

Vesna Vrtiprah, Ph.D.

Professor

Faculty of Tourism and Foreign Trade, Dubrovnik

COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM SMEs, THE CASE OF DUBROVNIK

UDJ/UDC: 796.5

JEL klasifikacija/JEL classification: L83

Simpozijski referat/Conference Paper

Primljeno/Received: 11. listopada 2004./October 11, 2004

Prihvaćeno za tisak/Accepted for publishing: 01. prosinac 2004./December 01, 2004

Abstract

Business recession conditions at activity levels in Croatia enhanced the real boom of small and medium sized enterprises. The increased market shares of tourism SMEs was realized exclusively on the basis of the market share of large enterprises, whose drastic decrease was influenced by transformation and privatization. Although SMEs have serious problems (lack of capital, planning, computerized information reservation system, lack of cooperation, complex regulations, etc.), their future lies in a globalization world. SMEs are able, due to their small size, to act flexibly and to find a niche market where they can provide personal services, which is a key point in the tourism industry. Tourism SMEs cannot overcome the obstacles presented by the process of internationalization of demand on their own. Tourism policies have to support the SMEs structure. The state should encourage both cooperation and competition in order to rejuvenate supply in an innovative way. Cooperation should lead to several benefits, such as access to new technology, the opening of new markets and a reduction in purchase and capital costs. The paper will discuss the findings of a study into the best practice of SMEs in the Dubrovnik's hospitality industry, within the context of strategic development.

Key words: Croatia, Dubrovnik, tourism SMEs, hospitality industry, cooperation, globalization

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 1990, the Croatian economy was exposed to a number of issues that prevented normal business – war, devastation of war, recession in the most important export markets, and the start of transition

throughout the entire national system. All these events affected the position of enterprises in Croatia, especially the position and change of enterprise size distribution in the tourism sector. In the last decade, the number of enterprises dealing in hotels and restaurants has increased more than 3.5 times. At the activity level, the market position of large enterprises has been weakened significantly, whereas the position of small and medium-sized enterprises has improved. Today, these companies are facing new challenges with the globalization of the tourist market. The paper explores the current situation as the basis for determining competitive strategies for this important part of the Croatian tourism supply, and the manner in which small and medium-sized enterprises can counter threatening trends and developments under competitive pressure.

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF SMEs IN THE TOURIST SUPPLY OF CROATIA

As a result of the privatization process, Croatia has, in greater measure, developed small and medium-sized enterprises over the last decade. A great number of small enterprises were established during this decade, with an increase in the number of medium-sized enterprises and a decrease in large enterprises. In the year 2002, there were 96.4% privately owned enterprises, 1.8% mixed, 0.6% joint, and 1.2% state-owned (19 % were employed in state-owned enterprises).

The process of establishment and entry of new enterprises into the tourism sector, induced by transitional liberalization and deregulation in the hotel and restaurant industry was of below average intensity. This can be concluded from the decreasing number of hotel and restaurant enterprises in the total number of Croatian enterprises - from 6.62% in 1990 to 5.87% in 2002.

The exceptionally unsatisfactory business conditions that confronted the Croatian economy in the first half of the 90s had a marked impact on the position of hotel and restaurant activities and their business results. The effects of war were mirrored in the great drop in tourist traffic, in the huge losses in revenue, and in the loss of markets. In 1991, at the start of the war in Croatia, the tourist traffic dropped by cca 80% as compared to the previous period, and by cca 86% in the number of bed-nights. Conditions for the revival of tourism were created only following the five-year period of war. In the relatively quiet year of 1996, there was a visible rise in the number of visits and bed-nights of both domestic and foreign tourists. Tourist traffic continued to grow with the settling of the situation in the country and in the surrounding regions. However, the pre-war tourist traffic was not realized even in 2002 (86% of the 1989 tourist traffic was realized).

Hostile conditions for running businesses in the industry slowed down the entry of new enterprises at a certain point. However, it was not halted

completely, for the number of hotel and restaurant enterprises continued to increase during the observed period. The total number of hotel and restaurant enterprises increased in this period from 719 enterprises in 1990 to 2,527 enterprises in 2002. Small enterprises are to be the most credited for the fast total increase.

