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FROM E-BUSINESS TO C-COMMERCE: COLLABORATION AND NETWORK CREATION FOR AN E-MARKETING TOURISM STRATEGY

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The role of networks has been recently associated with tourism planning. It may lead to a win-win situation for the promotion of a destination, since all parts involved cooperate to promote a uniform and complete tourist experience. Visitors, residents and business organizations who are associated directly or indirectly with a market destination need to develop dynamic relations through co-operation. The paper argues for the necessity of public and private collaboration, an issue that needs to be taken into consideration when networks are created for tourism marketing. National tourism organisations can have a significant role to play in these networks. To this end, the role of social media and information technology is of significance for destination marketing. Incorporation of information and communication technologies and the adoption of c-commerce in a marketing tourism destination strategy may strengthen networks and alliances between the public-private sector for the implementation of a successful tourism development.

Keywords: *networks, c-commerce, private-public sector collaboration, tourism, communication and social media*

JEL Classification: L83, M1, O1

INTRODUCTION

The growth of international tourism is closely related to its ability to use computerised systems (Fuchs et al., 2010), as the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) through the generation, gathering, processing, application, and communication of information, becomes very important to all travel and tourist stakeholders for day-to day operations of their business and can help them in creating strategic benefits (Buhalis, 1998). The latter are mainly caused because of flexible pricing and reduced communication and distribution costs, better specialised and differentiated services, close relationships with customers, smart enterprise networks, established entry barriers, and knowledge acquisition (Go, 1992; Buhalis, 1998; Fuchs et al., 2010).

Key stakeholders in the tourism industry can promote the destination's economic development by collaborating with the use of ICTs (Katsoni, 2011). Taking into consideration that destinations compete with each other in order to attract the potential visitors, -who have time and resource limitations-, destinations need to differentiate themselves to assert their unique and distinctive characteristics (Pritchard and Morgan, 2001; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008; Kavoura, 2013; Kuscer, 2013).

Destination stakeholders include public sector and governments, residents, tourism industry sector, destination management organisation and other groups-such as the most important categories which may influence and determine the management and marketing; these groups develop dynamic relations with the aim to cooperate and collaborate rather than compete (Goeldner and Ritchie in Konečnik, 2004).

This paper argues for the necessity to shift emphasis on the role of networks' cooperation and collaboration through the incorporation and use of ICTs, for a better and holistic tourist strategy approach. We argue that alliances are necessary for the implementation of a successful tourism marketing strategy and we emphasise the importance of a public-private sector cooperation.

COOPERATION, COLLABORATION AND NETWORK CREATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SUCCESSFUL E-MARKETING STRATEGY

Tourism is a fast-evolving economic activity which contributes immensely to employment, economic growth, sustainability and competitiveness and has therefore consequent social, cultural and environmental implications (Katsoni, 2013b). Tourism is part of a global cultural economy, a complex process that 'produces places as material natures, social relations and discursive conceptions' (Bærenholdt et al., 2004: 26). Tourism is also a typical cross-cutting industry, as it caters for a variety of economic branches, such as accommodation, gastronomy, transport, and a wide range of cultural and recreational facilities. In order to create and implement a total strategic marketing plan and advertising of a respective area, a holistic identity of the area with specific dimensions and characteristics is necessary.

Rainisto (2003) argued for a number of critical success factors in destination marketing utilised for a successful destination development, such as the creation of a planning group, which may determine the value of the destination. Based on the destinations' resources, a unique selling proposition is created depending on selected attractions of the destination, promoting the physical and soft or immaterial attraction factors (Kotler et al. in Rainisto, 2003: 70). In that way, the sum of characteristics that differentiate one particular tourism destination from any other are important to be identified and communicated to target groups (Rainisto, 2003) and the creation of networks can facilitate such a promotion. Coordination of these activities is necessary to implement the marketing plan and the communication message of the tourism destination in order to safeguard commitment among key tourism stakeholders and avoid conflicting actions (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008; Sartori, Mottironi and Antonioli, 2012).

Tourism destinations typically comprise numerous autonomous suppliers, often Small- Medium Tourist Enterprises (SMTEs). Cooperative programs go a long way in blending various stakeholders in the hospitality community into a unified marketing presence. They develop mutual respect and appreciation regarding the needs of each actor by maximising membership participation and destination exposure. Different public agencies encourage the establishment of small medium enterprises in order to develop tourism activities in rural areas for example (Chatzigeorgiou, Christou, Kassianidis & Sigala, 2009: 147); museum groups and the management of museums (private or public) associated within a specific area may also initiate network co-operation based on their attractions and visitors' interests in order to fully employ destination marketing management (Vasiliadis and Fotiadis, 2008: 29).

Limited research has taken place to examine the role of networks for the promotion of a destination (Saraniemi, 2009; McGehee et al., 2010). Networks reinforce 'bonding' and 'bridging'; the former is associated with cooperation inside the enterprises of the community whereas the latter is associated with external cooperation, as is for example the coordination of activities between entrepreneurs in a region and the contribution of an external cooperation, such as an advisor from another country or a private sector stakeholder who has experience in tourism marketing and planning (Jones in McGehee et al., 2010: 489). Networks create teams. Mickan and Rodger (2000) present characteristics of effective teams. The features of teams that create a network are associated with "complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (Katzenbach and Smith in Mickan and Rodger, 2000).

Cooperation and network formation between tourist operators, who are independent but at the same time, interdependent, may add value to the tourism destination product and could serve as a type of 'one-stop shop' for a tourist destination (Gartrell, 1991; Kotler, Palmer and Bejou, 1995; Mickan and Rodger, 2000; Bowen and Makens, 2003; Leiper, 2004). Networks can offer a workable structure for cooperation. Networks could be a strategic alliance improving the product/services offered by the tourism destination, improve overall performance and increase competitive position, as sometimes it is difficult for a single firm to cope with the risks, complexities and constant changes of its environment (Cravens et al., 1993; More and McGrath, 2003; Petrou et al., 2007).

A systems theory approach is associated with the elements of interdepedence and relationships, coordination of activities between and within teams and at the same time, distinctive roles for the implementation of the superordinate goal that is clearly defined and shared among the network team (Mickan and Rodger, 2000). Nonetheless, this is not always the case since personal expectations for example, or the way others perceive the roles of the members in the group may influence the way networks function and the results of the network (Mickan and Rodger, 2000; Ooi and Pedersen, 2010). Leadership is also significant for the network's successful implementation and in addition, the establishment of trust among members of the network or team, which in turn, influence team's processes and interaction such as coordination to perform different tasks; in that way, conflict is avoided (Mickan and Rodger, 2000). Nevertheless, at times, relationships may be loose among stakeholders or teams who form part of a network and may not be symbiotic who may not even want to co-operate (Ooi and Pedersen, 2010). Furthermore, social network theory argues that the attributes of individuals are less important than their relationships and ties with other actors within the network (Mickan and Rodger, 2000; Povilanskas and Armaitienė, 2010).

We could mention examples from different countries regarding existence and operation of networks. Joint initiatives of various communication federations and associations, independent companies and important personalities in Greece such as the Hellenic Advertisers' Association, the Association of Advertising and Communications' Companies, the Greek Association of Branded Product Manufacturers created advertising campaigns to promote Greece's tourism abroad in

2010; it is the first time in Greece that the private sector volunteered to support Greek culture and tourism and 24 radio and TV adverts were produced (On Board, 2013: 192).

Another typical example of network creation which promotes the unique characteristics of a tourism region, is TUI Viagens, Portugal; specifically, in regard to the island of Sao Miguel, Azores, local tours are advertised and synergies and networks are created such as Azorean circuits, whale watching, scuba diving, tracking tours, rent-a-car and English and German guides, offering a total experience to the tourist (http://www.tuiportugal.com).

Public and private cooperation is also an issue that needs to be accounted for in the creation of networks. Public authorities can not only help in establishing networks between various tourist stakeholder, but they can also assist in developing and maintaining products on a long-term and sustainable basis. Networks can enhance the co-operation of all stakeholders in a tourism destination, as they can provide flexibile and valuable marketing information, they encourage innovation, resource development and access to knowledge, unite the existing fragmented nature of tourism supply and finally provide a total tourism product (Augustyn and Knowles, 2000; Inkpen and Tsang, 2005; Saxena, 2005; Novelli et al., 2006; Daskalopoulou and Petrou, 2009). National Tourist Organisations can be accounted as public for example. “The role of National Tourist Organisations…is increasingly supported by the involvement of the private sector towards a collaborative and entrepreneurial set of values” (Wight, 2013: 135). A typical example where public and private sectors can cooperate is the recent effort for promoting the tourist product in Greece. More specifically, Greek Law 4070/2012, refers to the creation of an organisation which will promote Greece, -in paragraph 1 it is stated that an anonymous organisation is created entitled “Marketing Greece Anonymous Organisation of Promotion and Development of Tourism” and with the title “Marketing Greece A.E.”. Its sole Proprietors are the Association of Greek Tourist Enterprises (SETE) and the Greek Public…where the Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Shipping, Culture and Tourism and SETE will be in charge to sign all important decisions taken.

Greek Law 4070/2012, mentions in Article 5, that the aim of the abovementioned organisation is the development and adoption of promotion and advertising programmes of Greek tourism, internationally and nationally. In addition, its aim is the research of international and domestic tourist market, for the creation, development and adoption of a branding system for Greek tourism at national, peripheral, regional level...as well as activities related to the support of tourism. SETE will participate with a 70% and the Greek Public will participate with 30% to the capital of the organisation. It is the first time that public and private organisations cooperate together in Greece in order to promote the Greek tourist product, allowing for us to argue for the creation of synergies among the private and public sector.

Tourist boards and strategic authorities are important for the businesses involved as they encourage entrepreneurship on accommodation, food, services, attractions; they may provide a voice on industry issues and implement the marketing of the country (Wight, 2013). Their role can be significant because they may interact with interest groups and support the industry in tourism policy issues (Wight, 2013).

