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# IMPLEMENTATION OF A QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN A TRAVEL AGENCY

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**Abstract:**

*The present research refers to the major problems existing in the Romanian tourism, namely, "manufacturing" and commercialization of certain products non-compliant with the user's requirements in terms of quality. In tourism and hospitality industry, quality can be judged on the extent to which the service received meets the customer's expectations. So, the quality is important for both customers and managers of various travel agencies, as it can contribute to making better products at lower costs. Based on theoretical approaches on quality management of tourist services, this paper aims to analyze the activity of the largest travel agency in Romania - Happy Tour and assess the possibilities of implementing a high-performance quality management system in order to represent a model for other tour operators. In this respect, the quality system may identify how the user appreciates the quality of certain travel services, aiming to reduce the significant differences between the characteristics of services, preferences and expectations of the customer.*

**Key words:** *quality management system; tour operator travel agencies; quality standards*

## 1. Introduction

In the current economic environment characterized by increasingly fierce competition, wealth creation is reduced to consumer needs through the development and ownership of quality goods and services. The main source of competitive advantage for organizations nowadays is the good quality products and services and their ability to adapt to customer preferences.

Thus, we witness the promotion of new methods and models for implementing quality management, models allowing the travel organization to obtain performance and excellence, necessary and required for the functioning of a competitive economy.

In this context, the specialized literature is replete with studies on the impact assessment of implementing the model defined by ISO 9000 standards on business

performance (Hongyi, 2000; Piskar, 2009; Heras - Saizarbitoria Casadesus and Marimón, 2011).

In order to assess the performance, the organization providing services must take into account both the results and its processes (Paunescu, 2008; Olaru et al., 2007). At the same time, gathering data on the processes of the organization, provides the information necessary to analyze, control and improve processes and services. Thus, the organizations providing tourist services are becoming more responsible in terms of environmental impact and more socially aware of in terms of the relationship with employees, customers, partners and the society in general (Bovee et al., 2005).

Considering these aspects, it becomes necessary and appropriate to implement a quality management system in order to understand the present and future needs of customers and meet or exceed their expectations.

## **2. Literature review**

By their nature, tourism activities involve a number of participants, namely tourism service providers, tour operators, reselling travel agencies and customers. In this respect, tour operators have a significant contribution to the efficiency of tourism activities, given that both the success of the activity of service providers and retail agencies, and the satisfaction of tourists benefiting from products made by tour operators, depend on them (Muhcină, S.; Popovici, V., 2008).

In tourism, the quality approach requires consideration of the five categories of gaps: (Parasuraman, A.; Zeithmal, W.A., Berry, L.): between consumer expectations and the management's perception; between consumer expectations perceived by the management and the characteristics of service quality; between quality characteristics and service delivery; between service delivery and what is communicated about the service to the consumer, which will "form" the expectations; between consumer expectations and their perceptions about the current quality of service provided.

The consumers are the persons who purchase the package of services or some of its components, in their own name, or in order to offer them to other persons (Draica, C., 2003). For the consumer, quality is equivalent to the satisfactions that a good offers in use or in consumption (Maxim, E., 2007).

Thus, to obtain and commercialize certain quality products, tour operators need to focus efforts and resources in the operationalization of quality management.

Worldwide, *W.E. Deming* was the first specialist who taught the Japanese managers a methodical quality approach, having the belief that "*A higher quality produces at lower costs.*" (Pascale, R. and Athos, A., 1981). His method has resulted in the manufacture of high quality products and significant reduction of losses. The development of Deming's theory "Total Quality Management (TQM)" (Bank, J., 2000) is often recognized.

Thus, many organizations providing services in general, and tourism services in particular, use the principles of quality management to achieve accreditation of

International Standards of the Organization (ISO) and the global recognition of the quality of tourism services.

According to the World Tourism Organization, in the hospitality and tourism industry, the concept of quality is - *"the result of a process involving the legitimate needs of products and services, requirements and expectations of the consumer at an affordable price, in accordance with the quality standards related to the provision of safety and security of tourists, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity and harmony of tourism activity with the natural and human environment."*

In these circumstances, meeting the needs involves their identification, understanding and fulfillment by implementing an efficient quality management system, from the design and manufacture of the tourism product, continuing with its merchandising and its effective use.

According to international standards ISO 9000, the quality management means *"all activities of the general management function that determine the quality policy, objectives and responsibilities, in order to implement them in the quality system by specific means such as: quality planning, quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement."* In this regard, it is stated that *"the success of an organization is based on meeting the needs and current and future expectations of actual or potential customers and final users, as well as the consideration of other stakeholders"* (International Standards Office, 2008.).

