

Enhancing film- induced tourism: an analysis into how to increase a country's expo...

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Enhancing film-induced tourism: An analysis into how to increase a country's exposure to filmmakers in pre-production promotion. Laila Lala LT 3P18 N - Leisure & Tourism Management Project Abstract

Tourism can be accounted for an essential part of many small, medium and large-scale economies. In 2012 the expenditure projected by the World Travel & Tourism Council is at \$2 trillion, upped to over \$6 trillion if indirect spending is included. With this arises the battle of tourists' attention by destinations, ranging from remote places to buzzing metropolises. Branding efforts by Destination Marketing Organisations ("DMOs") have been trying to address this issue using personalities of places as emotional selling points. A trend unforeseen by DMO's only emerging in recent decades has influenced travelling decisions greatly, generated by the increased influence of the media — film-induced tourism. With little research into this field it is a nearly untapped source for marketing purposes, leaving this trend open to the liking of film-productions independent of marketing activities. Allowing for a location to be placed like a product in a movie the audience will associate the emotions evoked by the specific film the geographical location has appeared in, increasing branding opportunities via this secondary route. The issue encountered here is how to gain exposure as a geographical location to productions that will likely evoke emotions, corresponding with the DMOs efforts. This paper looks closely at two important features of this: Firstly, it provides a sound understanding of the different entities involved in the location choice. Secondly, an interrogation into how the previously outlined roles come to their knowledge of the location. Interviewing various industry insiders this report looks at how

geographical locations are chosen for productions. Concluding recommendations in order to gain more exposure to pre-production movies are made, including the use of film commissions, reaching out to location managers and being a part of the annual AFCI Location Show. Introduction

While the academic writing about the impact of place branding in context of the trend of film-induced tourism is sparse, the amount of research that has been conducted into how to increase exposure of geographical locations by pro-actively promoting the location to filmmakers in a business-to-business (" B2B") approach is bordering on nonexistent. Even though it has been acknowledged by academia that film tourism is highly lucrative, with such examples as New Zealand's increased economy after applying different marketing activities relating to films set in this country, the overall consensus is agreeing on insufficient measurement methods of promotional activities towards the impact of film tourism. The issues arising with this are the unaccounted successful and unsuccessful ways DMOs may have tried to market their geographic locations, in order for others to be statutory examples and guidelines for their own marketing efforts into this direction. This report tries to give an overview of the so far researched and published information available about this topic with a wide use of thorough related secondary research and more specific primary inquiries. In the context of a number of producers, all primarily located in the American film industry (Hollywood) from small and large scale productions, as well as other related experts this issue is in adequate scope of this report discussed. The focus is looking at pre-production variables that can be influenced when choosing the

location. The limited availability of research, as previously pointed out, will likely create various hurdles that will have to be faced when furthering exploration of this topic: designing trials, conducting audits and measuring effectiveness. As suggested by Hudson and Ritchie (2006b) the success of film tourism is related to five factors: destination marketing activities pre- and post-production, destination attributes, film-specific factors, film commission and government efforts, and location feasibility (see Fig. 1 in Appendices). It is beyond the scope of this report to review all of these factors and thus the focus of this article will be on the first factor related to preproduction activities. However it is clear that this is only a fraction of the factors that need to be considered for a whole analysis of how to successfully use placement of locations in film. In the scope of the topic addressed the main question investigated upon considers the factors for the location choice and the predominant players responsible for making this choice. How can DMOs influence film productions to take place in their country through pre-production marketing activities? Defining those entities and the different types of involvement in the overall choice it will then be considered where the information about suitable locations is derived from. Concluding the research will be looking at the influence DMOs can have into this choice, considering the successful offering of incentives to productions and the scope of the involvement of film-commissions' into the pre-production activities related. Methodology Qualitative research on this topic was conducted by combining new original findings in connection with existing academically published knowledge. Secondary research was sought utilising