The abovementioned efforts of tourism networking in Greece that have been mentioned above have not been successfully implemented so far, since the characteristics of effective teams have not been developed. Greek Laws are continuously changing and there is tension between the different agents involved -tensions exist between the Ministry of Culture and the Greek National Tourism Organization which interchangeably change names, merge, then again change names in short periods; at the same time, there is conflict and mistrust among its members over who has the administrative power and should be responsible for management issues such as the management and organization of cultural activities in heritage sites (Kavoura, 2001; Kavoura, 2013). Contrary to what network theory dictates about collaboration and team working, cooperation among the public and private Greek sector does not seem to be implemented.

THE ROLE OF ICTs ON NETWORKS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SUCCESSFUL E-MARKETING STRATEGY

Collaboration around ICTs may help the promotion of the tourism destination and enhance economic development. Principals for tourism development should incorporate ICTs into their strategic marketing policies, addressing issues that affect them such as collaboration, co-operation and competition.

The way tourism stakeholders choose to promote and disseminate information for a tourist destination varies tremendously, since sometimes the destination is presented by multiple websites through the actual tourist operators themselves, whereas centralised bodies such as tourist bureaus try to demonstrate the total tourist experience on that location, but they have the characteristic of being bureaucratic and mainly "hierarchical tourist boards" (Palmer and McCole, 2000). In addition, tourist companies among three European countries were found to have differences towards the adoption of e-business technologies and applications (Vlachos, 2013) which may in fact influence the way information and communication technologies are implemented. The importance of demonstrating a comprehensive and unified tourist experience in a holistic profile of the tourist destination is not widely acknowledged by the tourist stakeholders. We argue that an understanding of the necessity of member participation and cooperation is vital to tourism marketing destination marketing.

According to Werthner and Klein (1999: 261), "most of the destination sites are purely informational servers, where booking is mostly not supported"; they further assert that this reflects a lack of agreement for a holistic business cooperative destination strategy, suggesting that a number of issues should be addressed, such as forming co-operative strategies and covering the entire product range, particularly regarding the airline sector.

The creation of collaborative commerce (c-commerce) refers to collaborative management of information flows between businesses through ICT use and enables the formation of partnerships in new expeditious ways, in order to keep up with or to access unique or innovating resources, based on trust and business culture that values partnerships and ongoing dialogue between the public and private sectors can also be encouraged, for example, on the future need for training places (Ring and Van De Ven, 1992, Holsapple and Singh, 2000; Fairchild and Peterson, 2003; Levy et al., 2003; Turban et al., 2004). Trust, rather than competition with each other is the objective since networks deter competition (Inkpen and Tsang, 2005; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008; McGehee et al., 2010: 486). The emphasis is on cooperation among businesses; rather than on spending energy, time and money to observe how to 'compete' other businesses, everyone works as part of a group with multiple benefits and results for all.

A network with great potential for tourism development, which has really revolutionised communication, interaction and business in general, is the 'virtual' or 'social' network. 'Virtual' or 'social' networks can be defined as permeable structures without physical borders separating them from the environment, comprising a multiplicity of autonomous, interdependent, and self-organizing actors that rely on the internet infrastructure to integrate and exchange value (Poon, 1993; Pollock, 1998; Romano, Eliva and Passiante, 2001; Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004; Zhu et al, 2005; Katsoni, 2013a).

Online travel communities have no restrictions of distance and time and has become an effective customer relationship management (CRM) tool by enabling tourism stakeholders to manage and attract customer relationships through its integration with the new communication media, by providing in-depth, focused, and member-generated contents, engaging tourists through interactions with other members based on common attributes and interests, (by allowing them to maintain existing social ties and form new connections), and retaining them by facilitating relationship building with other members (Wellman et al., 1996; Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004; Zhu et al, 2005).

Blogs are virtual forms of networking among tourist as they act as media through which individuals and organisations present opinions and/or information about specific topics that are useful for the tourist destination, such as images, photographs, links to related sites, critique, variety of activities, reviews and opinions (Pühringer and Taylor, 2008). DMOs and other tourist stakeholders can benefit from the existence of blogs, as they can provide them with valuable information into the types of 'e-word of mouth' messages (Bickart and Schindler, 2002). Specifically, blogs can help them identify and monitor tourist trends in the destination, and they can also provide them with specific performance reviews, product and event evaluations, reviews of service standards. In addition, blogs can help a marketing competitor analysis by providing identification of product or infrastructure gaps (Pühringer and Taylor, 2008).

The tourism sector virtual organisation is a network of independent tourism sector competitors linked by ICT to share skills, costs, assets and broaden access to markets. Palmer and McCole (2000) argue that the 'virtual organisation' structure or collaboration around ICT by SMTEs is a more effective way of promoting tourism destinations since it is flexible and responsive to business changes that occur in their operating environment. The use of ICT thus facilitates the rapid interchange of business information and reflects the actual product offer and activities that the tourist will experience associated with online brands. The online brands have the following characteristics; they have users, they promise a price benefit, they prove their value with experience, they continuously adjust, their globalisation is easy; they have a relational and experiential character since each person develops a personal relation and has a unique experience with the brand (Kapferer, 2013).

The perceived image of the tourism destination is created by the tourist's virtual experience of the content of tourism destination Websites. An analysis of the Destination Management Organisations' (DMOs') website emphasises that there are two main functions: firstly, general publicity in terms of providing Web presence, information and interaction; and secondly, advertising, including publication of the tourism products or services without prices, provision of e-mail addresses and e-mail booking, online selling with credit card payment, capability for customers to acquire an account identity for direct purchases and other services, such as call for information, tourism guide services, etc. (Gretzel et al., 2006). Thus, a specific whole is created and advertised electronically. To make a step further, the promotion of such virtual experience via the website may include more than one participating businesses which create a network that aims to promote a unique and consistent identity destination message.

A typical example is Azores, Portugal. Businesses that operate in the tourism industry such as hotels, tourist guides, rent car companies, trips, local restaurants are in cooperation and initiate advertising and promotional campaigns in order to attract tourists; this takes place via the traditional print media, such as leaflets (see for example, Panazorica Tours, 2013) and via the internet where a website is provided where all the activities are consistently promoted in a uniform way (http://www.panazorica.pt). Another example for Portugal is the network created by 5 star hotels. 'Stay close to Azores' is their slogan, their logo is an open ended circle connected with another open ended circle and hotels from Portugal and more specifically from Lisbon and the islands of Azores -Sao Miguel, Terceira and Faial- promote their businesses; a website is provided with all the necessary information regarding reservations made to the participating hotels in addition to a central email address (http://www.bensaudehotels.com; http://www.bensaude.pt). This information is also promoted in the print promotional material of the destination (see for example, The Azores Tourist Guide 2013). Lack of cooperation among the participating groups may result in the limited usage of communication and information technology (Borges-Tiago, Couto, dos Santos Natário and Braga, 2007) because tourists make purchase decisions based on the totality of the experience available at a destination (Williams and Palmer, 1999).

A tourist portal is defined as an information gateway to the Internet and is an example of collaboration between tourist stakeholders allowing the exchange of business intelligence and information relating to a specific tourist destination, and by providing a single point of content management for the available information. (Turban et al., 2004). Portals can also initiate customer relationship management (CRM), by allowing tourism stakeholders to push value-added products to targeted customer segments at the customer portal (Turban et al., 2004: 322). Web service technology with respect to information travel systems facilitates "interoperability among many heterogeneous systems such as flight reservations and hotel bookings" (Dogac et al., 2004: 21), as tourist sites' hyperlinks regarding car rentals, airlines, accommodation and the like, facilitate the concept of destinations' holistic view on behalf of the tourist (Palmer and McCole, 2000).

Cultural tourism presents an area's cultural heritage, ranging from environmental attractions to historical, artistic, archaeological and folkloric features, and is a good example of the way in which online technologies, such as the portals discussed above, have influenced the tourism industry. The MEDINA (Mediterranean by Internet access) project (2002 to 2007) was one of the first European established cultural web portals for fourteen Mediterranean countries, where access to the portal was achieved through mobile devices (e.g. personal digital assistants or smart phones) (Garzotto et al., 2004) and network creation can add to the whole process.

The evolution of Web 3.0 or Semantic Web as a "mesh of information linked up in such a way as to be easily processable by machines, on a global scale" (Siau and Tian, 2004), by using a 'common and minimal language to enable large quantities of existing data to be analysed and processed' (Gutierrez et at, 2011: 250), suggest that tourism organisations experience continuous change and the uncertainty that has defined it (Mistilis and Buhalis, 2012). The existence of the Semantic Web, where meaning of content is recognised and understood by computers, enabling machine to machine interaction (Mistilis and Buhalis, 2012) and interoperability-centric capability, reinforces the role of networking, as it leads to an enhanced product creation, greater efficiency in matching tourism supply and demand, reduced dependency on third party intermediaries, facilitation in consumer choice and improvement in B2B networking (Mistilis and Buhalis, 2012 :53).

The incorporation of information and communication technologies to the marketing tourism strategy is significant for further strengthening networks and alliances for the implementation of successful tourism development.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT: THE CONTRIBUTION OF NETWORKS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME AND AN E-MARKETING TOURISM STRATEGY

This conceptual paper argued for the significant role of networks for a successful e-marketing communication and advertising strategy. Rather than basing their relations on competition, the actors involved in the promotion of the distinct characteristics of a destination, can offer and enhance the whole created system.

Networks may include public and private alignments. National Tourist Organizations may unite and bring the private entrepreneurial activities together, 'extinguishing' the disagreements that may exist. Industry contribution may add to the marketing and advertising campaigns (Wight, 2013: 135) especially in periods of economic crisis as is nowadays where there is limited budget that a destination may have for its promotion.

Synergies and interdependence among those involved can reinforce relations and coordination of activities when all parts involved cooperate to promote a uniform and complete tourist experience.

To this end, the role of social media and information technology is of significance for destination marketing. Communication in marketing needs to be coordinated and networking among all important tourist stakeholders could facilitate the ultimate goal of providing a holistic and coherent message towards tourists.