In order to operationalize a quality management system, some specialists (Dinu, V., 2005) recommend the following steps:

- provide general information to all staff on quality issues, i.e. what it is and how to do quality, quality management in particular and its necessity;
- selection of the staff who will deepen this information, turning it into habits and patterns of activity and who, working with experts from outside the company, will have the mission and tasks to design, implement and certify a quality management system in accordance with certain referentials as standards;
- design and actual implementation of the quality management system in the company. This means, first, achieving the work tools - setting referentials, preparing documentation, informing all staff and training of staff involved in working with these tools. This step ends with the final examination by an internal audit of the operation of the system and take possible corrective and preventive measures required;
- certification of compliance of the system with the referential adopted by the company as a model of good practice, usually with a standard.

Thus, the implementation of quality management at a travel agency shall coordinate the activity towards performance, given that the performance in customer relationship is represented by: the evolution of the number of customers, the number of new customers, the effect of loss of certain customers, etc., the customer satisfaction being crucial to achieve the objectives related to the financial performance of the organization (Fuller and Matzler, 2008; Evans, 2008).

### **3. Research methodology**

This paper presents the implementation of a quality management system at Happy Tour travel agency.

The agency quality diagnosis was the starting point to this effect, in other words, the assessment of the quality performance comparing to the quality performance of other companies. Thus, four specific steps have been taken: documentation in order to know the Agency, its location on the market of travel agencies in Romania, analysis of the existing situation, evaluation of expenditures and preparation of the final report.

Arrivals and overnight stays in tourist units in Romania increased last year compared to 2012, by 3.5 % and 1.1%, said the National Statistics Institute (INS).

In 2013, tourist arrivals totaled 8.01 million, increased by 1% compared to 2012 and overnight stays totaled 19.3 million (increased by 3.5%). Romanian tourist arrivals accounted for 78.3 % of the total, a rate similar to that in 2012.

In terms of foreign tourist arrivals in accommodation facilities, the largest rate was held by those from Europe (80.5 % of total foreign tourists), and 85.7 % of them came from countries belonging to the European Union.

Of the overall 1.71 million foreign tourists (over 60,000 more than in 2012), (228.592) came from Germany, (181.894) came from Italy and (118.649) came from France. Arrivals in hotels accounted for 74.7 % of total arrivals in tourist accommodation structures, which represents an increase of 2.4 % compared to 2012. (Table 1).

Most foreign visitors chose to go in Bucharest and other cities of residence (1.3 million), far fewer preferring mountain resorts (126.945), the seaside resorts (31,540) or the Danube Delta (22.790).

Eurostat data show that although the number of nights spent by foreign tourists in accommodation units in Romania increased last year by 5.1 %, Romanian tourism is still far behind neighboring countries, less than one in five overnights. Foreign tourists spent last year in Romania 3.5 million nights, among the lowest levels in the EU, i.e. more than four times lower than Hungary and Bulgaria.

Only Latvia and Lithuania had less foreign visitors last year, 2.7 million, and 2.8 million respectively, but foreign tourists in these countries represent 70 % and 51 % of the market of tourist arrivals. In Romania, foreign tourists represent only 18 % of the market, the lowest percentage in the EU, compared to 67 % in Bulgaria, with 14.3 million overnight stays last year or 49 % in Hungary, where foreign tourists spent about 12.3 million nights.

Net use index of accommodation places last year was 25.2 % of all tourist accommodation units, down by 0.7% compared to 2012. Hotels registered a use index of accommodation places of 31.6 %. The average length of stay was 2.6 days at the Romanian tourists and two days at the foreign tourists. Departures of Romanian

visitors abroad, as registered at the borders, were 11.36 million, up 1.9% compared to 2012.