topical literature in form of journal articles as well as books. Furthering this the snowball system was applied to gain further insights into background reading that otherwise would possibly have been neglected. This allowed for a sound understanding of the addressed areas and framework of related topics to ground the primary research on, which was gained in form of various interviews with individuals working in the specified industry in particularly related to the researched topic. These were then analysed using a mix of coding, relating to the specified research objectives. Other primary research methodologies were rejected, as the research question does not allow for their use. Data collection for the primary research was only undertaken through interviews with specific individuals. This occurred as differing methods such as public surveys or direct observations were ruled out as the particular focus of the report on pre-production does not allow for an involvement by the public. Literature Review Film-induced tourism or simply film tourism is the collective term used for the study of "tourist visits to a destination or attraction as a result of the destination being featured on the cinema screen, DVD, television or on video" (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006a; p. 256). As highlighted by O'Connor et al (2008) and Rewtrakunphaiboon (2009) the area of film-induced tourism in academia and practice has so far not yet enjoyed sufficient research and its impacts are in most cases still too coincidental and unrelated to undertakings by DMOs. In very general terms it can be pointed out that filming on location brings various short-term economic advantages (Croy et al, 2003) with it such as employment for locals, but it needs to be considered that the setting of a movie may

influence highly on long-term tourism opportunities generated through the specific 'product placement'. Hudson et al (2006) point out that just as the viewer's attitude towards a product is influenced by subsequent placement, in a movie a location in the background can affect the destinations branding and viewers' attitudes towards future travel opportunities. The destination images differentiate the location in the consumers mind in comparison to its competitors, in the same way branding efforts are undertaken (Pike et al, 2004; Echtner et al, 1991; Hart, 2003). However, in relation to this the concept of destination branding has been discussed throughout the last century by many academics such as Simon Anholt (2006), Philip Kotler (1993) as well as Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2003) in addition to others. A common issue arising describes destination branding to be often mistaken as destination marketing. This confusion mainly leads from marketing using its target audience wants and needs as guiding principles for its operations whereas branding focuses on building a personality from what attributes are already existent for its destination, establishing a message and vision with which the consumer can identify (Kavaratzis, 2005). This personality then is represented throughout all products and services offered. For this, branding techniques are applied to a destination similarly to how they would be applied to a less complex entity resulting in the geographical location to be more desirable if applied well. Robert Jones (as quoted in Salman, 2008), consultant director at international brand consultancy Wolff Olins describes it as such: "Successful branding can turn a city into a place where people want to live, work and visit". The process of developing a destination brand

however is intricate and multidimensional as in comparison to a simpler entity it is a multi-faceted identity that needs to be branded with a great number and variety of stakeholders. Two main principles have been identified for this process: strategic versus organic place branding. As geographic locations of any size (nation, region, city) realize they are in fierce competition with other places for resources, people and business the up spurt of brands created by Destination Marketing organizations. Examples for this are numerous and include Berlin's " beBerlin", Dubai's " the instant city" and Las Vegas " Sin City" - these are all examples of strategic place branding, city personalities created by DMOs. In contrast the " holy city" Jerusalem grew its identity over decades, reinforced by pilgrimage. Other examples for organic place branding are " tech capital" Silicon Valley and the " home of movie stars" Hollywood, which have each grown their reputation coherently with the areas industry formation (Kavaratzis, 2005). " All cultures and people have put meaning and into spaces to make them Places. They are given stories -- our own stories or experiences in that space, the stories of others we care about (or are influenced by), or perhaps imaginary stories created by us or by others" (Beeton, 2005, p. 229). This being pointed out the destination personality does not necessarily have to comply with the objective reality of the location as long as it relates to the consumers feeling of that place. According to Beeton (2005, pp. 67-68) the " reinforcement of the potential visitor's subjective needs and image is paramount. For example, much of Australia's tourism marketing by the Australian Tourism Commission relates to the frontier, pioneering idyll of the outback and

remote areas, whereas Australia is one of the most highly urbanized societies in the world". As a result this idealised idyll is re-enforced by filmmakers, using the wild outback as settings, re-enforcing the outback image. A quote by Busby et al (2001) says: ' Physical place is replaced through sensibilities by an image of place which is no less real, while the phenomenon of sense or spirit of place highlights the experiential nature of the individual's engagement. The lines blur as imagined worlds vie with real-life experience.' It describes well the very personal experience every viewer has engaging with the images of a location, which differ for each person. According to Morgan and Pritchard (1998) as in Hudson and Brent (2006b), placing a destination in a film is the ultimate in tourism product placement. But before the film can get to the consumer and as such the product placement being taken in by the consumer, it is necessary for the filming to take place on location (see Fig. 1 in appendices). Even though DMOs don't have the choice of which films are being produced, they can be proactive towards promoting their location to the relevant players involved. This sometimes involves public relations or product placement specialists (Weber Shandwick, 2005; The Economist, 1998). As briefly mentioned by Hudson and Ritchie (2006b) preproduction involvement into location scouting should be considered, e. g. in such terms as assisting with their scouting by paying expenses. This especially will be discussed in the research findings. In relation to that the active promotion of a location to film studios will be interrogated as well as incentives offered to film productions as proposed by Fig. 1 (see appendices). These encouragements may be offered as grants,

