

TARGET GROUP: TOURISTS

How shopping
centers are
discovering
tourists as
customers





“YOU HAVE TO GRAB TOURISTS WHERE YOU FIND THEM”

Around seven million tourists visit Alexa on Berlin’s Alexanderplatz annually. ACROSS asked Center Manager Oliver Hanna why. IMAGES: SONAE SIERRA



ACROSS: WHAT DO TOURISTS MEAN FOR ALEXA IN BERLIN?

OLIVER HANNA: Tourists are enormously important for our center as a target group. We are right on Alexanderplatz, a historic part of Berlin. It wasn’t always that way. I can still remember when the tourist buses at Alexanderplatz drove past, because there was nothing here for them. This has changed completely. Since Alexa opened, at the latest, Alexanderplatz has again become the real center of Berlin. This development has occurred just in the last few years. In the summer, over 30% of our visitors are tourists. In other words, we don’t ever experience the classic “summer doldrums” that centers outside the city suffer from. Moreover, tourists are eager to consume. They have the time and often the money for it. We had a total of 16 million visitors last year, about seven million of which were tourists.

ACROSS: ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF TOURISTS? WHERE ARE YOUR VISITORS FROM? AND DO THE CHINESE SPEND MORE ON AVERAGE THAN, FOR EXAMPLE, CENTRAL EUROPEANS?

HANNA: Of course there are differences, including by country of origin. This year we had increased numbers of visitors from the United States because the euro has lost so much value against the dollar. On the other hand, we noticed that the ruble was definitely weaker. We had significantly fewer Russian guests this year. Asian visitors, too, were not as well represented as in previous years. Among the

tourists, they were the ones who spent the most. They purchased massive quantities.

ACROSS: AS A CENTER MANAGER, DO YOU TAKE ANY SPECIFIC MEASURES TO ATTRACT TOURISTS AS CUSTOMERS?

HANNA: You have to grab tourists where you find them. In advertising, we reach them through magazines and city guides. We cooperate with selected hotels and also offer a separate booklet with information about Alexa. Tourists like that and are pleased when they then also get the occasional discount. We also communicate with the Berlin Taxi association. In general, it is important to have a permanent presence.

ACROSS: WHAT SPECIAL OFFERS DOES ALEXA PROVIDE FOR TOURISTS?

HANNA: Our tenants offer a tax-free service, for example. I recommend again and again to make sure that store staff can speak English well so they can provide clients with the best possible advice. We also recently relaunched our information system. Bilingualism is extremely important for that. We can program our information system digitally. This facilitates the work and creates flexibility with regard to multiple languages. We will soon offer our own delivery service for tourists. They will then be able to have their purchases delivered directly to their hotel rooms or to the reception desk. The fact that tourists have rated Alexa as the most convenient shopping center on TripAdvisor proves that they appreciate our offer.



OLIVER HANNA

Center Manager at Alexa: “We will soon offer our own delivery service for tourists. They will then be able to have their purchases sent directly to their hotel rooms or to the reception desk.”