**Table 1. The number of foreign tourist arrivals in Romania by destinations (no. of people)**

	Total	Bucharest and county capital cities, excluding Tulcea	Other cities and touristic routes	Resorts from the mountain area	Balneary resorts	Resorts from the seaside area, excluding Constanta	Danube Delta area, including Tulcea
<b>Total foreign tourists</b>	<b>1714538</b>	<b>1308260</b>	<b>192854</b>	<b>126945</b>	<b>32149</b>	<b>31540</b>	<b>22790</b>
Germany	228592	173760	24698	14930	2947	6111	6146
Italy	181894	148933	21768	7232	1066	1672	1223
France	118649	95518	11279	7021	698	2423	1710
Hungary	99261	55060	30879	3809	8996	371	146
Israel	96615	74062	4238	15996	1632	484	203
United Kingdom	92756	79050	6832	5228	300	977	369
U. S. A	91625	78680	6563	4338	443	1313	288
Spain	66375	48328	8954	7293	266	537	997
Poland	64152	40855	8701	7782	610	3130	3074
Austria	58765	45453	6695	4503	651	756	707
Holland	47378	37918	5807	2664	271	478	240
Bulgaria	43751	31315	4874	6559	161	434	408
Greece	39360	35098	1876	1726	84	434	142
Turkey	38375	29005	6819	1247	100	1073	131
Republic of Moldova	33668	15690	3705	5612	7467	1118	76
Belgium	30299	24958	2498	1608	285	782	168
Russia	29302	20031	2884	3800	278	2247	62
Czech Republic	22246	15942	3498	1696	777	173	160
Switzerland	20556	17199	1566	1026	156	317	292
Ukraine	17227	11557	2554	2419	257	331	109
Japan	16974	13244	1134	2343	39	138	76
Sweden	15049	12502	1054	750	229	388	126
Norway	14242	8156	1269	548	48	356	3865
Canada	13967	11129	1435	825	167	389	22
Serbia	13959	11834	785	717	436	62	125
China	13329	10488	616	1003	541	539	142
Slovakia	11678	9306	1576	441	243	80	32
Denmark	11004	7307	2190	457	105	435	510
Albania	10884	3882	3808	639	1896	505	154
Portugal	10145	7692	1200	576	24	181	472
Other countries	162461	134308	11099	12157	976	3306	615

There is an increase in terms of the number of arrivals of foreign citizens since 2007, but tourism actors are not satisfied with these figures, leisure tourism recorded small increases in times of crisis.

Many administrators of accommodation units state that statistical reports are not real and that 2013 was a bad year for tourism, the proof being the price of accommodation units, which decreased continuously, even five-star hotels sell rooms 50 euro the night, just because they do not have tourists.

Tourism operators further argue that acute problems of the industry are the infrastructure and unfair competition, especially in the food sector, those tourism actors who are VAT payers automatically have higher prices by 24% than the others (the case of the pensions, and so on).

The year 2011 seems to have been a good year for travel agencies active in the local market, most of them improving their financial results from the previous year.

Managers of travel agencies say that 2013 was better than 2012, not on the incoming, but on the outgoing, on corporate and domestic.

The classification of major tour operator travel agencies in Romania for 2012 is as follows:

**Tabel 2. Classification of major tour operator travel agencies in Romania**

No.	Tour operator travel agency	Turnover (million lei) /comparisons with 2011	Shareholders/segments addressed in recent years
1.	Happy Tour	181,9 million lei	Spanish group GED
2	Eximtur	157 million lei, increased its sales by 17%,	Romanian shareholders (family); business tourism and domestic holidays
3	Christian Tour	155,8 million lei	Foreign tourism
4	Perfect Tour	110 million lei, business growth by 16.6% dropped one position among agencies	Romanian shareholder ; corporate
5	Vola.ro	92,8 million lei, nearly 40% higher	The company is owned by a Polish investment fund, registered in Cyprus (66.6%) and by a Romanian shareholder (33.3%); online agency: city-break, ticketing
6	Accent Travel & Events	dropped two positions, although the businesses went up by 5% to 75 million lei	Romanian shareholder, domestic tourism
7	Hotel Air	74,2 million lei, up by 30%	The company is owned by a Greek citizen
8	Business Travel Turism	dropped one place, with a turnover of 66.4 million lei, 18.5% higher	Romanian shareholder
9	Mareea	64 million lei, up by 47%	Romanian shareholder, one of the largest tour operators specialized in seaside tourism
10	Prompt Service	63,8 million lei, up nearly 26%.	Romanian shareholder

Source: Ministry of Finance, 2013

The classification takes into account only the turnovers of companies registered at the Ministry of Finance. Agencies may choose to record either their turnover or only the commission for tourism services. Aerotravel company, for example, chose the second option and it is recorded in Finance with a turnover of 22.8 million lei. Agency representatives argue that last year's sales volume exceeded 156 million lei.

