

“Questing in city promotion on the example of the city of Częstochowa”

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Questing in city promotion on the example of the city of Częstochowa

Abstract

Gamification, storytelling and questing are the latest discoveries of marketing that are used for customers' attraction. The implementation of new methods for promoting the city of Częstochowa is a vital aspect in tourism development. The objective of the paper is to present the assumptions underlying questing and to indicate the opportunities it provides in the case of city promotion. The paper is supplemented with the examples of using this form of promotion in Poland. In the study, the methods of observation and questioning are used. 108 respondents were interviewed. The results show that most people have not come across the concept of questing (68.2%) and only 17.9 % have ever taken part in quest. Despite that, the majority perceive the questing positively. It has been proved that, in the case of Częstochowa, the city dominated by the Monastery of Jasna Góra, questing can be the way to present many other interesting historic, cultural and natural sites. The results of the paper can be used in further research and analysis.

Keywords: marketing, questing, city promotion, attraction of tourists.

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Introduction

Recently, in the process of communication with the market, there can be noticed an increased interest in tools which allow for building the engagement of customers. One of the areas of such a use is city promotion. The city, the municipality or the region are the products that must be sold in an appropriate manner. It depends on marketers whether they will be able to skillfully highlight the points of interests, related legends and tourist attractions typical of the specific place. It is positive that the attitude of the city authorities has been changing from year to year and is not limited only to issuing souvenir pens and lanyards with the city logo. More and more frequently the awareness of the significance of city promotion is so great that it reaches for non-standard, unconventional and new ways of promotion. One of the ways is questing as a tool which allows for evoking emotions, engagement in its participants, promoting the specific place, discovering its corners, previously unknown, building identity. Simplifying, questing is known as a type of a game whose participants discover interesting places, learn tradition and history. Questing has undoubtedly an educational element, which is not insignificant taking into account current changes in attitudes of customers and development of modern technologies. The objective of the paper is to present the assumptions underlying questing and to indicate the opportunities this

concept provides in the case of city promotion, including Częstochowa, the city dominated by the most important tourist attraction – the Monastery of Jasna Góra. For years it could be observed that Częstochowa is mostly visited by people whose main objective is a religious journey combined with the sightseeing of Jasna Góra. These people decide on a one-day stay and if it is a two-day stay, they get the accommodation offered by the Church or a hotel. There are preferred visits organized individually, in the case of organized groups, the organizer is the parish or the school. Tourists use the services of nearby bars, most frequently on the route between the Sanctuary and the Railway Station (Central Station or Stradom Station) or catering facilities located in the neighborhood of Jasna Góra. It seems that many tourists do not decide to stay longer and limit their visit only to the stay at Jasna Góra. Therefore, there appeared the concept to supplement the activities promoting Częstochowa and create interesting sightseeing tours combining the characteristics of questing – fun, education, building engagement, integration with the local community. Three questing routes were started in 2016.

1. Literature review

Questing is defined as a type of tourism with riddles. Delia Clark and Steven Glazer are considered as the pioneers of questing. Questing, as a form of sightseeing and a method in regional education, was first used in the United States of America in the mid-90s of the 20th century. In 1997, there was established the organization – Vital Communities, which developed three programs devoted to social, economic, environmental and cultural issues: Community Profiles, Valley Vital

Signs and Valley Quest. Valley Quest was based on the tradition of letterboxes, i.e. the game using hidden letterboxes. The project has been functioning up to the present and there are more than 200 quests in the offer. The aforementioned Delia Clark and Steven Glazer, in the work *Questing: A Guide to Creating Community Treasure Hunts*, defined questing as a model of regional education (place-based education), which concentrates on discovering the immediate environment of the man, learning and acquiring knowledge on the cultural and natural heritage, especially on a local scale (Droba & Przepióra, 2014, p. 37). "Questing as an innovative method of discovering, presenting and promoting natural, cultural and historical heritage of the specific place enforces the active engagement of the participants at each stage of hiking and, in contrast to urban games, does not require the supervision and control of the organizers, since it is based on the rule "be your own tour guide"" (Czerska, 2016, p. 281). Another definition states that questing "means heritage tourism with verse riddles, and the word quest refers to searching for treasures or an unmarked route" (Połucha, 2015, p. 64).

