

10

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CITY IMAGE

DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS IN MODERN RUSSIAN CONDITIONS **PROBLEMAS DE DESARROLLO DE IMÁGENES DE LA CIUDAD EN CONDI- CIONES MODERNAS DE RUSIA**

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ABSTRACT: The municipality image is formed from the priority elements of its structure and a complex of certain factors of territory development and promotion. In the modern sense, a municipality image is an effective result or a consequence of many factors of local development, as well as an active tool for transformations, raising the status and prestige of a given territory, and its investment attractiveness. The purpose of this article is to identify the factors that impede the development of a positive image of a municipality in modern Russian conditions. The main research method was a questionnaire survey of tourists and the residents of the Chekhov urban district of the Moscow region, during which they revealed the attitude of residents and tourists to the image of the Chekhov urban district. Based on the survey results, the key factors were determined that impede the development of a city positive image: the lack of local authority involvement in the city positive image development; low level of public awareness about the territory benefits; low level of tourist attractiveness of the city. The obtained conclusions made it possible to develop recommendations that would improve the image policy of the municipality and increase the city attractiveness.

Keywords: Territory image, territory marketing, brand, municipal authorities, tourist attraction.

RESUMEN: La imagen del municipio se forma a partir de los elementos prioritarios de su estructura y un complejo de ciertos factores de desarrollo y promoción del territorio. En el sentido moderno, la imagen de un municipio es un resultado efectivo o una consecuencia de muchos factores del desarrollo local, así como una herramienta activa para las transformaciones, elevar el estatus y el prestigio de un territorio determinado y su atractivo para la inversión. El propósito de este artículo es identificar los factores que impiden el desarrollo de una imagen positiva de un municipio en las condiciones modernas de Rusia. El principal método de investigación fue una encuesta por cuestionario de turistas y residentes del distrito urbano de Chekhov de la región de Moscú, durante el cual revelaron la actitud de los residentes y turistas ante la imagen del distrito urbano de Chekhov. Con base en los resultados de la encuesta, se determinaron los factores clave que impiden el desarrollo de una imagen positiva de la ciudad: la falta de participación de las autoridades locales en el desarrollo de la imagen positiva de la ciudad; bajo nivel de conciencia pública sobre los beneficios del territorio; Bajo nivel de atractivo turístico de la ciudad. Las conclusiones obtenidas permitieron desarrollar recomendaciones que mejorarían la política de imagen del municipio y aumentarían el atractivo de la ciudad.

Palabras clave: Imagen del territorio, comercialización del territorio, marca, autoridades municipales, atracción turística.

INTRODUCTION

For many years the issue of forming a positive image of cities and regions has not been raised in the Russian Federation. A municipality image is formed from the priority elements of its structure and a complex of certain factors of a territory development and promotion. In the modern sense, a municipality image is an effective result or a consequence of many factors of local development, as well as an active tool for transformations, raising the status and prestige of a given territory, and its investment attractiveness.

A municipality image is formed in the process of a city favorable impression development, based on the activities of local authorities in the development of the main spheres of life and the quality of their provision. In the process of a municipality image development, an important part is occupied by the media and other information resources, since they perform the main function of positive information distribution about the city. Forming a positive image, the municipality makes a direct impact on the successful attraction of significant investments.

Nowadays, there are two indicators by which a territory image is assessed: the professional activity of the authorities and the socio-economic development of the territory. Evaluation of the authority activities can be determined by the quality of their immediate functional duty performance, and by the effect their activity consequences on society. The formation of a favorable image is of fundamental importance primarily for the people living in the municipality. It affects the creation and support of social optimism among the population, trust in the authorities and confidence in the future.

During a territory image development, a decisive role, in addition to socio-economic indicators, is played by such elements as the needs and interests of the local population of the urban district, their material and spiritual values, the existing relationship between the municipality and other entities, their level of involvement, etc.