tax breaks during production or other incentives. Traditional factors considered for the location choice include the right scenery, set, backdrop, icons, awareness and brand (Hudson et al, 2006b). Research Findings The question researched causes a slight twist in findings. Even though the ultimate goal is to exploit the trend of film tourism the way it is proposed the research is based on not the application of how consumers respond to screenings, but on how to increase the number of productions utilizing the location. The interviews conducted in order to research this are therefore not with the general consumer base, but with industry specialists, exploring how locations can augment their exposure to production companies and studios. Across all interviewees three main entities were consistently described as being responsible for the choice of geographic location as the film set with a possible fourth extension (See Fig. 2). These three roles resume around the producer, director and location manager of the film. The number one theme expressed was the need for collaboration in the film business. It takes leaders and thousands of decisions to put a production together. The process of finalizing a location can take hours, days or even months. The Producer, Director, and Location Manager are responsible for having to find and more importantly secure locations for shoots. Securing a location is being able to afford and safely and legally work in a specific area. Each of these positions brings a separate piece to the puzzle of securing a location. An overview of the players involved in the location choice The Director is responsible for the overall look of the production, which he accomplishes by working with the writer, production designer and the art department. Developing the script

into a visual this role needs to develop first ideas to convey the needs of the shots both in terms of production needs and looks. In an initial meeting these are passed on to the location manager, in order to paint a visual picture with which then different suitable options can be found. The director then ultimately makes a decision on one of the locations supplied by the location manager, evaluating mainly the creative aspects. Complementing this the producer is in charge of all the business aspects of a production. " The essential objective of a great producer is keeping a production on time and on budget, " says Producer of The American Outdoorsman, Jim Mueller. The Producer does everything from negotiating deals to finalize locations to allocating funds and most importantly, he seeks out benefits such as tax incentives or funding by the location in cooperation with the location managers findings. It is the Producers job to contact and seek out production friendly destinations. The Location Manager's chief responsibility is to find the perfect location to support the vision of the Director, whilst keeping in mind budgeting restrictions and also find a suitable location that can be secured. " Securing a great location includes more than just a pretty place, it's a location that is affordable and also convenient to support the crew involved, " [in the production] says Josh Gottsegen, director of production. The Location Manager needs to be able to find a location that fits within the productions means and needs. Once equipped with the vision of the director it is about going out and exploring the world for places that comply with these requirements, finding several options for each location envisioned. You need to find different looks, like vegetation architecture and terrain which is

similar to where the on-screen location is meant to be. Securing the location is different for every location. " Bringing in the circus to town is what I like to call it, " explains Kevin Foster, location scout at Universal studios, " there is a lot of logistics involved in that — finding all the parking, permits and any vendor support needed, like toilets and food. Depending where they are filming, we need to go and make arrangements with the property owner before. " A location manager can be thought of, as a bridge between the creative wants of a Director and the business needs of a Producer. These three professionals work together to find a cost effective and beautiful location for production. The director creates the vision, the location manager works to find a location that fits that vision and then works with the producer to secure the location agreed upon. This is the ideal workflow for pre-production location planning. However a director can have a brilliant vision, but if the location given to him by his location manager doesn't fit, the production will be weak. Additionally, " there is the classic problem of a producer denying and forcing a director to alter his vision because of insufficient resources. Funds that can not be allocated are likely to cause a production to fail. " (Michael Gottsegen) Productions that have signed with a studio additionally have to involve another big stakeholder. The studio can be beneficial to productions and finding good location, which offer incentives and cinematic beauty. They have vast resources; specialised facilities, internal professionals, contacts with externals e. g. DMO's and most importantly offer monetary support. Yet they can also force productions to use their own facilities and try to fake foreign locations on sound stages.