The market position of large enterprises weakened, while at the same time the position of small and medium-sized enterprises improved significantly. A large decline in the market share of large enterprises resulted from the privatization of such enterprises. There is still a lack of smaller, family-run establishments, although their number has been on the rise recently.

Compared to 1990, total employment in the industry decreased from 71,648 employees in 1990 to 45,409 employees in 2002. However, most of the employment drop occurred with large size enterprises. At the beginning of the last decade, large enterprises played a dominant role in the distribution of employment in the hotel and restaurant industry. They employed 60% of the total employed in the industry, as compared to the 9.6% of small enterprises. The average enterprise in the hotel and restaurant industry had almost 100 employees in 1990 (Kovačević, 1997, 27). Today, large enterprises employ 34% of the total employed in the hotel and restaurant industry, in comparison to the 31% of small enterprises.

Table 1

Employment distribution among different-sized enterprises in the hotel and restaurant industry

	1990	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	%
Small enterprises	9,6	26,0	27,6	33,7	30,1	31,3	
Medium enterprises	31,4	41,2	40,2	37,5	33,0	34,9	
Large enterprises	59,0	32,8	32,2	28,8	36,9	33,8	
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	

Source: Documentation provided by the Payments Bureau, Zagreb, 1991, 1999, 2001 and Financial Agency, Zagreb, 2002

More important than the distribution of employment is the change in the distribution of total income at the level of the hotel and restaurant industry. Large enterprises continuously decreased their market share at the level of total industry income during the entire observed period. At the beginning of the observed period, large enterprises accounted for 70% of total industry income, but only 18% in 2001. Small and medium-sized enterprises constantly increased their market share at the industry level.

Table 2

Distribution of total hotel and restaurant industry income

	1990	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Small enterprises	7,5	26,4	26,6	31,5	29,8	38,3
Medium enterprises	22,1	39,8	39,0	34,4	32,4	43,7
Large enterprises	70,4	33,8	34,4	34,1	37,8	18,0
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Documentation provided by the Payments Bureau, Zagreb, 1991, 1999, 2001 and Financial Agency, Zagreb, 2002

Small enterprises increased their market share at the level of total income of the industry from 7.5% in 1990 to 38.3% in 2001. The market share growth of small enterprises continued throughout the entire observed period at the expense of large enterprises. Today SMEs tourism enterprises in Croatia face numerous problems: lack of capital, planning, computerized information and reservation system, lack of cooperation, unsuitably trained workforce, complex regulations, etc.

The business conditions of small, medium and large tourism enterprises are changing due to globalization as the basic megatrend in world progress. Competition, in terms of the price, quality and image of a number of new destinations is growing. The tourist product and services that are offered at the »local« level are being faced with increasingly global and exacting demands, which show a visible sensitivity to various disturbances in their own or receptive environments (Hitrec, 1999, 9).

A strength-weakness analysis (by Kohl & Partner) of small and medium-sized enterprises in the hotel industry has shown the following weak points and strength of SMEs as compared with larger units, especially hotel chains. Weak points of SMEs: branding, computerized information and reservation system, sales department, cooperative controlling, cooperative quality assurance, human resources management, methods of financing. Strengths of SMEs: flexibility, individuality, one-to-one-marketing, human contact with guests /close to the customer, high degree of possible specialization, reliable partner of the local community (Kohl, 2001, 29).

Although SMEs have serious problems, they have a future in a globalization world. SMEs are able to act flexibly due to their small size. They need less costly and flexible administrations. They are able to find a niche market where they can provide personal service, and can be successful where larger firms might struggle. The personal services, specialization in the supply sector and adaptation to the changing needs of visitors offers advantages to tourism and hospitality SMEs. Some characteristics also may be regarded as strengths in the marketing task (Thomas et al., 1998, 124): quality of service may be controlled better as