At present, the territory is perceived as the factor of administrative-territorial innovations. In the context of economic globalization, it is especially necessary for urban territories to develop positioning strategies for their attractiveness increase (Hassib & Ibtissem, 2018). Territory management offers a number of advantages in terms of the tourist sphere sustainable development, stimulating exports and attracting more tourism and investment. Like companies, cities and countries must develop their own brands, becoming increasingly diverse and competitive (Sousa, Malheiro & Veloso, 2019).

Image is a "personal information card" of a municipality. The investment attractiveness of the municipality will largely depend on the territory image. This is a new management concept for the territory of the Russian Federation, which is at the development stage. Foreign experience in a territory image development demonstrates how effective its tools can be, if properly applied, able to bring the territory to a new level of development, opening up new opportunities for it, and allowing it to realize hidden potential.

Two approaches to this problem were formed during such a concept development. The supporters of the first approach are Kotler & Haider (1993); and Arzhenovsky (2016). The object of management in this approach is the territorial authorities, whose functions attain increasingly pronounced marketing character. Vazhenina & Vazhenin (2010), believe that the territory should create not only the benefits for society, but also should contribute to its own environment development, and ensure the efficient use of attracted and created resources. A territory should carry out effective economic activities based on the rational use of its assets.

The supporters of the second approach, Seyfullaeva (2002); Pankrukhin (2010), present the territory as a specific "product" that has consumer value and usefulness, because consumers only use ordinary goods, but they live on the territory, in a specific place. Lamben (2007), noted that the consumer needs not so much a product as a solution to his problems, which can provide a particular product or service. These authors consider the territory as a unique consumption object, characterized by the presence of a general set of material and intangible qualities, which, being perceived by consumers, become the basis for their need satisfaction.

Recently, territorial marketing has become very popular in the world, which uses a wider, strategic approach, relying on such diverse sciences as anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, etc. One of the promising forms of territorial marketing is identity-based marketing, which allows you to activate the main features of the territory development.

The role of cultural marketing and territorial marketing, as well as their mutual influence, is considered in the work by Domański (2016). Various practices, difficulties and features related to marketing and territory are reflected in the writings by Amajid, El Wazani & Elwazani (2016). The publications by Sekuła (2012), present promotion tools that local governments can use in a marketing strategy formation and implementation. A special role here is played by advertising, and public relations. The roles of territory marketing in tourism development are described by Kostynets & Kostynets (2016). These roles present an

improved methodology for tourist region strategic analysis concerning their strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, based on the creation of alternative development strategy vectors and the calculation of integrated indicators (Kostynets & Kostynets, 2016). The principles of a municipality effective use and management by appropriate marketing project conduct based on the analysis of the social, economic and geopolitical situation of a commune are reflected in the works by Renigier-Bilozor & Bilozor (2015).

The analysis leads to the need to study the image policy of municipalities. The purpose of the article is to identify the factors that impede a municipality positive image development in modern Russian conditions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The information basis of the study is the regional regulatory legal acts, statistical data and information and analytical materials of the Chekhov Administration of the Moscow Region, the articles of leading periodicals, the materials of scientific conferences and seminars, and the thematic pages of the Internet.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study is the ideas and paradigms that were developed in the works of leading domestic sociologists, culturologists, economists and marketers. Among the individual methods that were used in the study, they distinguish the methods of comparative analysis, typology, classification method, questionnaire, the method of analysis of social factors and events.

The methodology of socioengineering approach use is of critical importance (Urzha, 2017). Social engineering is a special section of sociological knowledge which is the constructive sociology. Bearing the transformative function of sociology, social engineering makes it possible to provide an impact on a social object methodologically and methodically in order to modernize or update it completely. This area of sociological activity has special means and methods that allow you to contribute actively to public life urgent problem solution. Revealing the essence of these methods, we can say that social engineering is a chain of interconnected sequential procedures aimed at social object transformation in order to improve them, creating new ones that solve pressing social problems.

In order to identify urgent problems that impede a municipality positive image development in 2020, a questionnaire survey was conducted in the urban district of Chekhov (Moscow Region), during which they revealed the attitude of residents and tourists to the image of the urban district of Chekhov. The study involved 2 groups of respondents.

