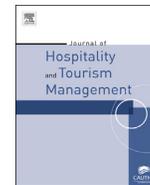




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Book Review

Handbook of LGBT tourism and hospitality, Jeff Guaracino, Ed Salvato (Eds.). Harrington Park Press (2017). XXI+230 pp. \$39.99/£34.00, ISBN: 978-1-939594-19-8(ebook)

LGBT industry is a globally boomed segment with an increasing potential. LGBT Capital had estimated that in 2015 there was around 450 million of LGBT population with \$3.7 trillion per annum of global spending power from this segment (P. 9). Almost all of the modern businesses have been injected in LGBT travelers, whether they are acknowledged or not. The number of LGBT people who would like to travel is nearly twice as much as the average American due to their cultural identity. In tourism, LGBT sector has become gradually one of the major players from a niche business over the last decade, accounting for almost 10% tourist arrives in global tourism business. Out Now Consulting predicts the potential value of LGBT tourism market would reach up to \$200 billion in LGBT 2030 research program (P. 10). Importantly, the purchasing power of LGBT tourists who possess plenty of disposable income is comparatively high. On average, gay travelers in the United States spend \$52.3 billion per year. National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce of the United States reported that the LGBT community contributed \$ 917 billion of combined buying power and \$1.7 trillion to the economy in America in 2015. Hence, LGBT tourism should be given enough attention in both industry and academia. However, only two publications are related to this subject from an academic perspective instead of travel guide so far. *Le Guide Gris (The Gray Guide)* compiled in 1958 by Mattachine Society is the first publication on LGBT tourism research, the first ever travel bible for LGBT community at that time. In 2011, Jeff Guaracino published *Gay and Lesbian Tourism: The Essential Guide for Marketing*. Jeff Guaracino and Ed Salvato are two of the most notable experts and redoubtable warriors in global LGBT tourism industry. To expose as real as possible the LGBT community, they collected the original materials through comprehensive interviews on eighty-five industry leaders (LGBT travelers and industry managers) from six continents. Hence, this book combines the best practices with expert tips and can be regarded as a road map of understanding this industrial segment. *Handbook of LGBT Tourism and Hospitality* is the first major handbook about all sides of the LGBT travel market. The book is injected widely with inlaid practical tips or case mainly in six ways (case study, tips from the experts, company spotlight, industry spotlight, international perspective, and best practices). Interestingly, there are some meaningful questions for discussion at the end of each chapter developed by the professional scholars, which can initiate and expand further the readers' studies and deepen the understanding to LGBT tourism community.

Macroscopically speaking, the book is structured neatly according to the reading regularity of readers. At the beginning, a historical review of LGBT tourism development is presented from four

aspects to gain a better understanding of LGBT industry: publications; history, events, and demonstrations; travel and accommodations; marketing. In the introductory chapter, the authors explain the research background, the purpose, and the features of the book in order to give a holistic view of the book before touching the main body. Chapter 1 introduces the foundations of LGBT tourism and hospitality. First, it states the importance of developing LGBT segment from four aspects: invitation and hospitality, homophobia surrounding, targeting LGBT market, relation marketing, and customer retention. Second, the book mentions the size of LGBT segment in the world and the United States. Third, it analyses the importance of the LGBT segment inside tourism industry, and finally, the authors give some practical tips before implementing LGBT marketing.

The main theoretical part (Chapter 2–4), focuses on LGBT tourism and hospitality businesses and presents systematically a current overview of this industry. Specifically, Chapter 2 discusses the business essentials of the four specific segments of LGBT tourism and hospitality: lesbian travel, bisexual travel, transgender travelers, and LGBT family travel. Meanwhile, the global events and destinations are listed respectively for the four kinds of LGBT travelers. Then, the authors predict the main trends in LGBT travel and give specific suggestions to attract LGBT travelers in terms of training, staff, business policies, and employee resource groups.

Chapter 3 analyses the business opportunities for the stakeholders of LGBT tourism and hospitality, mainly including ten aspects: LGBT events, festivals, and sporting events; LGBT sports; pride festivals; the cruise industry; LGBT tour operators; gays and the motor coach; airlines; hotels and lodging; meeting, conventions and business groups; milestone celebration travel. Meanwhile, this section points out some tips to use effectively this opportunity, such as tailoring the mainstream product with an LGBT wrist; putting up welcome signs and symbols; and turning controversies to the advantages.

Chapter 4 gives specific advice on marketing the business of LGBT tourism and hospitality. These marketing suggestions involve eight aspects: setting your marketing goals, budget, and staff; getting your advertising history straight; strategies for building an effective marketing campaign; the changing media landscape; great content in context is your foundation; communications, public relations, and media relations; smart press trips; LGBT print advertising and gay-inclusive creative; online and digital marketing; marketing through mobile phone apps. Furthermore, the authors recommend ten tips on how to keep LGBT campaign/destination competitive and ten classic principles of successful LGBT marketing.

Chapter 5 offers 13 empirical cases about opportunities and challenges of LGBT tourism in an international perspective by means of interview. The last chapter provides useful academic resources (association, conventions, organization, conference,

expositions, further reading, and annotated bibliography) for facilitating the researchers interested in this market field.

Generally speaking, *Handbook of LGBT Tourism and Hospitality* is the most inclusive, useful, and comprehensive guide for business practice in LGBT industry so far. This book is well-written in an easy-to-read style and with plenty of practical cases in order to improve the understanding among business managers and researchers. However, there are a few points of concern that merit serious attention. On the one hand, the arrangement of the contents in some chapters is confusing, because there is no inner hierarchical structure in each chapter. For instance, 3E and 3F in Chapter 3 discuss about the tips for success in LGBT marketing, while the other 11 sections in this chapter focus on the business sectors which can seize the opportunities from LGBT tourism market. Meanwhile, those tips for LGBT tourism business should be integrated together into an independent section, rather than being distributed among some separated chapters (Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4). On the other hand, one of the weaknesses of the book is the insufficiency of theoretical discussion on these numerous practical materials (expert' opinions, industry information, and empirical cases). Additionally, the title and the content of Chapter 5 are not consistent. This chapter just gives 13 survey results from 13 interviewees in different region/country on the LGBT tourism, which is a bit deficient in academic rigour if the chapter is titled as global view. Furthermore, if the authors were to consider a revised edition in the future, I would recommend an additional conclusion at the end of Chapter 5 summarizing the general prominent experiences from international

perspective rather than separately listing these practical cases.

A few weaknesses notwithstanding, the merits of the book most certainly outweigh the defects. The book provides a snapshot view of the full profile of this growing segment with essential information and the best practical experiences from different viewpoints. So, the book successfully serves as a concise guide to business owners, marketing specialists, academic professionals, and visitors' bureaus to understand the consuming behavior of LGBT tourists in this competitive LGBT industry. Meanwhile, the book can also be regarded as an informative supplement and extending materials for university students and teachers outside their regular curriculum. *Handbook of LGBT Tourism and Hospitality* edited by Jeff Guaracino and Ed Salvato undoubtedly makes a great contribution to the academic study and practical development of LGBT tourism and hospitality. Hence, this publication should be acquired by libraries and kept by those who are interested in LGBT tourism and hospitality.

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