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PUBLIC MARKETING IN SUPPORTING THE TOURIST DESTINATIONS

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Abstract

National policies and public marketing of destinations should cover measures on broadening the supply of travel agencies, on intensifying promotion actions for the offered touristic product. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to choose modern means of promotion so that tourists remain informed on existing and available accommodation, accommodation rates, recreation and entertainment means, booking and payment methods. This paper aims to discuss about a suitable public marketing in the way of supporting the tourist destinations.

Key words: tourism, tourist destinations, marketing, public marketing, tourism marketing, sustainable development, national policies

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National policies and public marketing of destinations should cover measures on broadening the supply of travel agencies, on intensifying promotion actions for the offered touristic product. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to choose modern means of promotion so that tourists remain informed on existing and available accommodation, accommodation rates, recreation and entertainment means, booking and payment methods. This paper aims to discuss about a suitable public marketing in the way of supporting the tourist destinations.

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing in the tourism industry allows the appropriation of participants' interests, such as: profit for economic organizations, environmental care from local communities point of view, a general tourism sustainable development from authorities point of view, a great satisfaction for a certain tourists category (the nature lovers, the persons which are preoccupied of nature and culture preservation). Through marketing instruments, such as events, brochures, direct marketing, the market evolution can be better known and it can be created the opportunity of a good coordination between different stakeholders' efforts and interests: tourism services suppliers, tour-operators, travel agencies, local communities representatives, governmental tourism authorities.

Regarding the resorts, these are classified in classic resorts, natural landscape, business tourism destinations, stopover destinations, short break destination, day visitor destination. In order to attract visitors to stay for a holiday or a day visit, tourism destination involves the combination of important elements, such as: prime attractors,

built environment, supporting supply services and atmosphere or ambiance (Lumsdon, 1997). To underline these characteristics, we took examples from Romania. (table 1) Romania benefits from all sorts of tourism, such as mountain tourism (the Charpatian Mountains), seaside tourism (the Black Sea), religious tourism (Moldavia Monasteries), cultural tourism (Maramures area), historical tourism (Alba Iulia city) and spa tourism (Herculane, Felix).

In comparison with a product, is far more complicated to market a destination, which implies a bundle of benefits around prime attractors of the host community. There are also, external factors that are omitted by the marketer, which consist of inherited elements of the destination mix.

Table 1. Characteristics of a destination- examples from Romania

	Comment	Example
Prime attractors	In this section are included main attractors of a destination, which make the difference between destinations	Dracula Castle, Moldavia Monasteries, Sapanta Happy Cemetery
Built environment	The main objective is to obtain a physical layout of a destination, including elements such as: commercial area, historic zones etc.	Brasov city- Big square, Sibiu city
Supporting supply services	Includes facilitating services, that becomes more and more important to achieve for all the destinations (accommodation, entertainment, transport etc.)	For all destinations
Atmosphere	Refers to the cultural attributes, which bring a cohesion between the host community and visitors	Agrotourism in Romania

Source: Adapted after Lumsdon L., Tourism Marketing, p. 239

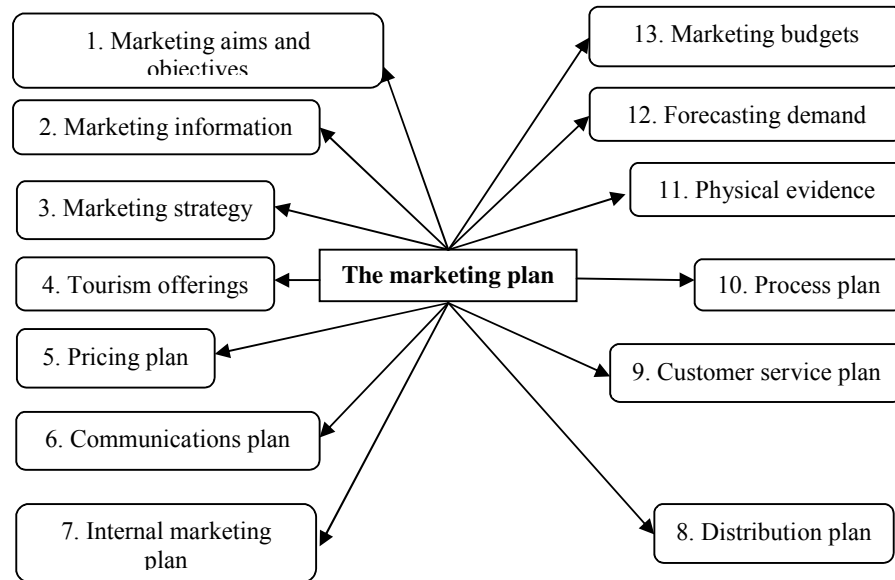
To set up some principles concerning the marketing of a destination it is relevant to take into consideration the elements mentioned above and to admit that the marketer can encourage the development of the environment, and further more, it can be obtained an increase in the demand for a certain destination. It is known that three elements, such as natural resources, climate and culture, are relevant for most destinations in the process of tourism marketing.

