

THE MARKETING MIX OF THE BUCOVINA TOURIST DESTINATION

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Abstract

The tourism is a dynamic phenomenon that is constantly changing. The tourist market is in constant transformation due to the competition and its continuous growth. The tourist destinations face many challenges to enter and stay upon this market. Thus, the tourist destination is a well-defined space that provides a set of services meant to satisfy the tourists' requirements. The Bucovina tourist destination is recognized nationally and internationally through its world-famous monasteries, some of which are included in the UNESCO heritage, but also by the hospitality of the inhabitants of this area. The specific customs and traditions, as well as the traditional costume, the gastronomy and other elements help this area to become a renowned brand through proper promotion. The purpose of this study is to analyze how marketing policies are being implemented within the Bucovina destination. Based on the analysis carried out, certain strengths and weaknesses at the destination level were identified. The effective promotion could be achieved through social networks, thus capitalizing on the trends currently registered in the behavior of tourists.

Keywords: *Marketing mix, Bucovina, tourist destination, tourist product, tourist market*

INTRODUCTION

The marketing activity taking place at the level of the tourist destination is a strategic process that aims to develop tourism in view of protecting the environment and satisfying the requirements of tourists and those involved in the tourism activity.

The tourist destination is regarded as a well-defined geographic area and viewed from the point of view of a product; the tourist destination is “a set of services and facilities that materialize in the specific ambience of the natural and artificial factors of attraction and the created tourist facilities, which are components of the tourist offer and can exert a positive force

of attraction upon tourists” (Snak O., 1999). In the modern sense, the tourist destination is perceived as the experience acquired by the tourist because of consumption (Ispas, A., Tourism Marketing, 2011). The tourist destination can be approached from two perspectives: from a perspective, as it is an entity as a whole; from a composite perspective, as viewed from the perspective of the tourist products provided within it, the basic constituents of a tourist destination include natural factors and anthropic resources.

Due to the passage of time, these resources end up degrading, because the tourist development of an area has negative effects upon the environment. Therefore, it is obvious that the practice of tourist activity must be in harmony with the environment. The development of the tourist destination is necessary to be a continuous development process, considering the dynamics of the tourist market.

Any tourist destination must consider sustainable development strategies. The sustainable development of the tourist destination implies the development of all forms of tourism, tourism management and marketing that observe the natural, social and economic integrity of the environment by ensuring the exploitation of natural and cultural resources and for the future generations (Ionescu, G., Murariu, A., 2005). The tourist destination has a major interest in ensuring the sustainable development and the following objectives must be considered:

- the sustaining of the tourism activities that bring the least impact upon the environment, the reducing of the forms of pollution produced by tourism;
- preserving and capitalizing upon the local cultures and ethnographic traditions;
- the protection of historical monuments and local architecture
- the introduction thereof into the value circuit, the ensuring of the modernization of the infrastructure and of the technical-communal equipment, the access ways, and services (Ruhanen, L. 2010).

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The marketing mix for the Bucovina area includes the following elements: product, price, distribution and promotion.

The product policy

The foreign tourists arrive in the tourist destination of Bucovina, usually because it is recognized for the Monasteries of the northern part of Bucovina, some of which are part of the UNESCO heritage and are recognized both nationally and internationally. The Romanian tourists choose this destination for a limited period, usually for a weekend. To extend the stay of both the

foreigners and Romanians, as well as to attract as many tourists as possible, it is necessary to design touristic products such as tours: 5-6 days to visit the Bucovina tourist area.

These products must contain a varied and diversified offer so that each day involves different activities and it is personalized, for example, by age segment. The purpose of these packages should be, in addition to visiting all the tourist attractions and discovering the customs and traditions specific to the area (e.g. organizing Romanian-themed folk dances, traditional dinner or campfire) to highlight the uniqueness of the area.

It is advisable to adopt the market penetration strategy because a new, diversified tourist product should be conceived, which exploits the tourist potential and will be introduced on the national and international market. Regarding the flow of tourists in the Bucovina tourist area, the situation of the accommodation of the tourists in the tourist accommodation units during the period 2000-2014 is presented below.