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POSITIONING AND BRANDING A WILDERNESS TOURIST ATTRACTION TO MEET ALL STAKEHOLDERS OBJECTIVES

Agnes Otjen
Montana State University-Billings

The Beartooth Nature Center (BNC) is Montana's premier wildlife education refuge. Home to over seventy wild animals unable to be returned to their natural environments after accidents or abandonment, the BNC houses mountain lions, bears, moose, bobcats, and a variety of large birds. Located in Red lodge, Montana, the northern gateway to the world- renowned Yellowstone National Park, the BNC is in a unique position to create greater awareness of important ecological and wilderness sustainability issues for. Primarily funded through donations from tourists and local residents, effective branding and marketing are crucial for its survival. This article presents a 2011 student-driven brand development and marketing campaign designed to create greater visibility and name recognition for the BNC. Using contemporary theories which emphasize the importance of including all stakeholders in the branding process, students created a brand-positioning television and targeted collateral campaign. As a result of this campaign, attendance at the BNC doubled the following summer. This case study confirms that bringing multiple stakeholders into the branding process is a highly effective way to create a powerful message for eco-tourist destinations.

Keywords: *Positioning and Promotion Campaign, Stakeholders, Destination Branding, Eco-tourism, Wilderness Sustainability*

JEL Classification: L83, M1, O1

INTRODUCTION

Trying to establish a brand image that satisfies the diverse objectives of multiple stakeholders can be difficult to accomplish. This paper describes a successful branding process used by Montana State University Billings students to develop a marketing strategy which met the needs of multiple stakeholders and achieved the goals of the organization. In addition to the stakeholder requirements, the project also addressed the inherent problems of marketing a natural place as a tourist attraction. For the last three decades, small rural communities in countries from Australia to Africa have used eco-tourism as a means to build the local economy, while sustaining natural places. However, marketing and sustaining an ecological tourist attraction are not always compatible. Encouraging economic growth can make it difficult to maintain the ecological integrity of the attraction. In fact, because marketing of tourist destinations traditionally concentrates on increasing the number of visitors, it has been seen as an enemy of sustainability (Buhalis, 2000). In the last decade, the eco-tourism destinations which have most successfully balanced their ecological missions with their economic needs have done so by making sure all stakeholders are involved in the branding and marketing process.

The Beartooth Nature Center (BNC) is the premier educational center of its kind in the region. Located near the northern entrance to Yellowstone National Park in Red Lodge, Montana, the BNC provides a home for local wild animals that are no longer able to survive in their home environment due to injury or abandonment. Grizzly bears, birds of prey, moose, lions, raccoons and wolves all live in an enclosed, but well-cared-for environment where visitors are guaranteed interaction. The BNC approached the Marketing Department of Montana State University Billings (MSUB) in 2011 for assistance in creating an effective branding and marketing campaign. Their ultimate goal was to build a larger, more up-to-date facility. In order to realize this goal, they needed to create greater awareness of their project, attract more visitors, and ultimately, receive more donations to fund the expansion

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the United States, domestic travel combined with international tourism is a $1.3 trillion industry, with a direct payroll of $162 billion representing 1 out of 8 jobs (heritagedestination.com, 2005). World Tourism Organization estimates that ‘nature tourism’ accounts for 20% international travel and is the fastest growing sector at 10% to 30 % growth overall. (United Nation’s World Tourism Organization, 2007). Within this context, wilderness and eco-tourism can be profitable. In 2000, according to Trails.com, wilderness and eco-tourists spent $1200 more than the average traditional tourist (Trails.com, 2000).

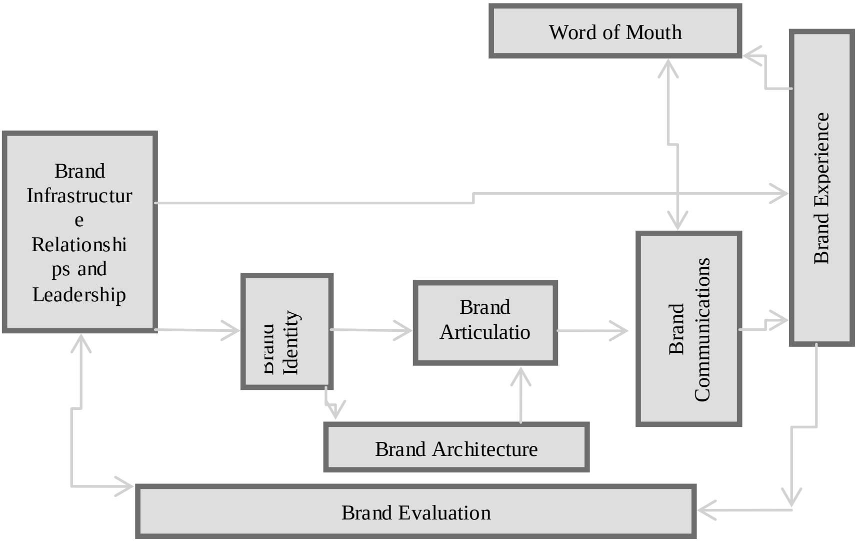
The key to marketing an eco-tourist destination successfully is branding. Current holistic marketing theorists argue that building a distinct image that communicates a differentiated value must start by including all stakeholders. The success of such holistic approaches has been demonstrated by brand models in New Zealand (Clark, et.al, 2010) , Zambia (Rogerson, 2004), the King Valley (Wheeler, et.al, 2011, Canada's Rideau Canal (Donohoe, 2011) and the Dutch Caribbean Islands (Daye, 2010)

Daye (2002) explains how the function of an effective brand does not merely give information, but also provides a meaning which appeals to stakeholders' values. The successful branding of an eco-tourist site like the BNC, for example, must reflect the tourists' desire to engage with the natural world as well as protect and sustain it. Drawing from the Means End Chain Conceptual Advertising Strategy, (Bagozzi, Dabholkar, 2000), Daye argues that a logo for an eco-tourist site should be symbolic, factual and emotive and that a slogan should be distinct and unique (2002). He maintains that physical attributes and distinctive local features can be very powerful in a marketing campaign. For example, the state of Florida effectively uses a flamingo as its symbol and ensures that visitors know that it is one of only four places where these unusual birds breed. To create a powerful brand for the BNC following Daye's theories, students needed to work with the stakeholders to identify the organization's key physical attributes as well as its unique features.

Aker (1997) argues that branding is a perceptual process which uses five essential brand personalities: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Sincerity expresses wholesomeness and family values; excitement appeals to the unique, young, cool and daring; competence denotes success and influence; sophistication speaks to elegance and prestige; while ruggedness signifies the outdoors. The students working on this project identified "sincerity," and "ruggedness" as the two fundamental brand personalities for the BNC based on the strengths of the product.

Students studied Hanna and Rowley's (2010) Brand-Management Model (Figure 1), which locates brand identity at the core of the brand-building process. In this model, brand identity expresses the distinctive characteristics that stakeholders ascribe to a place, provides a framework for overall coherence, and creates the means for building the effective brand.

Figure 1. Strategic place brand-management model, Hanna & Rowley (2010).



Significantly, this holistic model identifies stakeholders as an essential part of the branding process in the relationships area. As the authors explain, “the first stage in the process of positioning or repositioning any tourism destination brand is to establish the core values of the destination and its brand—these should be durable, relevant, communicable and hold saliency for both stakeholders and potential tourists . . . and … should be translated into brand personalities” (Hanna and Rowley, 2010*)*. This model offered students an opportunity to benchmark branding practices identified below (Table 1).

Table 1. A comparison of brand development stages, Hanna & Rowley (2010).

Destination Branding Model (Baker, 2007)	**Destination Branding Process** (Laws, 2002)
1. Assessment and audit 2. Analysis and advantage (defining positioning) 3. Alignment 4. Articulate 5. Activation (market communications) 6. Adoption and attitude (engagement) 7. Action and afterwards (experience management/ monitoring evaluation	1. Market audit 2. Consumer research 3. Identifying target markets 4. Portfolio strategies 5. Developing strategies 6. Implementation Track and review

Table 2 describes the involvement of destination stakeholders in Hankinson's (2010) five elements of brand orientation. Analysis of the field interviews indicated broad agreement among stakeholders about the relevance and importance of each step. Though the degree of implementation varied in each case, the fostering of stakeholder partnerships was found to be the strongest indicator of a successful branding initiative at 40%. (Hankinson, 2010)

Current research also shows that the importance of community stakeholders is not always considered in the destination branding and marketing process (Jamal & Getz, 1995, 1999.) Moreover, Schroeder and Salzer-Morling & Strannegård, (2004) have shown that marketing often neglects the importance of a community stakeholders' cultural perspective. Yet, as Gnoth (2007) argues, the values and meanings expressed in the cultural, social, natural, and economic dimensions of people's lives actually comprise the assets or "capital" of the destination. Students were persuaded by this review which supported a more holistic approach to destination branding. They were particularly interested in the approaches that include local values, cultures, and identities as part of a broader sustainable destination management philosophy as described by Wheller, Warwick, and Weiler. (Wheeler, Warwick, Weiler, 2011). For these reasons, including the community stakeholders became a crucial part of the destination-branding process for the BNC project.

Table 2. Critical antecedents: responses from senior managers (Hankinson 2010)

Critical antecedents		Respondents	Frequency
1.	Stakeholder partnerships	25	40
2.	Brand leadership	25	25
3.	Departmental coordination	22	26
4.	Stakeholder communications	21	22

Students also learned that ecological issues pose significant and complex issues for eco-tourist destinations. Fyall and Garrod (1998) note that marketing strategies attracting mass tourists to eco-tourist destinations have replaced the golden rule of conservation. An increasing number of tourists and their impact on institutional infrastructures and resources threaten the ability to balance the desire for preservation with the need for revenues (Dearden & Rollins, 2009). As a result, contradictory commercial values can create complexity, uncertainty, and conflict in the management of eco-tourism sites where preservation should be the fundamental priority (Donohoe, 2012). Nevertheless, progressive organizations have shown that creative thinking can offset some of these environmental problems. Organizations like *Visit Scotland* have been able to emphasize conservation while encouraging tourism by promoting greener forms of transportation (Lane, 2009).

