

## **ALANYA CCI: PROUD SUPPORTER OF EDUCATION**

Distinguished guests, with warmest greetings from Alanya in Turkey, today I'm here to represent Alanya Chamber of Commerce, for the project entitled "ALTSO CONTINUIOUS EDUCATION CENTER" that is one of the most important projects for our Chamber.

So,

Turkey's first accredited county chamber by TOBB, Alanya CCI started service with 1.947 members in 1991. It has currently over 7.000 active members and has become one of the most effective institutions, not only in the region, but also in Turkey.

Alanya, lying on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey, has always been an important agriculture center. However, after being discovered by foreigners by late 70s, it turned into an international tourism hub, thanks to its history and natural beauties.

Populated over 260,000 with a capacity of 160,000 beds, it is a global actor in tourism. Next to the significant signs of Byzantium, Seljuk and Ottoman, the UNESCO-world heritage nominated castle is the symbol of the town.

However, these are unable to draw the future of Alanya alone. From now on, everybody has to be faster, more technological, more economic, more trendy, more educated and more socialized. The ones who can not adopt to this new era, are inevitably eliminated.

As chambers, our number one mission is to help the towns to adapt to that fast change while pioneering this process.

In a world where economic sectors move, an increased number of global and local actors demand a share from tourism and service businesses. This change and newly developed tourism centers brought Alanya's position into a very critical one as well. This toughened competition lead us face the famous question Shakespeare's Hamlet asked once: TO BE OR NOT TO BE.

We, as a town, focused on how to survive in such a tough competition. The biggest challenge was the level of total quality.

As a town which bases most of its economy and sectors on tourism, we believed that a change that involves the inhabitants, employers, employees, the market and the town was inevitable.

Lack of professional knowledge and skills, lack of vision and awareness effected the total quality of tourism and related sectors, which leads to a weaker hand.

### **Innovates for the future**

That's why the bells were tolling for Alanya...We had to evolve ourselves in order to adapt to the new era. It was the time to decide.

So the focus was building the total quality in Alanya, an effort to generate a vision, an effort to light a candle for Alanya to rescue it from dropping into darkness.

We needed to start from the scratch: Need for a more qualified and sustainable sectoral structure with all its employers, employees, services, suppliers, authorities, organisations and the inhabitants that allows tourism all year round. Hence, the biggest problems raised in this regard were the lack of vocational knowledge and lack of public awareness towards tourism.

## **2 – FOCUS ON THE MATTER, QUALITY MEETS EDUCATION!**

As the economy of Alanya is based on agriculture and mostly tourism, almost all the sectors are directly related to tourism. The employed personnel are usually unqualified workers as they are recruited on seasonal basis only. Hence, those employees are jobless during the rest of the year.

As Alanya CCI, we focused on finding something which can add a direct value to both members and the town next to our regular services.

The basic problems are lack of vision, awareness and quality in services business, lack of qualified employees and lack of full-year work fields in the region, which negatively effects the tourism business offered in Alanya with all aspects.

The solution of these problems are to create vision and awareness, to become conscious, to train qualified staff and hence to raise the total quality of services so that tourism can be extended to full year.

Hence, in order to be able to compete in national and international platforms, next to our physical conditions, we had to improve our human resources as well.

### **3 – STEP UP FOR SOLUTION!**

We urgently stepped up for solution.

We started the training programs for all sectors serving in Alanya. Then we noticed that the programs are not enough to meet the needs of the sectors; So we set up The Continuous Education Center to organize systematic and continuous training programs. We established the center in a 550 m<sup>2</sup> (square meters) covered area with 5 classrooms, a PC lab with 20 computers and a conference hall.

### **4 –FIRST RUN TAKES START FOR QUALITY!**

In our opinion, building the center alone was not the enough for Raising Alanya. We seeked a way that allows the training programs to be officially approved in order to have a stronger and more institutionalized impact.

Hence, we set up connections with related public and local authorities.

In this regard, we signed protocols with several institutions in the town such as the following: Institute of Turkish Standards, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Alanya National Education Directorship and Alanya Public Training Center.

These institutions not only agreed to give training courses in the Continuous Education Center to support to establish the “quality concept” in Alanya but also, their presence in the certification of these trainings helped the participants certify their skills with a nation-wide valid certificate which increased their employability as well. Plus, it strengthened our project as most of the stakeholders of the issue were involved directly.

