

Destination marketing

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



" What do destination marketers need to know about trustworthiness In order to best market a tourism destination? " Tourism destinations face many challenges in a competitive marketplace. A tourism destination can be defined as a place which attracts visitors from a wide range of destinations globally to spend at least one overnight (Pike, 2004). With tourism destinations a highly perishable commodity marketing strategies have changed to become less mass market and more consumer orientated. As identified in the literature, segmenting mass tourism markets helps identify a strong relationship with the destination and there consumer.

Every destination can offer a variety of services and products however, each consumer has the freedom to choose a variety of destinations globally something which is becoming increasingly difficult for destination marketers to manage. Associates (2012) highlights the importance of effective strategic marketing strategies to destination marketing organizations. Marketing destinations effectively requires destination marketing organizations to collect data and information on consumer behavior, Page and Connell (2006) provides insight into the importance of understanding nonuser behavior and how this influences marketing decisions.

This paper has been structured in an attempt to identify and understand what information destination marketers need to know in order to successfully market a tourism destination. Research will highlight the concept of marketing, the role of destination marketing organizations and identify best practices in successful destination marketing. The case study of Edinburgh highlights the importance of successful destination marketing and the impact effective marketing strategies have had on the Scottish tourism economy.

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This essay will also provide insight into what destination marketers need to know in order to segment target markets and identify changes in consumer buying behavior. Effective marketing strategies will often determine the success of a destination. Marketing is based on the benefits which an organization can put forward in order to satisfy its customers. Kettle et al. (2004) in Page and Connell (2006) states that "marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they want and need through creating and exchanging products and values with others".

Marketing planning involves organizations evaluating their existing resources and approaches and identifying the ways in which existing resources can be developed to ensure long term success. The marketing of destinations has become increasingly competitive in recent years. It has become well established that the complexity of a destination means it is able to be marketed in much the same way as a product (Howe, 2003 in Baker, 2008). The marketing of tourism destinations involves selling a place by relating it to the lifestyle of identified target markets.

In order for destinations to be marketed successfully a strategic marketing approach should be adopted. It should be noted that the collection of information and data is the core of planning and decision making. Strategic marketing plans offer destinations marketing organizations quality, efficiency and effectiveness in the tourism destination marketing process (Straddles, 2012). Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) have continued to play an active role and are responsible for the marketing and promotion of an identifiable destination (Pike, 2004).

Marketing a destination covers all the activities and processes which bring organizations and consumers together. Destination marketing organizations focus on responding effectively to consumer demands as well as gaining a competitive advantage over other destinations. They are directly involved in making all the decisions relating to the product offered, branding of the product, the segmentation of target markets as well as the promotion and distribution (WTFO, 2004).

In addition to this their primary goals are to develop effective tourism information systems for the destination, creating an image and brand which will enhance the destinations identity and increase the overall awareness of the destination (Kazoo, 2011). Their role involves working with the operation of other tourism businesses within a destination to strengthen the tourism services provided. According to Page and Connell (2006) a destination marketing organization would work with existing and potential long term markets in order to ensure maximum visitor spend.

The development of marketing strategies has meant that today destination marketing organizations face new challenges. In the past destination marketing organizations would promote destinations to mass market rather than segmenting markets (King, 2002). The implications of such approaches has seen many destinations fail to add value to the experience which a destination can offer the changing consumer. Doms need to work more coherently with various stakeholders, coordinating effectively in strategic marketing plans.

Virtually all destination marketing organizations recognize their interdependency to work together with other stakeholders in marketing efforts (Associates, 2012). Various internal factors including shared visions, goals and objectives will effectively contribute to successful destination marketing. Failure to work in partnerships can often result in the poor marketing and promoting of a destination. To be successful in a competitive tourism market destination marketing organizations must be able to interpret the needs of their consumers.

Those destinations which recognize changes in the tourism market and respond effectively are the destinations which achieve the greatest long term success (Associates, 2012). The case of Edinburgh, Scotland capital is one example of a destination which has thrived from successful destination marketing. The success of the tourism activity in Edinburgh forms much of its economic prosperity. The recent development of the new regional city brand image saw research being undertaken to establish the external views on Edinburgh as a short break city destination.

The results indicated to local marketers what they need to develop in order to improve its perceived image as well as helping identify potential target markets (Fall, 2006). In recent years Edinburgh has seen more European and I-J markets emerging, contributing £1 billion to the economy each year. In 2005 Edinburgh merged local tourism authorities with Visit Scotland in order to create a stronger destination marketing organization. Developing partnerships with local businesses and authorities allowed the destination to achieve aims and objectives more coherently.