Another classification drawn up according to data from the Ministry of Finance is as follows:

**Tabel 3. Classification according to data from the Ministry of Finance**

Name	Turnover (RON)	Profit (RON)	Loss (RON)	Employees	Profit margin (%)	Productivity CA/Pers	Productivity Profit/Pers
Happy Tour Srl	181,936,705	-	527,219	108	-	1,684,599	-
Touring Europabus	178,365,947	820,951	-	242	0.46	737,049	3,392

Name	Turnover (RON)	Profit (RON)	Loss (RON)	Employees	Profit margin (%)	Productivity CA/Pers	Productivity Profit/Pers
Romania Srl							
Eximtur S.R.L.	157,059,208	1,766,597	-	129	1.12	1,217,513	13,695
Christian'76 Tour S.R.L.	155,829,930	3,134,535	-	94	2.01	1,657,765	33,346
Paralela 45 Turism Srl	127,566,375	1,699,806	-	200	1.33	637,832	8,499
Concept Consult & Prospect S.R.L.	126,918,372	4,791,910	-	46	3.78	2,759,095	104,172
Perfect Tour Srl	110,000,404	1,047,572	-	153	0.95	718,957	6,847
Vola.Ro S.R.L.	92,837,140	369,584	-	52	0.40	1,785,330	7,107
Hotelair Srl	74,234,709	846,158	-	10	1.14	7,423,471	84,616
Accent Travel & Events Srl	72,863,199	1,028,631	-	49	1.41	1,487,004	20,992
Business Travel Tourism Srl	66,412,701	3,409,798	-	40	5.13	1,660,318	85,245
Mareea Comtur S.R.L.	64,053,319	26,520	-	76	0.04	842,807	349
Sunmedair Travel & Tourism Services S.R.L.	63,964,636	489,159	-	62	0.76	1,031,688	7,890
Prompt Service Travel Company Srl	63,856,206	329,950	-	34	0.52	1,878,124	9,704
Prestige Tours International S.R.L.	57,904,100	-	2,793,681	37	-	1,564,976	-

What do we notice?

- At the request of Eurolines (Touring Europabus Romania srl ), they were added to the top finishing in second place. According to some specialists, they are not the second travel agency in Romania, a large part of its turnover being generated by the transport of passengers by bus through Eurolines network.
- Paralela 45 enters top three with an increase in turnover from 27 million lei to 127 million lei in 2012, change most likely due to reporting the turnover to total receipt and not just the commission as it has done until now.
- The position of Vola.ro and HotelAir (the company that operates HotelCon reservation system) is maintained and the HotelAir performance is the best in terms of employees. Technology in tourism begins to be felt; each HotelAir employee brought an average turnover of EUR 1.5 million.

- The average profit margin is around 1% in top 15 companies. The performers are companies specialized in the corporate area (Business Travel, Olympic International and Concept Consult) with margins of more than 2 %, even 5 % for Business Travel.
- Regarding top losses, Happy Tour went into the red, as well as Prestige Tour and ParAvion continues its loss registered in the last three years (since its foundation in 2010). Is it just a coincidence that the three companies that are part of the Happy Tour Group owned by GED Eastern Fund II are the only companies in the top 20 that record losses?
- Is a surprise the far-reaching bankruptcy of Kara Travel agency in September 2013 given that in 2012 the turnover accounted for 30 % of the turnover in 2011?

Maybe if experts had interpreted these data at the proper time, we wouldn't have been today in the situation where small and medium size travel agencies, collaborators of Travel Kara travel agency, pay today damages of over one million euros. Let's hope that no other large agencies go bankrupt.

#### *Happy Tour Group*

Happy Tour was voted in Hotel Tourism & Leisure Investment Conference in 2013 as "The best travel agency in Romania" , and "The best Corporate & MICE Agency (Meetings, Incentives, Congresses, Exhibitions) in Romania".

Happy Tour was established in 1996 as a family business. At the end of 2007, the company was acquired by the investment fund GED Eastern Fund II, controlled by Spanish people from GED Capital. The value of the deal was not officially announced, but it was estimated at 10 million Euros. From 1996 to the present day, the Spanish group GED has invested in Romania over 100 million Euros in 18 companies.

2008 was one of the best years for Happy Tour, the company recorded a profit of 7.46 million lei and a turnover of 184.1 million lei.