Table 1. The situation of tourist's accommodation in the Suceava county

Suceava County	Accommodation capacity		Arrivals (thousands)	Overnight stays (thousands)	Usage guidelines net of the capacity in function
	Existent (places)	In operation (thousand places-days)			(%)
2000	5269	1335.4	153.5	480.3	36
2001	5034	1421.1	151.4	461.1	32.4
2002	5192	1399.5	162.4	406.7	29.1
2003	5577	1640.8	162.5	423.2	25.8
2004	5755	1760.8	187.4	432.4	24.6
2005	6526	1932.6	192.1	435.2	22.5
2006	7012	2056.7	211.0	500.3	24.3
2007	6831	2087.4	226.3	535.1	25.6
2008	7029	2101.8	229.1	530.1	25.2
2009	7554	2176.4	209.7	479.4	22.0
2010	8033	2263.6	194.4	460.6	20.3
2011	8835	2439.6	229.5	556.2	22.8
2012	9447	2594.1	238.6	586.2	22.6
2013	9585	2642.6	241.6	577.2	21.8
2014	9650	2686.4	260.7	583.6	21.7

Source: www.insse.ro

The price policy

The main measure to be taken in the case of this marketing policy is to adjust prices to the quality of services so that the quality-price ratio is acceptable to all tourists. A strategy should be devised on the rates charged for entries into museums, churches and fortresses. Access charges are usually differentiated between the Romanian and foreign tourists, as they are lower in the case of the first category. This creates differences of opinion amongst the foreign tourists who, even due to Romania's fine reputation abroad, feel that they are being tricked.

Therefore, it is necessary to set common rates, expressed in EURO; they must be matched with the equivalent in RON, the Romanian currency. The rates for the access to cultural, religious and historical objectives throughout Bucovina are accessible to all tourists. It is therefore necessary to provide discounts to groups of tourists, retirees, students or pupils and to children under a certain age.

It is possible to design a marketing tool (such as an access card or travel card) that could be purchased from the Internet at a global price, lower than the amount of access rate for each objective, also providing a reduction to transportation and including entries to the most important objectives of the Bucovina area.

As a whole-area price strategy, one can utilize the low-price strategy to win a market position and attract tourists. Given the current national economic situation, this may be an opportunity for the Bucovina area to attract more Romanian tourists. The adjustment strategy for the off-season rates (spring and autumn periods) is also recommended.

In the case of business trips, the transport companies and accommodation units in the Bucovina area must attract this valuable segment of tourism demand by offering bonuses to the loyal customers who will benefit from them during the holiday period, thus ensuring a significant number of future tourists.

The consumers' sensitivity to the rates of the tourist services also varies depending upon the payment methods: cash payment, payment by card and payment by bank transfer. To attract as many tourists as possible, all the tour operators must accept the payment of cash, credit card and the on-line payment method. It is necessary to provide equipment such as ATMs, card readers, computers and laptops connected to the Internet and access to modern means of payment.

The pricing policy of tour operators in Bucovina must also consider the different behavior of consumers according to the economic situation.

During the economic upswing period (before the 2010 economic crisis), the population spent more to meet their travel needs by making more expensive voyages and accommodating in reception facilities with a higher-ranking rating.

Unfortunately, Bucovina cannot provide too many 4 and 5-star reception facilities and it is imperative to attract foreign investors or to implement projects financed by European funds to create a modern material base. During the period of economic recession (after 2010) the tourist demand decreased considerably due to the low level of the incomes and savings of the population.

It is necessary to revive the economic activities and create new jobs. To promote sales, a marketing tool can be designed to allow all monasteries to be visited by paying a global price. Just as with all museums - a voucher can be designed and sold.

It is recommended that the reception facilities in Bucovina promote low prices for a minimal package of services offered to attract tourists to this destination, and here the tourists will be encouraged to spend more by providing additional services: excursions to the area, hiking, organizing folklore programs, visiting local attractions (sheepfold, reservations).

The distribution policy

At present, there are tourism agencies dealing with incoming and outgoing tourism in the Bucovina area. The travel agencies prefer to organize tourist packages upon demand than to design some and to distribute them domestically and externally. The local agencies participating in tourism fairs prefer to promote outgoing offers rather than the incoming offers. There is a very large and unexploited opportunity for the incoming tourism in the Bucovina area. It is necessary that all the tour operators contribute in order to establish tourist products of touristic circuit-type of the Bucovina tourist destination at an advantageous price, which will be distributed both to domestic and foreign travel agencies.

It is necessary to cooperate with the big tour operators to include these products in their offerings, and concerning the electronic distribution, it is necessary to design a single official website that will contain all the information a tourist needs when he or she comes to visiting the Bucovina area; this site may also contain an on-line booking system that includes accommodation offer in the area, as the Bucovina tourist destination wants to strengthen its position on the market.

