of the Petrograd Side

5. "O, da! Eda! »

6. Festival of bread and milk

7. Gastronomic Festival of the farm products LavkaLavka

8. The Day of northern cuisine

9. The festival of Italian cuisine

From the nine gastronomic festivals only Smelt festival as a basis takes a gastronomic brand of St. Petersburg. In general, all the gastronomic festivals are local, and in spite of the large number of visitors, not contribute to attract tourists to the city. But at the same time these activities are creative in nature, what allows them to become the basis for the gastronomic city brand.

Gastronomic city brand forms by travel agencies which offers excursions to the city, individual tourists and gastronomic city events. Therefore, during the research it was necessary to consider all the components of gastronomic brand. The following conclusions were based on the analysis before:

• St. Petersburg traditional products such as smelt, candies “Krupskaya” have very little importance in the formation of an attractiveness of St. Petersburg as a tourist destination;

• St. Petersburg traditional dishes (St. Petersburg rassolnik, Pozharsky cutlet) also do not play a significant role in the formation and promotion of the city brand and does not deal with travel agencies or individual tourists as the attractive element of destination;

• 3 components of gastronomic brand- products, food and restaurants - restaurants are recognized as attractive, therefore, it is rational to build a gastronomic brand Petersburg which based on the city restaurants;

• the number of gastronomic events in St. Petersburg is quite a little, and in many cases they are local in nature, but at the same time they have a creative base, which enables them to become the basis of the St. Petersburg gastronomic brand formation.

Thus, the main hypothesis of the paper was confirmed. Despite the fact that the role of the of St. Petersburg gastronomic brand in general city brand is very low, we suppose that there are reasons for its formation. Furthermore, it is rational to build a brand based on city restaurants. But in this case, the basis for the brand formation should be not only cooking, but also cultural.

Moreover to contribute to gastronomic brand formation could foundation of special marketing alliances (for example, the Association of St. Petersburg restaurants) carrying general ideas with strict entry conditions, certification and promotion in a single concept. Only when there is strong gastronomic brand of Saint - Petersburg it is possible to talk about strengthening the overall city brand and the attractiveness of tourist destination.

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