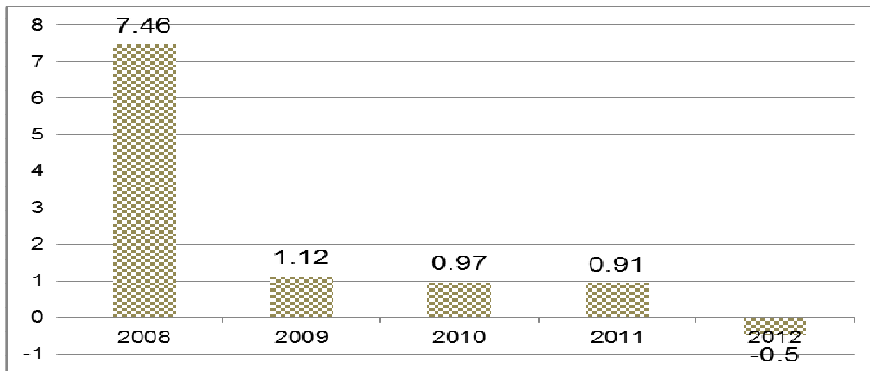
Happy Tour Group is a partner of FCM Travel Solutions in Romania since 2011- a worldwide network of travel companies, present in 75 countries, being now the largest travel agency in Romania. The major travel agencies in Romania still include Eximtur, Christian Tour, Perfect Tour, TUI Travel Center (Eurolines) and Paralela 45.

The turnover for the year 2012 of Happy Tour group, consisting of the travel agency with the same name, Paravion.ro online travel agency, Prestige Tours tour operator and Travel House group 's luxury brand, was over 57 million Euros and the turnover for 2013 was over 70 million Euros.

Figure 1 shows the evolution of the profit (in million lei) in the period 2008-2012:



**Figure 1. Profit evolution during 2008-2012 (mil. lei)**

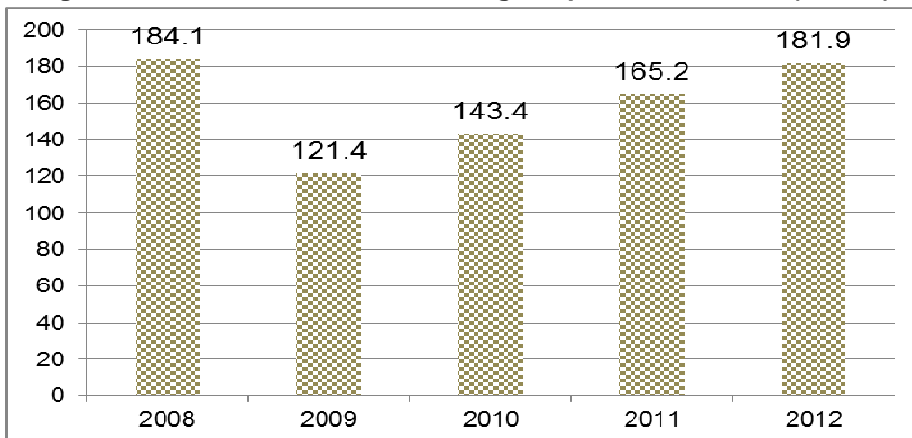


Source: Ministry of Finance, 2013

Because Happy Tour travel agency bases a great part of activity on the corporate services offered to Romanian companies, the crisis has made its presence, so in 2009 the business declined by 34 % , while the profit declined by 85 % , up to 1.1 million Lei, decrease largely determined by the 25% reduction of tariffs.

In the years that followed, the turnover recovered and increased cumulatively by 40% in the period 2009-2012. In fact, 2012 was the year when businesses of Happy Tour reached a level very close to the pre-crisis (Figure 2):

**Figure 2. Evolution of turnover during the period 2008-2012 (mil. lei)**



Source: Ministry of Finance, 2013

With the exception of 2013, the profit and businesses mentioned in the text are available only for the parent company Happy Tour.

In 2012, Romania sold around 100,000 plane tickets, exclusively through online traveling agencies (OTA), and Paravion.ro officials state that there was a 15% growth of this market in 2013.

We are seeing a change from year to year of the consumer behaviour for tourist services in Romania, which means that in the very near future Romanian people will choose and book plane tickets or travel packages on smartphones and tablets.

Using a booking portal on your personal computer or a mobile device such as tablet or smartphone, where you can find the best flight option, personalized from hundreds of airline offers updated in real time, is a direct benefit to the consumer in terms of time and costs. These are the characteristics that will make the difference on the market of the future intelligent tourism services.

Turkey remained again the first among the holiday destinations preferred by Romanian people in the summer of 2013 (over 7.000 of Romanian people, where 67 % of requests include Antalya). Other destinations chosen by Happy Tour customers are: Greek Islands, especially Mykonos, Santorini, Corfu, Crete and the Balearic Islands, Palma de Mallorca or Tenerife.