A distribution strategy is recommended, involving the use of many intermediaries. The tourist product of the Bucovina area should be placed primarily in the offers of the big international tour operators, then in the domestic travel agencies and information centers and in the international tourist information centers, and, also, to the electronic intermediaries.

The package of tourist services cannot be shipped to the customer; thus, the tourist must travel to the product to consume it at the destination (in reception buildings, spa, recreation areas, etc.). The tourist services, except those from the urban areas are in regions

that provide an attractive offer in terms of leisure opportunities. It is necessary to attract the tourist consumer to the places of supply and consumption of the tourist services in a certain resort or area.

This role is fulfilled in tourism by the distribution through an activity to stimulate and inform potential tourists about the characteristics and structural components of the products offered. The ease in choosing the destination for consumers requires the diversification of informational products (leaflets, catalogs, brochures, advertising spots on radio and television, internet advertising, websites) made available to tourists. The perishability of tourism services is countered by the distribution intervention, which is designed to allow for the sale in advance of the delivery.

It is imperative that organized travel holidays be completed well in advance of the actual consumption of the services and paid through direct distribution channels by the tourist and through indirect channels by the intermediaries.

Considering the cyclical, seasonal character of tourist activities, it is necessary to intensify the actions and the distribution efforts in the off season to stimulate the tourist demand. In this respect, it is possible to choose to organize sales outlets around commercial units, university campuses, main access roads in localities, and to make mobile units cover a larger area.

The promotion policy

The promotion in tourism consists of a set of communication approaches aimed at permanently transmitting, in various ways, messages intended to inform both potential clients and tourists, on the characteristics of the tourism products and services offered for sale; that is in order to consolidate a positive image, to cultivate a favorable attitude and determine changes that are convenient to the sender or receiver of the messages.

The components of the promotional mix in tourism include tourism advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and the sales force. Advertising is made through printed matter (leaflets, guides, tourist posters, newspapers, catalogs, leaflets, flyers) or electronic invoice, audio-visual, internet, television or radio.

The public relations are carried out both in the domestic environment (the staff of travel agencies, accommodation, food and leisure facilities, transport companies, guides) as well as in the external environment (press relations via press releases, press conferences, creation of events).

The promotion of sales of the tourist product – one can receive promotional gifts; there can be discounts (special offers, grouped sales), promotional contests, games, lotteries.

The direct marketing – in tourism, the mailing (correspondence, ground mail) is utilized as well as catalogs, direct meetings, telemarketing and internet. There are initiatives to promote the Bucovina tourist area due to its high attractiveness amongst the destinations in Romania. Thus, this tourist destination must be considered a well-known tourist brand nationwide and internationally, to start a promotion campaign. To ensure the effective promotion at the local level, it is necessary to cooperate with all the intermediaries in tourism to:

- design a catching portal to showcase all the attractions of the area, the activities that can be carried out here and the opportunities for leisure.
- introduce the Bucovina tourism product on the social media sites and on the websites of the different travel agencies.
- produce good quality, attractive, well-documented promotional materials such as flyers, brochures, CDs, tourist guides, distributed free of charge to tourists, information centers and travel agents in the country and abroad.
- conceive a brand of the Bucovina area to represent the identity of the tourist destination, including an advertising clip with its representative unique objectives of the area, a very succinct presentation of the traditions and leisure opportunities; a short message, easy to remember; promotional materials to be promoted under the common message. This brand must be launched both on the national and international markets.
- organize info-trips for tour operators and travel agencies for a better personal knowledge of the area.
- organize international festivals
- attract personalities to support concerts, book presentations, etc.
- participate in as many trade fairs and exhibitions as possible dedicated to the Bucovina area product.

The Bucovina tourist destination can adopt several promotion strategies: advertising, public relations and sales promotion strategies. The promotion of the Bucovina tourist destination was made by:

a) The participation in tourism fairs and exhibitions in the country and abroad:

- The participation with its own presentation merchandiser entitled “Bucovina” at the Romanian Tourism Fair in Bucharest, Romania;
- The participation with its own merchandiser at the “GLOB” International Tourism Fair in Katowice (Poland);
- The participation with its own merchandizer at the International Fair of Crafts, Tourism, Regional Culinary Specialties in Trieste (Italy);
- The participation at the “Touristica” Tourism Fair in Cluj–Napoca, Romania;

- The participation in the “Ferien Messe” Tourism Fair in Vienna.

b) The printing of specific material:

- the printing of the Bucovina Vacations brochure;
- the printing the Bucovina brochure in English and German;
- the printing of the Bucovina travel guide;
- the printing of the Bucovina tourist map in English and German;
- the printing of the “Force-Tourism-Business & Tourism” brochure in English and German.