management is more closely linked to labor; closer contact with customers allows small firms to track changes in customers' needs and wants; smaller scale allows management to adjust service offerings more rapidly to these changes in customer needs and wants; small firms may therefore be in the position to offer more specialized and individualized products; small firms may be more likely to be able to assess price elasticity at the individual customer level; some customers have a perception of smaller firms as providing higher levels of service; the press and media may be more sympathetic to the needs and achievements of smaller businesses, and may thus provide publicity and coverage at little cost; good knowledge of local markets or regional markets; i) limited share of market may engender a more focused, more informed approach; ability to act quickly in response to external opportunities and developments, as only one person or a small group of people takes all the key decisions; greater internal consistency of the small firm's motivations and actions, as it is managed exclusively by one person or a small group of persons; many small firms occupy niches where they may be able to maintain higher prices and profits; small firms can offer appropriate and successful products in these niches that larger firms would find difficult or costly to copy; small firms are often very innovative; small firms serve the needs of the local community; many small firms service specialist needs or the needs of particular user groups (e.g. customized business travel services, small museums); top management's commitment and ability to influence staff at all levels is not easily matched by a larger firm.

2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Study data was obtained from questionnaire surveys undertaken in the Dubrovnik region, selected to represent one of the leading Croatian tourist destinations. Dubrovnik's identity, besides the beauty of natural resources, is based on the historical appearance of the city, cultural and natural monuments. Dubrovnik is an urban center of the highest value. The Old Town of Dubrovnik was registered as a world cultural heritage by UNESCO in 1979. Questionnaires were administered to the top management of small and medium sized hospitality enterprises. All research data, collected in the period from March to June 2004, relate to the financial year 2003.

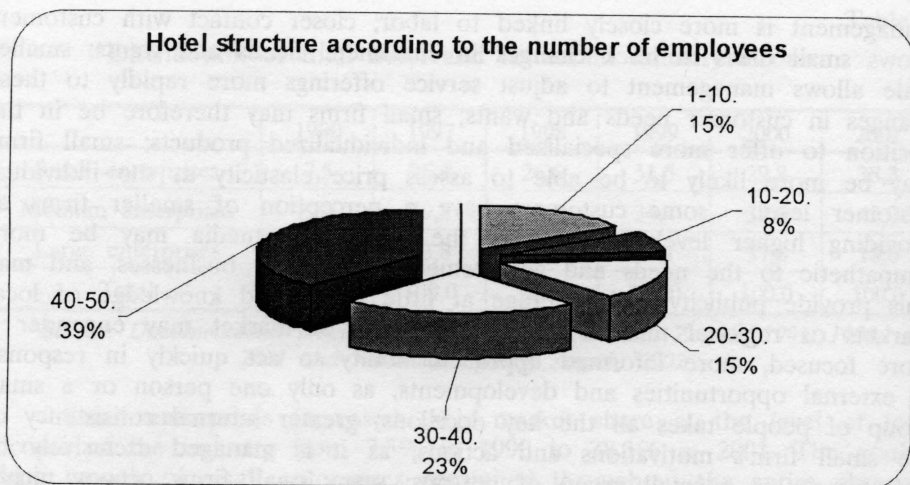


Figure 1.

Table 3

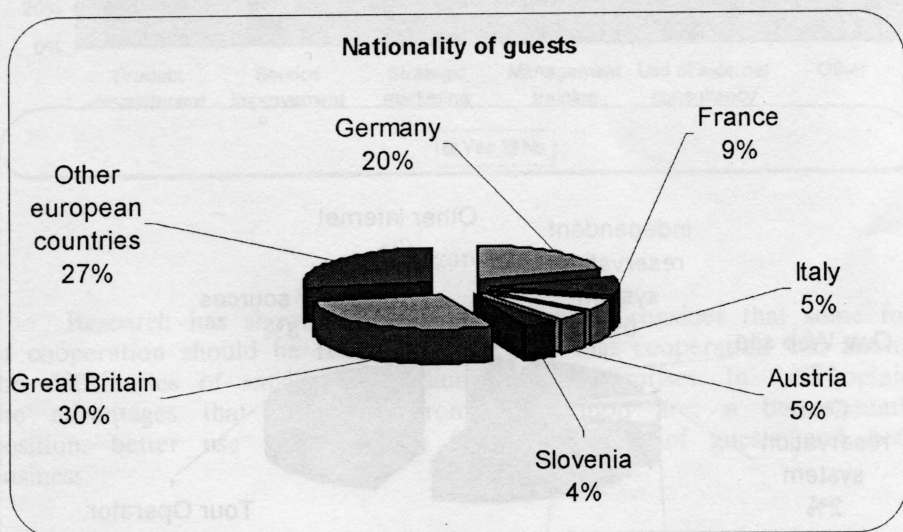
Main Survey Results on Hospitality SMEs in Dubrovnik