A considerable change can be noticed in the behavior of Romanian tourists for the summer season (2013), who took advantage of the offer of "early bird" launched at the beginning of the year and they have booked their summer holiday from the early months of the year, with a discount up to 40 %.

Happy Tour Agency made its mostly income from corporate, because it transferred the holiday part to Prestige Tours, the tour operator of the group.

Germany (Berlin) and the UK (London) were in 2013 the Romanian tourists' preferred destinations for city breaks (weekend getaways), followed by Italy, Spain and Turkey.

For winter holidays, Romanian tourists preferred either skiing holidays in Austria, Germany, France or Italy or holidays in Mauritius, Kenya, New York.

The top luxury holidays are cruises with outstanding itineraries in Galapagos, Australia or Norwegian Fjords, the price exceeds 10.000 Euros per person.

Happy Tour held last year 1,500 events attended by over 45,000 people and the largest event budget was 400,000 Euros for a sales conference which included premium VIP services such as transfers by private plane or helicopter and exclusive locations.

MICE Industry (Meetings, Incentives, Congresses, Exhibitions), as business line, generated last year revenues of 3.3 million Euros, representing 8% of the turnover of the company and a 16% increase in revenue collected from corporate events.

2013 was a transition year in domestic tourism, being an important step in this field, bringing improvements expected and launching ideas more or less innovative for the future, tourists have become more calculated and the options in terms of holiday destinations became more refined.

The major change has been observed in the consumer's behavior with each passing season, is becoming more cultured and more calculated. Specifically, tourists know better what they want from their vacation, they have more specific demands and we face an increasingly emphasized trend of those who prefer shorter or fewer vacations, but with higher standards of comfort and additional services included. In addition, more and more tourists choose to book their vacations in advance, with

reductions of up to 40 % Early Booking type. Basically their holiday budget has not undergone large changes, but they have exquisite choices. In Romania, the most popular destinations in the summer were the Romanian seaside resorts of Mamaia, Neptun and Eforie Nord. For the rest of the year 2013, the resorts in Moeciu area, Prahova Valley, Sibiu, Maramures, Felix and Herculane spas were very popular. For the summer of 2013 Happy Tour has achieved an increase of about 10 % of the average budget available for holidays, from 350 Euros per person in 2012 to 380 Euros last year.

In terms of comfort, however, this increase of 10 % means a lot more because tourists from Romania took full advantage of Early Booking discount type, booking vacations from the early months of the year and benefiting from discounts up to 40 % . Thus, although they did not pay much more than in previous years, they received comfort accommodation options or additional services in the tourism package.

Regarding the Romanian tourists, travel lovers' tastes began to refine and even if they hunt offers through Early Booking, they choose exotic destinations more often.

Hapy Tour agency already registered Early Booking reservations in the leisure area for spring and summer of 2014, and the corporate area seems at least as busy as in 2013, both on the events (M.I.C.E.) and on the business travel. It is estimated that the Romanian people will continue to refine their tastes in tourist services and destinations and they are always looking for new destinations and, equally, will invest more in the comfort of their vacation. New destinations such as Cape Verde Island, Bodrum in Turkey and Chania in Crete successfully join the uptrend started in 2012. After analyzing the activities of Happy Tour in the current economic climate, the strengths in the agency activity were found (Table 4)

**Table 4. Strengths of Happy Tour travel agency**

No.	Strengths	Causes	Effects
1.	Legal constitution of the company	The single act of incorporation of the company is in accordance with legal provisions	The trust offered to potential customers, because they have confidence that they will be able to find the providers if tourism products purchased do not match in terms of quality/price
2.	Good cooperation relationship between stakeholders of the agency	The management team is dynamic	Finding the best solutions in terms of tourist packages commercialization
3.	Short circuit of Information	The reduced number of employees	Useful for leadership, to find some information directly from employees who come in direct contact with customers
4.	Efficient use of working time	Specially trained personnel	Increasing labor productivity
5.	High quality of tour packages offered	Customers were satisfied with the quality of tourism products purchased	Increased turnover

**Other strengths:** the agency has a marketing department that deals with the development of tourism programmes and offers; the existence of a good correlation between the marketing department and other functional departments; the Agency has both good internal communication and favorable public relations; touristic product differentiation by seasons; using flat-rate tariffs; granting certain facilities; prices and tariffs corresponding to the quality of tourism products and services offered; the use of various payment instruments; differentiation of payment arrangements on budgetaries and other natural or legal persons; using an extensive promotion policy; focus on word-of-mouth advertising; differentiation of promotional means and messages on targeted customer segments; temporary differentiation of promotion because of the pronounced variation in demand; promotion and distribution of the global product; concluding profitable contracts with partners (obtaining discounts for tariffs and prices).

