

Chapter 48

Ease Your Travel Journey in Malaysia with GuideGo! Travel Application

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Abstract

Tour guides are one of the key front-line players in the tourism industry. Through their knowledge and interpretation of a destination's attributes and culture as well as their communication and service skills, they have the ability to transform the tourists' visit from a tour into an experience. The role and duties may not be that glamorous as the profession, in many countries, lacks a well-defined career path and their incomes are reliant on a variety of income sources.

Introduction

According to New Strait Times in 2017, The World Economic Forum (WEF) has placed Malaysia in the 26th spot in Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report for measuring the relative health of 136 countries' tourism sectors. Although dropped compared to previous years, Malaysia remains as an attractive destination for price competitiveness, strong air connectivity and beautiful natural resources. Despite that, Tourism and Culture Ministry, Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said that Malaysia is targeting 33.1 million tourist arrivals for 2018 compared with tourist arrival in 2017 which was 29 million. An aggressive performance taken to boost Malaysia's tourism industry which include accommodations, transportation and others help to maintain the industry as the third largest contributor to the country's economy. Besides that, the reason why tourists are interested in visiting our country is because of the skilful and trained manpower who play a critical role in promoting Malaysia. In addition, our guide interpretation has an influence on tourist satisfaction and tourist satisfaction turn to influence destination royalty (Kuo, Chang, Cheng & Lin, 2015).

Problem Statement

All these days, tour guide function has been used in travel agent to conduct a group tour but not commonly famous among backpacker and solo trip. Based on our research, we found that although tourist guide course is expensive, their functions have been slowly unappreciated and disregarded. In Malaysia, they are depending on Malaysia Tourist Guide Association (MTGC) and travel agencies to get jobs. In fact, tourist guide services will influence tourists experience travelling in Malaysia. Moreover, users also do not have the chances in selecting tourist guides based on their preferences. On top of that, the existence of the virtual guides' application does not really reliable in delivering information to tourist as bad internet connection causes the application works even slower. This kind of mobile application has been used widely in other countries but not yet been established in Malaysia

Product Objectives

Basically, the objectives of developing this application are firstly, to fully utilize and maintain the function of tourist guides. Secondly, for the convenience of tourist guides to organize their working schedule and

provide high quality services to tourists and lastly, users are able to choose their preferred tourist guide. Through this application, users will be able to view and access Malaysian tourist guides' profile, availability and latest news related to travel issues as well as make online booking. From tourist guide perspective, this application helps to promote Malaysia when tourist guides deliver good services to tourists. On top of that, tourist guides play an undeniably important role in representing our country as they portray the image of Malaysian. In addition, freelance tourist guide will be able to earn and generate income to the country.

Content

A. Product Development

GuideGo is an application that focuses on maximizing tourist guide skills and ability in Malaysia only. There is an existing application that offers similar services to the users known as Nuflit application where it gathers all tourist guides from all over the world within one platform. The advantage that GuideGo has is it will be a great help on tourist guide booking system where users can make reservation easily and save time. Instead of using travel agent, users still choose any freelance tourist guides based on their preferences. In Malaysia's growing tourism industry, this is something that should be emphasized by the government to protect the function of tourist guide. The users are able to access data and profile of Malaysian Tourist Guide, guide availability, review and rating, online booking reservation and news on tourist guides.

B. Guidelines on GuideGo

There are several guidelines for tourist guide to be a part of GuideGo application. Only qualified tourist guides are encouraged to register under GuideGo application when they agreed to pay for specified amount of commission. Firstly, tourist guides will be categorized under Nature Guide and City Guide based on tourist guide license under Tourism Act 1992. Furthermore, pricing on tourist guide services will be assigned on basic salary per hour or per day as stated by the Ministry of Human Resources. However, the pricing will be based on tourist guides' experiences as well as tourist destination chosen within Malaysia. Additionally, through GuideGo travel application, tourist guides will be selected based on customers' preferences and choices depends on tourist guide availability. As for booking procedure, customer booking must be confirmed by tourist guides within 48 hours. Then, customer will receive an e-mail on booking confirmation details after confirmation has been made by tourist guides and deposit payment has to be made after booking confirmation from the management. Payment must be made at least a week before the trip. Before providing services requested, a barcode on booking confirmation received by a customer from the management has to be scanned first by tourist guide. During tour, the tourist guide needs to turn on GPS location throughout the journey. In case of unexpected incident, tourist guide has to be responsible for customers. Last but not least, tourist guide will be receiving feedbacks from customers after the tour and each one of the feedback for every tourist guide will be recorded and kept by the management for future evaluation.

Apart from tourist guide, there are also some guidelines for users who are using GuideGo travel application. Firstly, user is required to create an account which require personal details. Nevertheless, their personal details will not be disclosed to the public. Next, minimum number of persons for each tour is 2 persons per tour. Making 10% deposit payment at least a week before the trip is also one of the guidelines that has to be followed by every user. Another guideline is user will receive confirmation booking after 48 hours and QR Code will be scanned by tourist guide before starting the tour. On the other hand, user has to make a full payment at least 3 hours before tour

with tourist guide. And ultimately, it is compulsory for a user to provide feedback on tourist guide services after experiencing the tour.

C. Tourist Guide Benefits

GuideGo application helps generate more income to Malaysian Tourist Guide as the booking is made directly by customers through this application. Before this, tourist guide has to be contacted by the travel agents and it takes more time. This application is beneficial to tourist guide because they can cater the needs and preferences of the tourist. Using the local tourist guide who is recruited from the local community, they will be able to deliver a good presentation and knowledge on history, culture as well as tradition at certain tourist destinations. Next, working as a tourist guide provides a golden opportunity for them to explore cities they have never been to and gain new experiences as well as knowledge. Being a tourist guide also provides an opportunity to meet thousands of people around the world. This two-way interaction does not only encourage tourist guide to learn about other's culture and their travel behaviour but it also provides an opportunity for tourist guide to learn local and foreign language and hence helps them communicating with tourists as well as handling logistics problem during the tour.

D. User benefits

Although the technology has dramatically advanced and evolved, tourist somehow still needs tourist guide as the best way to gain experience rather than downloading virtual application. GuideGo provides an opportunity for tourist to interact with local people who are knowledgeable and experienced in conducting a trip. Applications such as Smart Tour Guide, izi.TRAVEL: Audio Travel Guide and Travelopoly only provide one-way communication which is the application itself. However, GuideGo encourages two-way communication and it gives an opportunity for tourist to understand clearly the information conveyed by tourist guide. GuideGo also provides an opportunity for tourist to ask question and interact with surroundings so they get memorable experience instead of so rigid and too much information whereas no opportunity for interaction.

Conclusion

GuideGo is an idea to ease stakeholder and it is a great idea because GuideGo is the first application can be found in Android and App Store especially for tourist guide and it gives an enormous contribution to the tourism industry as well as encouraging tourist satisfaction while travelling to Malaysia. Therefore, the idea of GuideGo is great and even better than other virtual application for providing application benefit to the tourist guide which can help in sustaining their function in travel experience. This is a good innovation for Malaysia since it provides better services which require human interaction rather than merely using smartphone when travelling. Furthermore, the main features of this application are to book local tour guide which can reduce workload of Travel Guide association to manage their travel guide in Malaysia. GuideGo is also developed for tourist guide to maintain their functions, skills and abilities so that they still exist in the tourism industry even after decades.

References

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