During their secondary research, students learned that eco-destinations which are brand winners have one common feature: they are founded on intensive stakeholder, consumer, and competitor research which is thoughtfully expressed in everything that communicates the brand's personality.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

When the project began, the BNC's goal was to raise $12 million to move to a new location where it could improve and expand its facilities. The students' initial review of the facility and its weaknesses as well as a subsequent mall-intercept study showed that the BNC had the following marketing and branding problems:

- It was unknown to tourists in terms of both its existence and its mission.
- Its value was not clear to tourists or residents.
- It needs to articulate its value to the right target audiences in order to increase its financial resources.

When the students became involved, the BNC had not yet brought its stakeholders together nor had it identified its brand promise. In order to articulate its brand identity, the BNC had first to understand its significant relationships. Students determined that the BNC needed to better understand its relationship to Yellowstone County, Montana residents, and Yellowstone National Park. Understanding these central relationships would make the new BNC brand both durable and salient for all its stakeholders.

Their preliminary research, including the mall-intercepts of residents and a quantitative email survey of donors also showed that the personalities of the animals held at the Center were important to all stakeholders. Through additional focus groups with school officials and students, they discovered visitors not only wanted to view the creatures, but envisioned having a relationship with them. Learning each rescued animal's name and history allowed stakeholders to feel a personal connection to the animals and increased their interest in the mission of the BNC.

TARGETING STAKEHOLDERS

The student work began by making sure the BNC included all necessary stakeholders in its marketing process. Following the development stages similar to those described in Table 1, students started with Market Audit and Target Identification. These steps, along with the relationship articulation depicted in Figure 1, helped them develop a brand that satisfied all stakeholders. Eventually, they were able to use this information to deliver a branding promise that was both durable and equal to the experience of visiting the BNC.

Tourists

Student research showed that in 2010, 10.5 million non-residents visited Montana, spending $2.48 billion. Over four million out-of-state tourists visit Yellowstone National Park annually. Because the BNC is located on the highway near the northern entrance to Yellowstone, some 356,000 vehicles pass its gates every year. Another 110,000 ski tourists each winter and 100,000 tourists each summer visit Red Lodge, where the BNC is located.

Using Weaver's (2002) Natural-Tourist Spectrum Analysis (Table 3), students identified visitors to the BNC as a "softer" natural-tourist group as their needs were consistent with the product offerings in this category. This group of eco-tourists accounts for 30% of all nature tourism. The visitors to this kind of destination are typically physically passive, prefer short trips, expect services such as restrooms and food, and want interpretations of the places they are visiting. For example, the visitors to the BNC wanted to better understand the animals they were observing. This "softer" eco-tourist became the students' target audience and not the "harder" tourist or the "structured groups" in Weaver's description.

Table 3. Natural-tourists spectrum (Weaver, 2002)

Harder	**Structured**	**Softer**
Strong Environment Commitment	Strong Environment Commitment	Moderate Environment Commitment
Enhance sustainability	Enhance sustainability	Steady state Sustainability
Specialized Trips	Specialized Trips	Multi-purpose trips
Long Trips	Short Trips	Short trips
Small Groups	Larger Groups	Larger Groups
Physically Active	Physically Active	Physically passive
Expect Few Services	Services Expected	Expect services
Emphasis on Personal Experience	Emphasis on Interpretation	Emphasis on Interpretation

Residents

There are over 19,000 school children in the area. Even though nearby Yellowstone County only has a population of 130,000, it draws about 300,000 Montana residents to big events throughout the year. At the time of the study, the BNC currently attracted about 20,000 visitors each year.

Donors

At the beginning of the project, the BNC had over 200 individual and corporate sponsors and donors worldwide, but primarily their funders lived in Yellowstone County.

TARGET RESEARCH

Student conducted research in order to understand tourists' motivations for visiting the BNC. Using a quantified survey instrument in 100 mall-intercept interviews of residents, students discovered that:
51% of local respondents were aware of BNC
90% of tourists visited because a local friend took them
60% said the featured animals were the primary reason they visited
60% visited more than once
60% wanted updated exhibits
70% visited while in Red Lodge
25% made it a primary destination
33% were aware of its mission
85% thought it was a benefit to children
62.1% were willing to travel 1-60 miles to visit a zoo.
38% said they would "most definitely" visit

Students sent an additional quantitative research survey instrument via email to donors and received a response of 120, indicating a strong donor involvement. This survey revealed:
50% were likely to sponsor an animal
80% strongly agreed BNC was worthy of his/her donations
40% strongly agreed they gave because the animals were regional
40% strongly agreed it was important that the BNC was environmentally effective
60% wanted to sponsor specific animals

50% believed that BNC needed to use donations for advertising
65% thought it was important to house only native animals to the region
50% encouraged a new facility for the BNC

In order to help establish a brand orientation using Hankinson's framework, students also conducted three focus groups with employees, donors, tourists and residents in order to determine how they perceived the value of the BNC. They discovered in all three focus groups that all of the participants humanized the animals as part of their motivation. They then used this information to develop a positioning statement that would eventually lead to the overall slogan and campaign.

Students also learned that the primary visitors to BNC are out-of-state tourists who are brought as guests of local residents. This meant that an increased local awareness of BNC's value would create an opportunity for an increase in visitors. Residents and their tourist-guests offered a base for repeat visits, especially if the residents were motivated by relationships with particular animals.

Schools and families with children also appeared to be a strategic audience because the majority of the people surveyed agreed that children would benefit from visiting the BNC.

In the course of the research, one element stood out: visitors desired a personal relationship with the animals. A love of the animals and the opportunity of getting to know them as individuals, with their histories and needs, was the core motivation of most visitors. It was the animals themselves that made the BNC sincere and rugged. To many visitors, the animals were the BNC.

BRANDING METHOD

Using their values and identity. MSUB students developed a Means End Chain Conceptual Advertising Strategy (MECCAS) (Table 4) as a method for understanding the values of BNC stakeholders. It demonstrated how the Means End Chain was expressed for the BNC visitors.

Students also developed perceptual maps for each stakeholder group. Using the values established in their research, they located the BNCs position where it was most competitive.. The challenge was to create a positioning statement that satisfied all three groups in one slogan. (See Figures 2, 3, and 4)

Table 4. Means End Chain Conceptual Advertising Strategy

Attributes	**Physical Consequences**	**Psychological Consequences**	**Values**
A home for injured or abandoned wild animals. Each one has its own personality and story.	Participation with the sanctuary of actual wild animals. I know them; I go back to visit the ones I have a relationship with.	My visit and donation is saving the planet, protecting the wilderness, and saving the animals. I donate to save the lions who were orphans.	Universalism
Beautiful setting with gardens and pathways making it possible to always see the animals. Similar animals that live here also wild in Yellowstone Park.	Easy access, food and restrooms; it's a lovely setting in which to spend the day.	Enjoyable experience that I can tell my friends about; I might not have seen anything at Yellowstone Park. My kids got to know the bears personally.	Hedonism
Educational materials teaching people about animals in the wild and how they can be protected.	Learning and a new understanding about the earth.	I am humbled and have a new appreciation for myself and my family.	Stimulation
Elements	**Benefits**	**Hooks**	**Driving Force**

Figure 2. Tourists

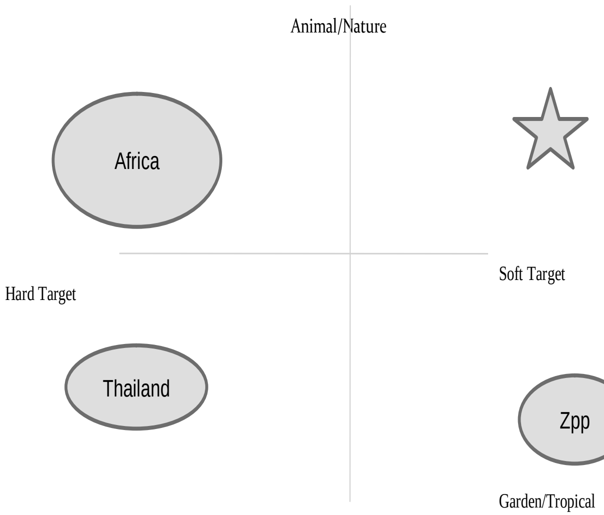


Figure 3. Residents

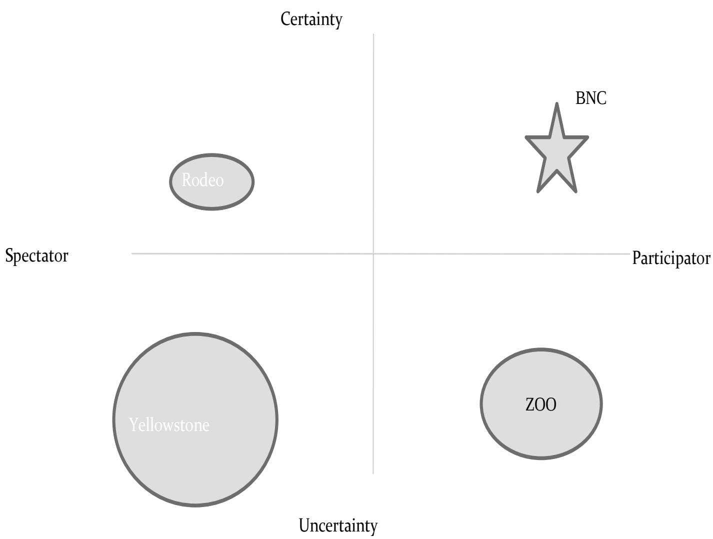
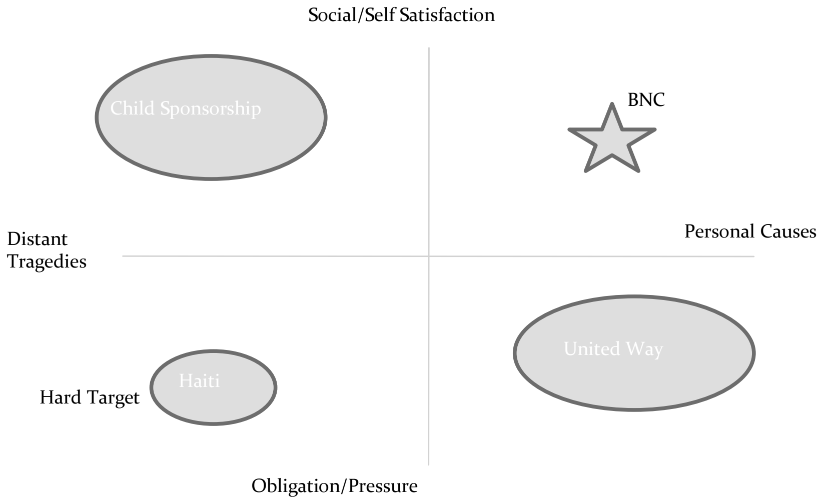


Figure 4. Donors



The resulting brand-positioning statement stated that the BNC was for softer eco-tourists interested in animals and nature. For residents and tourists, the BNC was a place where one was certain to see animals. For donors, the BNC was a cause that made them feel socially responsible.