**Weaknesses:** market strategy is underperforming - does not meet the agency goals; use of a small number of specialists and staff in the marketing department; lack of research studies of the market and the consumer's needs and preferences; lack of marketing forecasts; lack of research activity - development of tourism products; the existence of insufficient publicity; distribution policy unchallenged point, insufficient in scope and content; not using distribution channels with intermediaries; there is a limited number of sponsorship; use of low promotional budget; the method used to establish the promotional budget is inefficient, although it is the simplest, the most vulnerable; the downturn in rates of return, reducing profits and a high level of indebtedness.

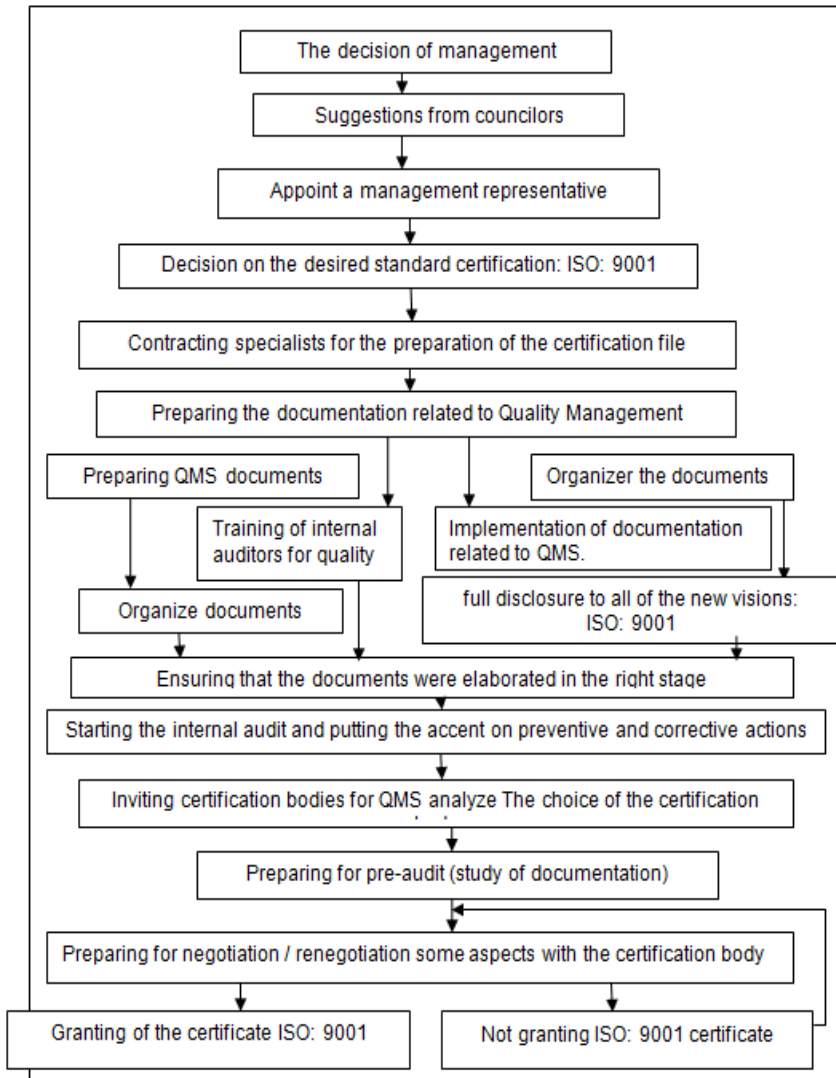
**Opportunities:** forming a social class with increasing income in Romania; development and extent known lately for business tourism; investments trying to emerge in the field of tourism (general and specific infrastructure: highways, international airports, tourist ports, mountain resorts, salt mines, etc.; attracting European investment funds, training of tourism staff, conservation and preservation of the environment, traditions and customs etc.

**Threats:** policy and rules of visa - complicated procedures for granting visas to certain countries; unprecedented expansion and development of the Internet, making possible for each resort or hotel to make known its offer in the country and abroad; natural disasters make the well-known tourist areas be withdrawn from the tourism market due to insecurity; climate and political instability in the international market; problems on Romania's accession to the Schengen space.

