EU Heritage

Skills for promotion,
valorisation, exploitation, mediation and
interpretation of European Cultural Heritage

Video Transcript
SU 1.2.2.
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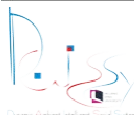### Tourist Experience
Design Strategist

Module:	1. Cultural Heritage and experience tourism for local development
Sub-Unit:	1.2.2. New paradigm towards experience tourism: the Experience Cycle
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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Tourism Mass Market is showing its limits, tourists want a tailor-made holiday based on their own specific needs, their passions and their dreams. They don't look for "how to arrive", "where to sleep" or "where to eat", they are also demanding integrated tourist experiences.

The internet and mobile phones have changed the rules of the game, but so has the mentality and behavior of tourists. In the Internet age travellers have an unprecedented number of options to choose from.

The information available on the web is well in excess of their ability to focus on, making them more selective and more specific, they are not accepting general proposals anymore.

The evolution of the Internet and of the social web has emphasized the aspect of the Long Tail with two main consequences: 1) the possibility to reach a wider audience, 2) the opportunity to specifically satisfy each and every audience.

We know that experience is a personal construct which is at risk of being trivialized if we try to describe it in general terms. It is useless to define a general 'unique' experience but more importantly to project a specific tourist experience for each different traveller segment to whom you are targeting. The challenge of "creating" new tourist experiences lies in going beyond what is known and already experienced. The strict definition of tourist experience would limit the creative and expressive possibilities tied to the innovation of present tourist offering and would tend to make design and implementation converge towards axiomatic solutions of such experiences, with the result of a standardized experience.

There is a big opportunity to study and design specific tourist experiences, which would bring innovation, differentiation and competitive advantage to our tourist offering. We need therefore to put the traveller at the centre of our design process.

The definitions of "conventional" tourist are not satisfying. We must ask ourselves more in depth "who are our tourists?" and "what are the reasons for them to move?", " why should they choose our destination?" We need to concentrate on the "wanted travel" - the so-called «motivational tourism».

If an experience is a perception, we cannot define universal tourist experiences, it is not useful to try to define a univocal concept of experience a priori, it's certainly better to design tourist experiences around the different segments of current and potential customers to create offers perceived as relevant by the different audiences to which they are addressed.

CHAPTER 2: The Tourist Experience Design® Methodology

To create a framework we decided to create a methodology called "The Tourist Experience Design®". The Tourist Experience Design® methodology was specifically developed by Andrea Rossi and Maurizio Goetz to meet this need and to fill a gap in the discipline of tourism.

There are 5 steps for the Tourist Experience Design® methodology that are shown in the following figure number 1. Let's have a look at them.

1) Competitive Analysis of the unique and distinctive elements of value proposition.

The first phase of the methodology consists of:

– the analysis of the tourism offering and "vocation" of the destination,

– the benchmark of competitors,

in order to highlight and complete the unique and distinctive elements to provide possible interpretations of the various tourist offers, suggesting topics and modes of contextualization.

For complex offerings, such as those of destinations, the competitive analysis is developed based on different identified offering elements.

In this phase we should analyse:

- most important offering elements (e.g. attraction, infrastructures, services, etc.),
- highly distinctive or unique elements that characterize a Destination,
- Tourists' motivations to visit these elements,
- elements that characterize the area's identity and that of its inhabitants (culture, traditions, history, etc.),
- degree of recognition of the destination,
- culture of reception and dissemination of that culture at local level,
- tourist satisfaction,
- strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, associations and attributes of the Destination from the point of view of Stakeholders and Markets.

We can create a visual representation of the most iconic elements of the Destination, that will be used in the promotional activities. (In the example, you can see the iconic elements of Ireland).

2) Long Tail Segmentation.

The correct segmentation is crucial to successfully address the market and to diversify the tourist offering and the web communication in a targeted way.

We have moved from mass tourism, undifferentiated and general, to "personal tourism", strongly oriented to the specific needs and desires of niche and specific segments of tourists.

Long Tail Segmentation is the second phase of the Methodology.

It is necessary to review the current segmentation of the market with a critical re-evaluation and make the necessary actions:

- to extend the segment (operation called "segment enlargement"), i.e. to identify potential new segments to which address the offering in order to define an experiential Point of View of the experience for each tourist segment). We can address our food tourist offer to several different tourist segments (Figure number 3),

- and to enrich segments (segment enrichment), in order to identify the characteristics of the different sub-segments in more detail, to adapt to the tourism offering and its web communication. (In the Example of Figure number 4 -we can see different sub-segments of vegetarians travellers with different motivations).

3) Definition of Experiential Strategy for segments and WOW elements

For the segments identified during the re-evaluation of segmentation, thanks to new information obtained, we define the basic strategies for memorable experiences (and we try to collect them in an experiential concept) and we define the "WOW elements", the specific elements of offering differentiation that generates surprise, satisfaction and enthusiasm for the selected tourists (what makes them say 'WOW'?).

What is the experiential concept? Through Experiential Concept(s), the tourist organization defines every experiential segment:
- Offering systems
- Environments
- Interaction processes
- Behaviours
- Outcome of the experience.

In the Figure number 5, we can see a visual representation of our subsegment that will help us to build the Experiential Concept called: *"Romantic Escape for a young couple of vegan cyclers"*

4) Definition of Extended Experiential Cycle and Experiential Points

The tourist experience is a process that develops long before the actual enjoyment of the tourist offering on site and continues after that, in fact, the Extended Experiential Cycle begins when the traveller has a desire to travel and he/she starts to get information and continues till after the end of the journey through the memories and the exchange of impressions through its social networks.

From this point of view Extended Experience Cycle is characterized in three phases:
a. Pre-experience
b. In-Experience
c. Post-Experience.

It is therefore important to analyze the three stages of the Extended Experiential Cycle, in order to continuously support a memorable experience for tourists. The fourth phase of the methodology, therefore provides analysis and mapping of the Extended Experiential Cycle, going directly to identify the "experiential points", i.e. the elements with which the tourist comes in contact with in order to enjoy the experience, both during the travel and on-site, and in the web.

5) Detailed design of the experiential points

The last phase of the methodology consists of the detailed design of the "experiential points" of the Extended Experiential Cycle, for the selected segments, by applying, in detail, the defined strategies, experiential concepts and WOW elements to every relevant "experiential point".

Conclusion

Tourist Experience is a process that can be designed around the tourist, in order to create an "Experiential Concept" that is considered relevant and memorable for each tourist segment.

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