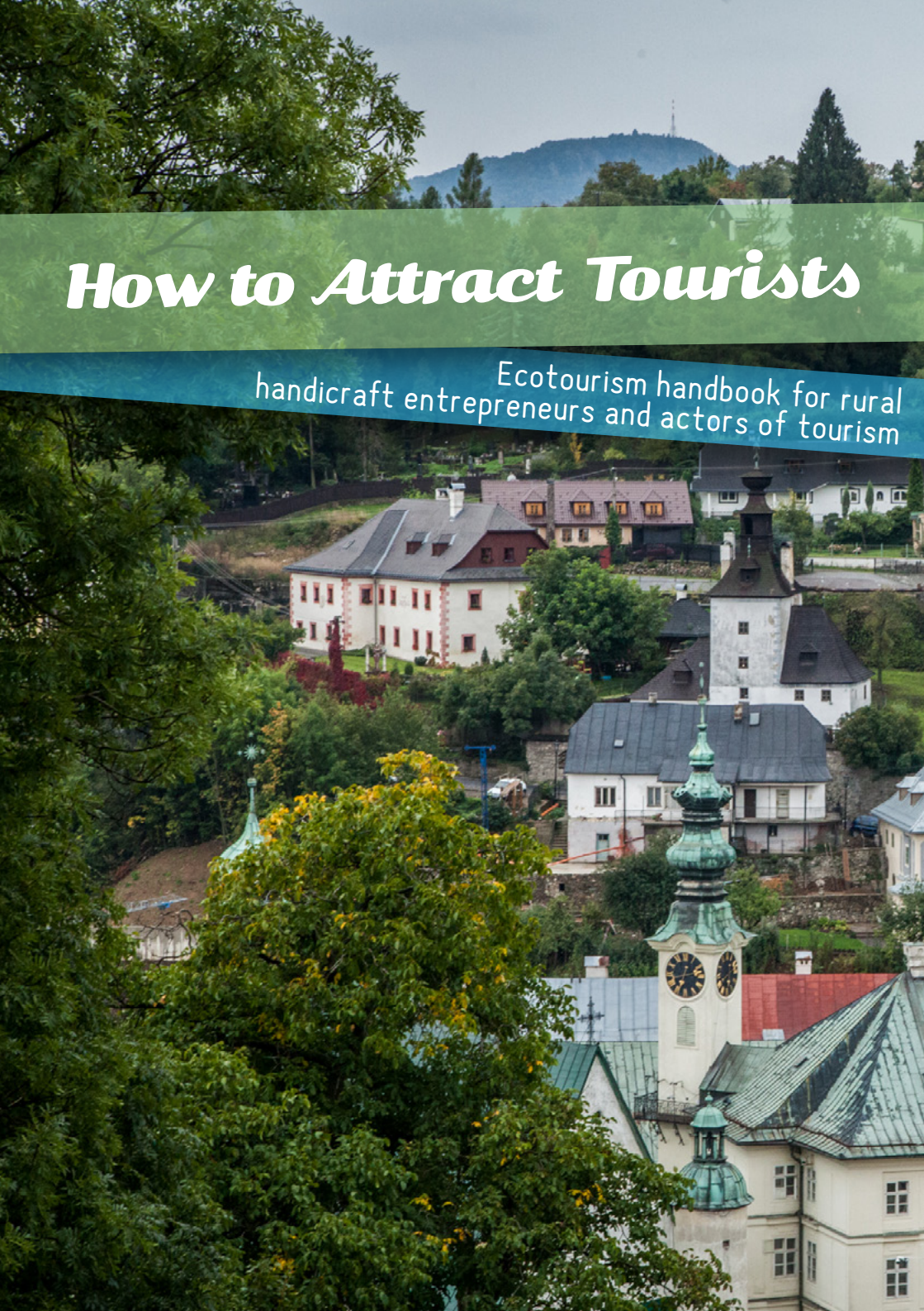


How to Attract Tourists

Ecotourism handbook for rural
handicraft entrepreneurs and actors of tourism



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The CARPATHIAN TOURISM project provides all information and documents about the project free of charge to those interested, which cannot be commercialised.

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Dynamic Tours
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Foreword

I am Ágnes Szabó-Díószeghy, project coordinator of CARPATHIAN TOURISM Project. The idea of the project was born in October, 2016 when I was interning at the Secretariat of Carpathian Convention of the United Nations Environment Program in Vienna. The basic idea was to try to provide very pragmatic marketing and tourism knowledge to rural tourism entrepreneurs in the Carpathian region, and it was a priority to involve local craftsmen in the project as well.

I spent several years in Spain,

where I have seen many examples of rural entrepreneurs selling workshops as tourism products. The leather manufacturers in Ubrique offered bag making, shoemakers offered flamenco shoe making workshops for tourists, while carpet weaving can be learned at Pampainera in Sierra Nevada. During my following travels, I found the heaven of Andean craftsmanship in Venezuela. Entrepreneurs' street or market stands are flooded by millions of sweaters, earrings, socks, hammocks, crates, and handmade pencils. Most of these items can already be purchased online, but unfortunately it is not local communities that receive the major part of the revenue.

On the one hand, we would like to help rural entrepreneurs and craftsmen sell their services more easily and successfully by advertising them on the right marketing platforms. On the other hand, we want to popularise local products of tourism in the Carpathians. Our aim was to explore how to increase the visibility and attractiveness of the products of the craftsmen and rural tourism service providers participating in the workshops, how to increase their income, how to create sustainable tourism services, or start and finance a business activity.



During the project, we organised four workshops, one in each of the four countries of the Visegrád Group. During the workshops we provided touristic and marketing knowledge with the help of experts on the development of businesses of rural tourism and craft entrepreneurship. The marketing modules were led by Péter Balog, and the tourism modules were led by Dr. Tibor Gonda and Dr. Zoltán Raffay.

The modules of the workshops are included in this handbook in a revised version, with the aim of helping those who did not come to the workshops but would like to enhance the promotion of their own product and business. The handbook is also published in English, so it can reach more entrepreneurs. In addition to the workshops and the handbook, we have created an English language catalogue of the products and services of the participants of the workshops with photos, which is available online and will be presented at the 2018 FITUR and ITB tourism exhibitions in Madrid.

Dr. Mátyás Szabó contributed to the project as a consultant and editor of the handbook. In implementing the project and editing the handbook, Adrienn Széll

provided indispensable help.

The project is run by the Association for Tourism on the Tisza Plain in cooperation with Humtour Ltd. We received a lot of support and motivation from the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, who helped the implementation of the project, contacting local partners, and the dissemination as a partner from the very beginning.

The partners of the project are Stowarzyszenie Ekopsychologia Association from Poland, the Art and Craft of Stiavnica Civil Association—Občianske Združenie Umenie a remeslá Štiavnice from Slovakia and the Tourist Authority South Moravia—Centrála cestovního ruchu Jižní Morava, z.s.p.o. from the Czech Republic. The Ecological Institute Foundation and the Glass Manufactory Ltd. also participated in the project. We wish to thank everyone who helped the implementation of the project, and in particular to the participants of the workshops for their active participation in the project.

Ágnes Szabó-Díószeghy

<http://carpathiantourism.humtour.com/>



Marketing and communication

Author: Péter Balog





Introduction

In the past decade, digital communication has achieved an astonishing importance when it comes to establishing a successful business presence. A shop with a good location, pleasant branding and a decent product has always been a success in any time of age. Even so, up until the turn of the millennia, having at least one of these three could have been enough for a business to chug along. Nowadays the same can hardly be said—with the advent of new technologies, the race for customers just got closer.

A business' online communication consists of everything that said business does in the virtual world: from landing pages to advertisement management, it is a very demanding matter, and finding the right balance between the challenges of social media and review management can be a tough gig even for the seasoned entrepreneur. While most people do know how to handle at least one or two of these areas (after all, we live in a tech-savvy time!), as the competition gets fiercer, getting by is just not enough.

To get ahead of the crowd, especially in a competitive sector like tourism, one has to handle all areas with the utmost proficiency and care. Long gone are the days of radio ads and flyers, these blunt instruments are

now the (mostly) extinct species of our time. Instead, we now have the ability to pick our customers with the precision of a scalpel, thanks to the massive data and the advanced targeting abilities of tech giants like Google and Facebook.

The following chapters will try to lend a helping hand in this maze of digital communication by answering common questions of the tourism service providers' mind:

- How can a business stand out in an online environment?
- Why have a consistent online presence across all marketing channels?
- What tools can Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in tourism utilise to increase bookings and sales?
- How to maximise the potential of a website?

There are numerous technical terms and tools out there, and even seasoned experts acknowledge that from a small business perspective, things can get quite overwhelming. The goal of this essay is to help solving these issues. We will be looking at hard data, backed up by statistics and personal experience as well, just to give a more tangible sense of what can be achieved online nowadays.

Hopefully, at the end of the day, tourism service providers and owners—or *you*, the reader—will have a better idea on the potential of their businesses!



Trends in Digital Tourism

It is a bit of a cliché in industry circles to talk about constant growth, but the facts are undisputable. The tourism sector continues to impress with its dependable rate of growth, and its massive impact on global

economy. According to the United Nations' yearly outlook report, tourism continues to be one of the most important sectors not just for countries, but for the whole of the globe. Nearly 1 in 10 people work in tourism today, amounting to 10% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP), amounting to about 7% of total export (UNWTO, 2017). According to the report there were 1,235 billion tourist arrivals in 2016, and with an expected annual growth of 3.3% this could reach 1.8 billion by 2030. Emerging economies, new

and more economic ways of travel and a more interconnected world all play a part in these immense figures, and without any significant economic bubble burst, the long-

Marketing



Nearly 1 in 10 people work in tourism today, amounting to 10% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP).

term outlook continues to be quite positive. The importance of the service and tourism sectors in national economies will continue to grow as small business providers look for more opportunities to jump on the travel gold rush. Suffice it to say, the winners and losers of these trends are already starting to emerge.

Offline Is Losing Ground Every Year

From a digital perspective, the last decade has been even more exciting. The appearance of new technologies, smartphones, and the continuing spreading of digitalisation around the world all helped the emergence of a new way to travel: enter the information-driven age of tourism.

Long gone are the days of tour operators and offline offices being the only window to the world, now even the most casual traveller can gather all the necessary information about their trips, including booking transportation, accommodations,

and enjoying local tourism products—skipping the middleman in the process. While the prevalence of the old guard has diminished significantly, the need for them to reinvent did manage to keep them afloat. The balance between offline and online is another trend that continues to shift towards the new and emerging technologies. And marketing is no different.

- *Instead of billboards, we have targeted advertising.*
- *Instead of brochures, we have personalised offers.*
- *Instead of call operators, we have automated chatbots answering user queries.*

For the first time ever, online booking channels actually overtook their offline counterparts. Travel research company Phocuswright conducted a research on the matter, and concluded that 55% of all transactions now happen in an online environment (Phocuswright, 2016). According to a similar study by TrekkSoft, when it comes to creating a balanced distribution network, online has become the leading channel, with most tour operators having a sales funnel relying 60% in favour of online (TrekkSoft, 2016). Another important finding of the study was that most tour operators agree



that having a booking option on the service provider's own website (direct booking) is the most important channel when it comes to generating leads.

While these trends do represent the global market, it is important to note that there are, and

55% of all booking transactions now happen in an online environment.

always will be, regional differences. A good example of this is the emerging third-world market, which—according to studies conducted by the United Nations' office—will be the next big game changer for the industry (UNWTO, 2017). A cultural and digital divide does exist at the moment, as a TripAdvisor survey found that while Western travellers (UK, Italy, US) are more likely to book their next trip online, their Chinese counterparts still prefer traditional channels like booking agents. With the continuing saturation and growth of more recent digital markets, it is a reasonable assumption that these gaps will shrink smaller and smaller (TripBarometer, 2015).

A good example of the effects of

digital booking on the tourism sector can be found in the case study of Greece, Italy and Spain. Conducted by Tourism Economics in Oxford, this document finds that countries that have a lower ICT Development

Index (ICT: information and communication technologies; for example two of the eleven factors to this index are: slower internet access or lower percentage of households with internet access) perform worse with tourism growth than other EU countries or the EU average (Tourism Economics, 2013, p 5). The same

way, online tourism arrivals in these Mediterranean countries lagged far behind from the EU average when it came to both researching information online, and actually booking services in an online environment. To solve these issues, the document ventured into providing recommendations for these countries and their respective travel sectors, namely:

- Businesses should develop their online presence.
- Businesses should develop their offers for cultural tourism.
- Businesses should engage their audience on social media platforms.

- Work for better cooperation between government agencies and corporate actors.

Suffice it to say, the goal and approach of this present document follows these steps closely. In the next two chapters we will take a quick general look at a few different trends that can help not just these countries, but individual businesses as well to reach these goals, regardless of location.

..... Mobile-Friendliness

With the release of the first iPhone in 2007, the change of the average business owner's life began. Nowadays almost everyone owns a smartphone, and this innovation profoundly changed the way we interact not just with each other, but with businesses, and that includes the travel sector. In fact, the revolution happened so quickly that the point of mobile overtaking desktop has actually swung by us a couple of years ago.

Mobile bookings in the travel industry have grown by 1,700% between 2011 and 2015.



Nowadays there are more people who use their phones to connect to the internet.

This is exactly why we must talk about mobile-friendliness. Simply put, if someone can use a website's every function in an easy manner on a mobile device, it is called mobile-friendly. According to Google's study on travel planning and purchase, travellers seek information and convert (purchase) on mobile. The document also details that over 90% of travellers using mobile devices will switch to another site or app if their needs are not met (Think with Google, 2017).

