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THE TOURIST DESTINATION BRAND

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Abstract: Through its growing importance to tourism, the tourist destination is increasingly attracting the attention of researchers and tourism managers. The rationale lies in efforts to gain deeper insight into travel motivations and tourist demands and needs. In destinations, tourists can meet many of their needs, above all, the need for leisure and entertainment. Comfortable accommodations, recreation services and facilities, natural and cultural sights, as well as various entertaining events make the destination attractive to tourists. In competing, the destination that has a more organised offering and an established image of the market will have a higher degree of success.

The best way to express a destination's identity is through a well-crafted umbrella brand. This type of brand allows the promotion of all of the destination's tourism supply providers, as well as their joint tourism product, on the market.

Key words: tourism, tourism product, tourist destination, destination brand.

Sažetak: BREND TURISTIČKE DESTINACIJE. Svojim sve većim značajem u turizmu, destinacije kao turistička odredišta privlače pozornost istraživača i turističkih menadžera. Razlog je u nastojanju da se dublje pronikne u motive putovanja, zahtjeve i potrebe turista. U destinacijama turisti zadovoljavaju svoje mnogobrojne potrebe, a prije svih odmor i razonodu. Udoban smještaj, ponuda rekreacijskih sadržaja, prirodnih i kulturnih znamenitosti, te različitih zabavnih događaja, učinit će destinaciju privlačnu turistima. U tržišnoj utakmici, veći uspjeh imati će ona destinacija koja ima organiziraniju ponudu i afirmiran imidž na tržištu.

Svoj identitet destinacija će najbolje izraziti dobro osmišljenim «kišobran» brendom. Putem takvog brenda svi će nositelji ponude destinacije biti promovirani na tržištu, a time i njihov zajednički turistički proizvod.

Gljučne riječi: turizam, turistički proizvod, turistička destinacija, brend destinacije.

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INTRODUCTION

National and world tourism is taking a big pace. The tourist supply is more and more sophisticated and of higher quality. The tourist demand is highly dispersed and requesting. The competition on the tourist market is every day keener.

When traveling the tourists choose such destinations in which they can best satisfy their needs. Those are the tourist destinations that offer recreational issues, natural and cultural values, various cultural and entertaining events besides accommodation and food. To attain better position on the market the destination should present its identity by the brand that will differentiate it from the competition.

The following pages elaborate the characteristics of the tourist destination, the selection of its brand and its promotion on the market.

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURIST DESTINATION

The word destination has become familiar in tourism and particularly in marketing literature. The tourist destination is the place selected by the tourists and it defines country, region, place, namely the location of great tourist concentration.

According to the famous tourist authority "destinations are places with some form of actual or perceived boundary, such as the physical boundary of an island, political boundaries, or even market / created boundaries such as those of a travel wholesaler who defines a South Pacific tour solely as Australia and New Zealand."²

In tourist promotion and in tourist travels market and administrative borders are mainly the same, especially in the recreational supply.

This, of course refers to longer travels which program includes not only several destinations but also several countries.

Before defining the marketing strategy for a specific destination, marketing managers must carefully analyze the characteristics that form and make possible tourist leisure and entertainment, excursions, congresses and business contacts. In these are included natural sources, infrastructure, airports, parking places and local transport.³

The tourist destinations differ not only by their appearance, but first of all, by the products they are offering.

In spite of the above said the majority of destinations have the following characteristics:⁴

- the destinations are amalgams
- the destinations are the affirmations of cultural values
- the destinations are used by tourists as well as by the other users.

² Kotler P., Bowen J., Makens J., Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism, Prentice Hall, USA, 1996, pg.635

³ Levis R.C., Chambers R. E., Marketing Leadership, VNR, New York, 1989, pg. 637-641

⁴ Cooper C., Tourism Principles and Practice, Pearson Education, UK, 1998, pg.102

The destination as **amalgam** (mixture) includes natural and artificial attractions (the main motives of tourist arrivals), comfort and amiability in extending the services, accessibility and local organizations for promotion.