The first group - the local residents of the urban district of Chekhov (N = 150), and the second group - the tourists (N = 150). Distribution by age: 17 - 25-year-old - 80 people; 25 - 35-year-old - 80 people; 40-55-year-old - 80 people and 60-65-year-old - 60 people. The sample of respondents was random in the study; the study was conducted anonymously.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The urban district of Chekhov is located 50 kilometers from Moscow, away from large industrial enterprises. As of 01.01.2020, the population of the urban district of Chekhov makes 99,038 people. The city has 5 monuments of civil and cultural architecture, old manors with picturesque parks and ponds related to the lives of interesting people of the past, churches, a number of archaeological sites, about 6 military graves and obelisks to fellow soldiers who died during the Great Patriotic War in 1941-1945. As of January 1, 2020, about 74 retail outlets, 30 public catering establishments and 12 consumer service enterprises, 3 shopping centers and 2 shopping malls operate on the territory of the Chekhov urban district (Official website of the Chekhov City District Administration of the Moscow Region, 2020).

The analysis of the data from the questionnaire aimed at urgent problem determination that impede a municipality positive image development of the Chekhov urban district of the Moscow Region provided the following results.

50% of respondents rate negatively the image of the urban district of Chekhov (Figure 1).

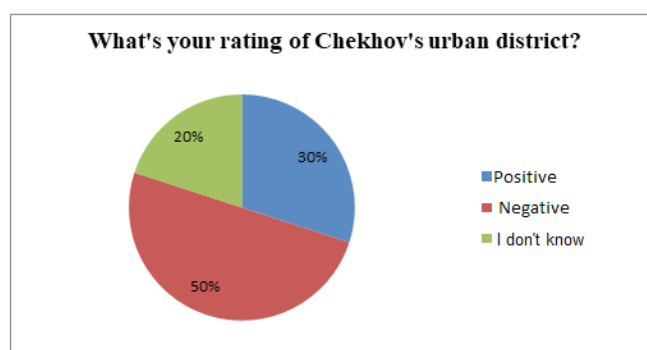


Figure 1. What's your rating of Chekhov's urban district?

Further, the respondents were asked the following question: "What are your associations with the city of Chekhov?" Most respondents (60%) replied that the Chekhov urban district was associated with the famous writer A.P. Chekhov, in whose honor the city was named. 30% of respondents associate the city with the "Seagull", located on

the city emblem, 20% found it is difficult to answer this question (Figure 2).

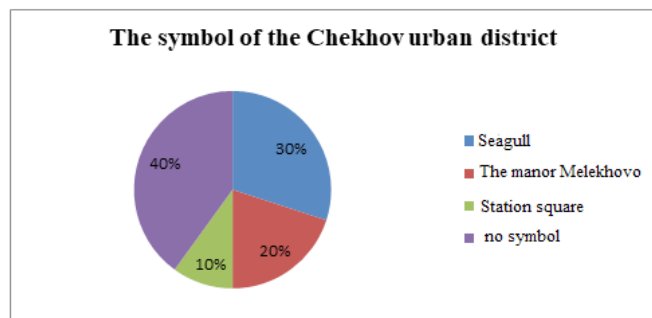


Figure 2. What are your associations with the city of Chekhov?

The residents were asked the following: “How do you assess the work of local authorities concerning the city image development?” 80% answered negatively, 10% answered positively and 10% found it is difficult to answer. This issue fully reflects the opinion of the residents on the local authority activities in the city image development.

To create a positive image of the Chekhov urban district, local authorities held various events, however, their assessment by the respondents was mixed. Most believe that such events are not held (70%) (Figure 3).