One of the most striking figures that represents the importance of mobile comes from marketing expert Frederic Gonzalo's research. According to his findings, mobile bookings in

the travel industry have grown by a staggering 1,700% between 2011 and 2015 (Gonzalo, 2016). His report also states that the vast majority of travellers now do not rely on traditional sources of information when on the road. Instead of opting for a guide book, 85% of international visitors will have a smartphone with them. Sites that do not have a mobile-friendly website or mobile version will lose out on the majority

of their potential traffic.

From a more practical point of view, a good tool for a business to determine if their existing site is mobile-friendly is to run Google's very own mobile-friendly test. The tool can be found here: <https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>

After a few seconds, the test will also show all the major areas where a site could be improved.

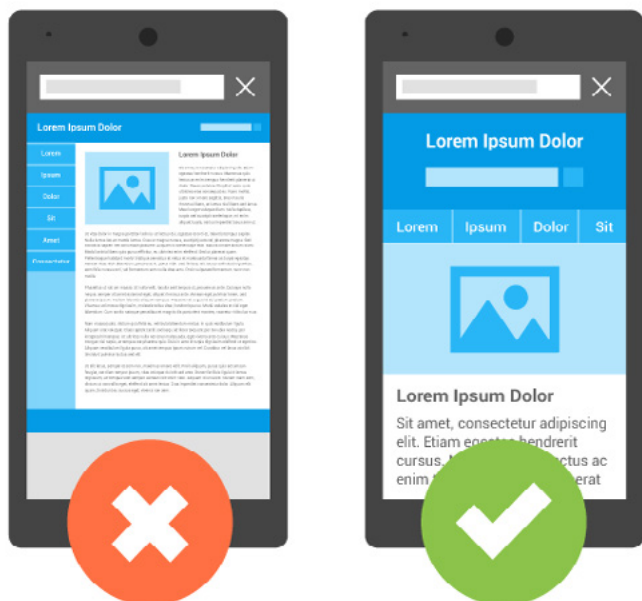


FIGURE 1: A SIMPLISTIC BUT EFFICIENT WAY OF DEPICTING MOBILE-FRIENDLINESS (SOURCE: GOOGLE)

Digital Communication, or Building an Identity

A Glass Always Full

Some say the glass is always half empty, while others claim it to be half full. Pessimists and optimists. When discussing marketing with business owners, one of the most common experiences I have is that a surprising number of them have a great understanding of several marketing channels. Some do it better, some do it worse, but generally speaking, they know how to fill their glasses. They know about Facebook boosts, search engine optimisation, some even have great websites, and others love their Instagram promotions. But whenever I ask them to try to summarise or categorise their marketing efforts, they fall short, and understandably so. Public relations, word-of-mouth, return of investment, user experience, radio ads, brochures, marketing funnels... we could name marketing terms all day long, piling on the confusion.

Most local business owners do not know how to do their marketing efforts, or how to fill their glass works. They have some ideas, however, what holds their marketing efforts together.

How the glass actually works, why it is there, and how to fill it up properly in order to live up to its full potential, so we have a glass always full.



Holistic Marketing Communication

The glass that holds together all marketing efforts of a local business is called holistic marketing communication. Or as Kotler and Keller put it in their book *Marketing Management*, the four dimensions of holistic marketing are:

1. **Internal marketing** – “ensuring everyone in the organization embraces appropriate marketing principles, especially senior management.”
2. **Integrated marketing** – “ensuring that multiple means of creating, delivering, and communicating value are employed and combined in the best way.”



**FIGURE 2: SOME ELEMENTS OF YOUR
INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION (IMC)**

3. **Relationship marketing** – “having rich, multifaceted relationships with customers, channel members, and other marketing partners.”
4. **Performance marketing** – “understanding returns to the business from marketing activities and programs, as well as addressing broader concerns and their legal, ethical, social, and environmental effects” (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

What affects most of our digital marketing communication is **integrated marketing**. According to Kotler and Keller, “integrated marketing occurs when the marketer devises marketing activities and assembles marketing programmes to create, communicate, and deliver value for consumers such that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” This may sound a bit academic at this point, so a good way to understand holistic marketing and integrated marketing is to visualise it.

..... The Message Is Key

Crafting a message that conveys the core of our business is not an easy task, as demonstrated usually by tourism business owners when asked to sum up their product in a sentence. From experience, only one out of five succeeds at this, as most instantly realise how far they

are from figuring out step zero of their tourism product—what it is exactly.

To answer this question, there is a great exercise one could try. Filmmakers are already familiar with this concept, and evolved on it before the land of marketing. An 'elevator pitch' was designed to convince potential investors what a film is about and why it would sell. The goal was simple—get your



message across in the short time of an elevator ride, and convince the studio exec trapped inside the tight confines of the cabin.

The fundamental principles are the same for us marketers and business owners. But what would a well-crafted message look like? Debbie Wetherhead, a seasoned online PR trainer, summarised it as the “essence of what you communicate, bite-sized summations that articulate: what you do, what you stand for, how you are different and what value you bring to stakeholders” (Wetherhead, 2011). According to Wetherhead, a key or core message should be concise, relevant, simple, memorable, compelling, real, and strategic. Real, as in not sounding too much like an advertisement, and strategic, as in offering a value proposition for the possible customer.

Throughout this study, I will bring examples of an imaginary tourism service and apartment located in Tuscany, Italy. Their

message would look something like this, note the three-four key messages presented in **bold**:

Example:

“We offer
relaxing daytrips,
delicious wine tastings
 and **family-friendly**
accommodations
 in Tuscany.”

Visual Creatures

Humans are visual creatures; we evolved to pay attention and respond to visual stimuli. Without going into various communication models, we can acknowledge that the digital environment is of numerous visual signals, and the best visual message will reap the benefits: a business that sells tourism products.

However, the attention span of an average human being is quite short, more so in an online environment. A study conducted by Microsoft revealed that in re-



cent years our attention span has decreased from 12 seconds to 8 seconds, while other studies showed it to be closer to 7 seconds— simply because we are more easily distracted by all the screens and multiple streams of media (Microsoft Canada, 2015). As marketers as small business owners, we are tasked to grasp the attention of our potential customer in these short few seconds. A daunting task for all parties involved.

Without going into detail, numerous marketing studies showed the importance of relying on visual communication when we are to deliver our aforementioned message(s). It is a good idea to always include something that will catch the attention of the customer, may it be an image, a video or just a catchy slogan.

Furthermore, in adaptation to the online environment, our brain started to function different-



ly, or rather consume information differently. The reading brain of the digital age has wandered afar from the Gutenberg Galaxy as today's digital natives are wired differently. A study conducted by San Jose State University found that when we consume materials from a screen, our brains like to take shortcuts, we scan for information, keywords, any-thing that might catch our attention before we decide to read further into the matter (Liu, 2005). We process differently.



Always include something that will catch the attention of the customer, may it be an image, a video or just a catchy slogan.

From Potential Customer to a Successful Sale

Let's Talk Funnels

The concept of the marketing funnel is one of the oldest ones in the business. The AIDA-model, or Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action goes back to the 19th century, developed by E. St. Elmo Lewis. The funnel itself was first born a couple of decades later in a book titled *Bond Salesmanship* by William W. Townsend, 1924. But what are these funnels, and how come they are still so relevant today?

The funnel is a great way to illustrate the journey of a potential customer becoming a happy customer, from gaining awareness of the product (step 1) to researching the product (step 2), making a decision (step 3), and finally buying the product (step 4). All along these steps our potential customer has the chance of turning around and leaving us, not buying our product, not using our service.

These same principles apply in

an online environment, as well as for a tourism service provider. The more people we pour into the funnel, the more customers we get at the bottom, or more people “convert”. Looking at *Figure 3* above we can see that out of a 100 people gaining awareness of our product (say a nice apartment in Tuscany, and checking out our website), only

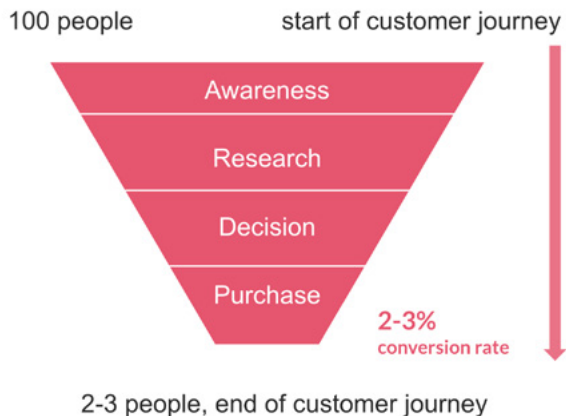


FIGURE 3: THE PURCHASE FUNNEL AND THE CUSTOMER'S JOURNEY

about 2-3 end up actually paying for the product (meaning actually sleeping in our apartment's bed after booking through our website). That is what we call a conversion, the rate of which is conversion rate.

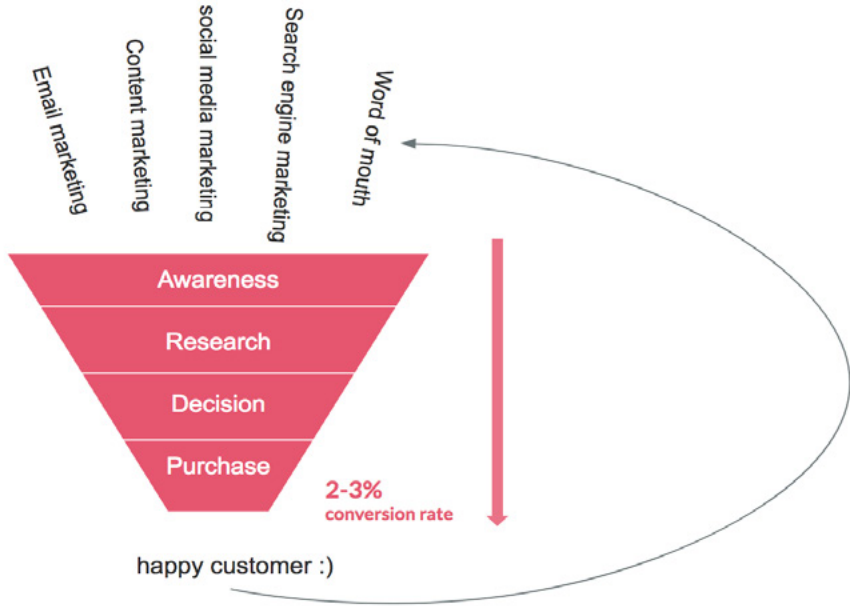


FIGURE 4: A VERY SIMPLISTIC FIGURE OF FEEDING AND REFEEDING THE FUNNEL

The bigger the conversion rate the better. For example, a funnel can be a website on which our potential apartment guest can take a look at our service. Put it simply, if we have a good website, out of a 100 website visitors, maybe 4-5 people will end up staying at us. If we have an outdated website (not mobile-friendly, no booking options, no visual items etc...), out of the same 100 people maybe 1 will actually stay at us—the rest? They will go with the competitor with a better website, more efficient funnel...

To sum up, our goal as marketers are threefold:

1. Making sure we **feed the funnel** with more and more potential customers through digital and traditional **marketing channels**.
2. Making sure that the **funnel is wide**, and more and more potential customers end up converting. The sciences of this are called **conversation rate optimisation (CRO)** and **user experience (UX)**.
3. Making sure that the converting, purchasing customer becomes a **loyal product evangelist**.

In the previous chapters we have already discussed the importance of having an online presence for our tourism business (setting up a funnel). In this chapter we take a closer look at feeding that funnel with various marketing channels.

..... Your Marketing Channels

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Search engine marketing has two main branches with very different pros and cons. Pay Per Click, or PPC for short, stands for advertisement that is presented in the search results page (SERP). This is the land of Google and their outstanding AdWords service, although honorary mentions go to Yahoo-Bing and the Russian-built Yandex as well. On the other hand, SEO, or Search Engine Optimisation is the process of optimising our sites to appear higher in SERPs.

PPC: Pay Per Click

SEO: Search Engine Optimisation

If we are to be blunt, PPC is paying for success, while SEO is working for it the hard way—at least this is what clients usually see, at first that is. Such harsh categories would be quite unfair, however, since both avenues have their advantages and disadvantages, and a thorough strategy builds on a balance of both.

PPC is...

- » a tool that **brings instant results**, since as soon as we start our ads, people start coming;
- » but in return, it **costs money**, and an inefficient campaign setup can prove to be quite costly;
- » finally, **PPC is very temporary** by nature—once we stop funding it, we lose revenue.

SEO, on the other hand, is...

- » a slow process, results only show after months of **hard work**;
- » but in return, it usually **costs less** than an advertisement campaign;
- » and its **effects are long-term**, meaning what we build with hard work, stays there.

SEO

Getting on the search engine results page (SERP) is done by either paying or working for it. The latter is what most people know as SEO. But how does Google decide who gets the top spots? All search engines have a sophisticated set of algorithms that factor in several attributes for sites and attached services. These are called **ranking factors**. **Google has about 200 of them**, but no one knows for sure as the search engine is quite secretive about its actual algorithm, understandably so. Some of these ranking factors are worth more, some are worth less, but here are a few examples:

- *What kind of content and key-words does the site have?*
- *What other websites link to the page?*
- *What is the domain?*
- *Do people share the site and content on social media?*
- *How fast is the website?*
- *Is the website mobile-friendly?*

These are just a few simplified examples. These ranking factors are often affected by each other. Also, the weight of these ranking factors is affected by every major search engine algorithm update. A few's importance might increase, a few's might decrease. There are several professional services tracking these changes, including moz.com, semrush.com, and serps.com.

