EUROPE
TOUR

MODULE 1
DESTINATION
CHARACTERISATION

This Training Module is part of the Cultural Toursim Training Course which has been developed within the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership EUROPETOUR, a European initiative aimed at unlocking the economic potential of Europe's outstanding cultural treasures and empowering rural areas to harvest the potential of cultural tourism.

You can find more information at the homepage: http://www.europetour.tips

Pictures: Wolfgang Eisenreich, Kees Grootswagers, Elena Paschinger

Introduction

Basically, a cultural tourism destination is a geographic area that attracts visitors specifically interested in culture. However, more elements need to be considered to fully understand the importance of desti-nation management. This Module contains the following units:

Unit 1   Why people travel

Unit 2   Definition of tourist destination

Unit 3   Basic elements of culturally attractive destinations

Unit 4   Core resources of destinations

Unit 5   Perception of the destination

Unit 6   Destination management

Learning objectives

After studying this module, you will have a basic idea why destination marketing is necessary to attract specifically culturally interested persons.

You will understand the key reasons in travel patterns which is crucial for tourism business and the rele-vant factors that make destinations culturally attractive.

You will become familiar with the six basic elements of tourist destinations (attractions, amenities, accessibility, image, price and human resources).
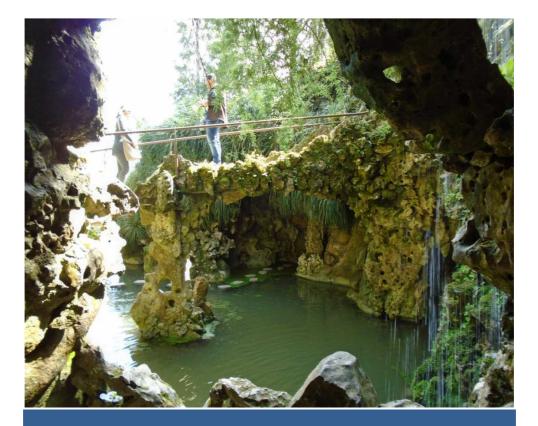
You will become aware of those attributes that shape the competitiveness of your destination.

You will understand what influence perceptions of travellers have and how you can influence their per-ception in order to generate more visits.

You will understand why destination management requires a coalition of cultural and touristic organisations towards a common goal, and what destination management organisations can do to link up separate entities to create a culturally attractive destination.

Unit 1
Why People Travel

Why People Travel

People travel for many reasons, especially today as travel is faster and cheaper than ever before. There are key reasons in travel patterns that have influenced people's travel for generations. Understanding these reasons is crucial for tourist boards, travel agencies and tourism business owners, especially in cultural tourism and in rural areas.

1 - Distance

Traditionally, distance was measured in kilometres. Today, distance is more commonly measured in time. This attitude is due to different locations having better transport infrastructures than others.

The less time and money it takes to travel to a place, the more people will travel there. This is even more important for rural areas, where distances are large and transportation might be a challenge. These concerns about time, distance and money are relevant for the majority of people.

2 - International Connections

Certain countries have a strong foundation of economic, cultural or linguistic ties, e.g. Germany and Austria. Their presence strengthens the likelihood that visitors will travel between these countries. The presence of cultural connections means tourists can feel a sense of familiarity whilst experiencing a new place. This means that travellers can begin enjoying a new place immediately without having to re-adjust or contend with a culture shock.

3 - Attractiveness

People have always travelled to destinations they find attractive. While it is difficult to generalise about what visitors find attractive, most of them travel to places that offer them something they cannot find at home. For culturally interested people the pleasure of travelling is also very often linked to their wish of learning experiences off the beaten tracks.

4 - Cost

The cost of a visit to a particular destination will affect the number of visitors that travel there. In general, the more expensive a trip is, the lower the demand. Cost is also relative. People compare the cost of something to their perceived value. Even if they have the money, but do not believe that the trip provides value for money, they will not travel there.