c) the organizing of promotional information tours for Romanian and foreign journalists

d) the organizing of cultural events, festivals and fairs in the Bucovina area

- Painted Eggs Festival;
- The National Trout Festival in Ciocănești;
- The Medieval Art Festival in Suceava;
- The “Midsummer” Fair June 22-24, Suceava
- “Humor... inGuraHumorului”
- The National Festival of Winter Wines and Customs “PornitiPlugulFetiFrumosi” 27-28 December VatraDornei;
- The “Snow Celebrations” - February-March in VatraDornei;
- “Easter in Bucovina”
- “Christmas in Bucovina”
- “The hora in Bucovina” –May –in Frasin;
- “Religious tourism in Bucovina”
- Bucovina BIOLAND-ecotourism for the promotion of traditional bio products.

To promote the tourism potential of the Suceava County (which obviously includes the Bucovina area), the National Tourist Information and Promotion Center Suceava was designed and achieved with the support of the Suceava County Council. This Center is located on 36 Stefan cel Mare Street, near the “Nicolae Sbierea” County Library.

The National Tourist Information and Promotion Center in Suceava is the only one in the North-East Region that fulfills both the tourist information function and the promotion of tourism at local, county, regional and national level.

At the level of the “Ștefan cel Mare” University, the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Public Administration, the Promotur BUCOVINA Tourist Information and Promotion Center, the Marketing Club and the Voiaj Travel Club were established.

SWOT analysis of the Bucovina tourist product

Strengths

- the alternative tourism potential, the traditional houses, craftsmanship, high natural potential, great relief, well preserved natural environment, attractive natural landscapes, local gastronomic specialties, the traditional cuisine, the New Year's traditions, masks, traditional music and dances and the winter sports which can be performed here.
- the tourist resorts: VatraDornei (spa), Câmpulung Moldovenesc, the mineral springs, the folklore and festivals, the historical and ethnographic museums, the medieval fortresses, the ceramic and traditional painting exhibitions, the possibility of organizing a touristic tour (the tour of the monasteries is the most requested), the black ceramics of Marginea.
- the local population is welcoming and open to tourism and local authorities have identified tourism as an activity that could lead to the economic development of the region.
- the tourist infrastructure in certain areas can be developed from scratch.
- the multitude of landforms existing in Bucovina, the itinerant tourism with cultural valences, the spa tourism, the rural tourism, the transit tourism etc.

Weaknesses

- the mentality of people to make money quickly and the people's indifference towards the environment.
- the insufficient training of specialists in the tourism industry, the lack of motivation of the staff.
- the low interest in investment.
- the disturbance of transport because of the access routes.
- the apparent poverty seen from the outside and the impression of monuments to be neglected in the historical areas.
- the insufficient promotion of tourist attractions.

Opportunities

- the development of new tourist resorts in Câmpulung, Cacica and Botuș;
- the creation of a Tourism Fair in Suceava;
- the rental of traditional houses;
- the provision of reception facilities with conference rooms, seminars;
- the establishment of a network of tourist information centers near the main tourist attractions;

- the encouragement of the development of new forms of tourism (scientific tourism, adventure tourism);
- the improvement of the infrastructure by implementing projects funded by European funds.
- the increased interest of tourists from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine for the mountain area in Romania.

Threats

- the carelessness of the authorities over the degradation of some monuments of art and architecture;
- the development of the Maramureş tourism product;
- the decrease of the population income, the inflation;
- the instability of the government policies regarding the tourism and taxation;
- the decrease of the spare time availability;
- the increase of the competitiveness among regions and the lack of collaboration amongst them.

THE MARKET STRATEGY IN THE TOURISM DESTINATION MARKETING

The marketing strategy is concerned with the market selection, focusing on the market growth, market share, sales volume, market penetration and the purchasing process. This strategy group includes: the adaptation strategy, the growth strategy and the survival strategy.

The adaptation strategy is characterized by the tendency of the unit to follow the evolution of tourism demand and to adapt it. The tourist enterprise that practices this type of strategy gains a stable market, reaching development without the need to look for other markets. The only problem there is the choice of the investment, which corresponds to the needs of the tourist market. This type of strategy is especially practiced by small and medium-sized businesses.