The **main goal of every search engine is to figure out the search intent of the user, and then provide unique and relevant results**. However, it would be a mistake to assume that an SEO expert's main role is to tailor a site to the search engine's current taste. While SEO is a very potent approach, one must always think long-term, in an intertwined system,



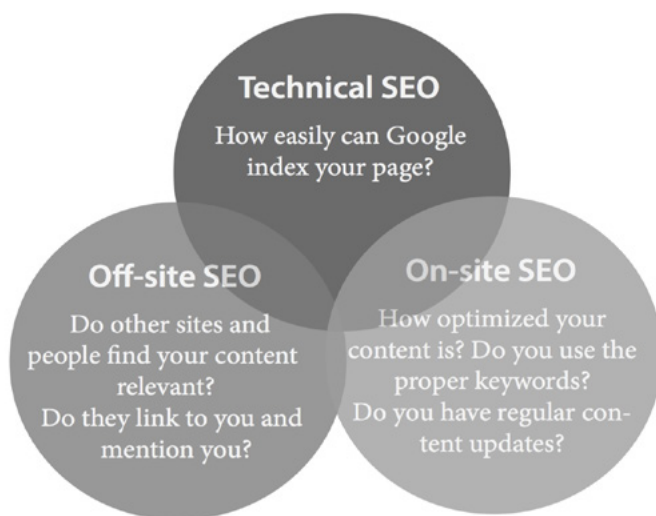


FIGURE 5: MAIN AREAS OF SEO

where everything has an effect on the other. Content, user experience, SEO, PPC, social media all play an important role in providing a relevant experience for the user. Our goal is to improve this experience to the best of our knowledge.

Search engine optimisation has three major areas that require the attention of the marketer. These three main areas are called off-site, on-site and technical SEO (moz.com, 2015). In the next three chapters we will talk about these areas in detail.

Off-site

Off-site, or off-page SEO is what happens outside of the website, which is more or less outside of our control in most cases. Without getting too technical, off-page SEO is basically the process of gaining backlinks. A backlink is a hyperlink or a mention of our site on a third-party website, pointing to our service and our content.



FIGURE 6: AN EXAMPLE OF BACKLINKS POINTING TO OUR SITE

Example:

Sticking to our Tuscany apartment complex, let's say BBC travel decides to write an online piece about our great services, and mentions our site in their article. That's a link pointing to us, and hence, a backlink.

The general rule of thumb is that the more backlinks our site has from various sources, the more relevant it is deemed in the eyes of search engines, and will be ranked higher on the Search Engine Results Page.

This is a very simplistic approach to the concept as there are numerous ways to actually do more harm than good when it comes to link-building—the process of acquiring backlinks. Let's see a few useful dos and don'ts:

Dos:

- The **more people write about us the better.**
- Try to have legitimate **mentions from authority sites.** An authority website is a well-known site, a possible news source, a respected blog etc...
- **Stay in niche:** meaning if we run a travel business, it is best to have mentions from other industry-related sources (example: a link from LonelyPlanet basically communicates "this site is about travel". If you have several links from random-auto-magazine.com, that tells the search engines that "this site might be about cars").
- For a local business, in area **local mentions are good** (for example a local newspaper).
- Directory sites and business listings are helpful (often called citations, yellow pages for example).



FIGURE 7: LINK PROFILE

Don'ts:

- **Do not buy links:** *some services sell backlinks. These can harm your online presence, and Google will punish you by not showing your website in SERPs.*
- **Careful with link exchanges,** *or the process of two sites mutually mentioning each other in a big quantity is harmful.*
- **Avoid spamming:** *too many links from one site will result in a possible penalty.*

The general idea is to have a healthy balance of low-quality backlinks and high-quality backlinks, building a balanced link profile. Here you can see that easy to obtain low-quality backlink (directory links) is abundant, while high-quality mentions from authority sources not so much.

On-site

On-site SEO is what happens on our website and its content. Content in this case mostly means text, although having videos and plenty of images relevant to our site's niche also helps. If we have a site about cars, having videos and

images of cars is helpful—to be very simplistic once again. To discuss on-site SEO, we have to define two very important terms here.

Keyword: a keyword is a phrase that best describes what the article or site is about. If we are writing a long piece about the sights of Tuscany, then our keyword for that particular content would probably be “Tuscany sights” (moz.com, 2015).

Keyword density: keyword density is the ratio of our keyword compared to the total body of text on the page. Basically, how many times the keyword appears in our article. A good keyword density is between two and three percent of our total word count.

Keywords used to be the bread and butter of SEO, since keywords not only summarise our content, but:

- » A keyword is what people actually search for in search engines;
- » A keyword tells search engines what our site is about;
- » A keyword can affect our paid advertisement budget as well through quality score.

And this brings us to **keyword research**, the process of figuring out what people search for—via tools like Google AdWords’ Search Volume, **keyword optimisation**, or rewriting our content to have a better fit for these popular keywords.

These are the very basics of keywords and on-site SEO, but as the search engines get smarter and smarter, SEO practices change as well. These principles still matter nowadays, but with the introduction of semantic search, their prominence has decreased. In many cases search engines now have the ability to figure out what a site is about without relying heavily on keywords.



Example of the semantic web:

Five years ago you had to include the keyword “Tuscany apartment” on your site to tell search engines what your service is about. Nowadays, if you maybe have an “our rooms, prices, amenities” section, and state that your service is in Tuscany, Google and other search engines will do the math, add 2+2, and figure out that maybe this service is about providing accommodations in Tuscany.

However, artificial intelligence is not quite there yet, so the basic principles still apply, especially in non-English areas of the web.

Do:

- **Keyword research** to determine search interest for your area and tourism product.
- **Optimise** your content according to your research results.
- Write your keyword in the **meta description** of your content.
- Use plurals and synonyms, search engines do understand those now (for example 'car', 'cars', 'autos' etc...)

Don't:

- Best to avoid **keyword stuffing**, or placing your keywords everywhere. Pay attention to your keyword density.
- Don't use artificial language by **forcing your keyword** into your content; make it flow naturally (for example avoid this: “we offer a relaxing experience at our Tuscany apartments”).

Some sources like to include technical SEO under on-site SEO, but in my—and others'—professional opinion that takes away from its importance. Technical search engine optimisation is the process of getting the website's backend up to specs, and usually requires some coding experience as well. Quite a few of Google's ranking factors heavily rely on technical aspects, so a streamlined website is a must nowadays if we are to stand out from the crowd. Without listing all of these technical ranking factors, here are a few:

- **Site speed**, or how fast a website loads. This is affected by the kind of CMS (Content Management System) we use, the size of the images and videos on the site, and many-many more. Good tools to check our site speed (and more importantly, where we are losing precious seconds!) are

» pingdom's site speed test:
<https://tools.pingdom.com/>

» gtmatrix: <https://gtmetrix.com/>

We should have a load speed under two seconds, as Google expects. Why? With every second we waste, more and more people just decide to close the page (Google, 2015). Ruthless, but as we discussed, we do not have a long attention span.

- **Mobile-friendliness**, the importance of which we have already discussed in previous segments. Needless to say, mobile-friendly sites rank higher on Google, and if our site is not mobile-friendly, competitors are already beating us.

- **Bot accessibility**, or can search engine crawlers reach our site and read our site? If Google cannot read our content (indexing), then it will not rank at all. A good way to check if all of our content is indexed is to simply go on Google.com, and search for our site's complete address with quotation marks, like this: "mysite.com"

The search engine optimisation of a site is a lengthy process, but focusing all of these three major areas (on-site, off-site and technical parts) is just a fraction of the complete marketing mix of a business. While many hail the arrival of semantic web as the death of SEO, its importance still remains.

PPC

We have already established the difference between SEO and PPC. Now it is time to talk about paid advertisement in detail. Facebook, Twitter, Google, Instagram

and LinkedIn all have their advertisement platforms, and campaigns organised on them brings in a great amount of traffic and revenue to local businesses around the world. With the digital marketing boom going on in every major developed country, search volumes continue to climb year after year (Internet Live Stats, 2012)—most businesses cannot ignore the necessary evil of advertisement. As most search engines favour their advertisement platforms more and more (Google, Bing, Yahoo too), businesses are forced to take part in the game. When potential customers search for a tourism service or product,

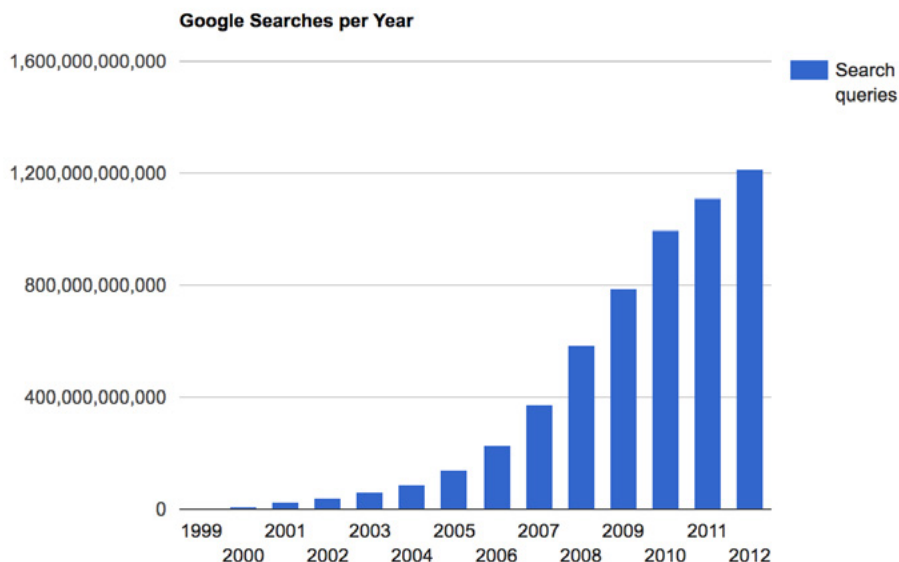


FIGURE 8: SEARCH VOLUME GROWTH. DO YOU WANT IN OR OUT ON THAT TRAFFIC? (INTERNET LIVE STATS, 2012)

businesses have to compete for their attention, and not grabbing one of the top (paid) spots is certainly a mistake. While organic, social, direct and other channels do bring in enough traffic, not even competing in the race can have grave consequences: your business' competitors will get all the clicks.

Why Invest in PPC?

This is one of the most common questions by business owners, and rightly so, justifying spending hundreds of dollars on AdWords every month better be a good investment. The simple answer for this is:

because it's worth it. Simply put, every dollar a business spends on advertisement will make another two dollars of profit (Google, 2017).

Another important figure is that when it comes to organic and paid results, many people do choose to click on the paid ones—as they appear on the top. In fact, according to a Wordstream marketing study, about 41% of people click on the top three spots or the paid results (Kim, 2015).

Furthermore, advertisement can be a great way to kickstart interest for new companies. As we discussed, getting our site to rank

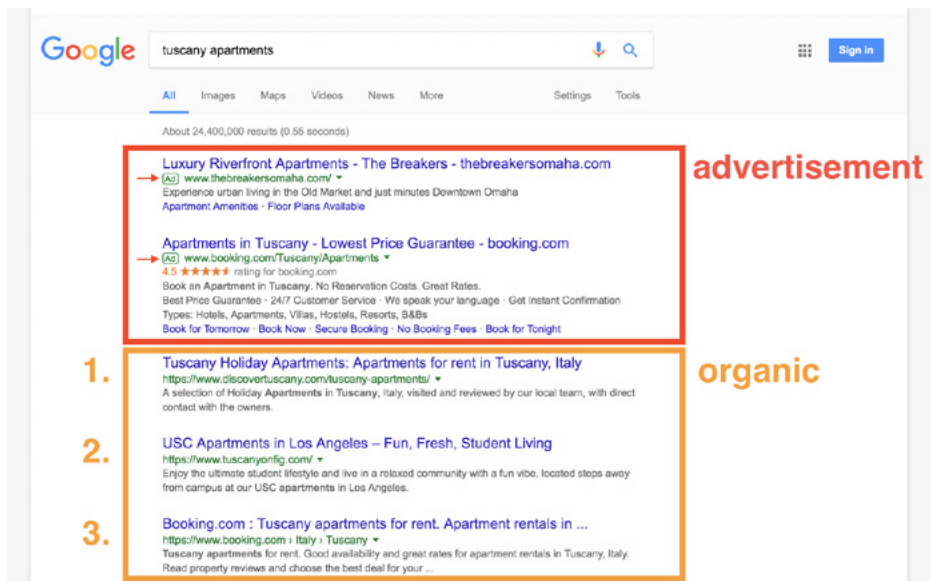


FIGURE 9: WHAT'S PAID AND WHAT'S ORGANIC IN SERPS?
NOTE THE LITTLE 'AD' SIGNS

organically in a good position in SERPs can take quite some time, but many need traffic right of the bat, and this is where PPC steps in. A professional marketer can set up a

campaign in hours, sending potential customers to our service—feeding the aforementioned funnel.

Tricks, Tips and Ideas



Remember your **key messages** when you are writing an advertisement.



Connect AdWords to other Google services, most importantly **Google My Business**. Read more about this by looking up "location extensions".