As with distance, an inverse relationship between cost and demand exists for wealthy travellers. For them, the higher the cost, the higher the demand. This segment of the market sees an intrinsic link between cost and quality. As well as quality, these travellers are willing to pay extra for the privilege of visiting "exclusive" places or culturally highly attractive places which cannot be reached easily.

5 - Specific Events

People often travel to destinations for specific (cultural) events. These events can be seen as an opportunity to showcase the destination, also through media coverage. The publicity often leads to an upsurge in visitors after the event.

6 - National Character

Certain nations have particular habits for their vacations that are rooted in decades of tradition. For example, British people view having an annual holiday as being very important. Furthermore, they prefer to visit seaside resorts. Italian people prefer mainly mid-August or the New Year for travelling. This is important to understand how best to market a cultural product or culturally attractive region internationally.

7 - Image

The image of a location is the perception that people gain from popular culture and media. Films, television programs, novels, news accounts and advertising combine to help people form an opinion of a place. Think of the novels of Rosamunde Pilcher, which brought literacy interested visitors to Cornwall or Italian movies of the Fifties of the 20th century, which made the Italian Marke region famous.

A location's image may or may not be rooted in fact. Most commonly it is a combination of fact and romantic idealism. In some cases fact can follow fiction and a location can begin to change itself to reflect its image in popular culture.

Exercise 1
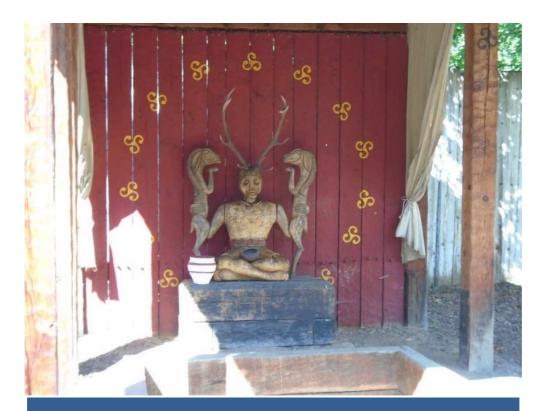
How your visitors travel

Find out who your visitors are, how and why they come to your business. Have there been changes in the past years?

Who are your visitors? (age, single, couple, over 50s etc.)
_____
_____
_____

When do they come? (spring, weekends, during festivals)
_____
_____
_____

Where are they from? (local area, domestic, international)
_____
_____
_____

Why do they travel? (break from work, family time etc.)
_____
_____
_____

How do they travel? (hitchhike, hire car, train, 1st class)
_____
_____
_____

A careful analysis of these data will help you to develop better offers for your target groups.

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Unit 2
Definition of Tourist Destination

Definition of Tourist Destination

According to Webster's Dictionary, the term "destination" is used to signify "the place set for the end of a journey", i.e. a geographical area (a location, a resort, a region, a country, etc.) where the traveller intends to spend time away from home.

According to the definition of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), a traveller destination is an important place which represents the basic unit in tourism, with three perspectives:
- Geographical: a distinctly recognizable area with geographic or administrative boundaries that travellers visit and stay in during their trip.
- Economic: the place where they stay the longest and they spend a relevant amount of money and where tourism revenue is significant to the economy.
- Psychological: the main reason for the journey.

> For cultural touristic marketing, a destination is much more than a mere geographical place. It is an amalgamation of products, services, natural resources, artificial elements and information that is able to attract a number of visitors into a place. They perceive a destination or the service offered in the context of a destination, as a whole. The package of services is often impossible to separate from the geographical place.
>
> Destination and product are therefore identical!

Relevant factors for culturaly attractive destinations:

Resources, actors, activities
A destination is characterized by an integrated set of natural, cultural or artificial (e.g. theme parks) resources. They become attractions and then can be "translated" into products. Each destination product combines goods and services produced by the market with the local resources that represent the reason why travellers choose this destination over competitors.

Territory
The integrated set of resources, actors, activities are located in a territory that can be either a municipality or a sum of municipalities sharing resources/attractions. Frequently, a destination is characterized by a main centre and a group of other municipalities with a secondary role around it, e.g. for support of accommodation services (as it is for example the case of Italian Albergo Diffuso - concept) to the creation of alternative opportunities for experienced travellors who want to know "the context" of the destination. This is a viable strategy to spread demand over space and time and to stimulate the development of the surrounding area.