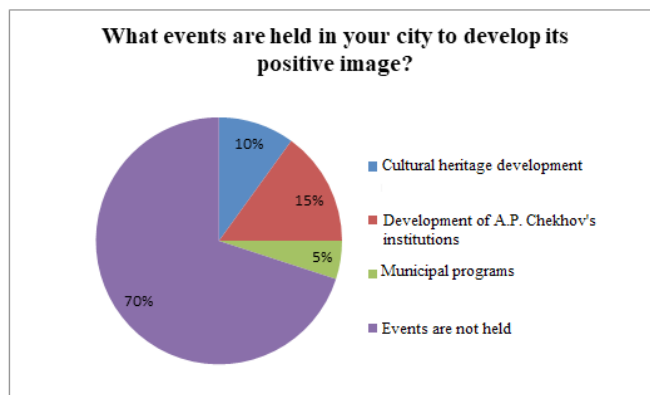


Figure 3. What events are held in your city to develop its positive image?

Thus, the results of the study made it possible to identify the factors that impede a positive image development of the Chekhov urban district:

1. An insufficient level of local authority involvement in the process of a positive image development of the city of Chekhov;
2. Low level of public awareness of the Chekhov urban district benefits;
3. Low level of tourist attractiveness for the urban district of Chekhov.

To inform residents, there is an official website of the Administration of the Chekhov urban district with an average monthly number of visitors of about 6,000, an information and entertainment portal Chekhov (Chehov-vid) with the number of visits about 60,000 per month, Chekhov Today (inchehov.ru) with the number of visits about 3,000 per month, Chekhov News Portal (Chekhov. Net) with the number of visits about 25,000 per month.

As the part of the study, the analysis of the official website of the Chekhov urban district administration was performed. Its results are presented in table 1.

Table 1. The analysis results of the official website by the Administration of the city district of Chekhov.

Data	Available	Enough	Not enough	No data
Availability of general information about the department, management and employees, availability of links to municipal institution portals	3	4	20	10
Availability of administrative act texts and the texts of administrative regulations	15	15	3	1
The presence of information about activities on the site - news feeds, texts, speeches, meeting agendas	2	1	22	28
Availability of budget execution information	20	17	2	1
Data on the social and economic development of Chekhov	5	6	30	67
Information on working with citizens' appeals - the procedure and time for admission, appeal consideration procedure	6	13	7	15
Feedback system availability	1	2	18	56
Availability of information on Chekhov's investment attractiveness	3	11	30	29
Availability of information on Chekhov's tourist attractiveness	6	15	35	18
Availability of information on municipal programs	3	1	31	76

Availability of progress reports	5	9	48	55
Total number of comments:	163		602	

The analysis made it possible to note that the official website of the city district has no information about the socio-economic development of the territory, about municipal programs, the population feedback, the information about the tourist attractiveness of the city is not fully reflected.

Development of a system of feedback with the population will affect the perception of the population authorities to a large extent, will optimize their interaction and will increase the level of trust, which will affect the image of local governments, and ultimately the image of the municipality as a whole.

Territory development through competition is becoming a popular trend. In a market economy, cities, regions and countries are forced to compete with each other to attract external resources, investments, and other potential consumers of the territory. Each of them seeks to stand out from the rest via individual characteristics, to offer his own unique product - be it leisure, the conditions for entrepreneurial activity or a place of permanent residence (Russian Federation. State Duma, 2018) No. 204 "On national goals and strategic objectives of the Russian Federation development for the period until 2024").

This desire is based on the simple fact that a territory consumer represented by an investor, a tourist or a potential permanent resident will choose a territory that meets his expectations and wishes.

Comparing the instruments of the territory image used in our country and abroad, it is impossible not to reveal a cardinal difference. In our opinion, this is due to the fact that a positive image development of the territory as a management philosophy in our country is at the development stage, while foreign countries have been practicing it for quite some time. This is an incentive for many cities and municipalities of our country to change radically their socio-economic situation and the perception by external actors.

One of the promising areas aimed at their distinctive asset increase in accordance with the strategic marketing paradigms used in the territories is a new approach to "site management" - Place Management. It is necessary to consider the issues of site management and territorial marketing from the point of view of an interdisciplinary analysis of evolutionary development paths.