Certainly, all definitions of questing amount to a few key components: fun with riddles, sightseeing, education, discovering the identity of the region, activating tourists and the local community. In questing, the aspect supplementing the basic tourist offer is also worth highlighting. This may co-exist with a marked route, a commonly known story or a legend about the place, supplement the traditionally perceived sightseeing of attractive tourist destinations. Questing, in spite of being initially addressed to young people, is now a tool which can be played by everyone. "Questing refers to the theme of "a secret place" from childhood, which, like the archetype, is hidden in everyone and is waiting to be awoken. In such a place, due to youthful imagination and dreams, "long" trips were taken and "remarkable" goals were achieved. The atmosphere of such a place often had impact on the ideals and core values, and although they were usually verified by life, in everyone, there remained the need to be in a place where, for a moment, one can break away from everyday monotonous life and enter the extraordinary world of imagination, full of magic" (Lenart, Wilczyński, 2016).

"Questing is an activity defined as 3xE (entertainment, excitement, education) (Jalinik, 2013, p. 56). One may also go further and then questing, as an attractive form of sightseeing, being inscribed in the global trends, can be defined as 4xE (entertainment, emotion, education, engagement) (Smalec, 2015, p. 196).

Questing has developed and gained recognition, since it was based on four pillars:

- ♦ The first one is the "therapeutic" role, referring to the fulfillment of childhood dreams and return to the joy of individual discovering and 'unlying' the world.
- ♦ The second one is an extremely, attractive, engaging educational function, directed (regardless of the general development effect) to regional contents or cultural and natural heritage of 'little homelands'.
- ♦ The third one is integration qualities, strengthening and activating the local environment based on the local identity which builds strong personalities, deeply connected with their 'little homeland' and proud of the place where they live.
- ♦ The fourth one is the promotional and economic effect consisting in attracting tourists (Lenart, Wilczyński, 2016).

In Poland, questing and questing routes are a relatively new solution. On a larger scale, they have been developed since 2011, when the project of the unique tourist product in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship was developed – "Bałtów – the Polish capital of questing" (Pawłowska, 2014, p. 30). However, already in 2006, the first quest which was implemented in Poland was "Cornucopia" created for the purposes of the action promoting Prussian females – stone statues of women. In 2008, the Internet version of that game was created (Questing. Programowy Ruch Odkrywców). In the years 2008 and 2009, Steven Glazer came to Poland to run questing workshops in Lower Silesia and then in Bałtów. Nowadays, questing is promoted in several dozen centers in Poland, in the area of which there are already almost 700 quests (Lenart, Wilczyński, 2016).

As to studies and researchers in tourism sphere, Stankova and Vasenska (2017) provide a model for sustainable planning in order to enhance competitiveness in different tourism destinations. Millington, Young, and Gibson (2002) identified the main aspects of city marketing, describing the trends in formation of marketing policy and its implementation.

Development of marketing concept of questing can be based on promoting factors for services that were highlighted by Enerson, Mason, and Corbishley (2016). Authors paid particular attention to 7P framework taking into consideration marketing problems of professional services.

The idea of promotion by using social media was proposed by Cant (2016). The author focused on the events that need a special approach for promotion,

as well as questing. The results of this study show that institutions use social media ineffectively, a lot of tools are not even used. Also, Zhou, Wang, (2014) analyzed multiple marketing tactics for promotion and use of social media for the city marketing with all advantages and disadvantages, highlighting the main problems that may arise.