Relevance of the consumption for the overall economic activity

While the concentration of attractions gives each place a unique characterization and attracts demand, the tourism industries that contribute to satisfy travellers' needs are generally distributed over a larger territory than that of the destination (e.g. external actors, like tour operators or transport carriers). Consequently, the positive economic effects (revenues and employment) are spread both within and outside the local destination, while the negative impacts generated by excessive demand (as sometimes experienced in UNESCO World Heritage destinations) are localized only in the destination.

Exercise 2

The profile of your product

What are the expectations of my customers about my destination or product?
_____
_____
_____

How/where is my destination/product different to that from my competitors?

_____
_____
_____

What do I offer to my customers in addition to my core products ?

_____
_____
_____

If you have answered all these questions, you have now a basic performance profile of your product. If you have many very different products, it may be necessary to answer these questions several times and create a separate profile for each product.
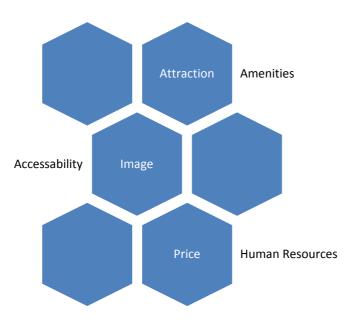
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Unit 3
Basic Elements of Culturally Attractive Destinations

Basic Elements of Culturally Attractive Destinations

Destinations contain a number of basic elements which attract visitors to the destination and satisfy their needs on arrival. These basic elements can be broken down into attractions (the 'must sees' or 'must dos') and other elements. The provision and quality of these elements will be influential in the visitors' decisions to make their trip.

Attractions

Attractions are often the focus of visitors' attention and provide the initial motivation for the traveller to visit a cultural destination. They can be categorised as built attractions (e.g. iconic buildings such as heritage monuments in the country, religious buildings like monastries,), or cultural attractions (e.g. museums, theatres, art galleries, cultural events). They can be in the public realm such as cultural or historical sites or community attractions and services such as culture, heritage or lifestyle. Other, less tangible factors, such as uniqueness and emotional or experiential triggers are also attracting visitors to destinations.

Amenities

These are the wide range of services and facilities which support the visitors' stay and include basic infrastructure such as utilities, public transport, and roads as well as direct services for the visitors such as accommodation, visitor information, recreation facilities, guides, operators and catering and shopping facilities.

Accessibility

The destination should be accessible via road, air passenger services, rail or cruise ships. Visitors should also be able to travel with ease within the destination. Visa requirements, ports of entry, and specific entry conditions should be considered as part of the accessibility of the destination.

Image

A unique character or image is crucial in attracting visitors to the destination. It is not sufficient to have a good range of attractions and amenities if potential visitors are not aware of this. Various means can be used to promote the destinations image (e.g. marketing and branding, travel media, e-marketing). The image of the destination includes uniqueness, sights, scenes, environmental quality, safety, service levels, and the friendliness of people.

Price

Pricing is an important aspect of the destination's competition with other destinations. Price factors include the cost of transport to and from the destination as well as the costs for accommodation, entrance fees to cultural attractions, local food and services. A tourist's decision may also be based on other economic features such as currency exchange.

Human Resources

Attractive services for visitors are labour intensive and interaction with local communities is an important aspect of the experience. A well-trained workforce and citizens who are equipped and aware of the benefits and responsibilities associated with growth of number of visitors are indispensable elements of destination delivery and need to be managed in accordance with the destination strategy. Specifically culturally interested visitors like to dive into the life of locals in order to come as close as possible to a cultural or cultural-historic experience.

Exercise 3

Elements of your destination

List the elements in order of importance for your organisation/enterprise and explain why:
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____
4)_____
5)_____
6)_____

Reflection: Which elements were easy to list; where did you have difficulties?