Every destination should have a strategy document from the tourism officer in charge with marketing a destination, document which stipulates how the private and public sectors can coordinate resources in order to promote a destination. To create a strategy document, a tourism officer should follow the next steps: the first one is to make a market audit, where is analyzed the actual situation of the destination, after that is the formulation of a suitable marketing strategy, thirdly is necessary to prepare

tactical marketing plans and after that an important aspect is that of monitoring and control.

The marketing plan, also in tourism, includes several stages that have the purpose to achieve the proposed strategic objectives. (figure 1)

Figure 1. Stages of a marketing plan in tourism



Source: adapted after Lumsdon L., *Tourism Marketing*, p. 102-103

RULES FOR TOURISM MARKETING

In this section we intend to present some relevant rules in order to obtain a successful tourism marketing. (Roger Brooks, 2004)

The first rule consists in creating a tourism development and a marketing plan for a certain destination. Some of the elements that should be included in the plan are represented by product development, improvements, attractions and events, PPP (Public- Private Partnership), marketing and public relations, funding and budgets and organizational responsibilities. Being aware of the front- line sales' importance brings a considerable advantage to that destination. There must be several retail and dining establishments within walking distance in a tourism destination, in this way is provided the critical mass to attract and keep visitors in that community. In addition, it is necessary for a destination to have a marketing plan concentrated on something unique, that differentiate it from the competition and to offer for visitors enough elements to keep them occupied in that area. Branding is more than a logo and implies image and value, things that sets the destination apart from the competition. Attractive stories keep

the visitors longer in that place and it is easier for them to keep in mind that destination. Another advantage of the stories is that visitors tell to others and in this way the destination is promoted by word of mouth.

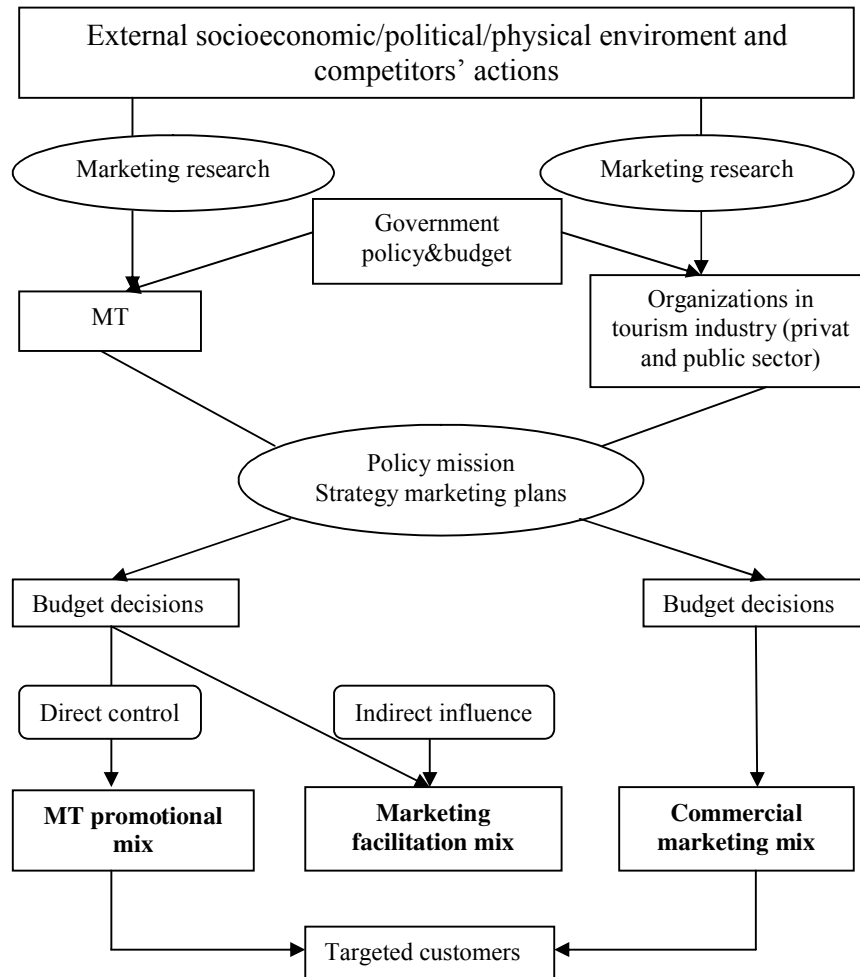
A marketing plan can not be successful without having a strong background, consisting in a qualitative product and a constantly concern on product development. A marketing campaign has a significantly impact on people, when are used elements that show experiences, emotions, not scenic images. These emotions are captured in photos, so that they represent a key element in brochures, public relation efforts, and especially on the web.

NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATIONS

Where governments provide the bulk of an NTO's (National Tourism Organizations) funding, marketing objectives are naturally required to serve government policy. In Romania, the NTO is represented by the Ministry of Tourism (MT). The strategic goals of the NTOs are much the same all over the world, requiring that tourism revenue should generate employment and foreign exchange earnings in accordance with national economic policy and environmental objectives. (Middleton V. and al., 2001) For the tourism marketing strategy, there are some relevant government policies that tend to be common to most countries, which consist of generating increased tourism revenue and channeling demand by season and area of the country. Another two government policies refer to the protection of consumers' interest and increase in the quality of the product in the destination environment and the second one, refer to the insurance of sustainable development.

It is known the importance of practice and it is necessary to involve representatives from private sector in the elaboration of public policies. Nowadays, the representation of the private sector and other organizations on various committees and boards of the MT is almost something vital. It is intended to create a productive dialogue between the main organizations in the travel and tourism industry and the direction of government and the MT policy. In order to assure a dialog between the MT and the main organizations in the travel and tourism industry, it should be used a marketing strategy. (figure 2) For example, in Romania the main organizations in the travel and tourism industry are represented by: The National Association of Tourism Agencies in Romania, The Association of Ecotourism in Romania, The National Association of Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism, The Federation of Hotel Industry in Romania and others.

Figure 2. Collaboration between the MT and main organizations in the tourism industry



Source: Adapted after Lumsdon L., *Tourism Marketing*

TOURISM IN ROMANIA

In the period 1990-2000, the tourism development was based primarily on profits reinvested in other businesses in tourism, because of the reduced intensity of the privatization process. In addition, tourism has faced a lack of facilities and government subsidies needed to support the development. Due to these factors, the Romanian

tourism industry has been characterized by major weaknesses, such as: low recovery and promotion of tourism resources, low procentage in GDP and low foreign exchange earnings, the persistence of low quality in tourism services, declining domestic market share as a result of changes in the structure of family income, low promotion of tourism and as much insufficient for the tourism resources and demand.

The period since 2001 is that the Romanian tourism tends to register a continuous upward trend due to the privatization of almost all the housing structures (about 92% of them), increasing the volume of investments to modernize the tourist structures and volume growth of green-field investment. As a consequence, the completion of privatization in tourism has increased turnover in tourism.

This upward trend of tourism sector by 2001 was also supported by the launch of national development programs („Superski in the Carpathian Mountains”, „Cruises on the Danube”, " Wine Road ", others), social programs ("Holiday at the countryside", „Seaside for everybody ", "A week of recovery in the spas", others) and training programs for the workforce in tourism. The tourism development and tourism promotion are done, also by the two programs, „Development of tourism products" and " Marketing and promotion", financed from the state budget. (NPD, 2005)

In the following two sections we discuss about the programs that are elaborated by the Ministry of Tourism from Romania and that impose the trend in the tourism industry. Started with 2008, these programs are the result of the collaboration between members of the Advisory Council for Tourism, formed by professional organizations, employers' organizations, NGOs, local authorities and ministries that are related to tourism. (Amos News, 2008) This year, the amount of funding public policies in the Romanian tourism industry is approximately 20 times higher than in 2008. The total amount is of 397,3 milions of RON, 312,5 milions of RON is allocated to the development of tourism product, and te other 42 milions of RON are destined to the tourism marketing and promotion.