Thus, the results of the study made it possible to formulate the following recommendations for the city of Chekhov positive image development:

1. It is necessary to amend the Program of socio-economic development in the form of a subprogram for a positive image development of the city of Chekhov municipality, since today there are no projects or programs in the territory aimed on the municipality positive image development to one degree or another, its popularization and perception among the local population and among tourists.

2. Information support of the main heritage sites of the Chekhov municipality (information on the advantages of the territory, photographs and advertising leaflets) in social networks, the media, and on the Internet. Marketing of historical and cultural heritage with the priority on A.P. Chekhov's work should contain the following trends:

a) the creation of the municipality Chekhov group in Vkontakte and Facebook, a personal page on the Instagram network and integration with well-known travel bloggers who will come to Chekhov and present high-quality content as the part of the territory positive image development. First of all, it will be necessary to show the following objects: St. Nicholas Church on the graveyard in Rovki; the Museum-Estate Lopasnya-Zachatievskoye; the Manor Sadki; the Outhouse Seagull; Zachyatevskaya Church; the Church of St. Luke of Simferopol; the Temple of John the Baptist; the Church of All Saints in Ivanovo; the Assumption Church in Novoselki; The holy spring of Rev. David; the Adventure Park "Wild Squirrels"; the Chekhov Museum-Reserve "Melikhovo".

b) high-quality professional photographs of potential objects;

c) advertising the main events of the city of Chekhov, business training and socially significant forums in the media.

3. Creation of the Chekhov municipality investment site in order to attract and support investors, which will reflect the main advantages of the municipality, a visual map of attractive objects with a detailed description and characteristics, the sections with the main commercial organizations, including tourist ones, which will be associated with possible improvement of the city tourist attractiveness.

4. Tourism development in the region:

- Training of staff in the field of hospitality, in order to acquire knowledge and develop work skills for a large tourist flow and high load in hotels.

- The development of international cooperation in the field of hospitality (the availability of package tours that could satisfy the needs of different consumers).

- Conduct of scientific and practical conferences on the main issues of the tourism industry.
- Conduct of seminars on the main trends of tourism and hospitality development.
- The use of foreign practices in the field of hospitality.
- Conduct of advanced training courses and professional retraining of the tourism industry employees in order to improve the level of guest service quality (Vetrova, et al., 2018).
- The publication of booklets, newspapers and brochures about the city.
- Active coverage of tourist resources in the media and the Internet.
- Development of tourist infrastructure.
- Development of passenger traffic.
- Development of the tourism industry for children and all related child infrastructure.
- Development of a city navigation system.

To implement the abovementioned trends of the city positive image development, it is necessary to rethink and popularize urban symbols; to involve the local community to generate image ideas; partnership with local advertising and design companies to popularize urban cultural brands, cooperation with the business community representatives to activate local resources (Frolova & Medvedeva, 2018).

The developed recommendations will help to improve the municipality image policy and increase the city attractiveness.

CONCLUSIONS

Recently, a negative image of the municipal government has developed in the minds of citizens, the population believes that the municipal government is not able to protect effectively the interests and observe the rights of citizens, and does not respond to residents' requests. The effectiveness of municipal governance improvement depends partially on the municipality image, the application of technologies for its promotion, and, therefore, on the feedback and relations between the government and society, on their mutual influence and dialogue.

The development of a favorable image is of fundamental importance primarily for the people living in the municipality. It affects the creation and support of social optimism among the population, trust in the authorities and confidence in the future. The activities of local authorities should

always be aimed at the population benefit. Requests, interests, and expectations of residents can be identified during various opinion polls. The data obtained should be used as fundamental factors for further communication work.

Russia is rich in cultural heritage, but not all municipalities are ready and able to see the key to their development in this heritage and form a positive, memorable image of the city. A serious problem for the development of such a field of activity is a catastrophic lack of qualified experts with practical skills, making developments in the field of territory attractiveness or branding, and involving the residents in the process of a positive image development.

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