It was found that in the analyzed period (2011-2013), the value of the balance indicators was negative because of the improper correlation of the organization's resources.

Considering these aspects, but also the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the agency, it becomes necessary and appropriate to implement a quality management system (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. The basic steps of implementing a quality management system



In this regard, the final audit mainly aims to assess how the management of the organization is able to operate under efficient conditions. Thus, the audit was based on a number of objectives, including: finding the work mode and comparing it with the requirements of the reference standard; finding situations inconsistent with the requirements of the reference standard; analysis of the quality of existing human, financial, informational resources, etc.

The audit in the tourism industry aims to establish compliance of the quality parameters of a product / service with the specifications of the reference standard.

The audit process concludes with the preparation of the audit report and the communication of the results to the representative of the audited Department.

In the case of Happy Tour Agency, it was found the need to improve the activities carried out and hence the results obtained. To achieve this, it was necessary on the one hand to train the organization members on the requirements of the standards and on the quality management system, and secondly to identify the processes and the interactions between them.

In the vision of ISO 9001:2008 standard, the process-type approach recommends organizations to identify, manage and continuously improve the processes that are needed for the quality management system and to guide their interaction in order to meet the organization's objectives. Such an approach will increase profits by focusing on meeting the current and future needs and expectations of customers, because customer's needs can only be achieved through proper functioning of processes within the organization.

In these circumstances, the identification of processes required for the quality management system imposes responses to a series of questions, namely: Which are the processes undertaken by the travel agency required for a quality management? Who are the people responsible for the coordination of these processes? What types of clients do these processes target?

Similarly, determining the methods by which it can be shown that both the implementation and control of these processes are effective, can start from the following questions: Which are the elements that characterize the results of the processes? Which are the best ways to monitor and analyze processes? How can these methods be incorporated both in the quality management system and in the manufacture and sales process of tourist packages?

At the same time, implementation of the measures needed to meet planned objectives and continuous improvement, requires knowledge of methods which ensure improvement of processes and operation of corrective actions.

An important role in the process of implementing a quality management system to Happy Tour travel agency was drafting of the necessary documents. So they developed a series of activities, such as training all employees in order to know the requirements of the system; adapting existing documents to the system requirements; obtain information about the quality management system from additional sources (the relevant legislation); development of system-specific documents (policy and objectives in the field of quality, the quality manual); validation of the content and form of documents.

The role of development and administration of documents in the operationalization of the quality management system consists of: achieving compliance with the reference standard; training of human resources on the implementation of the quality system; it provides tangible evidence on effective implementation of the system; *ensuring the procurement and commercialization of quality products meeting the requirements.*

*Quality policy and objectives* are represented by a statement which specifies both directions and objectives to be pursued by the agency in the field of quality and resources necessary for this purpose.

Thus, the quality objectives – of the travel agency - are: fulfilling customer needs and expectations by observing the quality procedures established; involvement of all employees in the quality improvement actions.

The quality manual is a document stating the reference standard and the quality system implemented. In this respect, the quality manual has the form of a file that includes a number of aspects such as: the Manager's statement and commitment; presentation of the organization; documents needed for the implementation of the quality system; description of specific quality system processes established and interaction between them; procedures related to the analysis, updating and managing of the quality manual, etc.

Among the advantages of the quality manual: ensure quality policy understanding by all members of the organization; setting each employee's responsibilities regarding the quality objectives, provide training to employees in order to know the elements of the quality system; ensuring access to quality system documents and managing them effectively; use as the main document for the quality audit.

Finally, it can be stated that the existence of these documents and processes within the organization results in several advantages, because they are an important source of information about the activities undertaken in order to ensure quality that can be offered to interested in order to guarantee that the agency provides products according to customer requirements.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In the current economic environment, tourism companies attach great importance to establish certain corrective and preventive actions required for the application of certain models to continuously improve the organization products and processes.

Given the ever-increasing demands of the Romanian business environment, the integration of the concept of quality system in the organization's top management decisions requires relevant quantitative analysis, the quality audit being the main tool to identify processes able to satisfy requirements of travel service users.

By operationalizing an advanced quality management system, Happy Tour travel agency could control the deficiencies found during the quality diagnosis, the organization's leadership can thus effectively carry out activities that allow the achievement of planned objectives in general, and those in the field of quality in particular.

In this way, the quality management can identify and understand the consumer's requirements in real time, generating benefits on the organization by reducing costs, improving processes and achieving competitive advantage, and on the customers who gain in this way confidence that tourism products purchased meet specific preferences.

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