Groups of variables	2003
Domestic Guests	22,5 %
Foreign Guests	77,5 %
Business Travelers	23,5 %
Tourists/Leisure	73,1 %
Other guest	3,4 %
Yearly Average Room Occupancy	41,1 %
Average Room Rate (Euro)	40,5
Average Number of Employees per Room	0,36
Existence of Strategic Marketing Plan	46,2 %
Top management's awareness of the importance of marketing information:	
Vital	38,0 %
Very useful	62,0 %
Sources of marketing information:	
Primary	27,6 %
Secondary	72,4 %
Necessary innovations according the attitude of top management:	
Product development	54,0 %
Service improvement	77,0 %
Strategic marketing	62,0 %
Management Training	54,0 %
Use of external consultancy	8,0 %

A survey carried out on small and medium size hospitality enterprises in the Dubrovnik region gives a clear picture of the situation and the problems facing SMEs today. Based on the survey results, more than 80% of Dubrovnik's hotels do not have long-term strategic plans. Most of these hotel managers rely on intuitive strategy in their business. In an analysis of marketing activity, it is interesting to notice that all hotels compile an annual marketing plan. Unfortunately, only 46% of the hotels surveyed have a strategic marketing plan. An inadequately applied marketing concept and applicable marketing techniques in business has reflected itself negatively on the realization of potential sale results.

The main motive in arrivals for 73% of visitors is a holiday and recreation. Consequently, there is a high concentration in demand over the few summer months of the year. In 2003, 77% of the total bed-nights were realized in Dubrovnik hotels by foreign tourists. The most significant generating markets were Great Britain and Germany, which realized about 50% of the bed-nights.

Figure 2.



Hospitality SMEs in the Dubrovnik region have problems with low productivity that are caused by seasonal fluctuations in demand. Their average yearly room occupancy is only 40 %. Another problem is market access for tourism SMEs. They do not have the resources to find a place on foreign markets. The major weaknesses lie in the area of the service sales, as a result of the lack of adequate market information, promotion and cooperation. This makes them dependent on tour-operators and forces them to accept unfavorable conditions, for example allotment prices, etc. Further, the lack of skilled management techniques, insufficient practical

education and workforce, have additionally burdened the market position of these enterprises.

Table 4

Sources of Advance Reservations

Reservation methods:	%
Tour operator	45,2
Travel Agent	24,4
Direct Inquiry	7,3
Own Reservation System	2,4
Own Web Site	16,5
Independent Reservation System	0,1
Other Internet Site	1,3
Other Sources	2,8