Another problem arises here with the studio having the final say in all decisions, which potentially forces changes to the script, locations or actors. " The process of finding a suitable geographic area is like finding a needle in a haystack. It's possible but takes a hell of a lot of work," exclaims Nick Pasquale, " You need lots of hard work and time to find a good location. Luckily, the industry is beginning to create various ways of researching and finding hidden gems. The Location Managers Guild of America is the easiest address to look for advice. In cooperation with the guild, an annual trade show takes place - the AFCL Locations Trade Show Los Angeles, whereas Foster states, " film makers can tour the world in one building". He goes on explaining that every civilized country around the world is represented there, supplying information about all the benefits, and points of differences, attractions, and climate. It is a menagerie of sales pitches and networking. Another more specific source for individualised country information can be found through film commissions. Vivien Flitton, director of operations at AusFilm — the Australian film commission, describes it as such: " Film commissions connect the production with the location. Pre-production we send out information packs to all the major studios showing different features of what we have to offer. This will range from pictures of the lonely outback to shots of very busy city centres and of course the main attractions. Additionally it will very clearly point out any incentives we can offer, such as tax breaks. " These tax breaks are defined by the local government and film commissions help promote their existence. The existence of film commissions clearly represents the pro film view countries

have. They are valuing the benefits of being represented to a global audience over esoteric taxes and are going out of their way to appease filmmakers. Furthermore they must view the return on investment of the marketing effort, incentivising images of their country to be beneficial and induce tourism. Across the interviewees a certain acknowledgement can be found towards this being one of the more influential factors of the location choice — tax breaks may be related to any stage of the production. Pre-production scouting aid as well as postproduction, digital and visual effects production are common. Information packs are additionally sent to the location manager guild to have on file for potentially interested scouts. Other services solicited during the pre-production procedure include property representation. This is usually sent directly to the Production Company and studios assume the role of an agent negotiating on the behalf between property owners and productions, with responsibilities including the forming of a contract. Destinations are becoming businesses themselves, more than a location for tourism. The branding and marketing of an area is becoming essential to day-to-day operations of city government. The extent destinations will play in controlling its image through out the world is becoming more of a norm and I expect this trend to continue for the many reasons stated above. Recommendation As pointed out throughout this report there are many advantages to locations through filming. If handled well the short- as well as long-term economic effects can be highly lucrative and it is not to be taken lightly as the right efforts will aid most destinations gaining this exposure. Enhancing said exposure to tourism and especially

film tourism is an intricate undertaking, which has many layers to it. During pre-production the presentation of findings by the location scout to the director and producer is highly influential in the final choice, thus efforts to be included in this are very likely to return results. As discussed the sheer number of choices makes the process difficult if only considered by the locations attributes, but furthering incentives have a high impact. These don't necessarily have to relate to pre-production activities, but can also be commence during the actual stage of filming or during post-production. In combination a great location with excellent incentives for the production is a perfect opportunity for every filmmaker. Even though this option shows the most advantages for the production it is not solely the monetary influences that decide the final choice — availability of information is inevitably of great importance. Investing in a short video to distribute to production companies and studios is likely to show an impact, especially for lesserknown locations. Greater investment in this sort of marketing activities undertaken by film commissions will enable the scouting to be simpler and augment the likelihood of consideration by scouts and therefore directors. Last but not least these activities need to extend to the AFCEI tradeshow, which offers a platform to showcase locations. Although it may not fit the current location needs of someone walking past the stall, if it is memorable the long-term effect of recall can be rewarding. Conclusion This report faces many limitations, the main restrictions resulting from looking solely at pre-production marketing activities. Furthermore the results are representative of a small number of specific industry insiders originating mostly from North

America, representing the current state in that specific area. For further research this group will need to be extended onto the different continents in order to get a better insight on used practices in a more global approach. Moreover it is acknowledged that film tourism is not only generated by the B2B promotion described in this report. Thus the success of attracting film tourists depends on a number of variables, including (but not limiting to) marketing activities as media publication around the film and the promotion of the location alongside the film. With this it is proposed to quantitatively investigate the effectiveness of the annual locations trade show on actual locations chosen. Little research has so far explored these factors and insight into them will help gear those marketing activities better towards the consumer target group, especially with an additional extension of research into the psychological aspects of film tourism — considering especially film tourist attitudes and behaviour.

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