Your cultural organisations/enterprise is not a lonely planet in the universe. It is embedded into an environment of a multitude of other service/product providers who together form the "destination". Imagine yourself in the position of a few of them (e.g. hotel, museum, castle, artisan) and make the ranking of the element again.
1)_____1)_____1)_____1)_____
2)_____2)_____2)_____2)_____
3)_____3)_____3)_____3)_____
4)_____4)_____4)_____4)_____
5)_____5)_____5)_____5)_____
6)_____6)_____6)_____6)_____

Is the order different than from your organisation? If yes, think which impact this might have on your business, and which are the consequences.

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Unit 4
Core Resources of Destinations

Core Resources of Culturally Attractive Destinations

Culture tourism in general, but especially cultural tourism networks in rural areas, must be aware of the importance and impact of the attributes which shape the competitiveness of destinations and help to decide where and how resources should be directed.

While other components are essential for success and profitability, a destination's core resources and attractors are the fundamental reasons why prospective visitors choose one destination over another.

Therefore, information which helps to identify which attributes influence competitiveness most effectively is of considerable value.

Physiography & Climate

The natural and physical attributes of the destination define its character. They create the environment within which visitors experience the destination. They also define much of the aesthetic and visual appeal of the destination. Therefore, actors in cultural tourism must be heard as a serious voice in regional or local development in rural areas. Architectural eyesores in historic city centers and trans-poration routes which brutally destroy a landscape will definitely depreciate the competitiveness of a destination.

Culture & History

The human heritage varies in terms uniqueness and attractiveness of cultural and historical resources. However, most potential visitors are also interested in quality-of-life aspects and appreciate contemporary lifestyle experiences.

Mix of Activities

It is desirable to assemble a mix of activities that enable visitors to become more actively engaged with the destination. This factor appears to be growing in importance as the traveller increasingly seeks experiences that go beyond the more passive visit of the past. A destination which offers a more multi-dimensional set of cultural touristic experiences is in a better competitive position.

Entertainment

The performing arts sector can be a major supplier to the tourism sector. Theatre, concerts, comedy festivals are examples of the contribution that the entertainment sector can make towards a destination's competitiveness.

Superstructure

The tourism superstructure comprises the built environment that provides for the travellers' specific needs such as accommodation facilities, restaurants, transportation facilities, recreation facilities. It is an important element of the destination's attractiveness.

Market Ties

The depth of cultural and economic links with origin markets, such as ethnicities and migration patterns, may provide a strong and enduring link and may also provide a firm foundation for building cultural tourism within a destination. It can also lead to the establishment of business or trade ties that can generate both a steady flow of visitors and create other forms of economic development. Other important ties include religion, and history.

Special Events

Staged happenings of particular significance can create high levels of interest and involvement on the part of both visitors and residents. The spectrum of possible special events ranges from modest community festivals to large scale events. Some rural destinations have successfully pursued the development of special events as a cornerstone of their competitive strategy. Events like the Austrian Lockenhaus Chamber Music Festival (http://www.kammermusikfest.at/geschichte) are excellent examples that high class cultural events can stabilize and enrich specifically rural areas.

Exercise 4

Core resources and how to make use of them

You might think that these core resources, such as physiography & climate, are beyond your sphere of influence. Well, that is certainly true for some, but not entirely. Let's give it a closer look! Here are a few examples:

Will the climate change affect your business? Should you think of installing air condition during your next renovation?

Landmarks that have been critized as ugly monsters might become accepted or even culturally interesting as showcase of e.g. brutalist architecture.

List core resources for your environment which you can use as attractors for your business:

1)_____
2)_____
3)_____
4)_____
5)_____
6)_____

Reflection: Which resources will develop in a positive way for your business, where can you expect potential negative impact?

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Unit 5
Perception of the Destination

Perception of the Destination

Travellers form perceptions of a cultural destination long before they ever arrive. These perceptions derive from news stories, affiliation with products, experiences with cuisine, portrayal in movies, childhood stories, word-of-mouth, and a wide variety of individual biases. On a larger scale, a Destination Management Organisation (DMO) can generate higher numbers of visitors to a destination by creating and managing a brand that influences people's perception, ideally making it more favourable toward the destination. The brand is the psychological, emotional, and motivational link between visitor and destination. A destination's brand is a collection of elements, including messages and values, designed to provoke a positive perception in the minds of visitors.