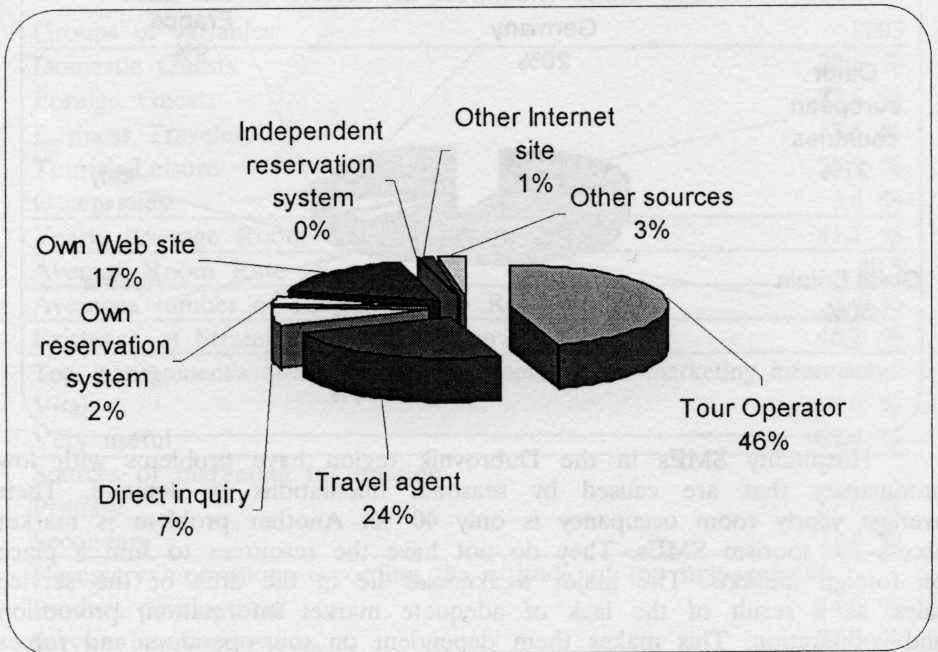


Figure 3. Reservation methods

Managements are aware of the significance of marketing information. More than 2/3 of them consider this to be highly useful. They are also aware of the need for a strategic marketing plan under today's sharp competitive conditions on the tourism market and the changes that are occurring as a result of globalization. They believe efforts must be invested in improving supply quality, service quality and the education of employees (Fig. 3.)

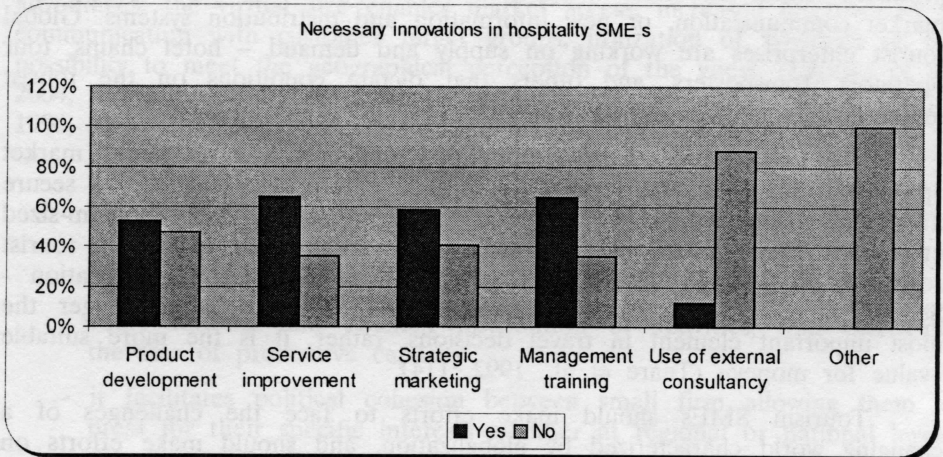


Figure 4.

Research has shown that 62% of managers consider that some form of cooperation should be realized. All believe that cooperation can alleviate the deficiencies of small and medium hotel enterprises. In their opinion, the advantages that can arise from cooperation are: a better market position, better use of capacities, better structure of guests and better business.

3. COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM SMEs

On a day-to-day basis, customer preferences are changing due to fast technological, cultural and economic changes. The information age and globalization will continue to drive changes in the way the consumer of tomorrow will do business with companies in the hospitality industry. This customer will demand greater assurances of quality, safety and well-being. They will look more for intangible experiences that match their wallets and physical capabilities. Their demands will be relentless as they seek to maximize their wishes and economic realities (Olsen, 2001, 214). They are well-informed and aware of the balance between price and quality. The

cost of services is no longer considered primary in the choice of hotel, and is replaced by quality, which has become a strategic variable in the fight for a market share.

Product differentiation by way of ensuring service quality is becoming an increasingly more significant dimension of marketing in tourism. A large number of hotel chains in the world market have already accepted this. Further, due to confrontations with growing competition, there has been a dynamic development of new technologies, and standardized and uniformed products. This all leads to a new and more modern system in world market communication, or new information and distribution systems. Global tourist enterprises are working on supply and demand – hotel chains, tour operators, transporters, and others that dictate conditions on the tourist market.

The exceptionally harsh competition demands a professional market approach from both small and medium-sized enterprises. In order to secure a market advantage and long-term progress, small and medium-sized enterprises have to be able to satisfy the specific needs of certain tourist segments, that is, to develop the new »4S« of tourism: »Specialization - Segmentation – Sophistication – Satisfaction«, for price is no longer the most important element in travel decisions, rather, it is the more suitable »value for money« (Teare et al., 1992, 114)

Tourism SMEs should make efforts to face the challenges of a changing world characterized by globalization, and should make efforts on self-improvement as well. They must be more consumer-friendly and more independent. They have to improve their skills and undergo life-time learning. The quality of their services has to be more market-oriented. The Profit Impact of Marketing Strategy (PIMS) study (Buzzell and Gale, 1987) has shown that the most important single factor affecting a business unit's performance is the quality of its products and services in comparison to its competitors. Similar results have been found in the hospitality industry. In the short term, the added value of a »quality« hospitality operation allows profits to be generated through premium prices, but in the long term, business growth and quality improvement efficiencies will maintain higher profit margins.