2. Questing in Częstochowa

In the theory of questing, it is pinpointed that the theme of quest should relate to the place visited by tourists. In the case of the region where natural qualities prevail, tourists are attracted by certain natural heritage, natural quests are developed. In the culturally rich places, where tourists are attracted by the strength of traditions, rituals, legends and customs, cultural quests dominate. On the other hand, in places where one learns the story of life of famous people or historical architecture, historical quests will prevail. Another type is seasonal quests, i.e. the ones that relate to local seasonal attractions, e.g. kayaking, ski runs or paragliding fan rally. In Częstochowa, there are three questing routes (Figure 2 presents the brochure of one of them) known as *Profesor bez katedry* (The Professor with no department) (the quest concerning the prominent social worker, general practitioner – Władysław Biegański), *Miasto pełne artystów* (The city full of artists) (the quest on the artists of Częstochowa, among others, Jerzy Kędziora, Halina Poświatowska, Tomasz Sętowski and others) and *Częstochowa przez wieki* (Częstochowa throughout the centuries) (the quest through the Old Town, tourists visit historic places).



Fig. 1. The poster promoting the questing routes of Częstochowa in the shop window of Częstochowska Organizacja Turystyczna (Tourist Organization of Częstochowa)

Source: Author's source material.

The project of development of a new tourist product was initiated by Częstochowska Organizacja Turystyczna and commissioned to an external company. The unmarked routes began to operate in 2016. The participants of individual quests receive the brochure with detailed information due to which,

while wandering around the city and following the included instructions, they learn previously unknown places, legends, anecdotes and monuments. Instructions require the engagement of the participants since they were constructed with the use of riddles and simple mathematical tasks. The questing routes of Częstochowa are promoted by the organizer at tourism fairs and, among others, these are:

1. The Fair of Tourist Regions – Where Cultures Meet in Łódź.
2. Gdańsk Tourism Fairs.
3. International Tourism Fairs in Wrocław.
4. International Tourism Fairs in Katowice.



Fig. 2. “Profesor bez katedry” questing card

Source: Częstochowska Organizacja Turystyczna (<http://www.czot.pl/>, accessed on August 2017).

Moreover, the following actions are taken to spread the idea of quests in the city:

- ◆ posters and brochures (at Tourist Information Office, Al. NMP 65);
- ◆ during the holiday season, promotional materials could be collected at the Department of Culture of the City Hall of Częstochowa, in the Odwach building, Al. NMP. 45A;
- ◆ the information on the offer of questing routes was distributed by the tour guide on the route of the tourist bus during the holiday season. As the interview with the staff of CZOT (Częstochowska Organizacja Turystyczna) indicates, many tourists, just due to the information obtained on the tourist bus, came back to the Tourist Information Office to collect the brochures and participate in quests;
- ◆ the promotion of the questing routes during the celebrations of the World Tourism Day; in 2017 this event was organized in the Muzeum Częstochowskie (The Museum of Częstochowa) and the Ceremonial Hall of the City Hall;
- ◆ the promotion of the questing routes at the outdoor fairs, e.g. Christmas and Easter Fairs;
- ◆ mailing addressed to the neighboring Municipal Offices and schools;
- ◆ the website of CZOT (the information collected during the interview with the staff of Częstochowska Organizacja Turystyczna).



Fig. 3. Tourist bus service – July-August 2017

Source: A double-decker bus began holiday routes around Częstochowa, *Gazeta Wyborcza* (<http://czestochowa.wyborcza.pl/czestochowa/7,35270,22041953,pietrowy-autobus-rozpoczal-wakacyjne-kursy-po-czestochowie-zdjecia.html>, accessed on July 2017).

The information obtained during the interview with the staff of Częstochowska Organizacja Turystyczna indicates that it is planned to develop other questing routes in the city. Additionally, the organizers are planning to engage the inhabitants of Częstochowa announcing the contest for other questing routes.