An ideal brand will position the destination among potential competitors and attract target market travellers. This can be done through:
- Identifying unique selling points that separate the destination from the competition
- Producing and prioritizing clear motivational messages for visitors that address positive characteristics of the destination
- Crafting a market positioning statement that describes the destination
- Creating a theme line or slogan and graphic logo for the destination that supports the positioning statement

A particular destination may have a hierarchy of messages targeting different market segments. These messages should be crafted for use in websites, publications, direct mail programs, trade show displays, media publicity, advertising, and sales solicitation programs. Once developed, the message and the overall brand become the face of the destination in the eyes of the consumer.

Because travellers have so many destinations from which to choose, destinations must differentiate themselves, partially through branding, in order to be seen among the crowd, let alone be selected. As a result, an entire sub-industry of consultants and business management firms has arisen to assist destinations and companies in this endeavour. It can be a challenging exercise to combine a diverse set of people, places, and emotions into one notion. Remember, to brand a place is also to brand those who live there.

Read more on branding in Module 4, unit 2!

Exercise 5

Comparative analysis of tourist destinations

Compare two or more destinations and analyse whether they are following the rules described in this unit:

· Do they offer clear unique selling points that separate this destination from others?
· Do they produce clear motivational messages for visitors that address positive characteristics of this destination?
· Can you find a market positioning statement that describes the destination?
· Can you find a theme line, a slogan and a graphic logo for the destination?

You may look for destinations that you know or visit some of the following destinations:
www.vulkanland.at
www.klosterland.de
……
……

What do these presentations have in common?
_____
_____
_____

Which presentation comes close to your environment and your business?
_____
_____
_____

Can you get some inspirations for your destination?

Unit 6
Destination
Management

Destination Management

Destination management calls for a coalition of many cultural and touristic organisations and interests working towards a common goal. The Destination Management Organisation's (DMO) role should be to lead and coordinate activities under a coherent strategy. They do not control the activities of each of their partners, but bring together resources and expertise and a degree of independence and objectivity to lead the way forward and to become a strategic leader in destination development.

What is Destination Management in Cultural Tourism?

Destination management is the co-ordinated management of all the elements that make up a culturally attractive destination (attractions, amenities, access, marketing and pricing). Destination management takes a strategic approach to link-up these sometimes very separate entities for the better management of the destination. Joined up management can help to avoid duplication of efforts with regards to promotion, visitor services, training, business support etc., and to identify any management gaps that are otherwise not being addressed.

The elements of the destination are supported by marketing to get people to visit in the first place and to deliver services at the destination to ensure that expectations are met. The basis for these activities is the need to ensure a suitable physical, social and economic environment in which the desired experiences of the visitor are developed. The Destination Management Organisation should lead and co-ordinate these different aspects of the destination.

Creating a suitable environment is the main objective of destination management. Only then the marketing of the destination and the delivery of experiences can follow. Before the visitor is attracted by marketing or arrives at the destination, the right social, economic and physical environment must exist in which visitor experiences can be developed.

> Creating the right environment for cultural tourism includes:
> - Planning and infrastructure
> - Human resources development
> - Product development
> - Technology and systems development
> - Related industries and procurement

Exercise 6

Create your wish list for destination management

Make a "wish list" where you write down everything which could improve the destination marketing of your region: Which of the following activities will you include?

○ working towards a common goal
○ bringing together resources and expertise
○ having a strategic approach to link-up separate entities
○ avoiding duplication of efforts
○ identifying any management gaps
○ creating the right social, economic and physical environment

Which other activities will you put onto this wish list?
_____
_____
_____

If possible, discuss this list with friends or colleagues working in cultural tourism in the same region. Ask them to do the same exercise and discuss any similarities and differences!

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Regione Marche - DMO
Marche Tourism

The Marche Region is the Government of the homonymous Italian region; its Department of Tourism promotes and enhances the regional tourism, coordinating the activities of the incoming operators.