Hospitality businesses can only optimize their contribution to global sustainability through local and regional co-operation. In Europe, there is a remarkable trend towards concentration with small and medium-sized hotels in the form of cooperation agreements. More and more independent hotels look out for strategic alliances, for partnership in marketing, in cost-cutting programs, in benchmarking of ratio analysis, in employee-training programs, and others. The cooperation of independent enterprises started in the eighties. The number of cooperations doubles every five years. In Austria, for example, already 10% of the hotels are members of a voluntary cooperation – compared to 2% that are organized in hotel-chains (Kohl, 2001, 27). For the first time in Croatia in 2004, the Association of Family

and Small Hotels was founded, an autonomous, non-profit trade association joining independent, family-owned and/or run small hotels of up to 50 rooms and having a 2 to 5-star quality rating level. The Association of Family and Small Hotels of Croatia is open through various types of membership. It is the first, and thus unique, attempt at addressing the issues of the hospitality SME sector in Croatia (Tališman-Košuta & Ivandić, 2004, 228).

The strategy of cooperation helps to overcome disadvantages of small-size structures without losing independence. It bears numerous advantages: the virtual size enables market access, increased effectiveness in communication with customer target groups, utilization of synergies or the possibility to meet the geographical perception of the guest. (Laesser et al, 2004, 195). According to Pyke the benefits of cooperating include (Pyke, 1994, 3):

- the advantage of achieving economies of scale
- the sharing of information about the latest techniques and technologies might be an essential mechanism for keeping small firms up to date and competitive
- more rational and efficient distribution of activities, thus increasing the size of productive capacity
- it facilitates political cohesion between small firm allowing them to press for their specific interests whether at regional or national level.

SMEs must look seriously at forming consortia to centralize common activities like market research and analysis, dealing with tour operators and travel agents, production of brochures, purchasing, technical assistance, management consultancy services and, most importantly, human resources development.

Today, numerous interest concentrations are developing based on the intra-cooperation of small enterprises, which are either outside the larger systems or are included within them, but which retain a certain independency. Production and sale of tourist services is advanced through cooperation, and all in the aim of increasing profit. In the world, independent hotels are grouped together by hotel consortia in order to compete with integrated and franchised chains. The main benefits of joining a consortium are:

- joint production of guides and brochures, which advertise all the hotels in the chain and are distributed at each hotel through tour operators and travel agencies
- joint national and international publicity campaigns
- links into the computer reservation system (CRS) which allows agents to book directly onscreen

- centralized purchasing of hotel equipment to achieve economy of scale
- technical assistance and management consultancy.

A consortium offers the opportunity for independent hoteliers to join together to operate in the global marketplace. There are four basic consortium types (Jones, Pizam, 1993, 127):

Full consortia. These organizations provide not only marketing expertise and services, but also assistance with regards to human resources and purchasing. Such consortia tend to operate domestically, rather than internationally

Marketing consortia. These consortia provide marketing expertise.

Reservation systems. These provide a central reservations systems, usually based around a single, toll-free telephone number

Referral consortia. These are affiliations of hotels with airlines and their reservation systems. In this case, it is often the chains rather than the independent hotels that affiliate with the airline.

As hotel consortia have grown internationally, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish between the four types. The concept of the hotel consortium has become very popular and their numbers have expanded considerably.

Cooperation allow SMEs to achieve economies of scale and synergies. Choosing the right strategy for cooperation is crucial to the economic success of tourism SMEs. With their joint experience, tourism SMEs can lower their unit costs and reinforce their position on supply and customer markets. Furthermore, they have to use information technologies. Widespread use of information technology can facilitate cooperation for tourism SMEs.