Repeatedly, the students' research and analysis showed the key value to communicate was the opportunity to develop a relationship with the animals. Overall, the stakeholders saw the animals as part of the community and the culture. Students communicated this value in the brand-positioning statement they developed: At the Beartooth Nature Center, you will see and understand wild animals. The slogan for the BNC became: "Befriend the Beasts."

In January, students began using focus groups to test the "Befriend the Beasts" slogan with three different campaign tones.

- Humorous animal personification
- Heartfelt connection with humans
- Escape to nature

Students interviewed resident and donor stakeholder groups using sample scripts and story boards for each campaign tone. The unmistakable winner was "humorous animal personification." This campaign tone motivated and interested stakeholders and made them feel connected to the animal personalities. After seeing the materials, they felt they had a relationship with the wild animals being protected at the BNC. This campaign strategy motivated the stakeholders to visit, to take guests, and/or to donate to the BNC.

IMPLEMENTATION

Analysing the size of the potential audience data listed under "Targets" above, (local residents, students, visitors to local events, donors and tourists), students determined that with a 3% action result from the combined groups, the BNC could double its number of visitors. They determined that they could use the limited resources available to target key audiences (local residents, the regional school system, and donors) at large events. They also decided to use television-based Public Service Announcements as an umbrella for the new branding. Moreover, given the large number of motorists who drive by the BNC, the students recommended better highway signage to create awareness and provide directions to the facility.

Students oversaw the production of three humorous animal personification television commercials which were aired in the Yellowstone County. The commercials featured actual animals in their habitats and used voiceovers that allowed the animals to "speak for themselves." In one, a deer contemplates crossing a busy highway and then decides instead to head to the BNC for safety. On arrival, he is welcomed by two owls. In another, two mountain lions lament being orphaned by their mother and grumble about being stuck with each other. The two comic owls mock their grumbling. The third commercial stages what appears to be a dangerous confrontation between a bobcat and a strange visitor only identified by his boots. As the two come closer together, the audience expects a violent confrontation. Then, in the last moment, the audience sees Jeff, the BNC director, reach down and gently pet the affectionate wild cat. To extend the television campaign, students also designed an accompanying poster to reach local residents and tourists shopping in Red Lodge.

Because students also identified over 300,000 people attending various events in the area, a large part of the campaign promoted the new brand at these events using posters, fliers, and program ads. Table 5 illustrates the events the students targeted.

Table 5. Events

Home of Champions Rodeo and Parade- July 2-4, 2011 • Parade float • Flier distribution in the parade area • Booth at the parade with animals
Billings Mustangs • Radio/Print combination (including a half-page game announcement) • Five-night event sponsorship (Five home games per sponsor)
Big Sky State Games- Summer 2011 • Program advertisement and flier in participants bags
The Scout Show- March 19, 2011 • Booth at show at Metra Park • Distribute pamphlets and brochures focusing on family-based events at BNC

Students decided that individual donors would best be pursed through fundraising events. They also identified corporate donors and possible granting opportunities that were consistent with the overall brand. The organizations and groups they targeted included:

- Pet Smart
- Veterinarians
- Kenmark (Fox)
- Yellowstone Valley Woman's Magazine
- Harley Davidson
- Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP)
- Environmental Education Grants Program
- Montana Legacy Project (preserving Montana land)

With the support of the Yellowstone County School Districts, they also promoted the brand through the schools in order to reach the 19,000 children (Table 6).

Lastly, they recommended that even though the BNC Website offered many valuable learning tools, it could be effectively redesigned. They felt particular attention should be paid to Web materials that would attract more interest and interaction from the education community. Students also suggested that the BNC Web address appear on every piece of printed material.

Table 5. School programs

Kindergarten	3rd Grade	School/Grade Assemblies
Presentations were between 30 and 60 minutes. They were tailored to suit particular age groups. They were designed to be fun and exciting without being overly technical. Children in each age group received a small poster and a flier to take home to their parents.	Presentations were between 45 and 60 minutes and were slightly more technical than the kindergarten group, but were not overwhelming to students. Children in this age group received a small poster, a flier to take home (with an admission coupon), and trading cards. The trading cards focused on the eight most popular animals at the BNC. (Bears, mountain lions, raccoons, porcupine, wolves, owls, lynx and fox.) Each animal's 'tale' was printed on the back as well as information about the annimal(age, diet, species, etc.). When a student	Presentations were tailored to fit the needs of the school and were 45 to 60 minutes or longer as needed. They were designed to fit the educational group. For example, if the assembly was for ages K-6, the appropriate materials that would be interesting to the entire group were prepared.

	collected the entire set of trading cards he or she could take them to the BNC for free admission for themselves *and* an accompanying adult.	

FEEDBACK AND CONCLUSION

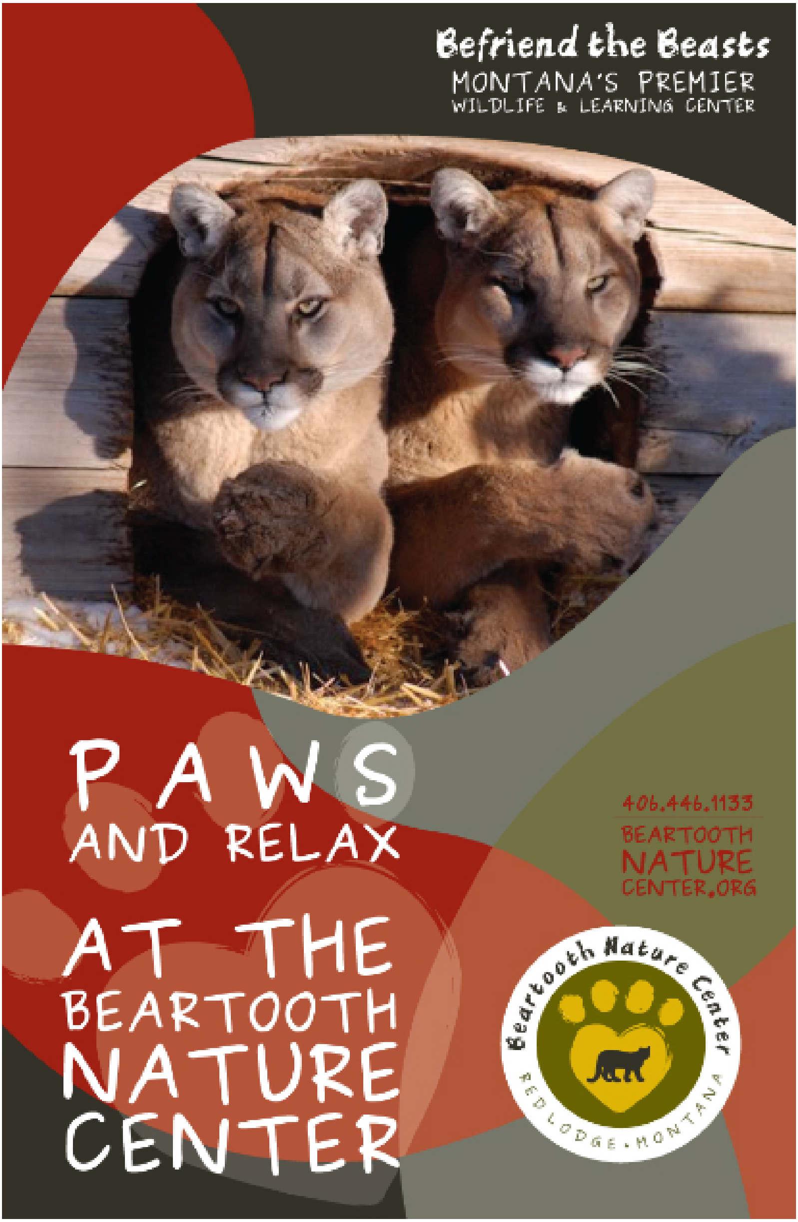
In order to determine if they had followed an effective model that reached all stakeholders, students evaluated their campaign against Hankinson's branding process. They also considered whether their work achieved Hankinson's description of an active place brand. Did it enhance the "coherence of the experience"; support the efficient use of resources to "maximize the enjoy-ability and appropriateness of the experience"; did it facilitate the "evolution of the experience"? And, in general, as far as key stakeholders are concerned, did it "engender 'pride of place' that was effectively shared and communicated? (Hankinson, 2012)

Based on attendance at the BNC and reviews with stakeholders, students determined that they had, indeed, made sure that key groups were included in the process which, as Hankinson's model predicted, created support from the community and donors for the new brand. They also saw relationships strengthened in the process of developing the campaign. Local businesses in the area supported the branding efforts by featuring BNC posters in their store windows and at big events. Local TV stations ran almost double the usual number of Public Service Announcements in support of the on-air campaign. Several discussions with all stakeholders revealed the majority considered the brand and slogan to represent accurately the experience of the BNC. There was shared pride in the campaign which used personalized images of the BNC animals to relate to the values of the stakeholders. As a result, attendance at the BNC doubled during the summer of 2011. Moreover, the campaign itself won a Gold Addy from the Montana State Chapter of the American Advertising Federation in 2012.