Facebook boosts can be a great way to **generate interest for an event**, but pay attention to targeting and target audiences.



Remember to **be visual** when it comes to creating display ads, and most importantly, stick to the visual language of your other online channels (i.e.: use the same logo and colours as your website).



PPC is also a good way to **test new ideas**. We can always "buy traffic" to test a new service or a product, or to check out how a new keyword on our site performs.

Content Marketing

Content marketing is the process of creating creative content for your website in order to sell your products. Content can be anything: a blog article about the benefits of your product, a YouTube video showcasing your business location, or maybe an e-book about tips and best practices...

A few pointers on content creation:

- **Dare to be personal:** your customers are interested in you, and being personal and upfront about your services will bring you closer, humanises the business and your story. The more you share, the more you will engage with your target audiences.
- **Spend money:** we will be talking about the importance of creating good content, and why spending money on professionals is never a bad idea.
- **Synergy in mind:** remember your brand's identity, your key messages; interact with your other marketing channels! If you pay great attention to SEO, write blog articles focusing around keywords important to you. If you create great visuals for your website, go ahead and use them in social media posts too! The possibilities are endless.



Influencer Marketing

Tapinfluence, an agency specialised in influencer marketing defines the term as “a type of marketing that focuses on using key leaders to drive your brand’s message to the larger market” (Tapinfluence, 2017). In other words, a company contacts inspiring and well-embedded people of a community or niche to sell the product. For example, if a company sells beauty products, contacting a famous fashion YouTuber to talk about said products is a great example of influence marketing.

Example:

An industry-relevant example of this would be for our Tuscany apartment to contact a travel writer who visits Italy frequently, and for a price, ask this influencer to talk about our apartment and services.

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is one of the most difficult channels to get right, but if you have a viral hit on your hands, the efforts are well worth! Social media marketing consists of sharing your brand's key messages on any of the popular social media platforms, which for travel businesses usually includes: Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, Pinterest, Instagram to name only the most prominent ones.

A few tips on how to use social media efficiently:

- **Upload branded content:** upload your logo as a profile picture, populate the header section on Facebook or YouTube with branded banners or videos.
- **Remain proportional with your communication:** if you have a small audience and maybe not a lot happening on a usual week, do not post every day; once a week is enough. On the other hand, if you have a weekend with a big conference going on, feel free to post several times a day.
- **Be consistent:** whatever content schedule you decide to go with when it comes to your social media presence, stick to it.
- **Pin important messages:** if you have something important going on with your business, emphasise it by pinning that content to the top!
- **Hashtags are dorky but useful:** hashtags can feel forced, but are great when it comes to categorising your content, and a good way to present your services to potential customers.
- **Buttons and Call to Actions:** if a social media service has ways to direct traffic to your website, use them! Set up a website button, a messaging bot, enter your phone number—the goal here is to bring your potential customers from areas that you do not preside over

(Facebook) to domains where you can control their action towards converting (your site).

- **Share your story:** people like to see the human side of a business, so sharing a live story on Facebook, for example, is always a good idea!
- **Use Google Plus:** while not many people hang out on this service, posting content here may help with your search engine optimisation efforts!

Other Channels

Affiliate Marketing

Investopedia defines affiliate marketing as “an advertising model where a company pays compensation to third party publishers to generate traffic or leads to the company’s products and services” (Investopedia, 2017). For small businesses affiliate marketing is usually not the most common tool to generate interest, but can be useful for testing new partners.

Example:

An online tour company offering packages for the Tuscany region contacts our Tuscany apartment, offering to send us guests for a percentage of the profits.

E-mail Marketing

Email marketing is one of the oldest digital marketing tools, and can be great in building a loyal audience. Most travel-related local businesses nowadays use e-mail marketing to talk about promotions, news related to the service, and maybe to ask for reviews as well. A recommended free tool to use when it comes to constructing newsletters is Mailchimp (www.mailchimp.com). For small businesses e-mail marketing can be one of the most important channels to engage existing customers, which actually brings us to customer satisfaction and retention.



..... Customer Satisfaction and Retention

When discussing funnels, we talked about the final step of the customer's journey, about converting, what the process of the customer buying our product and enjoying our service is. However, our interaction with the customer does not end here; the job is not done. In fact, one of the easiest and cheapest marketing tools in our toolkit is the good ol' word of mouth marketing: people enjoying our service, and recommending it to friends, family, coworkers.

Simple, right?

One of the greatest entrepreneurs of our times, Warren Buffett famously said, "it takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it." In other words, one misstep by us, and one unhappy customer can set back years of progress and hard work. The same applies to our digital environment, only the bad news is, it applies ten-fold.

With the advent of tools and services like TripAdvisor, Facebook Reviews, Yelp or Google My Business, customer satisfaction has never been this important.

While twenty years ago an unhappy customer could spread his or her opinion to maybe two dozen peers, now in an online environment a bad review can be seen by thousands of potential customers. Thus, the way

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it."

Warren Buffett

a business responds to such comments is key to a successful online presence. Here are a few tips on how to handle bad apples, based on ReviewPro's guidelines (ReviewPro, 2016):

Always

- *Thank the reviewer for the feedback.*
- *Respond to positive comments too.*
- *Apologise for any legitimate negative experience.*
- *Explain the steps you'll take to prevent it from happening again.*
- *Allow the guest to contact you offline if follow-up discussion is needed.*

Never

- *Take it personally.*
- *Write angry, abusive responses—or any type of personal attacks.*
- *Question the reviewer's legitimacy.*
- *Use corporate speak that contains no meaningful information.*

Finally some good news: **customers have realistic expectations.** Don't be afraid of having a 4.5 star overall score; in fact, a study showed that customers trust imperfect scores more, since the "too good to be true" effect also translates to an online environment (PowerReviews, 2015).

Best Practices

Finally, we are to take a quick look at a few tips and tricks that can be beneficial to most local businesses. These general guidelines might feel just that—too general—, but bear in mind that all markets are different; what might work in one city or country might have totally different results in others. This is where a marketer has to do their due diligence via a comprehensive market research to determine the characteristics of the local busi-

ness environment. There are, however, a few rules of thumb that ring true in almost all cases, and especially in the Visegrád area for tourism-based local businesses.

■ Spend \$2 on creating content, \$1 on marketing that content.

If there is one key takeaway for local business marketing, this is it. As Bill Gates famously said more than twenty years ago, "content is king," meaning if you do not create engaging and meaningful content, you can have the best marketing ever, it will not stick.

Spend two dollars on creating an awesome blog article, spend money on a professional photographer



(visuality grabs attention!), create engaging copy (remember your key messages), dare to share your story via video messages (personal communication), and dare to invest in a state-of-the-art website that converts well.

Once you have all of these ready, then you are ready to market your site, product and service. You are ready to **spend your one dollar** on advertisement campaigns, Facebook post boosts, influencer marketing via Instagram, Google AdWords and so on. If you have great content, it will engage your target audience no matter how you deliver it. Ad campaigns are

designed to give a little push, not supplement the content.

- **Develop a multilingual website.** Most countries in Europe have a neighbouring country where people speak a different language. Preparing for a multicultural and multilingual environment is a must if we are to offer our services to regional audiences. Having at least an English version of our site is not just good for our marketing efforts, but is essential. And this actually brings us to our last point.

- **Thinking without boundaries.** Our closely intertwined economies and the continuous integration process of the service industry may scare many, but it can also be viewed as an opportunity. The most successful travel services nowadays do not just target a local audience, but dare to think without boundaries, without borders. Set up an English site, dare to engage neighbouring potential customers, or even customers living thousands of miles away. With the advent of info technologies and cheaper plane tickets, the opportunities are ripe for harvest.



The Digital Age – Closing Remarks

When we discuss digital marketing, we often talk about the digital divide, or “the differing amount of information between those who have access to the Internet, especially broadband access, and those who do not have access” (internetworldstats, 2017). A country’s digital divide can be bigger or smaller due to the population’s age, infrastructure, social mobility, economic advancements and a couple of other factors. But the general consensus is that this divide is getting smaller and smaller.

Between 2000 and 2017, the number of internet users grew by 976.4% worldwide (internetworldstats, 2017), and with just 51.7% of the global population online, there’s still immense growth to be expected, especially in developing countries. However, as we have seen in the introduction, while some of these countries might not have relevant purchasing power from our Eastern European perspective, this can change even in a decade.

Furthermore, we have already seen that those markets that do not invest heavily into info communication may actually fall behind, just remember the examples of Greece, Spain, and Italy.

Digital marketing may feel like a different world, but it is definitely an opportunity for all. Small companies no longer need to rely on the whims of great travel agencies and booking sites; they can make their own fortune. The travel gold rush is a chance for all. It is now time for the Visegrád countries to boldly dare for new markets and new opportunities.

Recommended

Learning Resources

Understanding today’s online environment can be a daunting task, but lucky for us, there are several great, often free, courses available to get you started. Here’s a short list of services that I wholeheartedly recommend to learn from. Remember, most offline and academic digital marketing courses are outdated by the time you finish them, so the best way to stay up-to-date is to go to the source, and go digital. These learning resources are called MOOCs, or Massive Open Online Courses; here’s a list of the best of them.



- **Udemy.com:** Udemy is probably one of the fastest growing online learning resources, and the reason for that is their content is user generated. The upside is that you can find cheap courses here, however, due to the nature of user generated content, the quality varies. Only go for well-respected content creators with plenty of reviews.
- **Lynda.com:** one of the oldest learning resources on the internet, and its prestige is well earned. Great courses for only \$25 per month!
- **Coursera.com.** Coursera partnered with leading US universities to provide comprehensive, certifiable trainings. They have a rich selection in marketing, however the prices can seem hefty at times. Still, it is a good investment into you and your company's future!
- **Google:** great place to learn the basics for digital marketing; their courses are very useful to learn the ins and outs of Analytics and AdWords. If you live in a major urban area, chances are Google has its very own real life course as well.

If you are interested in learning about the concepts discussed in this document, here are a few keywords that can help you find what you are looking for!

- **Marketing basics:** holistic marketing, online marketing fundamentals, lead generation fundamentals, growth hacking, marketing channels, marketing strategy
- **Digital communication:** marketing funnels, visual communication, attention span, storytelling, copywriting basics, customer satisfaction, review management, Google AdWords, Google Analytics, data driven marketing
- **Marketing channels:** social media marketing, search engine optimisation, PPC marketing, affiliate marketing, electronic direct mail (EDM), influencer marketing, content marketing
- **Design and UX:** conversion rate optimisation, user experience, colour theory, elements of design, responsive web design, service thinking, gamification, call to action

Tourism

Authors: Dr. Tibor Gonda,
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Foreword of the Authors

It was a pleasure to accept the invitation of the management of the CARPATHIAN TOURISM project to provide learning opportunities on product development, and on rural and ecotourism to tourism service providers, craftsmen and local producers coming from V4 countries through workshops organised in different countries. We compiled our handbook based on the results of the workshops, and individual consultations with the participants of the project, and on the decades of experience we have in tourism. Since we are both active players of the supply side of the tourism market as service providers besides having a role in the education and research of tourism, we know from our own experience that having theoretical knowledge on tourism can greatly enhance successful market presence, and facilitate the introduction and successful operation of the tourism service.

Tourism is a significant phenomenon of our times. It is not only an economic branch anymore but a socio-cultural phenomenon that is an integral part of human life. The expansion, development and massive growth of modern tourism trace back to just a lifetime. The dynamics of expansion is well represented by

the fact that while in the early 1950s, 25 million people participated in international tourism (i.e. travelled abroad), nowadays it has exceeded 1.2 billion. This dynamic growth is also a possibility for new service providers to successfully join the tourism market. And tourism sciences develop hand in hand with tourism's becoming a social phenomenon. By examining the phenomenon of tourism, knowledge on the principles of tourism is also constantly changing, progressing and expanding. Numerous new trends have become known and new conceptual categories have emerged, and the navigation between them is a challenge even for well-prepared professionals of tourism. Gentle, sustainable, responsible, green, natural, eco, conscious etc.: we could list well-known or lesser-known "characteristics" of tourism without having deep understanding of their underlying meaning. We hope that our handbook will prove helpful in navigating between the important categories of tourism. We would like to provide



useful and practical information on tourism product development, active and rural tourism, antecedents of the development of ecotourism, and on ecotourism practices.

We aimed to write this handbook in a practice-oriented way, supplemented with personal advice, hoping that it will reassure the readers in their engagement as active service providers in tourism in order to successfully fulfill their ideas and business plans.



Things to Know About Tourism Products

Improving tourism products is an important task of every tourist receiving area, as tourism service providers and the destinations can thus raise the interest of the demand side, and maintain and strengthen their market position. In the theoretical and practical system of tourism, the tourism product approach has no long history. In the second half of the 20th century, with the rapid development of tourism as an economic activity and as a social phenomenon, the science of tourism developed as well. In the 1970s and 80s, the product-based

approach became widespread both in foreign academic literature and in the tourism development practices of developed tourist receiving areas, tourist resorts. Nowadays, there is already a vast academic literature on some of the major tourism product types. Tourism researchers and practitioners analyse and examine the process of product development and the special characteristics of certain product types from the behavioural practices of service providers through buyers' motivation to the infrastructural needs of the given tourism product etc.

Tourism product development

is a complex task that requires widespread knowledge, thorough knowledge on tourism theory, and creative thinking. Naturally, with the development of tourism, new types of tourism products may emerge or already existing ones can become more and more fashionable.

What Is a Tourism Product?