## **5 RIVALRY BRINGS QUALITY, QUALITY BRINGS DIFFERENTIATION!**

The number of Alanya’s both local and global rivals is increasing. The town has to make a difference in order stand out among strong rivals like Spain, France or Italy.

We know that the only way make this happen is to raise the service quality, raise the level of guest and customer satisfaction by offering more than what they expect.

We need to educate the citizens and everyone in the services business to accomplish the mission. We believe that, continuous education is going to establish the desired level of quality and awareness in the town.

Here you can see some examples from the courses we organize to different groups coming from various cultural, educational and professional backgrounds and age groups.

Lately, depending on the demand from various companies in Alanya, we also provide trainings at the spot, due to the subjects required by the market itself.

## **6 - NEEDS DEFINE QUALITY!**

So, what did we need? The answer defined the path.

We have published a Training- Program Recommendation Form on our website. Not only the members, but also people of Alanya can fill the forms and ask the Chamber to organize a program. 27 out of 87 programs were demanded by participants so far. Programs range in a wide spectrum, from elevator training to jewelry.

Also Personal development Training programs were not forgotten and a wide range of them was included in the program as it is a very important factor for the dialogue with the tourist which again relates to customer satisfaction directly.

Hence, we established a need-based system where needs and demands of all parts; employers, employees, authorities, organizations, the market and the town were reflected directly in the subjects selected for our courses. Also, their recommendations, comments or critics were considered while opening new programs or making an overview of the existing ones.

We established a bridge between what is offered by the the town and what is demanded by the tourism sector.

## **7 - QUALITY FOR EVERYONE!**

When we established this project, we wanted to reach a very comprehensive target group, involving especially those that are socially, economically or physically disadvantaged.

Public Authorities and the municipalities in our region also supported our initiative, published related regulations for the service business in the town. Next to that, they took the first step and almost all public officials in Alanya attended the training programs. We are also proud to see housewives attending educations in the center too.

We have trained 14.570 people in 4 years, the number is expected to exceed 20.000 by the end of 2011. This makes a rate of 5,8 percent. This is the rate that refers to the whole population. However, if we consider only those that take active

part in the labor market who consist our main target group, this rate will duplicate.

So, we estimate that number is well beyond similar projects.

However, One of the most interesting groups trained were the prisoners...

A protocol signed with Alanya Prison gave an opportunity to many prisoners.

For example, a hair dresser training was organised and then its department was set up with our support within the prison and in the end it started serving both its employees and customers being prisoners. Since now, 729 prisoners are trained in the training programs in order to acquire a profession and to integrate in the social life easily after they have been released.

## **8 - TIME TO GET THE FRUITS!**

Trainings, developed skills helped the labor force and the public increase their level of awareness towards the importance of personal, vocational and educational learning and the service quality, which ended up with customer satisfaction.

These trainings helped the participants become more competitive, skilled and qualified both professionally and personally. Strengthening their capacity building helped us to offer a more qualified labor force to the market, hence a better service and tourism sector as for Alanya's case.

The center helped many trainees to find jobs as well. The Private Employment Bureau working within the chamber received 669 applications while 185 companies applied for recruiting new employees.

Until today, 680 job interviews were done and 106 people who applied have been recruited in several companies. We also hear that numerous people are finding jobs with Alanya CCI-certified educations noted on their CVs.

## **9 - ALANYA WINS!**

So, that's the story of Continuous Education Center Project. Which raised when we told ourselves "Let's do something which will be for the benefit of our members, the people and Alanya".

So, we are here now, in front of you.

We know that, unrealized potential is the greatest loss ever. Education is the no:1 fact that determines quality

We also want to add a very important development which happened recently. In parallel with our mission of raising the total quality by strengthening this educational structure and emphasizing the importance of vocational quality, we have established a project entitled "ALTSO Voc-Test Center" which aims to develop certain professional standards in tourism business and become an accredited center that certifies employees that fulfill these standards. We were granted by the EU for this 21 months long project.

Thank you for listening ladies and gentlemen. We are deeply inspired by all the projects that we have got to know in this competition, we hope that we inspire other Chambers with our project as well.