



MODULE_3 MARKETING

Lesson_2_DESTINATION MARKETING

CONTENT OVERVIEW

What is a tourist "destination"? How to build a winning "destination"?

What are the strategies of a successful destination marketing?

What is the best way to manage a tourist destination?

Some destinations are so well known that they do not need advertising: if you take a look at the images in the slide no. 5 of the video lesson you will immediately know which sites are represented and where they are located. In some cases, even those sites are so well known and crowded by tourists that remedies are needed to reduce the number of visitors!

But if they are not very famous sites, what can we do to make people know them?

The lesson focuses on this and other topics and, in order:

- a) explains what is meant by "tourist destination";
- b) lists the conditions for moving from "destination" to "tourist destination";
- c) illustrates tourism marketing tools and strategies to enhance a destination;
- d) indicates the different ways through a tourist destination can be managed.

The meaning of tourism destination

Destinations are first of all sites, places that have firm boundaries, natural or purely mental: even a cruise can be considered a destination! Destination can therefore be a beach, a mountain, a route, a city, a village, a region, an entire nation or even a continent! For example, think of Australia: a tourist who does not know the country in depth and wants to take a trip, has the idea of Australia as a unique destination, while it is a real continent with extremely different tourist products: beaches overlooking on the coral reef, deserts, cities teeming with crowds, amazing nature! Yet even when he will come back, he probably will not say to friends: I visited Sidney or Alice Springs, but he will say: I visited Australia and then he will say that he spent some days in Sidney, he saw Ayer Rocks etc. This is the strength of the destination!

However, the destination is **not** only a place to visit. Let's take again the example of Australia: to visit Ayer Rocks, our tourist must first arrive in Australia, find a hotel probably in Alice Springs, organize the hike to the red mountain, go to the restaurant, use a guide, find information on visiting time,

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership 2018-1-ES01-KA204-050711



ASSET
BASILICATA





maybe rent a car etc. Well, all the things listed contribute to creating the destination, which is therefore a **set** of geographical factors, attractions, hotel services, entertainment, catering etc.

The destination marketing

The first step to be taken by people involved in destination marketing is to make a survey of attractions and resources available in a given area as they are the ones determining the segments of the potential market to turn to.

There are four main elements that must be taken into account in defining the "destination" product: the elements (natural or human) able to draw attention of the tourist, the ease to reach it (accessibility), the services available, the image (that is, the emotions that travel is thought to arouse in the visitor) and, last but not least, the inhabitants.

In slide no. 12 you can find a good definition of destination marketing.

Like any other marketing activity, destination marketing must have at least two goals:

1. improve the attractiveness of the destination, i.e. build one or more tourism products consistent with its most important elements and in line with the expectations of the market targets referred to;
2. position the destination on the market, i.e. find the most appropriate place for the tourist product (s) created on the tourist market

Tourist product

Without going into technical details, attention is drawn to slide no. 14 of the video lesson as it summarizes all the elements that must be present for a successful tourist product:

- a) **resources**: let's remember once again that resources can be both natural (a lake, a mountain, a beach...) and, so to speak, semi-natural (think of a landscape whose human emotional element is an essential component) or, finally, of human origin (the individual monument or an entire country or city or region as well: of course the wider the geographical area of the destination the greater the risks of not being able to give it a unitary image);
- b) **services**: from tourist guide to hotels, from transports to restaurants, from tourist information to museums, from sports facilities to attractions, from street cleaning to signs to car rental to retail stores, etc.;
- c) **promotion**: the set of promotional tools (printed material such as brochures, leaflets, signs etc. ; websites, social pages, articles in magazines, newspapers, blogs etc. ; commercials; sponsorships etc.); it is worth to underline how promotion can do very little if the tourism product is not consistent with the promoted image (indeed, it would be counterproductive to promote a territory that does not keep the promises contained in the promotional tools!);

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership 2018-1-ES01-KA204-050711



ASSET
BASILICATA





- d) **engagement:** not only of all the stakeholders who have committed themselves to creating and managing the tourism product (from local authorities to service managers) but also of the inhabitants who must feel committed to being an active part in making visitors live a pleasant experience;
- e) **experiences:** all the parts of the destinations properly combined, as mentioned several times, must serve to make the tourist live a pleasant, if possible unique experience!

Marketing strategy

Experience: here's the magic word of destination marketing! Developing and managing experiences with high added value, this is one of the first objectives in building a tourism product. The word "experience" can be ambiguous: in the sense we use it, it means letting tourists experience a meaningful, engaging, fun experience that deserves to be photographed, filmed or told after the end of the trip. The slides on pages 15 and 17 show some examples: from the famous hot air balloon trips at dawn in Anatolia to the processing of pasta which will then be served to those who prepared it in a farmhouse to the historical re-enactment in a medieval center. Very different experiences but all of them, if they deserve it, will be the object of a good memory (and they will probably activate a positive word of mouth!).

The experience will be conveyed by the "destination" product as a whole, not by its individual parts: as the marketing experts of the services teach, in a choir composed of good singers, with only one less good than the others, the spectators will attribute to the lived experience the value corresponding to the less good singer!

Systematising existing resources means creating one or more tourist products but above all putting on the visitor's hat and understanding what he wants to find in the destination that he is going to visit after having seen the promotional tools created by the destination: for example, if the destination is a rural area with small medieval towns he will expect to find typical products (both crafts and food) and to be able to stroll through the small streets of the center. His expectations are very different if he chooses a beach place.

To better understand what an effective marketing strategy means, try looking for some more news on "The Lavender Roads" in Provence (France) or on the small Swiss town of Obermatten.

If we wanted to summarize what has been said so far, we could say that tourists want to be able to use (even individually) all the products of the destination, while it is the task of the destination to organize the territory and transform resources into products.

Destination management

Finding the best possible positioning for the destination is the main task of the people in charge of managing the destination. Referring to another lesson to understand what "positioning" means, when

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership 2018-1-ES01-KA204-050711



ASSET
BASILICATA





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



we talk about destination management we mean the joint and coordinated management of all the parts that make up a destination. Common and coordinated management serves to avoid duplication, to better plan promotional actions, to direct efforts towards a single shared direction, to bridge gaps that an individual entity (public or private) is unable to fill.

A management organization (normally called **DMO** - Destination Management Organization) can be a public entity or a consortium of public entities, a public / private partnership, a totally private entity etc. The important thing is that the DMO:

- is solely responsible for promoting the destination (avoid duplication!);
- gather all those interested in the tourism development of the destination;
- guide and coordinate activities with an appropriate program;
- do not control the activities of individual partners (or even replace them) but bring together skills and resources towards a shared objective.

In conclusion

- Let us avoid the mistake of considering the tourist destination simply as a place (physical or mental) because that place is actually made up of things, services, people, roads, signs, etc.
- The primary purpose of a destination is to arouse an emotion in the tourist, a feeling that is remembered and that triggers a positive word of mouth
- A destination without a subject that coordinates the activities of the many stakeholders involved in tourism development in that area will never be a successful destination.

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership 2018-1-ES01-KA204-050711



ASSET
BASILICATA



"The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."