Edinburgh key concept is to continue investing in new developments and new successful marketing techniques in line with changing market requirement (Edinburgh 2020 tourism strategy). For destination marketing organizations globally, emphasis will be on the experience they offer the for success in the future (King, 2002). In recent years consumer behavior has adapted with the economic crisis which resulted in changes to many travelers' personal circumstances, economic status and social factors.

Consumer behavior defines the process in which organizations understand the needs of consumers in the buying process Frat (2011). Tourism experiences are developed through an important understanding of tourist behavior (Page and Connell, 2006). Consumer behavior is a highly important issue which will influence many marketing decisions. An understanding of the tourist perceptions and values allows destination marketing organizations to improve the resources in place to meet consumer expectation. Aladdin 2000) argues that developing an understanding of a visitor's preference makes the overall perception of a tourism destination stronger. Consumer behavior is an important aspect in all marketing activities especially for the marketing and rendition of tourism destinations as this will often determine a destinations success. However, studying the behavior of tourists has become increasingly complex due to the multitude of products and services which a destination can offer its buyers. A wide range of factors will determine whether a customer will purchase a product or not.

Every individual tourist is different and will have multiple motivators which will determine their buying decisions (Swarthmore and Hornier, 1999). More often than not consumers make decisions on the external influences around them, Page and Connell (2006) highlights that attracting new visitors can be challenging as there is the potential for consumers to search relevant customer experiences something which is increasingly influencing consumer decisions. Understanding consumer behavior and the motivators which influence buyers in tourism is becoming increasingly challenging for destination marketers to manage.

It is vital that destination marketers have a clear understanding of who they are trying to market to and that they have the plans and resources in place in order to gain a better understanding of the changes in consumer behavior. The tourist decision process is also influenced by personal characteristics, such as demographics and economic status (Mom du valley, 2008). As consumer's age destinations will face a change in demand, thus destination marketing organizations must have strategic plans in place in order to develop the services and product provided (Rudolf, 2010).

An understanding of demographics and the changes in consumer buying decisions allows destination marketing organizations to make more structured changes in developing a destination which will meet the consumers' needs and wants (Mill and Morrison, 2002). Market segmentation splits the population into groups who all share the same purchasing behavior characteristics. The strategy behind market segmentation is to achieve a competitive advantage by focusing on a specific category of customer and

developing existing products and services according to their socio- economic or socio-demographic differences (Kettle et al. 009 in Kazoo, 2011).

Segmenting mass tourism markets allows destination marketing organizations to link one set of external influences and motivations to one sub group. The most popular form of market segmentation is by demographic factors such as age, sex, religion and Emily life cycle .

Motivational differences are often identified in age gaps (Knott, 2009). The more mature consumer is likely to make decisions based on cost savings conscious approach, with consumers wanting better value for money.

The critical factors which consumers identify as the most important factors when choosing a destination are the price, promotion and physical identity of the place (Alert, 2010). Price is an influential factor in identifying service quality and quality of experience. For destination marketing organizations segmenting markets has identified that most consumer buying decisions are based on a destination which is seasonably priced and will ensure maximum quality. Doom's should identify appropriate methods which will allow them to segment mass tourism markets into more specific target markets.

Segmenting mass tourism markets can provide destination marketers with a better understanding of the needs and wants of their consumers better than their competitors (Lovelace, 1991 in Pike, 2004). The future of marketing destinations will be greatly dependent on destination marketing organizations adopting new approaches. A greater understanding of consumer behavior through market segmentation will provide destination

marketing organizations with the information they need in order to develop existing resources in order to attract new, long term and future markets.

The future of destination marketing is more dependent on organizations gaining a better understanding and awareness of consumer buying decisions. With the content of this paper it is important to understand that destinations are becoming increasingly difficult to market, therefore it is the role of destination marketing organizations to gather the data they need in order to successfully market their destination. Kazoo (2011) discusses the crucial role of destination marketing organizations that of creating an image and brand which will attract existing, long term and potential markets.

For destination marketing organizations it has become apparent that approaching a mass market will no longer ensure a destinations long term success, this is because consumers have the freedom to choose a wide variety of destinations. Segmenting mass tourism markets allows consumers to be divided into sub groups. This approach allows organization to gain a better understanding of the consumers' needs and wants, allowing them to adapt the services and products offered more effectively. Page and Connell (2006) emphasizes the importance of understanding consumer behavior and how this can influence marketing decisions.