

The role of technology in improving the touristic experiences of cruise passengers: Business review and a new solution for adding a ‘tasting’ experience

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Abstract

The cruise sector is one of the cornerstones of Blue Economy generating a substantial economic impact at global level. In 2019, before the outburst of the Covid-19 pandemic which heavily disrupted business operations, the sector contributed almost \$154 billion to the world’s economy and supported more than 1.1 million jobs.

Having transited from a pure touristic product to an experienced-oriented one, and with the average profile of cruise passengers having changed a lot (e.g. smaller age, lower economic class, technologically competent, etc.), the sector is looking to introduce new innovative services that will further increase the interest of passengers in selecting cruising as a form of vacation. To this end, the role of technology and the introduction of digital solutions / smart applications is profound and considerable progress has been made over the past years into integrating such solutions in the day-to-day activities of cruise passengers both onboard the vessel but also at ports of call.

A new solution, complementing existing ones, is being investigated over the past two years within the framework of the NAUS research project funded by the Interreg Greece – Cyprus programme. The NAUS solution targets the cruise supply chains as well as the preferences of passengers on local, ‘traditional’ products that can be found at different cruise destinations in Greece and Cyprus. Through a matching platform that has been developed, local producers and suppliers have the opportunity to post and promote their high-quality products, which cruise companies and passengers can then order gaining in that way an additional ‘tasting’ experience, representative of the respective cruise destinations.

Along with an overview of already available digital / smart solutions targeting the cruise sector, the NAUS solution will be presented outlining its development stages, pilot-testing and commercialization plans within both Greece and Cyprus.

Keywords

Cruise, touristic experiences, smart applications, digital solutions, traditional products, local economy