3. Methods

For the purposes of the paper, there was conducted the diagnostic survey on questing itself and the questing routes of Częstochowa. In the research, there was used the questionnaire and observation. In the period of July-November 2017, 108 respondents took part in the research. The questionnaire included 8 questions in the substantive part and some demographics questions. The objective of the research was to learn the opinion of the respondents on the efficiency of questing in the promotion of Częstochowa. The knowledge on the assumptions of questing as a tool for building the engagement of tourists was also important since it was assumed that, in the case of Częstochowa, the city dominated by the Monastery of Jasna Góra, which numerous pilgrims visit every year, it is questing that can be a way to present many other interesting historical, cultural and natural sites. The responses of 108 people were subjected to the analysis, of which 72% belonged to women and 28% – men. The majority of the respondents were the inhabitants of Częstochowa (63%), the others 28.7% – villagers, 6.5% – residents of cities of up to 100 thousand inhabitants and 1.9% – residents of cities of over 100 thousand inhabitants. Most of the respondents represented the age group of over 25 (49.1%) and 46.3% - people aged 19 to 25. The others (4.6%) were under 18.

4. Results

The first question related to the passion of the respondents for all types of games. According to the research, the global game market is growing rapidly. Also in Poland, as indicated by the results of the Video Game Market Report of 2015, 72% of Internet users aged 15-75 are players (Kondycja polskiej branży gier video. Raport 2015.). According to TNS OBOP, in 2012, “as much as 77% of Polish Internet users declared that they had played online games, whereas every fifth of them played online more often than once a day” (W co gramy w sieci.). On the other hand, the Polish Gamers Research Report of 2016 indicates that 69% of the Polish Internet users are players (Kim jest statystyczny polski gracz? – mamy pierwsze wyniki Polish Gamers Research 2016). In spite of a slight decline, there are still many gamers and half of them are women. Summing up, we like games and, as the research conducted for the purposes of the present study shows, over 65% of the respondents like different types of games and 16.7% of the respondents indicated outdoor games. Computer games were indicated by only 6.5% of the respondents. The responses: ‘I don’t like’ and ‘I have never played any games’ were indicated by 7.4% and 3.7% people, respectively.

In the subsequent question, the respondents were to indicate their knowledge on questing as a type of a game with riddles. In relation to the question ‘Have you previously come across the concept of questing?’, the majority of the respondents admitted that they had not known such a concept (68.2%), only 31.8% had come across the idea. This may result from the novelty which questing is. Most of the respondents, having read the introduction to the questionnaire, began to associate questing with the scout paper chase. They responded similarly to the question whether they had ever participated in a quest. 17.9% answered “Yes”, 82.1% selected answer “No”.

In the subsequent part of the research, the respondents who had ever taken part in the quest were asked to evaluate their participation in the aforementioned game. The responses were most often the following:

- ◆ I got to know new places – 34.2%.
- ◆ I had a lot of fun – 28.9%.
- ◆ I got satisfaction with the tasks solved – 26.3%.
- ◆ I learned an interesting story – 21.1%.

In the subsequent question, the respondents were to indicate the responses which they associated with the participation in a quest. Several responses could be indicated, which can be seen in Figure 4.

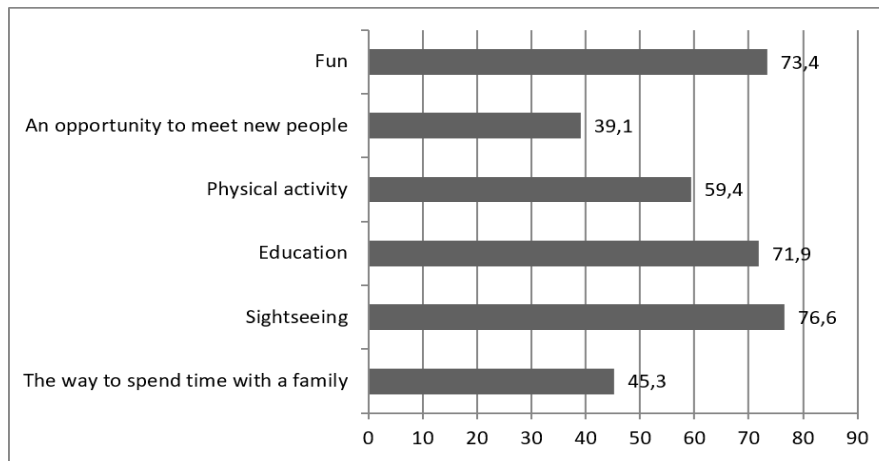


Fig. 4. What do you associate the participation in a quest with?