The destination as **the affirmation of cultural values** is expressed in estimation of tourist demand with regard to the invested money and time for visiting a certain destination.

The simultaneity of production and consumption of tourist product gives the destination the characteristic of **inseparability**.

The destination has **manifold usage** as it is used by domicile population, tourists and the other passers by.

Only by realistic and thorough examination of destination position, the destination management can define the marketing strategy of promotion and sale of the tourist product.

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TOURIST DESTINATION BRAND

The success of the destination on the tourist market greatly depends upon its image, brand, trade mark (identity of product mark). The brand is an English word that denotes "the wide notion that includes the name, design, legally protected identity elements etc., that are used for differentiation of product, services and producers from the other market participants"⁵

In defining marketing strategy, the destination management must make decisions about trade mark of destination product and about its creation. When creating brand it is very important to have in mind how is tourist going to perceive, understand and appraise the brand. In the introducing process a new brand passes several phases in the mind of the potential tourists. In his thoughts a tourist appraises a certain brand as preferential or not preferential, and that will influence future purchase or non purchase.

The brand that yet has not a name on the market passes through four characteristic phases:⁶

- the first phase is creating of awareness about the brand among potential tourists
- the second phase is the recognition by future users
- the third phase is the decision about the preference of the brand or non preference, that would result in purchase or rejection of the brand.
- the fourth phase is the loyalty to the accepted brand by the users of the tourist product.

The effect of tourist product recognition is of crucial importance for tourist destination.

⁵ Rječnik marketinga, Masmedia, Zagreb, 1993, pg.52

⁶ Berman B., Evans J.B.: Marketing, Macmillian Publishing Company, New York, 1987, pg. 301

The reason that the tourists recognize and choose the destination is directly related to its popularity and recognition.

The process of brand creation goes through various but mutually related phases.⁷

The creation of brand begins with market research. The goal of the first phase is to discover the needs and wishes of the potential tourists. When needs and wishes are well defined begins the creation and the production of the brand. This process includes defining of brand elements, such as name, design, logo and the other elements that form the brand "line".

Upon brand realization begins the elaboration of the strategy that will enable the accomplishment of planned business goals. When the brand is conceptually and visually determined begins the phase of promotional activities that would present the brand to the market through selected communication channels.

The creation of destination brand is multidisciplinary process. Each brand should be constantly followed up and improved. Following up the success of the brand on the market increases its actualization, namely the improvement of its design.

Starting from the basic definition of the brand where the brand is name, symbol, design or the combination of the same, P. Kotler distinguishes several elements of the brand:⁸

- the name or the part that can be pronounced
- the symbol or the part of the product that can be recognized but not pronounced (symbol, design or the use of various colors or letters)
- the trade mark or the part of the brand of the product that is in exclusive usage, something that protects the exclusive rights of the seller for use of particular name or symbol,
- the subsequent right is the exclusively legal right of reproduction, performance and sale of form and contents of literary, musical and artistic works.

Without regard to the alternative chosen by a certain organization regarding the selection of the brand it is important to respect the adequate regulations:⁹

- short and easily understood
- easy to articulate, pronounce and read
- easy to recognize and to remember
- can be pronounced only in one way
- can be pronounced in all languages (for international market)
- suggest the advantages of products and services
- adequate for packing and labeling
- do not offend, its not negative.

Tourism is one of the most dynamic industries today. In such propulsive industry are promoted almost all products of the other economic and social branches.

⁷ Senečić J: Promocija u turizmu, Mikrorad, Zagreb, 1998, pg. 31

⁸ Kotler P.: Principles of Marketing, Prentice Hall, London, 1996, pg. 154

⁹ McCarthy E.J., Perreault P., Richard D.: Basic Marketing, IRWIN, USA, 1993, pg. 274

The brand enters in tourism in two ways:

- indirectly through the other products which are incorporated in the creation of the tourist product,
- directly as the brand of tourist destination product.