There are several interpretations of tourism products. Its most widespread understanding is that it is a service that a tourist uses. According to this interpretation (also referred to as microeconomic), when a host leases its room, the accommodation service itself is the tourism product. According to another interpretation, the tourism product itself is a tourist destination with its many colourful supply elements and attractions.

According to our interpretation, a tourism product is rather the latter. We think that a tourism product is a complex set of services that tourists use during their trips and their stay in the given tourist receiving area. In other words, it means a set of services fulfilling the needs of tourists.

It is a special product since it cannot be abstracted from place and time. A “simple” consumer good can be easily interpreted as a product (for instance, a television, a refrigerator, a bottle of wine etc.). When using such products, place and time have minor significance in contrast to tourism products (Lengyel 2004).

The characteristics Kotler (2002) defined with regard to services in general are valid for tourism products as well:

- » intangibility – not materialised;
- » inseparability – consumed at the moment of production;
- » heterogeneity – the quality of the service is closely related to the service provider;
- » perishability – services cannot be stored (inventoried), i.e. the services did not used go to waste.



- » (It is often referred to as the "HIPI" principle: heterogeneity – intangibility – perishability – inseparability.)

The main features of a tourism product result from its characteristic that it is made up of several services. The tourism product is bound to a place; it is the tourist who has to appear at the venue of the supply, and it is not the service that is delivered to the tourist as is the case with goods.

The tourism product is of non-material nature, a predetermined stock not manufactured and delivered on time. The tourism product package (for example, availability at a hotel or available seats on a flight) has to be sold at the time when and where it is available (a seat on a charter flight which is not sold is wasted). If no sales can be executed at the time of availability, there

is no revenue but the costs remain, so in the field of tourism marketing, among other things, price formation and pricing policy play a dominant role.

Before purchasing it, the tourist does not see the tourism product, because there is no product sample, consequently the tourist does not know what they will receive, consume. The tourism product has to be purchased without prior comparison. It is intangible but can be experienced. One of the main tasks of marketing is thus to display the services offered as well as possible, and present their advantages (Kovács 2004).

The most important tool for displaying tourism services was the travel catalogue, the programme booklet and various other tourism publications. By today, the importance of online tools has increased significantly. They help to present tourism products, and for this reason they serve as a communication tool while signifying the "materialisation" of the intangible, physically non-existent tourism product.

In the "production" of the tourism product, the tourist itself is involved: the



delivery, the provision of services and their use coincide (simultaneous, inseparable); there is no possibility of quality control.

When purchasing a consumer product, the customer always expects the same performance from the product (pencil = writing, light bulb = lighting, etc.). However, from tourism service, each customer hopes to fulfil their own individual desires. This fact, in itself, makes planning extremely difficult, since the behaviour of tourists is a factor independent from us. By the marketing assessment of the needs and habits of tourists, we can reduce the likelihood of unpleasant surprises.

The basic elements (original supply) of tourism offers – natural, geographic, historical attributions, habits and lifestyle of the local population – undergo only slight changes both in the short and long run.

Some elements in the structure of the tourism industry – the quantity and quality of hotel accommodations, the road network, and certain elements of the infrastructure – can be changed only in the medium or long run because they require significant capital investment and the creation or acquisition of high-value assets. The investment risk can be reduced to an acceptable level only with sound and reliable market knowledge and information,

with well-established business plans for which market research proves to be an essential tool.

Complementarity is an essential

From a tourism service, each customer hopes to fulfil their own individual desires.

feature of the tourism product. It is hard to sell only one kind of tourism service alone (“a hotel service provider does not make tourism alone”). Tourism offer consists of a large number of different elements, and there are several producers of one service package (transportation, hotel, restaurant, culture, sports, commercial and other companies, including businesses of variable sizes), and for this reason, it is difficult to control it (ETC-UNWTO 2011). The marketing activities, the quality of work, and performance of companies that are in a complementary relationship with each other decisively influence tourists’ opinion of other companies. Some services can not replace others; a frowsy, poor quality hotel room cannot be effaced by an excellent cuisine (Raffay 2013).

To understand the special char-

acter of tourism products, we summarised their most characteristic features:

A tourism product is:

- » complex, made up of several elements (accommodation, cuisine, sport, leisure, travel etc.);
- » the customer compiles its elements, he/she finalises the product;
- » the aim is to fulfil the needs of the tourist;
- » another important aim is the collection of memories that can be presented and told;
- » consumption is tied to place;
- » consumption is tied to time (in accordance, available accommodations that is not sold is wasted);
- » "intangible;"
- » the service provider and the customer cannot be separated from each other, they have an interactive effect on each other, and the quality of the product depends on the activity and attitude of the customer;
- » customers can compile it themselves, but a travel agency or the management organisation of a local destination can also compile the service package.

“The product thus includes selective elements of the general supply that the tourist can select for themselves alone in accordance with their needs” (Michalkó 2012).

Attraction and fascination are at the heart of a tourism product. This can be natural or man-made. However, attraction can exert its attractive force if it is equipped with the right infrastructure. For this, an example can be an accessible road, or basic infrastructure that satisfies the basic needs of visitors during their stay. In order for an attraction to have significant impact on tourism, the establishment of the necessary tourism infrastructure is required (Puczkó–Rátz 2011).



Tourism theory calls this tourism superstructure. There is a need for nearby accommodations, dining facilities, and for a longer stay, a number of additional services. Certain supply elements must be in harmony with each other, i.e. the type of product based on a certain attraction determines the type of accommodations and meals, the way of transportation and the estimated length of the stay. The schematic structure of the tourism product is illustrated by the following figure (Figure 10). Tourism product is therefore a set of supplies that can satisfy the demand. The evolution of tourism products that are actually used by tourists depends on a number of influencing factors. For instance, think about the organisation of the journey. The fact that whether a tourist arrives individually

or in a group has a significant influence on what service package, i.e. tourism product, is used during the trip.

In the case of organised groups, it is decided usually prior to the journey, and mostly predetermined, and the organiser books it in advance, while in the case of individual tourists, on-site spontaneous decisions have greater role. The knowledge of motivations inducing and inspiring demand is very important in product development, because based on it, the type of tourism product sought by the visitor (such as cultural tourism, holiday, spa excursions, wine tourism, rural tourism, shopping tourism, active tourism etc.), and its characteristics and elements can be foreseen and planned.

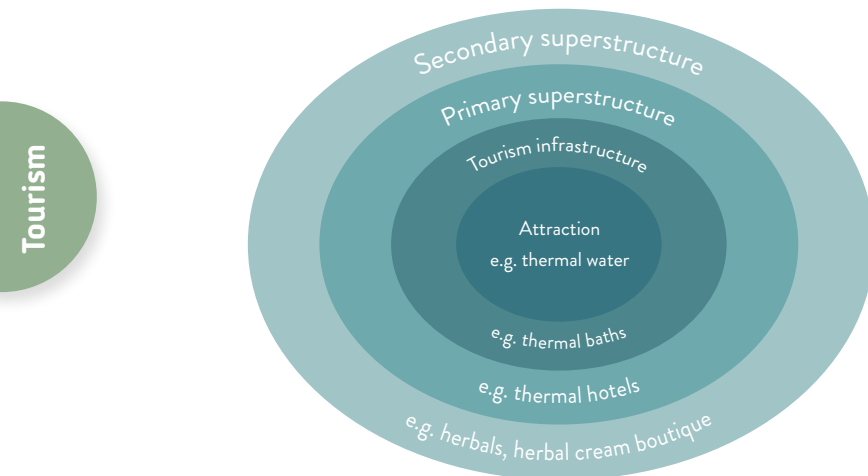


FIGURE 10.: THE STRUCTURE OF TOURISM PRODUCTS
SOURCE: AUTHORS' COMPILATION BASED ON MICHALKÓ, 2012.

Elements of the Tourism Product

Attraction

The main motivator of tourism is the tourists' aim to obtain experience. Experience is provided by the attraction or fascination. The attraction is therefore the basis of the tourism product, because this is the reason why the trip ultimately takes place.

Attraction is linked to motivation based on the interests of potential visitors, or may trigger motivation itself occasionally. What if a particular area does not have a tourist attraction at all? For answering this question, we must begin by defining attraction, which is not a simple task. Attraction means different things for different people. If somebody wants to get away from the world and relax, attraction may be a secluded little farmhouse with quiet surroundings. It may be that an attraction for the locals is not an attraction to tourism, and vice versa. It may be that emerging tourism calls the attention of locals to an attraction not yet recognised by them. Generally speaking, every East-Cen-



tral European settlement has some sort of attraction – of course not necessarily bombastic ones.

A beautiful piece of landscape, a favourable belvedere, a pleasant hiking trail, a fascinating tree, a stone cross, a few charming old cellars can all be appealing. Certainly, these local resources and tourism potentials need to be discovered and continually developed. Drawing up an inventory of attractions is

therefore the basis for establishing a demand.

Throughout the history of tourism, attractions have been changing: initially, only natural elements were considered as attractions to tourism; then the scope of attractions gradually widened, and new elements became driving factors for tourism. Today, most of the world's most popular attractions include man-made facilities, entertainment and other programme opportunities (Rátz–Michalkó 2015). This process sped up particularly after World War II with tourism increasing on a massive scale. At the end of the 20th century, the process of creating thematic attractions with huge investments where the experiences, excitement and adventure tourists could gain was concentrated.

Classification of Tourism Attractions:

Attractions can be divided into two groups: natural and non-natural, in other words, man-made.

1. Natural attractions are

- *climate* (warm, cold, sunshine, snow, ice; and climate suitable for healing);

- *water* (sea, lake, river, generating regular and special interests—for instance sunbathing, bathing, and thermal water);
- *beautiful scenery* (either cultivated or untouched area; especially a shore, mountains, panorama paths);
- *unique natural beauties* (high mountains, caves, waterfalls, volcanoes);
- *flora and fauna* (inducing general interest or scientific observations);
- *national parks, reservations* (for the protection and preservation of disappearing species).



2. Man-made attractions include

- *archaeological sites, historical and cultural places* (buildings, ruins, churches, cities, ships sunk during wars, earthquakes, settlements destroyed by volcanic eruptions);
- *cultural peculiarities* (tradition, lifestyle, clothing, folklore, craftsmanship—tied to cities, regions);
- *religion* (pilgrimage, religious holidays), *arts* (music, dance, theatre, fine arts and crafts—occasionally these are the main attractions, for instance, opera in Milan, theatrical play in the quarry at Fertőrákos);
- *urban environment* (metropolises, lots of sights, vivacity, shopping opportunities);
- *museums, cultural centres* (presenting values, education, raising awareness);
- *cultural festivals, series of events* (music, fine arts, plays);
- *theme parks, funfairs, circus* (their significance varies);
- *shopping opportunities* (malls, souvenirs, duty-free, special and



- traditional handicraft products, jewellery, plazas—for instance Designer Outlets—Parndorf, Austria);
- *special events* (sports competitions, exhibitions, fairs, Olympics, world exhibition);
- *casinos* (main or complementary attraction: for instance Las Vegas and Monaco);
- *conference, congress, workshop* (interesting combined with other attractions);
- *sports, recreation* (can be a primary or secondary attraction—for instance, hunting, bullfight, cycling, swimming, horse riding etc.);
- *interesting farming activities* (harvest, fishing, market);
- *ethnic origins, nostalgia* (visiting relatives, ancient homeland, battlefields etc.);

- *other elements of tourism supply*
(a major attraction could be a unique hotel, for instance, Burj Al Arab in Dubai, a renovated means of transport—Orient Express –, gastronomy—wine tasting) (Puczkó–Rátz 2011).

The listed attractions are only the possible major groups of attractions, and the attractions of a destination may, in accordance with local conditions, have different significance—aggregated or more detailed.



Prepare an inventory of attractions!

It helps to systematise business opportunities, product development and strategic goals.

When preparing an inventory of attractions, each attraction must be systematically determined, indicating the exact name, type, location, availability and features of the attraction, including possible problems as well.

Each attraction—if it is linked to a location—must be marked on the map. If the receiving location has more than one attraction, their features must be listed separately.

Evaluating the attraction

For evaluating the attractions, the following features shall be considered:

- » scope of the attraction (local, regional, national, international or global);
- » relative costs of developing and maintaining the attraction;
- » accessibility of the attraction;
- » environmental capacity;
- » environmental and socio-cultural effects.

By the analysis, it is possible to find out what the primary attractions of the receiving area are, or what the secondary attractions are that increase the duration of stay as supplementary attractions. It can also be defined which attractions dominate the area in question: natural or man-made.

The central element of a tourism product is the attraction, thus the main question of tourism product development is the possibilities of attraction development, and the ways how to carry it out.

There are three well-defined ways of attraction development (Sulyok 2013):



1. Establishing an iconic sight:

This can be achieved mostly by a large investment that will create an attraction with such strong appeal that can position the entire destination in the tourism sphere (for example, creating a new high capacity aquapark, an exhibition centre in a contemporary architectural masterpiece, or the establishment of different thematic visitor centres).

2. Cluster development of certain products

This happens when we intend to develop the product with a new type of cooperation based on existing attractions, without major investment. It is possible to develop regional tourism product clusters or to develop different thematic trips. This kind of product development is carried out also by coordinating a well-functioning destination management organisation.

3. Introducing events and programmes

This is the third form of tourism attraction development, when events and programmes are the attractions. For the success of this type of product development, the recursiveness and the brand are important factors.

Assess your opportunities regarding points 2 and 3!