The effectiveness of the campaign inspired donors to continue working on plans for the new BNC home which will ultimately complete the long-term promise created by this branding project. This new excitement and interest in the BNC would not have been possible without a brand that was well received by the community and which has attracted more tourists and more donors, both private and corporate.

Students concluded that the theories advanced by current literature are indeed effective in the branding of an eco-tourist destination. As their experience with the BNC taught them, understanding the values of all stakeholders and including them in the process makes it possible to sustain an important wilderness attraction which offers environmental, social, and economic benefits to the area. The BNC promises to be a valuable and sustainable part of the local ecosystem, environment and culture. Its success is the very definition of sustainability.

All materials including television and collateral can be reviewed at:
http://www.msubillings.edu/BusinessFaculty/otjen/examples_of_advertising.htm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EXPLORING BRAND CONFUSION THROUGH HOTEL ADVERTS

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Brand confusion takes place when a person views an advertisement for a particular brand as a communication about a different brand. The purpose of this study is to investigate the problem of brand confusion in advertising and more specifically, to study into more depth some of the parameters that lead to brand confusion in print advertising of international hotel-chains. This study was conducted in 127 men and women, and based on 17 international hotel-chain advertisements. Respondents were selected through quota sampling, using age and education as variables. Consumer characteristics and the dependent variable 'brand confusion' were measured through a questionnaire completed during interview, while print advertisements were presented followed by a set of questions containing measures of the attitude towards the advertisement. The purpose of this study was to explore the issue of brand confusion in advertising of international hotel chains, a topic never surveyed in the past. This study was limited to a specific product category (international hotel chains), hence practical implications should be formulated with caution. Nevertheless, the following suggestions seem to be valid: The affective reaction to hotel advertisement is very important; advertisement likeability leads to less hotel brand confusion; hotel advertisements should be distinctive and not too information dense; building awareness, loyalty and involvement reduce brand confusion.

Keywords: *hotel branding, advertising, promotion, hospitality marketing*

JEL Classification: L83, M1, O1

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is intended to stimulate selective demand for the advertiser's brand, but often also stimulates primary demand for the product category in general. Far worse than this problem is the phenomenon of brand confusion that potentially causes advertising to stimulate selective demand for competing brands instead of the advertiser's brand. Misattribution by consumers can be an important reason for advertising ineffectiveness. When consumers perceive an advertisement for a certain brand as promoting another, it is not only ineffective, but even counterproductive (Poiesz and Verhallen, 1989): it produces an effect that the advertiser specially wants to avoid. Therefore, brand confusion is a phenomenon that should receive the researchers' continuous attention, and measures of brand confusion should be added to the more conventional advertisement effectiveness measures (Poiesz and Verhallen, 1989).

Brand confusion takes place when a recipient views a commercial communication for brand X as a communication about a different brand Y (Poiesz and Verhallen, 1989; Christou, 2005). Not only the brand name, but on a more general level also the product or service displayed in the advertising message may be the subject of confusion, e.g. an advertisement by a hotel resort might be interpreted by the consumer as an advertisement for a tourist destination. At the lowest level, confusion can take place with regard to particular message components, for example between slogans (Poiesz and Verhallen, 1989). The present study is limited to brand confusion; correct identification and confusion are not perfectly related.

Depending upon whose position is taken, brand confusion can be 'positive' or 'negative' (Häcker and Verhallen, 1988; Christou, 2011a). 'Negative' brand confusion refers to the extent to which the reference brand is confused with other brands; i.e. the degree to which the reference brand advertises for its competitors. 'Positive' brand confusion refers to the degree to which other brand advertisements are confused with the brand at issue; i.e. is the degree to which competitors advertise for the brand at issue. 'Positive' brand confusion is not necessarily an advantage for a brand. It may be a threat to a clear positioning and image building strategy if a company's brand name is incorrectly attributed to a competitor's advertising message.

Taking into account that tourism products may be considered as brands, the purpose of this study is to investigate the problem of brand confusion in advertising and more specifically, to study into more depth some of the parameters that lead to brand confusion in print advertising of international hotel-chains.

HOTEL BRANDING AND BRAND CONFUSION

Based on previous research, three categories of parameters that have an impact on brand confusion in destinations' advertising can be identified, i.e. product category related factors, consumer characteristics and message characteristics.

Tourism and hospitality products are becoming more and more objectively similar with respect to their functionality and presentation (Poiesz and Verhallen, 1989). In an increasingly cluttered marketplace, the *reduced inter-brand differences* necessitate the use of advertising to create a unique and recognizable brand image (Poiesz and Verhallen, 1989). This leads to an overload of stimuli which, in turn, may lead to brand confusion.

Ha (1996) refers to the degree of similarity and proximity of advertisements as a dimension of the advertising clutter. The *degree of overall similarity of strategy* (DOSS) seems to have increased over time as far as the information content is concerned, although tourism destination ads tend to become more diverse as to their emotional content (De Pelsmacker and Geuens, 1997; Farmaki, 2012). Successful advertising techniques get imitated and waves of similar advertising arise. It can be expected that a higher DOSS leads to more brand confusion.

Brand confusion can also be caused by *wilful brand imitation*. In this case consumers may buy the imitator brand thinking it is the original (Ward and Loken, 1986). The aim of the creators of imitator brands is to position their product next to the better known brand (Foxman and Muehling, 1990); this is often the strategy adopted by new – not well known – mass tourism destinations. The *degree of competition in the product category* or, in other words, the number of competing brands in a product category and the similarity of their market shares, may also lead to more brand confusion (De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh, 1998; Sigala, 2013).

A consumer's *attitude towards advertising in general* will presumably affect his recognition of brands in print advertisements. Someone who is very negative about advertising in general is likely to be more irritated by individual advertisements and, therefore, block out most of the advertising messages targeted at him. Indeed, irritation leads to less recall, especially in advertising haters (De Pelsmacker *et al.*, 1998b). Also, the *attitude towards the advertisement* (Aad) may play an important role. Especially in the case of low involvement products or consumers (as is often the case for mass tourism tour operator packages), a positive attitude towards the advertisement may lead to more interest in the message and the brand, and eventually a more positive attitude towards the brand (Batra and Ray, 1986). De Pelsmacker *et al.* (1998b) concluded that a more positive Aad was related with less brand confusion. Consumers who have a high personal *involvement* (Zaichkowsky, 1985;

Ihamaki, 2012) in a product category possess a more fully developed knowledge structure with respect to brands in the category, and are therefore less likely to be confused (Foxman and Muehling, 1990).

The more familiar consumers are with the various brand offerings within a product class (for example, if they have visited already various mass tourism destinations in different countries), the more likely they can be expected to be able to make distinctions among brands, thereby reducing the likelihood of confusion. *Product category familiarity*, a major component of consumer knowledge, has been defined as the number of product related experiences that have been accumulated by the consumer (Jacoby *et al.*, 1986; Alba and Hutchinson, 1987; Sigala, 2010; Christou, 2011b). Cumulated advertising exposure, information search, salesperson interactions, choice, decision making, purchase and ultimately product usage are capsulated in the consumer's memory and build-up product class and brand experience. *Brand salience*, i.e. brand awareness, brand loyalty, and use of a particular brand, may influence brand confusion. For instance, brand awareness has been found to be statistically significant for discriminating between consumers who confuse and consumers who do not confuse brands (Foxman and Muehling, 1990). The *degree of media use* may be a factor of importance, since consumers that read more magazines or newspapers or watch more television, will be more frequently exposed to advertisements.

Advertisers use a large number of techniques to convey their message and to influence the consumer's ability and motivation to process the information offered (De Pelsmacker *et al.*, 1998a; Christou and Nella, 2010; Sigala, 2012). Advertisements may differ in emotional and informational content, as well as in format or creative strategy used. As far as *emotional content* is concerned, advertisers use techniques such as humour, eroticism, warmth, and provocation to draw the consumer's attention. Very often, though, the capacity of these messages to draw the attention distracts the consumer, and leads to lower brand recall (Gelb and Zinkhan, 1986; Severn *et al.*, 1990). *Information content* refers to characteristics such as the number and type of selling arguments used (Abernathy and Franke, 1996), the degree of repetition of the arguments, the number of times the brand name is shown or mentioned and, more generally, the type of motivation used, e.g. informational or transformational (Rossiter and Percy, 1997). Although the richness of information may stimulate elaborate processing during exposure, and as a result lead to more attention and less confusion (Poiesz and Verhallen, 1989), information dense advertisements also lead to more irritation (De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh, 1998), and consequently may induce more confusion. *Format characteristics* refer to the use of human models, product-in-use pictures, headlines, baselines, logos, large or small body copy or pictures, colours and typography; for instance, advertisements with pictures and advertisements in which a product in use is shown, result in less confusion. De Pelsmacker and Van den Bergh (1998) also conclude that the headline and the picture of the product were two of the most important determining factors of absence of confusion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of a number of consumer characteristics on brand confusion, more specifically for international hotel chains. Brand confusion is operationalized as a consumer's false identification of a brand name (in our case this is the name of the hotel chain) when an advertisement is presented with the brand name excluded from the message

A total of 54 print advertisements, pertaining to 17 different hotel chains, were used as stimuli. It involved advertisements that were published in several magazines in the six months preceding the survey. The product category investigated (hotels), was selected because of the substantial amount of print advertisements available during that period of time, the diversity of brands advertised, as well as the publication frequency. The only problem is that the advertising stimuli in this product category were very similar in nature, resulting in a very high general degree of brand confusion.