Tourism policies have to support the SME structure. It allows them to improve their market position. The state should encourage both cooperation and competition in order to rejuvenate supply in an innovative way. The state can promote such developments. To compete in the global tourism market, SMEs must be integrated in a destination management system that is supported by public tourism policies (Knowles et al., 2001, 213). One example of government support originates from Austria where the government has introduced a set of policies to support SMEs and family-owned tourism businesses in order to provide a favorable framework for tourism development and to reduce barriers for growth. These policies include subsidies to ensure that local capital is invested in the industry to counter the high share of foreign investment capital and the promotion of cooperation to develop local synergistic networks to implement pilot projects such as multiple distribution channels, destination management schemes, joint offers and joint brand development. In Austria, the

government is also promoting consultation and training to develop a more varied form of tourism in the country (WTO, 1998).

In Croatia over recent years, various stimulating measures have been introduced that are meant to speed up the development of small and medium tourism enterprises. In May 1999, the Ministry of Tourism published a detailed guide titled «Guidelines for Entrepreneurs in Tourism», as a further step to previous attempts at developing tourism in the rural regions of Croatia. The emphasis was on the indirect effects that tourism has on the development of agriculture and demographic renewal. All geared towards the development of sustainable tourism. For the first time, the Ministry used the state budget to ensure the initial funds needed for the development of tourism in rural regions and for the promotion of SMEs enterprises. It also organized an educational program for entrepreneurs. Banks included themselves in such activity, offering favorable loan conditions. In 2002, the Government of Croatia accepted the «Program for the employment, stimulation of small and medium-sized enterprises, and the prevention of gray economy in tourism – Incentives for success». The incentive measures within this program concern: the backing of small family enterprises investing in smaller accommodation capacities, the restoration of old houses to their former traditional architecture, the refinancing of existing loans used for investment in smaller accommodation sites at low interest rates, certain subsidized interest, grace period and longer terms of repayment.

An efficient tourist policy is necessary due to the complex nature of the tourist industry, keen competition and globalization. Other Mediterranean countries are also using economic (tourist) measures to stimulate development of this sector. The most frequently used instruments are public financing (investment by state, grants and subsidies, exemption from income and property tax, application of different VAT rates) and monetary-credit policy instruments (long-term credit with low interest rates, full financial guarantees provided by the government for international borrowing). Such measures are essential for the Croatian hotel industry. Except for monetary and fiscal policy measures, incentives for the development of the tourist sector should be ensured by other measures as well, explicitly by: introducing a system of compulsory permanent education for all management levels, ensuring conditions for the creation of firm partnership profiles of domestic and foreign business entities at horizontal and vertical levels (from ownership investment, know-how, franchising and managerial contracts, etc.) through the introduction and regulation of special consumer protection measures, etc. (Vrtiprah, 1999, 2281).

CONCLUSION

Over the last decade in Croatia, a continuous growth in the hotel and restaurant enterprises has occurred. Small enterprises are mostly responsible for the fast overall growth in the number of these enterprises. The market position of large enterprises has been weakened, while the market position of small and medium-sized enterprises has considerably improved. The drastic drop in the market share of large enterprises is the result of privatization in Croatia. Small and medium-sized enterprises are burdened with many problems. They need an appropriate support system. The role of the state is vital in terms of a stable legal framework, in subsidizing interest rates, in administration, promotion, education and training. SMEs themselves should make efforts to face the challenges of a changing world characterized by globalization, and should aim for improvement as well. The quality of their services has to be more market-oriented, and they have to develop cooperation. Cooperation will involve cost. However, this should lead to several benefits, such as access to new technology, the opening of new markets and a reduction in purchase and capital costs.

REFERENCES:

- Buzzel, R. D., Gale, B. T. (1987) *The PIMS Principles: Linking Strategy to Performance*, New York: Free Press in Lockwood, A., Baker, M., Ghillyer, A. (1996) *Quality Management in Hospitality*, Cassell, London
- Data on basic financial results for enterprises in the Republic of Croatia in 1990, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002 – according to data from statistical reports, Payments bureau, Zagreb, 1991, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2002.
- Jones, P., Pizam, A. (1993) *The International Hospitality Industry, Organizational and Operational Issues*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York
- Kohl, M. (2001) *The Significance of SMEs in Europe's Tourism Supply*, Proceedings of International Seminar on «The Future of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in European Tourism Faced with Globalization», WTO, Budapest, 25.-30.
- Kovačević, Z. (1997) *Market Dynamics and Position of Firms in Catering and Tourism Industry in Croatian Economy 1990-1995*, Acta Turistica, Ekonomski fakultet, Zagreb, br.1, 21.-47.
- Ministarstvo turizma Republike Hrvatske (1999) *Vodič za poduzetnike u turizmu*, Zagreb, 1.-55.