Source: Own study based on the conducted research.

The respondents most frequently indicated that they associated the participation in a quest with sightseeing, fun and education, i.e. the key components of questing. When responding to the question ‘who, in their opinion, questing is addressed to’, 78.8% of the respondents answered that to everyone, only 17.3% indicated that only to the youth. A small percentage of the responses was: to families and children.

Another question in the questionnaire concerned the knowledge on the existence of three questing routes in Częstochowa. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the respondents (94.3%) knew nothing about the questing routes of Częstochowa, already existing for over a year. This may be due to the existence of the product on the market for a short time or an inappropriate selection of

communication channels. As shown above, the questing routes of Częstochowa were introduced in 2016, the related information was presented during tourism fairs, at the Tourist Information Office and during outdoor fairs. In addition, the information on the routes can be obtained at the Department of Culture of the City Hall of Częstochowa, on the website of Częstochowska Organizacja Turystyczna (CZOT). There was also used mailing to schools and offices of the neighboring municipalities. At the time of the implementation of the product into the market, there were a few articles in the local press and an interview with the Director of CZOT on the local Orion TV. Subsequently, the respondents assessed the significance of questing for tourism in Częstochowa.

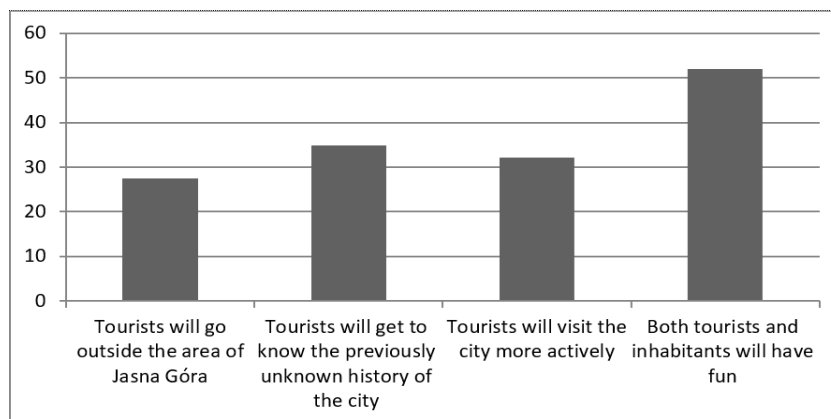


Fig. 5. In your opinion, what impact on tourism in Częstochowa may questing have?

Source: Own study based on the conducted research.

As indicated in Figure 5, questing in Częstochowa will be definitely an interesting part of the tourist offer. In the opinion of the respondents, ‘both inhabitants and tourists will have lots of fun’ – 51.9% of those surveyed indicated so. Subsequently, the respondents noticed that, due to this type of a tourist attraction, visitors will learn better the previously unknown history of the city. Unfortunately, only 27.4% claimed that questing

may provoke tourists to leave the area of Jasna Góra and evoke the willingness to get to know other tourist attractions of the city of Częstochowa.

Conclusion

Questing is definitely an innovative way of promoting places, it has educational values, it is an ideal way of building engagement and education through entertainment. It is also the response to the

particularly high requirements of customers nowadays. The quests designed for the needs of the city of Częstochowa are still a relatively new tourist product the promotion of which undoubtedly requires time and perhaps the selection of new channels of communication with customers. Currently, questing routes definitely require the development of new ways to reach customers and perhaps, in the future, the engagement of inhabitants in developing other quests. At the same time,

promotional activities can be implemented through traditional promotional tools, and proven for Częstochowa. Certainly, quests, as a single form of the promotion of the city of Częstochowa, will not be able to contribute to the accomplishment of the promotional objectives. However, the combination of the potential and the application of the integrated marketing communication will allow for creating coherent, complementary and positive, in terms of image, messages.

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