Significant Factors in Tourism

Transport and Other Infrastructure

The right level of infrastructure is a basic requirement for tourism, as attraction that enhances turnover has to be approached in some way. Attractions that are inaccessible or difficult to reach cannot be used for tourism. Infrastructure is a basic condition for tourism, while it is peculiar in a way that it is not only used by tourists who want to access an attraction, but by local people as well, and that solely for tourism, infrastructure is rarely established. However, due to the dynamic evolution of tourism, so-called tourist ghettos, i.e. separated holiday complexes which are used solely by tourists, are established out of nowhere more and more frequently. They may even reach the size of small towns.

Accommodation Facilities

But attraction can only motivate the traveller to visit a place. In order for a traveller to become a tourist, according to the definition, s/he has to spend one night at the given location. The infrastructural basis for this is accommodation. The examination of accommodations covers all types of accommodations available in the receiving area, considering their capacity, trends in turnover, the level of capacity utilisation, price range, types of guests, ownership, quality of service, connectedness to international chains etc. Despite the recommendations of international organisations



(UNWTO, OECD), the grouping and categorisation of accommodations has not led to a uniform practice. Nevertheless, when evaluating, it is essential to compare the category and the services provided: whether the classification of a given facility is down-to-earth, whether the services meet the expectations.

Catering

The evaluation of catering covers, on the one hand, the examination of the catering network, and the rating of the selection on the other.

The following factors shall be examined:

- » the size of the network (number of shops, type, location);
- » the volume of turnover (broken down by type of business);
- » the quality of service;
- » choice of food and drink;
- » price range;
- » attractiveness of shops;
- » hygiene and comfort;
- » local specialties and prohibitions.



Catering is a special element of supply. Since it can be a standalone attraction—as a country’s gastronomy can be a special attraction in tourism—it is worth bearing in mind to facilitate that visitors can enjoy the “pleasures of taste” in several places. At the same time, gastronomy cannot be self-contained, the taste, eating habits, possible religious bans or restrictions must be considered.

When assessing catering, contemporary international trends of nutrition have to be taken into account, since in the absence of these, catering does not encourage longer stays.

From our topic's point of view, the trend according to which a wide range of people have a deeper interest in gastronomic heritage, regional cuisine specialities and local products is more advantageous. Thus, the accommodation provider, with a lot of creativity but with relatively little effort, can take on the development of attractiveness independently. The following catering-related experiences have been proven by several providers, and the tourism market has confirmed that there is an interest in:

- *joint production of a traditional local product (e.g. jam cooking, brewing, pickling);*
- *cheese making course;*
- *gastro school;*
- *pig slaughter;*
- *wine or pálinka tasting etc.*

Travel Agency Services

It is necessary to evaluate the offer of the travel agencies of the given area, the local programme offers, the travel agencies' touring activities and other activities of the travel agencies (ticket sale, reservation or rental, etc.).



Cultural Services

An increasingly wide spectrum of tourists require cultural services during their stay as well. Receiving places with modern destination management consciously strive to ensure that local cultural offerings are sufficiently colourful, and tourists can easily access them.

The following areas are important for tourism product development:

- » peculiarities and uniqueness of the culture of the given area (arts, folklore, traditions);
- » culture of everyday life (such as gastronomy, living folk art, local customs, etc.);
- » characteristics of cultural life (theatres, concerts, museums, exhibitions, places of entertainment etc.), their open hours and seasonality.



Other Services

- » possibilities for shopping (souvenirs, food, products specific to the destination);
- » financial services (currency exchange, ATM, credit and debit card acceptance);
- » healthcare (first aid, clinic, hospital proximity, availability, quality, rescue possibilities);
- » information services (tourist and other information, foreign language information, brochures, websites).

Security, Hygiene

When evaluating supply, the following factors shall be considered:

- » the political stability of the receiving area;
- » public security;
- » crime rate;
- » laws concerning prostitution, drug use and trafficking;
- » public health and epidemiological provisions.

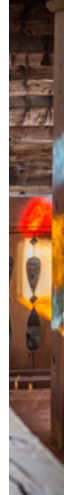
Human Factors

- » number of people working in tourism, their level of education;
- » education, vocational training, retraining, further training;
- » language knowledge;
- » hospitality, the openness of locals.

Think about
how to
improve the
factors above!



Classification of Tourism Products



Classifying tourism products is not a simple task. As new products are being created or becoming fashionable in line with the dynamic development of tourism, classification can not be regarded as perpetual. This also varies with the given age, and the current trend of tourism. Most of the time, however, we distinguish products based on three aspects, namely activity-, location- and group-specific products (Michalkó 2012).

1. If the name of the product can be linked unambiguously to the essence of the well-defined tourism activity, we can talk about activity-specific products: for example, conference tourism, shopping tourism, or even a product of active tourism such as cycling tourism, equestrian tourism, golf tourism etc.
2. Tourism products can also be classified based on location, which determines the essence of the supply and demand side as well. Products associated with such locations are called location-

specific products: for instance, rural tourism, urban tourism, seaside tourism, mountain tourism, and even ecotourism, as the latter is heavily tied to natural areas.

3. The third version of classification approaches the essence of the product's demand side, as there are products that can be specifically linked to a well-defined group. These are the so-called group-specific products, as they can be linked to specific market segments (e.g. youth tourism, senior tourism, LGBT tourism, single tourism).

We assessed the classification of tourism sectors relevant to our topic in Table I.

	Activity-specific sectors	Location-specific sectors	Group-specific sectors
Active tourism	equestrian tourism	Rural tourism	Senior tourism
	hiking tourism	Urban tourism	Youth tourism
	cycling tourism	Mountain tourism	
	active water tourism	Beach tourism	
	hunting tourism	Ecotourism	
	angling tourism		
	Wine tourism, gastronomy		
Cultural tourism	heritage tourism		
	rural cultural tourism		
	religious tourism		
	Health tourism		

Group your enterprise according to the above, assess the segment-specific customer habits, features of the customer market and focus on them in your business activity in the future!



Tourism

TABLE 1. CLASSIFICATION OF THE RELEVANT TOURISM PRODUCTS IN THE RURAL SUPPLY OF THE CARPATHIANS
SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN WORK

The Place of Tourism Demand in the System of Tourism

The system of tourism can be divided into two sub-systems, demand and supply, which practically cover the main components of the tourism market. The processes of tourism are also influenced by its environment (social, natural, economic, political, technological and cultural), which is called the external system of tourism. The embodiment of demand is in fact the tourist themselves, whose travel is influenced by the triad of free time, salary and motivation, which provides a sound description of the demand side.

We can classify travellers in a

variety of ways. We can talk about travellers who are not in tourism statistics (e.g. commuters, immigrants etc.), and those who are recorded by different tourism statistics, i.e. who are travelling for recreational and/or business purposes. We use the collective term 'visitors' to name them, and they can be further classified into other groups. In case the visitor spends a minimum of one night in a given destination, they are tourists, and if somebody travels without staying overnight, we use the term 'visitor' or 'traveller'.



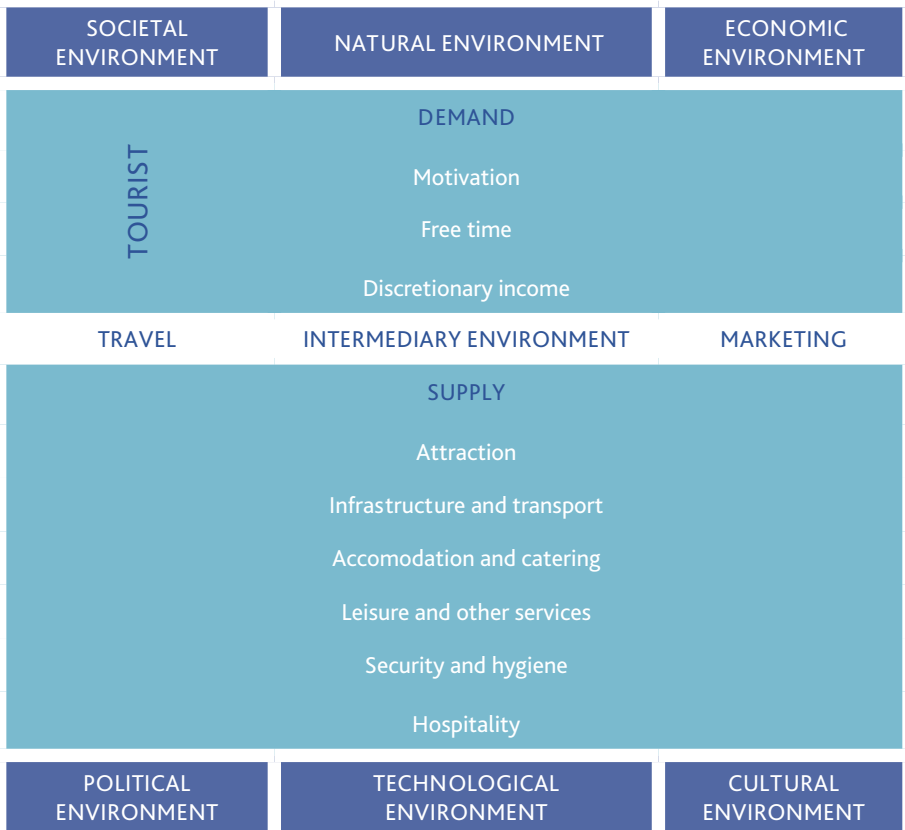


FIGURE 11. *THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SYSTEM OF TOURISM*
SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN EDIT BASED ON LENGYEL M. (2004)

The characteristics of tourism demand can be assessed as follows:

- » the level of freedom of choice;
- » the travel decision involves a high degree of risk as the customer buys an unknown item, the product is intangible, and it is essentially the memory that lasts

(though modern information technology provides more and more information on the product to people prior to their travel);

- » tourists themselves participate in the manufacturing of the product, since the service provider and the customer are both present at the same time when the "product" is created;

- » characterised by seasonality, temporal and spatial concentration;
- » extraordinary sensitivity to changing factors, external system and internal processes as well.

The protagonist of demand is the tourist, and every tourist is an *individual with a unique personality, special motivation and individual choices*.

Certain market segments are essentially made up of group of people with similar motivations and needs, or of groups with other characteristics. Lengyel M. (2004) defined the following segments.



Market division criteria	Example
motivation	leisure, healing, education
geography	region, locality
demography	age, gender, income, occupation, education, socio-economic features, relationship status, religion
destination	business and holiday trips and their subcategories
psychography	value and lifestyle
behaviour	customer behaviour with regard to the product
product	health tourism, active tourism
channels	direct, indirect, mixed

TABLE 2. SEGMENTS IN TOURISM.
SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN WORK

The Role of Motivation When Deciding on Travel



The decision-making process on travel is based on needs. Need is a generic concept: we can talk about internal needs, biological needs, and physical needs. If

a person is unsatisfied, internal tension develops in the human body, and the driving force to overcome it as soon as possible leads to the reduction of the tension at last. At the first stage of making the travel decision, the individual has to realise the need, which evolves into *intention*. Marketing practically helps this process through its toolkit, as it enhances the interest of customers, and makes them aware of the intent. In fact, the individual becomes motivated at this point to leave their

permanent environment by giving in to their need for change. The state of being motivated influences the behaviour of the individual for satisfying their needs.

In the motivation process, satisfying each individual's needs can be done in many ways, and similar motivations can be met in different ways. The purpose of marketing is to provide the customer with proof that the best way to meet certain needs is to choose the given product or destination.

Maslow developed a system of motivational hierarchy in the 1940s. He claimed that the needs of all human beings can be set hierarchically. His followers developed the so-called pyramid model of his the-





FIGURE 12. MICHALKÓ (2007) BASED ON MASLOW, MILL AND MORRISON, AND PUCZKÓ-RÁTZ

oretical system. He stated that daily necessities are at the lower levels of motivation, the satisfaction of which is essential to the human body. These physiological needs include hunger, thirst, rest, activity. On the second level of the hierarchy, there is a search for security, for a state without fear and anxiety. The next level is belonging (giving and receiving love), then appreciation (self-esteem and appreciation of others), while the highest level is self-realisation (self-expression).

Mill and Morrison later further developed this system by adding the needs for knowledge and understanding (obtaining knowledge), and aesthetics (appreciation of beauty) (Michalkó 2007).

Different tourism products can be associated with different levels,

with simpler products on lower levels of motivation, while the higher level the needs are, the more complex the product is. As the lower levels are met by more and more people, the higher levels appear in the form of travel motivation more often and for a wider range of people. Naturally, certain products and product variants are not limited to one level; as there is an increasing differentiation within one product, higher needs can be fulfilled by a single product. Thus, for example, the evolution of gastronomic supply goes far beyond satisfying simple physiological needs by nowadays, and gastrotourism is often accompanied with experiences that can be classified into the category of knowledge and self-realisation.



The Motives Behind Travelling.....

“So many people, so many travel motives,”—we can put it this way. As needs of individuals are different, the travel motives can be varied as well, which can be grouped as follows. Below answers can be found for the questions why are people travelling, what makes a person travel?

Physiological drives

- *Addressing the consequences of physical stress*
- *Maintaining physical and health conditions*
- *Recovery*
- *Psychic needs*

Socio-cultural drives

- *Establishing and maintaining human relations*
- *Religion—pilgrimages*
- *Language learning in native environment*

Existential factors

- *We travel to trigger acknowledgement from our environment*
- *Business tourism*
- *Shopping tourism*
- *etc.*



Tourism consumption is influenced by a number of factors. Of these, we consider the most important ones.