ASPECTS OF THE ANNUAL PROGRAM OF PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIAN TOURISM - 2009

The purpose of this program is to develop the tourism product taking into consideration the preservation of natural and cultural heritage. In order to achive the purpose, the Ministry of Tourism proposed some objectives, such as: establishment of partnerships for the development of strategic planning at national level and for the growth in visibility of romanian tourism destinations, joining in projects of tourism development with organizations/ international organizations: Organization for Economic Cooperation (OECD), Organization for Industrial Development of the United Nations (UNIDO), European Commission, Council of Europe, the European Commission for Tourism, collaboration with the World Tourism Organization (OMT) for prevention seminars on the crisis management and developing tourism in crisis situations, organizing conferences, organizing bilateral meetings with national tourism authorities of other countries, improving the quality of the tourism training programs for staff, improving the quality of tourism services in Romania, development of forms,

products and important tourist destinations in Romania, restructuring the information system in tourism, advisory services for improving legal and institutional framework in accordance with good practices at EU level, carrying out investment programs in public-private partnership between the Ministry of Tourism and local authorities, developing legislation in this field and others. (The program of product development in romanian tourism, 2009) All of these objectives imply actions that offer an optimistic perspective on sustainable development of tourism.

In addition, it is relevant to mention the perspective of Ministry of Tourism concerning the means through which these objectives are fulfilled. The document contains in a summary way, means of obtaining a product development in the tourism industry, such as: organizing seminars, printing brochures, implementation of a national system of evaluation and development for staff and managerial skills of personnel in units of tourism, national and international market studies on mountain tourism - winter sports and health tourism, organizing press conferences, developing software for all the authorities in the field of tourism, including tourism information centers, making research on interest area and others.

The product development in romanian tourism implies a package of actions that offers a wide range of perspectives. The product development must be supported by all the actors involved in this industry, so that Romania to become a viable destination for internal visitors and also for foreigners. The actions mentioned above can be put into practice with strong instruments (material, financial) and competent persons that have the necessary skills to adapt in a changing society.

ASPECTS OF THE ANNUAL PROGRAM OF MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF ROMANIAN TOURISM- 2009

The purpose of this program is to promote the most important destinations and types of tourism in Romania, as much in the domestic market as in major tourism markets abroad. In order to obtain a good image of Romania among the romanian tourist and te foreign tourist, the Ministry of Tourism elaborated also in 2009 the program of marketing and promotion, which includes directions and ways of action to achieve the main purpose. Among these actions are included activities, such as: development of marketing studies, marketing on-line, participation at national and international tourism events and exhibitions, organizing educational visits for representatives of media, touroperators, representatives of companies with activities in tourism industry, representatives of tourism associations or non-governmental organizations, central public administration and local government and other opinion leaders, specialists in tourism, organization/ collaboration in organizing events and missions in the country and abroad, making promotional activities and publicity through the national and international airlines and airports, purchasing of relevant materials for romanian tourism (guidebooks about Romania, maps, albums, slides, audio-video tapes, catalogs, leaflets, picture, photos and others), promotion through radio-TV station with a specific target, making promotional printed and audio-video materials with specific

tourism, achieving national brand and others. (The program of marketing and promotion of romanian tourism, 2009)

The activities mentioned above from the marketing program offer some ways of actions in the tourism industry in order to obtain national awareness of romanian tourism destinations. These actions involve a macroeconomic view on tourism industry and it depends on the involvement of every participant, representative to become succesful in this field. We would suggest a more precise and detailed national program of marketing in tourism, because is necessary to have a much closer control on actions and appropriate expenditure.

CONCLUSIONS

It becomes more and more necessary to have a plan no matter the domain, but when it comes about a strategic industry at a macroeconomic level it is much more important to make a very well structured plan on which all the representatives from that area can rely on. For all countries, it is needed a suitable marketing plan, where the uniqueness of the composed destinations have to be emphasized so that tourists to be determined when choosing a certain tourism destination.

A collaborative system between the principal public and private sector players, could be a guarantee for the tourism industry, because of the ability to achive consensus in marketing strategy, quality enhancement and advertising communications. The main strengths of a collaborative system are represented by the links with tour operators, responsible with product presentation through promotion and provision of information to their clients, and support for small businesses, which cover a very high percentage of tourism employment.

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