The advertisements were presented to a representative sample of 127 persons in Greece, users of the product category under investigation (i.e., they all had visited hotel chains in the past, though not necessarily all the hotels represented at the advertisements of the study). Respondents were aged between 20 and 60, and were selected following a quota sampling procedure, using age and education level as quota variables. As part of a larger survey, participants were personally interviewed in cooperation with a professional marketing research agency in September of 2013. All respondents were recruited randomly until a quota sample of 127 was reached.

Consumer characteristics and the dependent variable '*brand confusion*' were measured by means of a questionnaire completed during the personal interview. The questionnaire was composed of two parts. A first part provided measures of the attitude towards advertising in general, magazine reading behaviour, involvement with the product category under investigation, spontaneous destination brand name recall for the chosen product category, brand loyalty, and product category familiarity measured as the extent of product use (visitation to different hotels) and the number of brands used regularly (number of hotels visited). Demographic information, including age, education level and profession, was also collected at this stage. The second part of the survey involved the actual testing of the advertisements; each respondent was assigned twenty-four advertisements. The advertisements were presented one by one, each time followed by a set of questions containing measures of the attitude towards the advertisement (11 items based on Madden *et al.*, 1988; Olney *et al.*, 1991 and Cho and Stout, 1993: likable, interesting, convincing, appealing, easy to forget, effective, irritating, believable, clear, informative, distinctive) and recognition of the advertisement. Participants were also asked to identify the brand (destination) each advertisement referred to (‘*attribution*’). In order to control for a possible presentation bias, separate groups of participants viewed the advertisements in different orders.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In general, brand confusion scores were found to be discomfortingly high: from a total of 3216 observations, in 1286 cases (40%) respondents admit not to know what brand is advertised. For the following analyses these observations are excluded. Since not knowing which brand is advertised is not considered to be real confusion, these cases are irrelevant for further analyses. Of the remaining 1930 observations, in which case the respondents think they know which brand is advertised, 43% actually confuse brands and attribute a wrong brand to the advertisement. Overall, in only 1061 (33%) of all observations the advertised brand is correctly identified.

Two dimensions of the *attitude towards advertising in general* were measured: to what extent the subjects think advertising in general is irritating or fascinating, and to what extent they believe advertising in general contains useful information or not. Respondents who confused brands, as compared to participants that attributed brands correctly, evaluated advertising to be more irritating (3.61 versus 3.18, *t*-test, p = 0.001), but did not hold a different opinion on the information content of advertising. It can be assumed that the level of irritation served as a ‘gatekeeper’ for further processing of the advertising message.

Besides the effect of the attitude towards advertisements in general, also the impact of the *attitude towards each individual advertisement (Aad)* was assessed. This measure was a characteristic of the stimulus as judged by the respondents. Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation on the 11 items of the Aad scale used showed three dimensions, explaining 67.3% of the variance: affective reaction, composed of the items 'likeable' and 'appealing' (summated); distinctiveness, the item 'different from other advertisements'; and informativeness, the item 'one learns something from this advertisement'. The criteria used to define the Aad components were: variables should load more than 0.70 on one factor and less than 0.35 on the others, and correlations between variables loading on the same factor should amount to more than 0.70, while the correlations between variables of different factors should be less than 0.30.

Table 1: Hotel brand confusion & attitudes towards the advertisement

	Participants confusing brands*	Participants correctly attributing brands*	Significance level t-test
Attitude towards advertising - irritation level	3.61	3.18	$P = 0.001$
Affective reaction	3.79	4.73	$P < 0.001$
Distinctiveness	4.18	4.81	$P = 0.030$
Informativeness	2.21	2.84	$P = 0.268$

* *Average scores on 7-point Likert scales*

Relating brand confusion to what participants held of the advertisement revealed that respondents who confuse the brand as opposed to those who correctly identify the brand, rate the affective Aad-dimension, as well as the distinctive dimension significantly lower (Table 1). In other words, the extent to which consumers perceive the advertisement as attractive and as distinct from other advertisements is inversely related with brand confusion. Although the direction of the causality cannot be revealed in this study, it seems more plausible that the relation flowed from advertisements responses to brand confusion and not from brand confusion to the attitude towards the advertisement. The reason for this is that people who did not know which hotel brand was advertised were excluded from the analysis, eliminating the possibility that one evaluated the advertisement unfavourably simply because he/she did not know the advertised hotel. It has to be added, though, that the extent to which the respondents felt certain they attributed the right brand, was not measured.

As to the effect of the format of the advertisements, significantly more people confuse hotel brands when the advertisements contain human characters (59%) than when they do not (30%) (χ^2, $p = 0.004$). A plausible explanation for this the nature of the product category investigated with respect to the think-feel dimension of the Foote, Cone and Belding (FCB) classification of products and services. According to this symbolic-utilitarian framework (Rathford, 1987; Sigala et al., 2012), hotels may be classified as purely symbolic, real 'experience or feel' products, as a result of which consumers are attracted to more affective and emotional formats. All in all, the affective reaction of respondents towards advertising in general and towards specific advertisements in particular appears to be strongly related to brand confusion, although certain differences can be observed between different hotels' advertisements.

As to the information component of Aad, no difference was observed between participants who confuse and do not confuse hotel brands. The number of information cues present in the advertisements varied between 5 and 11, leading to brand confusion (2.28 versus 1.96; *t*-test $p < 0.001$). Although no significant effect of the perception of informativeness of the advertisement (as a component of Aad) was found, on the basis of these results it may be concluded that information overload in advertising leads to higher levels of confusion. This is confirmed by the fact that the copy of advertisements leading to brand confusion counted more words than their non-confused counterparts (267 versus 141, *t*-test $p < 0.001$). The density of the copy (the number of words divided by the size of the copy) was also larger for advertisements leading to brand confusion (1.68 versus 0.86, *t*-test $p < 0.001$). In Table 2 the effects of a number of other consumer characteristics on brand confusion are shown. Consistent with the findings of Foxman and Muehling (1990), *highly involved* respondents showed lower levels of destination brand confusion than low involvement consumers.

The number of respondents confusing brands does not differ for light and heavy product category users, although the difference points in the expected direction. As expected, highly brand loyal consumers confused destination brands more often than variety seekers. Similarly, respondents mentioning more brands in use were confused to the same extent as those who mentioned fewer brands. Hence, *product category familiarity* does not seem to influence hotel brand confusion. *Destination brand salience* was measured as the level of brand awareness and brand loyalty. As expected, *brand awareness* leads to lower levels of confusion. However, people that are top-of-mind aware of hotel brands were confused to the same extent as consumers that were not top-of-mind aware of the brands. Brand loyalty, as measured by distinguishing respondents who tick one particular brand as compared to those who tick the option 'miscellaneous destination brands' when asked what destination they most frequently visit, had a significant impact on brand confusion in the sense that more loyal customers seem to confuse brands than their 'variety seeking' counterparts (46.7% versus 30.2%, $p = 0.031$).

Table 2: Hotel brand confusion & respondent characteristics

		Confusion level	Significance level
Brand awareness:	*Non-top-of-mind aware*	49.3	
	Top-of-mind aware	22.7	χ^2, $p = 0.015$
Brand loyalty	*Loyal customers*	46.7	
	Variety seekers	30.2	χ^2, $p = 0.031$
Involvement:	*High involvement*	40.4	
	Low involvement	52.0	χ^2, $p = 0.003$
Usage frequency:	*Heavy users*	41.3	
	Light users	44.9	χ^2, $p = 0.084$
Age:	*Under 40*	37.9	
	Over 40	54.0	χ^2, $p = 0.002$
Perceived exposure:	*Not seen it*	54.0	
	Seen it a few times	40.8	χ^2, $p < 0.001$
	Seen it several times	37.6	

Magazine readership was expected to have an impact on the *perceived frequency of previous exposure* to the advertisements, and therefore on brand confusion. Indeed, the more magazines participants read, the more they claimed to had seen the advertisements several times (20.2%, 26.8% and 32.5% for reading one, two and more than two magazines respectively, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the fact that respondents thought they had seen the advertisement before significantly lowered the likelihood of destination brand confusion (Table 2). A remarkable finding is that claiming to have seen the advertisement only a few as opposed to several times, does not seem to affect brand confusion at all. One might be tempted to conclude that this lends support to the idea of Jones (1995) that one exposure might be enough, and that frequency of exposure is not so important. On the other hand, it could be that respondents only remembered having seen the hotel advertisement, but had no idea how many times they were exposed to it.

As far as the demographic characteristics of the respondents are concerned, neither education level nor profession had a significant impact on brand confusion. Age seemed to have a significant effect on brand confusion in the sense that more respondents over 40 confuse brands than their younger counterparts (54% versus 37.9%, χ^2, $p = 0.002$). A possible explanation that the former were less involved in the product categories investigated has to be rejected. As a matter of fact, respondents over 40 actually appeared more involved (5.73 versus 5.11, *t*-test $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, they can be assumed to have more brand experience, since they mention to use the products more often (56.0% versus 31.4% are heavy users, χ^2, $p = 0.040$). A possible explanation for the fact that more people over 40 confused brands may be that they are more loyal to particular hotel brands, and as a consequence, pay less attention to other brands. Significantly more respondents aged over 40 as compared to the younger ones, showed brand loyalty (65.0% versus 31.8%, $p < 0.001$), lending support to the suggestion that a high level of destination brand loyalty is a key factor in the higher brand confusion observed in people older than 40, that counterbalances the effects of more product usage, more product involvement and more magazine reading.

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FEEDBACK AND CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that hotel brand salience, the level of product category involvement, the degree of perceived exposure (as a result of the difference in magazine readership), the general affective attitude towards advertising, the likeability and distinctiveness of the advertisement, the degree of information overload, and to a certain extent the age of the respondent, are the main consumer-related explanatory parameters of brand confusion for hotel chains.

Consumers most vulnerable to hotel brand confusion generally have lower levels of product category involvement, brand awareness and brand loyalty. They have a more negative general attitude towards advertising, and are more easily irritated by it. If they do not like a particular advertisement, or they think it is not distinctive enough, they are more likely to be confused by it. Information overload advertisements tend to lead to more brand confusion. People over 40 appear to be more vulnerable to brand confusion than their younger counterparts. Other socio-demographic characteristics do not appear to have an impact on hotel brand confusion.