1. **Needs** (already presented in detail).
2. **Income**—plays a decisive role in the development of demand, as the effect of income change rapidly exerts its spillover effect to all areas of life. In the case of recession, people tend to reduce their recreational spendings first, while in the case of positive income changes people tend to spend more money on travelling (out of prestige as well).
3. **Price**—certain tourism products react to changes in prices differently.
 - a. products of sticky prices: business and conference tourism
 - b. products of flexible prices: leisure tourism

With regard to price, nowadays it is not the price itself but the price–quality ratio that determines the demand, since travellers have more and more travel experience and have increasing expectations.

4. **Supply**—a diversified supply can enhance demand.

5. **Free time**—free time is present in the discourse since the industrial revolution. The after-hours activity of the population flowing into the cities only emerged as a problem at that time. The earlier—mainly agricultural—activities of people allowed for different time schedule. In today's postmodern society, recreation has become a privilege, urban and suburban recreational spaces have emerged. The trend first favoured the products of mass tourism, and then the demand shifted to quality free time activities. Nowadays, we can talk about free time in a context where free time is increasingly becoming a commodity, consumption culture is transforming from day to day, and the variety of fashion trends have a significant impact on it. Mediators (nowadays not only tourists in the classical sense, but online platforms as well) have an important role to play in influencing customers and in encouraging shopping.

Think about the motivation of customers to whom you provide services or products.



With this in mind, regard...

7 useful tips for a successful tourism enterprise

1

During the course of tourism product development, strive for complexity and diversity! Do not just think about providing accommodation, offer more! If you cannot do it alone, look for strategic partners.

2

Experience is above all! Tourists need experiences. For this reason, promise experience in your marketing message!

3

Begin your work by creating an inventory of attractions in your environment.

4

If there are significant attractions near you, you need to think about how to optimise these experiences.

5

If there are no significant attractions nearby, create programmes, minor or major attractions by yourself in a creative and innovative way so they can be sources of experience!

6

Try to position yourself well. It should be clear for you what kind of guests you are expecting. But be careful not to narrow your target group too much in order to be able to address people with different kinds of motivations and interests.

7

For the guest, price is not the most important consideration but the price–value ratio. If something is of poor quality, regardless of its low price, it will not be a successful service. But if you invest great energy in your service and can provide lasting experience, feel free to ask for the price! High-quality service brings customers.

Things to Know About Active Tourism



Active tourism plays a decisive role by itself and also as an element of other product groups in the supply of Carpathian tourism. Its success, among other things, is due to its varied components that offer permanent experience and relaxation, connecting sport and nature.

The close link between the multifaceted activities of active tourism

and other tourism products (e.g. ecotourism) makes it difficult to define active tourism in professional literature.

Most definitions consider active tourism to be activity as a motivation, and focus on leisure travel destinations.

Based on this, we can say that “active tourism is a form of tourism where the motivation of a tourist is to perform of a recreational or sporting activity requiring physical activity” (Magyar Turizmus Rt. 2003).

“Active tourism is understood as any tourism activity in which the individual’s non-routine, experience-



driven motion is performed in an environment different from their everyday spaces” (Michalkó 2002).

If we look at it as a tourism product, we can determine active tourism as a group of products related to activity. In this interpretation, activity and motivation are closely related (Michalkó 2012).

According to the terms defined, the conceptual structure of active tourism is made up of the following types of tourism:

As discussed above, activity and motivation are closely intertwined. There may be overlaps between products (e.g. cycling in rural tourism). Activities make it easier to classify the product, but it is important not to ignore the main motivation of the tourist when identifying each product.

International literature does not use the term ‘active tourism’ to designate the concept.

Active Tourism, by extending the concept, gives a more precise definition of active tourism: “a responsible form of travel that requires physical and mental par-



FIGURE 13. TYPES OF TOURISM CONSTITUTING THE CONCEPTUAL SYSTEM OF ACTIVE TOURISM
SOURCE: WWW.ITTHON.HU

icipation from the tourist, with taking into account sustainability, the protection of biodiversity and cultural conservation. Recreation, education, respect and contemplation are important elements of a tourism product, and also the active participation of a local expert—professional tour guide—in the journey.” (Csapó–Remenyik 2011).

Sports tourism shows a close relationship with the category of activity tourism, but their difference is that within sports tourism, active and passive sports tourism are differentiated. In case of passive sports tourism, physical activity is not exercised but tourists are only spectators of professional sporting events (Marton 2015). In addition, it is also a significant difference that sports tourism is a category related to sport competitions, while active tourism can be linked to hobby activities.

Attraction is basically divided into two large groups of natural and man-made attractions. The artificial supply elements characteristic of active tourism require physical strength and good stamina, increased adrenaline production, which causes a euphoric feeling that contributes to a sense of happiness. Among other things, these elements are becoming more and more popular today, not only among young

people and young adults, but also among middle-aged people. Natural attractions also require active movement.

The basic criterion for both natural and artificial attractiveness is their geographical distance from tourist-sending places. Ideally, the active tourism attraction is located near destinations or tourist attractions often visited by tourists, and offers complementary programmes for guests. Active tourism thus contributes to the regional centralisation of tourism but can also promote decentralisation (Aubert et al. 2013).

In Central Europe, the infrastructure and superstructure of active tourism is already developing, but there is still a lot to be done in





this field. It could be exploited well during the developments that active tourists can quickly overcome the underlying infrastructure deficiencies, thus the necessary developments can be carried out in a more focused, concentrated way. More and more organisations and local governments are investing in active tourism, but unfortunately the conditions and ancillary services often do not reach the necessary quality. There are more and more extreme parks, often connected with forest bicycle routes, but it is often difficult to access the park itself (for example, lack of proper information or poor quality roads). Ports of water

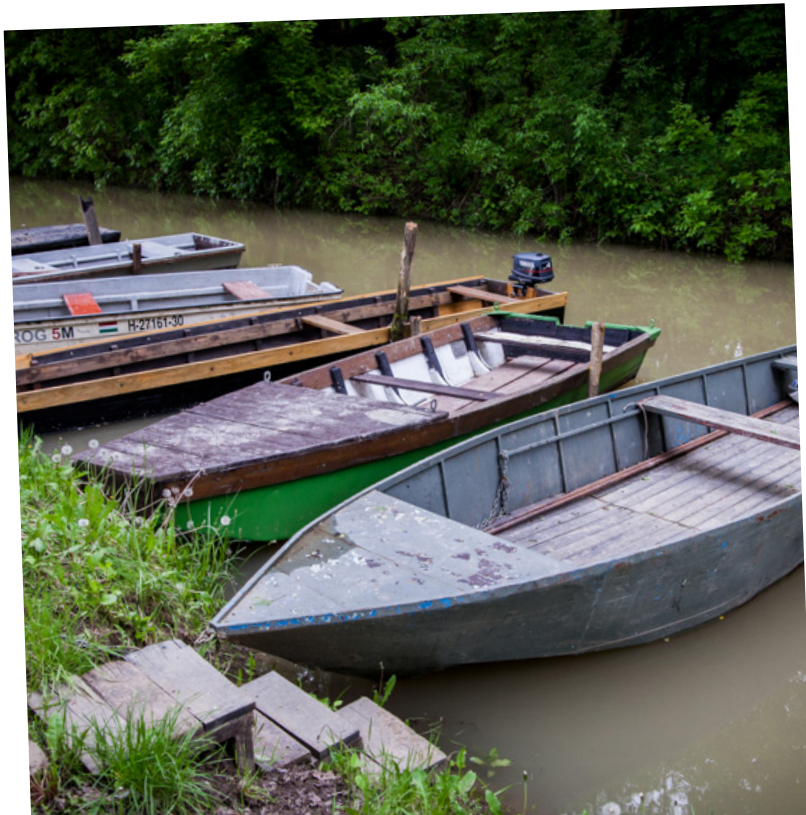
tourism are also very deficient in terms of related services, and occasionally they do not offer any other opportunities than the sport activities, so the guests soon leave the location, as there is nothing to keep them there.

In the Carpathians, hiking has a more than one century old tradition. Changes have been made in the field of hiking in recent years, and progress is noticeable (Magyari-Sáska et al. 2011). Thanks to the support of the European Union, several cabins, service stations and ecotourism visitor centres are established along hiking trails that help to ensure the

comfort of active tourists, and meet other physical and consumer needs.

Commercial accommodations and catering facilities represent the primary superstructure of active tourism. Rural or village tourism is linked to active tourism at this point, as rural accommodations are waiting for active tourists in a nice, cosy and clean environment. The great advantage of village accommodation is that it usually relates to services presenting local values.

In order to reach the international standard we must have more serious accommodation structures. The most important types of tourist accommodation for active tourism are: village accommodations, eco-lodges, and accommodations linked to special products (e.g. horse stables), guest houses, forest houses, campsites and youth hostels (Csapó–Remenyik 2011).



Characteristics of Cycling Tourism



Among the activities of active tourism, cycling is a priority. The diverse landscape of the Carpathians is excellent for cycling tourism. Over the past decade, a number of cycling-related developments have been carried out in the relevant countries. Not only new cycle paths (bicycle lanes in cities, trails) have been built, but the local government emphasises its support for cycling by creating bicycle storages and bicycle rental facilities in more and more settlements

(such as Bubi in Budapest).

Transport makes it easier and quicker to reach the tourism destinations and therefore plays a very important role in tourism. Eco-friendly cycling contributes to the realisation of sustainability principles. The specialty of this type of transport is that tourists already collect direct experiences during the journey (in the car, in a bus, or in the train we often do not perceive the small events happening around us, for instance we cannot see the flowers by the road or see the



FIGURE 14. CYCLE PATH ALONG THE RHONE–RHINE CANAL
SOURCE: [HTTP://WWW.FREEWHEELINGFRANCE.COM](http://www.freewheelingfrance.com)

hedgehog crossing the road). In addition to the “riding” experience and the beautiful scenery, cyclists can travel through secure and continuous routes, and while on the road, visit cyclist-friendly settlements and get access to relevant information through the roadside information boards.

Definition of Cycle Tourism

The concept of cycling tourism can be approached from many ways, and there is no consensus regarding its definition. The common feature of different concepts is that cycling is an integral part of recreation.

The Hungarian Cycling Tourism Development Strategy (2009) contains a system of terms that defines the different types of cycling activities (the categorisation was prepared on the basis of the categorisation of the EUROVELO study prepared at the request of the European Parliament):

- **Cycling tourism:** denotes travel between two places by bicycle, performed with touristic purposes. Cycling is an integral part of the tourist experience.



- **Cycling holidays:** a vacation that is motivated by cycling as a popular form of recreation for travel, sightseeing, or walks. The main means of transportation is typically the bicycle for both local and long-distance travels, but the target area can be reached by other means of transportation as well.
- **Holiday cycling:** a holiday that involves cycling as a programme type, and is often connected to other activities, usually during



single centre tours (for example, during long weekends, one morning is dedicated to cycling).

- **Cycle day trips:** free time and recreational excursions from home or from the accommodations, combined with cycling as an integral part of the daily excursion.
- **Long-distance cycling routes:** cycling routes designed to encourage cycling tourists to explore different destinations within a country or between countries. It is

more than 100 km long, but a 500 km route is not uncommon either. Bicycle regions/road networks are generally provided with proper directions and are equipped with different interpretation tools to better inform cyclists.

■ **Cycling events:**

national or international cycling competitions, performance races or other cycling events, programmes that are organised based on a theme

or event (even annually). Their impact is significant in many respect, as they contribute to the strengthening of local economy by the attendance of accompanying family members and other interested parties and spectators, for example Tour de France (Cycling Tourism Development Strategy, 2009).

7 useful pieces of advice to improve active tourism supply

1

"The foot is always at hand." The demand for various forms of pedestrian tourism (whether it is an easy walk around the accommodations or a hearty performance tour) is increasing. That's why you should know the hiking trails well in your environment! Keep a tourist map at home!

2

Create a connecting road between the hotel and the nearby hiking trail! If you do not have a nearby hiking trail, you can set up your own round route. Your guests will love it!

3

The popularity of cycling is growing steadily. Get bicycles! It's okay if they're used, but have at least 6-8 so that a larger family or smaller group of friends can take advantage of them.

4

Make an inventory of what kind of active tourism services are available in your settlement (e.g. horse riding, swimming, water tourism, etc.). Offer these to your guests!

5

Create your own active tourism infrastructure from a small amount of money! Petanque, for instance, can be played almost everywhere, only a set of good quality balls is needed. Some nordic-walking poles are not a big investment, but they make your guests happy.

6

With tiny yet unique offers you can compete with great attractions. Night-time animal watching with an expert, or a nearby fishing spot with "sure catch", a hike on the hills where the unforgettable panorama is waiting ... These are things that an active tourist needs.

7

The greatest experience for tourists is usually personal relationships. Find a friendly person with outstanding authentic knowledge of the area who has more time than you, and for a lump sum is willing to take your guests for a trip! If they speak foreign languages, it is highly valued since you can involve foreign guests in the programme.



Rural Tourism

In Central European countries the pace of development in rural areas has always lagged behind that of the capital cities and their metropolitan area throughout history. Since the global economic crisis, the economic centralisation of capitals and individual regional centres has only strengthened; due to the slower economic development of rural areas, territorial inequalities have continued to grow. The process of rural im-

poverishment is still taking place in several affected countries, an integral part of which is the growth of urban agglomerations, the aging of settlements due to the younger generation leaving villages in the hope of better living and work. Because of the virtuous circle of migration, it poses significant socio-economic problems, as unemployment occurring for generations is reproducing poverty, and thus the inadequate level of qualification structure also shows an even picture. Agriculture



and agrobusiness have dropped out of the pulling economic sectors, during the 20th century rural areas' advocacy capacities decreased significantly, and the decline of rural areas has become a real danger.