Why is this a Best Practice?

Marche Region promotes the incoming tourism through the valorisation of six clusters:

The Marche Region in Blue

It boasts 180 km of coastline, 26 seaside resorts, with sandy or pebbled beaches. 17 of these have been awarded with the "blue flag". Along the coast, the Monte Conero, a mountain that plunges directly into the sea, tracing the outlines of beaches and coves with crystal clear waters, is worth to be mentioned.

Parks and Active Nature

Just a few km from the sea, the Marche region has an area to be explored: hills and parks and the peaks of the Apennines.

Some 90,000 hectares of the region are covered by parks and protected areas, such as the Sibillini Mountains, much to the delight of nature and sports lovers: trekking, rafting, canoeing, kayaking and bike tourism.

The Genius of Marche

Getting to know the Marche means embarking on a journey into beauty and excellence as expressed by the magnificent masterpieces and works of art. Many are the cities of art, among which Urbino, UNESCO Heritage, is to be mentioned.

Composers, musicians, poets and artists made the Marche well-known all over the world. You have the chance to relive the atmosphere of past times during historical re-enactments held in many of the cities and villages of the region.

Made in Marche

The region has an incredible variety of local products, fine wines and traditional recipes: Flavours of the Adriatic fish, wholesome dishes from the hills, and the mountains to satisfy even the most demanding palates, with its quality restaurants with starred chefs. Moreover, it offers very interesting shopping opportunities and the chance to go to real itineraries through popular fashion and clothing outlets of the major recognized brands in the world. The tradition of old crafts is still alive in the numerous workshops and museums.

Rolling Hills and Ancient Villages

The hills of the region are famous for their medieval villages, traditional flavours, ancient crafts, simple and welcoming people. Among these hamlets, 22 belong to "The Most Beautiful Villages in Italy" and 20 to the "Orange Flags" for their inland tourism quality. Moreover, you can still enjoy a Medieval and Renaissance atmosphere, with historical theatres and buildings, castles, sacred architecture and any kind of museums.

Spirituality and Meditation

A holiday in the Marche helps to rediscover one's faith amongst monasteries, abbeys, ancient landscapes and places of religion which speak to modern man. The history of the many valleys of the region is marked by the stories of numerous Saints and imbued with the heritage of great humanity and spirituality. It is also the birthplace of great Popes and hosts, in Loreto, the most visited Marian shrine in Europe.

These six clusters are developed through thematic brochures, apps for mobile phones, and touristic products offered by local tour operators.

Find more at: www.regione.marche.it

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Ceramic Centre and Museum

Why is this a Best Practice?

The Ceramics Museum in Höhr-Grenzhausen (Westerwald region) is not only a place of preservation of cultural heritage, but also for promotion of the whole region and for fostering innovation in ceramics production as an old craft. The city and the region are part of the tradition of craftsmanship and contribute to the financial security of the museum. Local people are proud of their ceramics tradition in "Kannenbäckerland", they see it as part of their identity.

The settling of ceramists in studios around the museum is promoted, e.g. by involving the artists in the educational work of the museum, studios with low rents, the possibility to exhibit and sell the products in the museum shop as well as opportunities to exchange knowledge with colleagues from all over the world, the organization of international competitions and through sales campaigns such as the annual ceramic market.

The museum is highly connected though networks with the city, the region, the regional economy, the business promotion and the regional tourism agency, and is also involved in the European "Street of Ceramics" and in networking with internationally committed research and production facilities (through conferences, exhibitions and the use of social media). The local economy (e.g. the glass refining company Rastal) helps pragmatically with donations in kind and more.

In addition to the preservation tasks and exhibitions, the "basic offers" of the museum also include a cultural programme, an infrastructure for events, training for professionals as well as interested amateurs, children's programmes and an excellent museum shop.

The Ceramics Museum has numerous partnerships with other museums on local, regional, national and European level, tourism agencies, business and research, accommodation providers and tourism agencies.

Find out more at http://www.keramikmuseum.de