- Hitrec, T. (1999) Europski turizam na prijelazu tisućljeća: tr_išni izazovi i predvidiva kretanja, Acta Turistica, br.1 Ekonomski fakultet Zagreb, 9.-15.
- Knowles, T., Diamantis, D., Bey El-Mourhabi, J. (2001) The Globalization of Tourism and Hospitality: A Strategic Perspective, Continuum, London.
- Laesser, C., Raich,f., Pechlaner, H (2004) Chances and Limitations of Business Reconfiguration of Alpine SME Mountain Railway Companies: The Case of Switzerland and south Tyrol, publication of Aiest, Vol.54, St. Gallen
- Olsen, M. (2001) Hospitality and the tourist of the future, in: Tourism and Hospitality in the 21st Century, edited by Lockwood,A., Medlik, S., Butterworth-Hinemann, Oxford, 2001.
- Teare, R., Adams, D., Messenger, S. (1992) Managing Projects in Hospitality Organizations, Cassell, London
- Telišman-Košuta, N., Ivandić, N. (2004) Strategic Partnerships as a Key Competitive factor for SMEs: Case Study of Croatia's Small Family Hotels, Publication of the Aiest »The Future of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Tourism«, Vol.46, St. Gallen, 219.-233.
- Thomas, R. et al. (1998) The Management of Small Tourism & Hospitality Firms, Cassel, London
- Vrtiprah, V. (1999) The Croatian Hotel Industry in Transition - Position, Difficulties, Measures of Advancement, Proceedings of the Third International Conference on »Enterprise in Transition«, Faculty of Economic, Split, 2273.-2286.
- Pyke, F., (1994) Small Firms, Tehnical Services and Inter-Firm Co-operation, International Institute for Labour Studies, Geneva
- World Tourism Organization (1998) Tourism Taxation: Striking a Fair Deal, Madrid

Dr. sc. Vesna Vrtiprah

Redoviti profesor

Fakultet za turizam i vanjsku trgovinu, Dubrovnik

KONKURENTSKE STRATEGIJE MALIH I SREDNJE VELIKIH PODUZEĆA, PRIMJER DUBROVNIKA

Sažetak

Uvjeti poslovne recesije u gospodarstvu Hrvatske potaknuli su nagli razvoj malih i srednje velikih poduzeća. Rast trgovine dionicama malih i srednje velikih poduzeća u turizmu postignut je isključivo na temelju trgovine dionicama velikih poduzeća, čije je značajni pad posljedica transformacije i privatizacije. Iako mala i srednje velika poduzeća imaju ozbiljnih problema (nedostatak kapitala, planiranje, kompjuterizirani sistem informacija i rezervacija, nedostatak suradnje, složena pravila, itd.), njihova se budućnost nalazi u globaliziranom svijetu. Mala i srednje velika poduzeća su u mogućnosti, zbog njihove male veličine, djelovati fleksibilno i pronaći tržišne niše gdje će moći osigurati osobne usluge, što je ključno u turizmu. Turistička mala i srednje velika poduzeća ne mogu sama savladati prepreke koje se javljaju u procesu internacionalizacije potražnje. Politika turizma mora podržavati strukturu malih i srednje velikih poduzeća. Država bi trebala poticati kako suradnju tako i kompetenciju da bi podmladila potražnju na kreativniji način. Suradnjom bi se trebalo doći do nekoliko beneficija, kao to su pristup novoj tehnologiji, otvaranje novih tržišta i smanjenje kupovnih i kapitalnih troškova. Ovaj rad će razmatrati rezultate studije o najuspješnijim malim i srednje velikim poduzećima u hrvatskom ugostiteljstvu, a sve u kontekstu strategijskog razvoja.

Ključne riječi: *Hrvatska, Dubrovnik, turistička mala i srednje velika poduzeća, ugostiteljstvo, suradnja, globalizacija.*

JEL classification: L83