The beginning of the modern brand in tourism comes out on the transition from XIX to XX century.

When we mention the brand in tourism automatically appears the association of world famous chains of hotels that have succeeded to guarantee the required quality to their guests.

The standards that are guaranteed by the brand in hotel industry are associated with the names of great hoteliers (Cesar Ritz, Conrad Hilton, Ralf Hitz and the others).

The research has shown that more than 80 percent of booking in the world hotel industry is made due to a certain brand.¹⁰

The brands of hotels are not enough for the success in tourism but also the destinations in which they operate. The destination is a wider area on which the visitors satisfy their tourist needs. Thus, for quite a long time the accommodation facilities are not enough to satisfy the needs of the tourists. They require the tourist product of a wide range in which creation participate various subjects in the area of tourist destination. Therefore is necessary that the destinations have also their brands that will enable them the placement on the global tourist market.

In modern tourist development the destination is treated as tourist product that will successfully compete on the market due to its attractive and high quality issues.¹¹ The destination brand demonstrates its location, its attractions and the activities inside its borders.

The similarity between product and destination brand appears in their qualities of recognition and creation of identity, the mix of values that should be well promoted to the target groups on the market. The difference refers only to the complexity of their performance.

The creation of the brand is a long lasting process and the established brand is kept very long in the mind of tourists. It is necessary to have the long time vision of the destination brand based on the knowledge and cooperation of all that are included in the creation of destination tourist product. In spite of the difficulties in the destination brand creation it will become the heavy weapon in winning and attracting the market.

The creation of the destination identity is concentrated on the market and always in relation to the competition and taking into consideration the requirements of the tourist, all in order to create such a product that would be well positioned in the tourist market.

¹⁰ Bennet M.M.: The Market of Tourism, Hainemann, London, 1996, pg.128

¹¹ Magaš, D.: Management turističke organizacije i destinacije, Fakultet za turistički i hotelski menadžment, Opatija, 2003, pg. 30

The second step is to create visual elements of the brand, like logo and slogan. In destination brand the name of geographic area is omitted, important is the sound and the meaning of slogan.

After defining of the brand in all its elements begins the phase of marketing activities that will launch the product on the market. It is substantial to follow up the results that brand realizes in the destination, while during brand creation is necessary to make the general identity that will represent all the participants included in the tourist product creation. This model is called "umbrella brand".

Istria has obtained a high level in tourism. It is now important to set the aims of future development and elaborate the measures of protection for all its resources. To this effect the Master Plan of tourism development in Istria from 2004 to 2012 has been worked out.

The municipal tourist office has organized the contest, in 2005, to create the brand of Istria as the tourist destination under the name "The Green Sanctuary of Mediterranean". On the basis of the same the design, logo and slogan have been created. The chosen logo of Istrian destination is green-blue goat of quadratic body and the slogan "The Green Mediterranean". The goat is socially recognizable historical symbol of Istria.

This is the first time that Istria creates its identity that will bring her the position of preserved and ecologically conscious area on the Mediterranean.

The creation of the identity is only the first step in the course of branding. The implementation of the brand requires great marketing activities, investments and the communication between the participants in creation of destination product.

We believe that the other regional municipal offices would follow the same path too.

3. CONCLUSION

The destination and its branding attract a special attention of scientists and tourist managers in the modern development of tourism.

The tourist place have long become "too narrow" for satisfying the growing requirements of the tourist demand. Destinations are much bigger areas in which the tourists can use not only basic hospitality services but also get acquainted with natural and cultural values and enjoy the recreational and other facilities and events. If destination is to succeed in its endeavours, in the time of great competition, it must be recognizable on the market. The thoroughly elaborated brand that will represent the identity of destination, its values and unique attractions can be of great help in realization of this goal.

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