The growth strategy involves the initiation of a research-development program by applying the offensive tourist marketing. The main objective of such a strategy is the transformation of the external environment, so that the tourist unit can assure a competitive advantage of affirmation of the tourist product and increase its power on the market. Basically, this strategy can be achieved through the following directions of action:

- entering the tourist market by increasing tourist flows;
- developing tourist markets by selling current tourism products on new markets;
- developing tourism products by launching new products on the current markets.

The survival strategy is characterized by the preoccupation of the unit for the realization of an adequate tourist benefit without considering the market elements. It is, by essence, a defensive strategy that cannot contribute to the success of the activity of a tourist unit. Starting from the fact that the secret of success in a competitive environment, such as tourism, is to maintain an edge over the rival firms, the following types of strategies provide an increasing interest in:

- the market share strategy;
- the product or market strategy;
- competition-based strategies (Elisabeth Hill, Terry O'Sullivan, London, 1996).

The market share strategy is based upon the idea that a large market share means high profitability, as the recovery of the investment and the efficiency of marketing expenses increase with this share. A company's strategic market share options based upon the market share, taking into account the positions it can occupy at one time in a market, are market leader, challenger, tracker and niche player.

The market leader strategy aims either to defend its market share - this is easiest, thanks to the benefits of mass economy - or the expansion by the increasing market share or the market growth. The challengers - the second place on each market - directs the strategies on the smaller competitors, not on leaders, thus increasing their market share.

An attack strategy usually has increased chances of success, as the leader is very preoccupied with defending his key area leaves market areas uncovered. The pursuers are far from the market leader, but they have a comfortable position they are not going to leave. Through a careful market segmentation and intelligent use, such businesses can acquire significant profits.

The units in the position of niche players, carefully selecting a market segment that is too small to interest large companies, can make important business if they are satisfied with the small volume. But a niche is very difficult to defend, because as soon as the big companies realize its profitability, they will attack it with all the means available to them.

The product or market strategy looks at how the organization deals with consumers and supply. From this standpoint, four strategic options are distinguished: the market penetration, the market expansion, the product or service development and the diversification of supply.

The first option is to increase the sales of a product on an existing market and is suitable for the market leader; the second option is known as the market development and entails a medium risk; the third option relates to the product development and is more risky because the absolute costs of entering the market can be very high; the last option is the most risky, although it provides satisfying rewards for those willing to take the risks.

Strategies based upon competition

They are supported by Michael Porter (Michael Porter, 1985) and include the following strategic platforms:

- the cost leader, which involves concentrating the firm upon the technology investments, which can benefit from mass savings and can defeat the competition through pricing;
- the differentiation, which involves focusing upon product quality to justify an increased price;
- the concentration, which involves the dedication of the whole interest to a reduced group or segment of consumers instead of concentrating upon a niche.

Any of these strategic options can create the competitive advantage that will make the consumer prefer a particular company instead of rivals.

Strategies concerning the segmentation of the tourism market

The tourist market is made up of a network of segments, of certain categories of clients, who have their own preferences, desires, needs and motivations. For this reason, the tourist market can be differentiated by homogeneous categories of tourists to develop appropriate marketing strategies.

The segmentation of markets is based upon certain criteria, of which the most common, with applications and in tourism are: the geographic area, the demographic characteristics, the income categories, the psychological factors and behavior.

The geographic segmentation involves sharing the market in different units: regions, counties, cities, mountain areas, seaside, urban, rural, north, south or, in the case of the international marketing, there is a sharing according to states, nations, regions (Pacific Coast, Caribbean Area). In this case, firms can act on one or more geographical areas or act on all of these but paying attention to local variations of the consumers' needs and preferences.

CONCLUSIONS

Tourism is a dynamic phenomenon that is constantly changing. The tourist market is in constant motion due to the existing and ever-growing competition. The tourist destinations face many challenges to enter and stay on this market. That is why the marketing activity in the tourist destinations is significant, to keep them at a competitive level. The marketing approaches within the tourist destinations have become important tools for their success.

In recent years, the tourist market has been severely affected by important economic changes, which has also led to changes in the consumer behavior. In this context, the orientation of tourists towards certain destinations to the detriment of others has highlighted the

need to address the current policies and marketing strategies applicable to tourist destinations at the conceptual level.

This article represents a continuation of the scientific researches related to the marketing and approaches of the tourism destination and it addresses both the theoretical and exemplary concepts specific to this field. It can be utilized both as a basis for study of conceptual aspects and as a tool for elaboration of marketing programs, used by the management organizations of the Bucovina tourism destination.

Given the limitations of this research, this may be a starting point for other research based on a questionnaire that could highlight the opinions of tourists who know well the tourist destination Bucovina.

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