This study was limited to a specific product category (hotel chain brands). Therefore, practical implications should be formulated with caution. Nevertheless, the following suggestions seem to be valid: the affective reaction to tourism advertisement is very important; advertisement likeability leads to less hotel brand confusion; tourism advertisements should also be distinctive and not too information dense; and, building awareness, loyalty and involvement reduce destination brand confusion.

However, the present study has a number of limitations that are likely to affect the generalizability of the results obtained. It can be suggested that future research in hospitality marketing and branding includes more advertisements (and in a variety of formats – not just print ads), more diversified stimuli, and certainly more product categories from different types of hotels. This would also enable the investigation of product category and message related parameters. Finally, in order to investigate further hotel chain advertising campaign parameters a longitudinal approach may also be more appropriate.

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BOOK REVIEW

From Heritage to Terrorism: Regulating Tourism in An Age of Uncertainty

Brian Simpson & Cheryl Simpson (2011), New York, Routledge.
ISBN 978-041542559-9

Although, tourism-related studies focus on terrorism as the main threat of industry, others are interested in understanding the fascinating relation between terrorism and tourism. Whilst some specialists consider that terrorism resulted from resentment and poverty, others allude to the inter-cultural shocks, where tourism is embedded with. Whatever the case may be, few scholars have delved into the role of laws and jurisprudence in regulating tourism and terrorism. In view of that, *From Heritage to terrorism*, originally authored by Simpson and Simpson, represents a valuable effort to understand, from a fresh view, the logic of terrorism as well as its commonalities with tourism. Brilliantly, this book explores how the law facilitated the expansion of tourism over years, protecting the interests of capital holders. The existent jurisprudence suggests that tourism was determined by the legal system. It is unfortunate that scholarship preferred to study the economic forces that coexisted to boost tourism worldwide, avoiding a clear diagnosis of the laws. Circumscribing the laws to the local, and tourism to the global, the trivialization of legal comparative studies in tourism research is one of the most troubling obstacles, this book should overcome. Quite aside from this difficulty, it is necessary to trigger a new discussion respecting to the connection of tourism and terrorism.

The main thesis of this pungent project exhibits the need to show tourism is very hard to regulate because of its mobile nature. Touring represents an act of encountering others, a new discovery, which not always is hospitable. In some conditions, travellers are attacked or rejected by natives because their behaviour, or at least by their polemic cultural values. At the time, terrorism seems to be encouraged by discrepancies on the value given to heritage and history, some heritage “makers” decides what part of history should be or not reminded; acts of atrocities in past are regulated by particular interests, which sometimes generate terrorism. In this vein, Simpson & Simpson´s book starts from a critical question to what extent terrorism should be regulated by the international law?

The paradigm of nation-state shows confidence in the paradoxical belief that that law reduces the conflicts among actors. An open question is also addressed by authors at time citizens become in tourists. They remind that it is important to debate if law can be used to protect the interests of status quo, which encourages the economic asymmetries of this globalized tourist world, or it signals to an desire to respect the ethnic difference and multiculturalism. Unless otherwise resolved, this argument goes on to acknowledge that “law is but a tool that can only be understood in the hands of those who control it”. Nations are today commoditized as products, which confers identity and heritage to a wide international demand. The specialists and experts encourage tourism as an activity of peace, wealth and as an answer to the needs of people. Its importance depends on the hegemony of the market on nations´ autonomy. Rather, others emphasize on tourism as a mechanism of control and alienation, because enlarge the inequalities between tourist-producing and tourist-receiving countries. Following this argument, one might speculate that terrorism resulted from a sentiment of resentment, generated by liberal force of market.

The originality of this book rests on the dichotomy that the same law generates respecting to tourism and mobility. If national jurisprudence declares what type of movement is legal and what type should be banned by state, how can we understand terrorism?. By chance, is terrorism an attack to the law?, or simply a hate-filled sentiment against the effects of mass-tourism traffic?, is control a way towards happiness?

Although the jurisprudence in sustainable tourism tries to regulate the negative aftermaths of the industry, the fact is that the system paradoxically provides the justification to promote tourism and the consequent reasons why it should be constrained. In respective, the disparities of legislation around the world makes very hard to apply the law to citizens from other states. Given this, local law enforcement poses a quandary in an era where uncertainty flourished elsewhere. On one hand, states allude to the protection of tourists ignoring the safety of the local natives. This means that their money is more important than their behaviour. On another, local interests should be amalgamated to much broader policies granted by state. The obsession for heritage consumption results in terrorist attacks because state does not follow sustainable policies, which take the voice of locals and natives. To reverse these trends, law should be formulated to orchestrate all involving stake-holders interests. At some extent, the neoliberal demand echoes the promises that tourism would serve as an invisible-hand in order for local economies to be enhanced. Further, the doctrine of "free-transit" alludes to the needs of human rights in ensuring a just retribution of wealth. To cut the long story short, law and national jurisprudence plays a crucial role regulating tourism to respect all interests of local agents. In so doing, terrorism has fewer probabilities to have success.

We have delineated the main argument of this book to the study of tourism and terrorism. Nevertheless, there are some points which merit to be discussed. Unlike Simpson & Simpson´s argument, we argue that (modern) tourism is terrorism by other means. Of course, the law plays a vital role in this process but not by the reasons stipulated in this text.

The organization of labour gave to work-force a commercialized leisure to deter their protests and claims. Policies of this calibre rushed anarchism to divide in two sides, one of them inclined to support the unionization of labour in US, the others attacked by bombing officials, and important members of society. The jurisprudence of a capitalized society conferred to workers not only a reason to work, but also rejected the most negative effects of terrorism, which were associated to anarchism, towards the boundaries of society. The right to strike, which was legally given by elite to work-force in the early organization of labour (Wagner act), shares with terrorism certain commonalities, unexplored by specialists (Korstanje & Clayton, 2012; Korstanje, 2013; Korstanje & Skoll, 2013).

To explain further, whenever passengers are stranded at an airport or train stations because of problems between owners and unions, the sense of urgency facilitate the things for stronger ones. Businesses and terrorism organizations are not concerned about the vulnerability or needs of passengers. The latter one are manipulated as means for achieving certain goals (instrumentality). In a world designed to create and satisfy psychological desires, consumers as holders of money, are of paramount importance for the stability of system. The threat that represents the consumers and the derived economic loses are enough to dissuade owners from the worker's claims. In these types of processes, typified by law, State not only takes intervention mediating between both actors but also is in charge of leading negotiations. But if negotiations fail, the state uses its armed force might to force the workers back to their jobs.

An early historical example is the great rail strike of 1877 when federal troops were withdrawn from the occupied former Confederacy to kill strikers, terrorizing the mass of rail workers to end the strike. In doing so, first anarchists decided for terrorist acts, until they were disciplined by states. Once done, their forms of violence were mutated to another more symbolic way of protests, the strike. Capitalism owes much to worker unions, more than thought. Whatever the case may be, tourism has extended to the globe, as the well being of industrial societies had advanced. The evolution of tourism, as a mass industry, came from a combination of economic factors, much encouraged by worker unions, such as working hour reduction and a rise in the wages.

Last but not least, industrial societies pave the way for expanding trade in the world, in which tourism plays a crucial role, domestic workers are subject to conditions of exploitation. If anarchism introduced poverty relief in industrial societies, their virulent ideas were not accepted until they were changed to ways acceptable to the state and ruling class. From the ideals of bloody revolution, European societies passed to the working class organizations—unions and political parties. This is the reason why we argue that tourism indirectly resulted from terrorism. Violence exerted by the anarchists was not enough to change the society, or at least its ways of productions, but their ideas not only inspired many artists, but also many syndicalist leaders (Joll, 1979).

The capitalized society needed from a profound organization of human relation to work. The migrants who have arrived to US, in quest of better opportunities brought new ideologies (as anarchism), which organized a particular view of labor system. At time some anarchist organized attacks to officials and top director of police (terrorism), others were dissuaded to manage the worker union struggle. The former ones were jailed or deported, while the latter aspired to new benefits such as working hour reduction and better condition of work. Terrorism was legally disciplined by the introduction of strike, which conferred to work-force the right to stop the production when they rights to be violated. Worker union had success in their claims, capital holders accepted a drastic reduction of working hours and better wages. These benefits disposed to accelerate not only the ways of production, but also the mass consumption of workers. Modern tourism not only resulted from the success of first worker union's dispute, but also it was the precondition to reject terrorism beyond the homeland. However, the ideals of anarchism never were eradicated in America. This is the reason why, tourism is terrorism by other means.

The history of pioneers in anarchism shows us two relevant aspects. First and foremost, states create their boundaries as a barrier to protect their economies. What inside can be denominated "a strike", beyond is labeled as "terrorist attack". Secondly, terrorists, most of them educated in the best Western universities learned our tactics of negotiations, strategies of exploitation and projected to more violent forms of expression. At the time tourism gave to worker unions a reason to work, the social system repelled the most negative aspects of their ideologies towards the boundaries. Actually, terrorists not only have been educated in the best western universities, they are familiar with our style of life. Although it is recommendable by specialist and researchers interested in terrorism, this book ignores precisely what a much broader international audience today fears, which means the bombing to an international resorts in Bali, has been taught by West.

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TOURISMOS

An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism

AIMS & SCOPE

TOURISMOS is an international, multi-disciplinary, refereed (peer-reviewed) journal aiming to promote and enhance research in all fields of tourism, including travel, hospitality and leisure. The journal is published by the University of the Aegean (in Greece), and is intended for readers in the scholarly community who deal with different tourism sectors, both at macro and at micro level, as well as professionals in the industry. *TOURISMOS* provides a platform for debate and dissemination of research findings, new research areas and techniques, conceptual developments, and articles with practical application to any tourism segment. Besides research papers, the journal welcomes book reviews, conference reports, case studies, research notes and commentaries. *TOURISMOS* aims at:

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