Today's fast-paced world has brought changes in recent decades. Tourism experts, locals and tourists are also aware that the continuous economic downturn of rural areas can result in the permanent disappearance of natural and social values. One of the possible tools to slow down and reverse this process is rural tourism development.

Definition of Rural Tourism

In international literature, several definitions (rural, agri-, agro-, farm-, green, and soft tourism) can be found for tourism supply in rural areas that are based on resources of local families. According to the European Union, **rural/village tourism** is a complex system in which, besides many components, agriculture also appears, but is not exclusively based on it.

Key features:

» local enterprises (ancillary activities);



- » less developed infrastructure compared to the city;
- » small facilities—no areas of large population density or development;
- » lots of outdoor activities and programmes;
- » part-time employment (workers are close to home);
- » great seasonality;
- » few guests—personal contact;
- » local atmosphere.

Agrotourism is an emerging form of village tourism and village tourism is part of rural tourism. According to László Csizmadia, **agrotourism** is a way of spending free time with activities based on crop and animal production, food processing, forestry, hunting and fisheries, and on their utilisation.

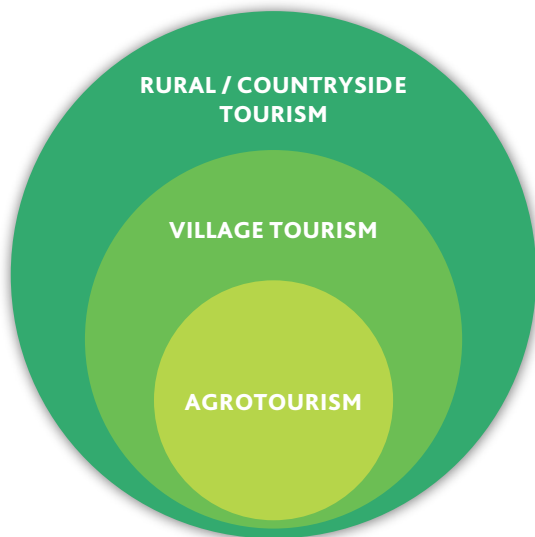
Rural tourism is indispensable for fulfilling the needs of domestic and foreign guests in village and rural environments, for establishing, presenting and preserving quality infrastructure and unique services, for preserving nature and the environment at the same time, for local people, institutions and businesses to im-

prove their living conditions with the cooperation of professional rural tourism providers.

The definition of the National Tourism Development Strategy 2005–2013 for rural tourism: hosting in rural areas (typically accommodations, catering, and programme services) by familiarising with the typical lifestyle and traditions of the countryside with the active participation of tourists.

According to the meaningful term of Szabó (2014), rural tourism is a supply based on local partnership to present the traditions of rural landscapes and settlements.

The concept of rural tourism is more than rural accommodations; it means tourism in areas where



- the attractions are scattered and are less attractive in themselves;
- the organisation and association of the local community is necessary for development;

FIGURE 15.

- tourism development and rural development can work synergistically.

Village tourism is not the same as a village accommodation.

Village accommodation provides the accommodation of a guest for a specified number of nights. At the accommodations, guests can satisfy their physical needs in a safe, appropriate environment during their stay, but the host does not actively intervene in the holiday programme (offering only programmes of local service providers, tourist attractions in the area). The owners of village accommodations participating in rural tourism are real hosts to their guests who are introduced to the everyday life, culture and customs of the local population, to the local culinary traditions and cuisine, and are asked to help in the preparation of their own meals (for instance, baking in a fire stone). Their attention is also raised to activities related to local culture (such as an open handicraft workshop) and natural values (locals often accompanying guests for the tours). The complex form of hospitality is complemented by comfort, safety and tidiness as a basic supply element. Briefly, the main features of rural tourism are nature's proximity and naturalness, preserved and cultivated traditions, rural hospitality and familiarity.

The main features of rural tourism are nature's proximity and naturalness, preserved and cultivated traditions, rural hospitality and familiarity.

vated traditions, rural hospitality and familiarity.

Rural tourism therefore reflects the cohesion of the community that may result in the emergence of seemingly valueless resources that can become marketable through the cooperation of local forces.

The Supply of Village Tourism

When clarifying the concept of village tourism, we have already mentioned its main features. We can see that it is a more complex concept than to have accommodations in a rural environment.

The hospitality of the hosts, the traditions of folk culture, natural values and naturalness are the attractions of rural tourism,



and its supply is manifested as a diversified totality of these elements. It will become a complex product only when there is an extra service or programme supply along with basic services.

The composition of programmes depends on the characteristics of the region, so if, for example, in the given destination cultural tourism is significant, cultural programmes will be predominantly included in the programme supply; if the region is famous for its unique gastronomy, then gastronomic programme supply is added.

Village tourism as an independent tourism product can be further broken down into unique tourist supplies and their forms of appearance. If we interpret it as a set of

types of tourism, we can easily infer from the subtypes (product types) the related types of services and the different programme opportunities.

The actors of the supply side of rural tourism (private and public sector) have the task of making these features attractive and receptive. This challenge can only be met if the human and material conditions are met for the particular attraction and service.

Village tourism not only supports the exploration and utilisation of natural and cultural resources, but also brings the city and the countryside closer to each other, which are moving away from each other in the 21st century.



FIGURE 16. TYPES AND GROUPS OF RURAL TOURISM
SOURCE: DÁVID 2007

..... *The Demand for Village Tourism*

Demand for the products of the tourism market depends on the internal motivation of those who wish to travel/relax, and on the existing socio-economic conditions. The demand for rural tourism is intensified by urban peoples' longing for silence, and harmony with nature, and a lot of people are motivated to get to know the treasures of folk customs, and the material ethnographic culture of the given destination. The popularity of rural tourism is also enhanced by the fact that the tourism market is extremely price-sensitive and the price-value ratio of rural tourism is one of the best in the diverse tourism supply. The price of a hotel room with similar quality can be higher by even 50–60 percent. It is not uncommon to have a convenient room with separate bathroom for just 20€, but it is also an important factor that the personal relationship with a friendly and welcoming host can

make the tourist experience more complex and unique.

The motivating factors of foreign tourists are different from that of domestic tourists'. Foreigners prefer to go to village accommodations where at least one foreign language is spoken by the host. Therefore, those who have a well-structured website that meets the expectations of the modern age and indicate the spoken foreign languages can expect a larger number of foreign guests. The national minority settlements, especially German minority villages, benefit from it. Not only because of the native level language knowledge, but also because with the network of



families and friends of those living there it is easier to establish a potential clientele, and the returning guests also mean a secure income.

In the case of rural tourism, domestic tourists are predominantly family members living in the city. In a family living in a city, it is usually the baby that brings back the need of parents and grandparents for fresh rural air. Not only families want to relax in the countryside, but young people, young adults, middle-aged and retired people also have individual needs. More and more people give up organised group trips. This process is called the individualisation of rural tourism, where the demand for individual care and service is strikingly visible. The desire for recreation and active leisure is also advantageous for the demand for rural tourism.

The guest expects an ever higher quality that is reflected in the price-value ratio as well. Individual and special accommodations and services, however, who meet high quality demands, will improve their position.



The Effect of Rural Tourism

The difficult rural economic situation resulted in decreasing production, which not only threatens farmers' livelihoods, but also has a serious impact on the standard of living of rural people. Village tourism can be a life-saving haven for a settlement. On the one hand, its economic impact is local, as it generates profits at local levels, and on the other hand, it is national, as it increases domestic exports by selling locally produced products.

From the point of view of employment policy, it contributes to improving the employment rate as it creates new jobs in the tourism



sector. The involvement of families in the reception of guests reduces unemployment in the given area, thus improving the living standards of locals. It provides not only the main source of living, but also the opportunity for some people to earn additional income.

Rural tourism may also have an impact on the settlement image.

Rural tourism uses and protects local natural and cultural values in an environment-friendly way, and helps to protect them.

Revenues from different taxes can be spent on infrastructure development.

Its capability to retain the population can be explained by the fact that family businesses, through decisions and investments in development policy, are able to prevent migration and the depopulation of the settlement.

We may not even need to detail the heritage conservation function of rural tourism. In addition to promoting the survival of folk traditions, it plays an important role in the cultivation and presentation of built legacies. Through the presentation of local products used in village catering, traditional farming methods and traditional rural lifestyle can be preserved.

Rural tourism, in a sustainable way, uses and protects local natural and cultural values in an environment-friendly way, and helps to protect them. It builds on the use of local resources and stimulates the production of local products and their utilisation in tourism (Szabó 2014)

7 useful pieces of advice for rural tourism service providers

1

Remember: you have to provide not only accommodations, but experience too! In this experience, you are the most important with your kindness, attentiveness, hospitality and with much of your work.

2

Village tourism is a mission, the mission to preserve the values of the countryside. Therefore, pay close attention to your heritage: the habits of people living there, traditional farming, values of folk art etc.!

3

The need for authenticity is a proven customer trend. Therefore, transforming your building should also serve the aim of preserving values! Modernise while taking into consideration the local architectural traditions!

4

Do not be afraid to recycle old furniture! It is cheaper to renovate beautiful old furniture than to buy one from Ikea, and your guests will be more pleased with it as well.

5

Village lofts hide treasures for a city man. Collect the 'unnecessary' objects and tools of your acquaintances. Create a mini museum! Interactively show this to your guests! Do not be surprised if the names are mixed up, sooner or later they will figure out what they are used for.

6

Despite being a good host, your service can become boring after a few days. For this reason, collect the sights and tourist attractions of the area! Provide information on them.

7

Rural accommodation comes with hearty rural hospitality. You must undertake to provide at least breakfast. And you mustn't disappoint your guests by getting food from a nearby supermarket. Instead, encourage your acquaintances to make delicious local products! You will almost certainly find honey, jam, eggs etc. nearby, but in a few years a complete supply can be established. You can also help to sell the products of locals: for them, it is income, for your guests it is a souvenir, and for you it is a satisfied guest. It's a win-win situation.

Changing Needs, New Trends: Alternative or Mainstream Tourism?



The tourism industry in today's sense came into being after World War II. Since the 1960s and 70s the phenomenon of tourism has become worldwide, and the number of tourists has become massive. More and more professionals have noted that this process has not only a positive economic impact, but can also cause negative environmental and societal changes. Over the past few decades, the amount of criticism regarding tourism has increased, mainly due to the unforeseen consequences of mass tourism.

A lot of people therefore conceived the idea to support some other supply or alternative to mass tourism. This is how the category of alternative tourism was born, which largely corresponds to the former form of tourism (before the birth of mass tourism), but a number of elements reflecting present challenges were added.

When it comes to delineating the two forms of tourism (mass tourism and alternative tourism), it signifies much more than one is used massively and the other is not.



The two forms come with different quality and value concepts (Table 3). The content of mass tourism is rather negative. The concepts that can be associated with it include congestion, mediocrity, superficiality, shallowness, copying, and so on. Alternative tourism has rather a positive content associated with the following concepts: uniqueness, depth, quality, responsibility, sustainability etc. The following table shows a comparative analysis of the two forms of tourism.

Characteristics of mass tourism	Characteristics of alternative tourism
<p>The phenomenon emerged in the second half of the 20th century. Popular destinations are visited by tourists of unimaginable masses. Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ hasty developments motivated by financial gains ■ standardised services ■ similar experiences ■ schematic ■ idleness, sunbathing ■ hedonism, pursuit of pleasure ■ barely any personal contact with locals ■ the role of the environment is negligible for obtaining experience ■ formation of tourist ghettos due to concentrated supply ■ dominates the tourism market 	<p>The "ancient form" of tourism, re-invigorated in the 1970s and 1980s with new elements. Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ result of a conscious development that considers the interests and values of locals ■ services satisfying individual needs ■ unique experience ■ uniqueness, segmented and varied supply, satisfying needs different from average ■ programmes requiring mental and physical activity ■ responsible consumption ■ authenticity ■ conscious behaviour of tourists ■ intense relations with locals ■ experience becomes complete due to the intensive connectedness with nature

TABLE 3. COMPARING MASS TOURISM AND ECOTOURISM
SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN WORK

The emergence of alternative tourism and sustainable tourism

From the 1960s and 1970s, the emergence of classic mass tourism has seen the adverse social and ecological phenomena created by tourism: the excessive use of certain areas caused significant environmen-

tal, social or economic damages to locals (for example, the high rise in real estate prices) (Puczkó-Rátz 2005). Naturally, experts and the more sensitive members of society reacted immediately to these processes. Krippendorf had already formulated his criticism of tourism in his 1975 book *Die Landschaftsfresser* (free translation is “Land Gluttony”). Jungk (1980) called traditional mass tourism “hard” tourism, while out-

lining another vision and creating a “soft” tourism concept. The thoughtfulness and value system of soft tourism have many features related with those of sustainable tourism that emerged later. Economic, ecological, sociological and political considerations are equally represented (Strasdas 1987). Soft tourism was an interesting and important social countermovement when the decisive trends in tourism were hedonism and the pursuit of pleasure.

The comparison of hard and soft tourism is shown in the table below.



Characteristics of hard tourism	Characteristics of soft tourism
Unthoughtful	Deliberate
Offensive	Defensive
Aggressive	Careful
Fast/hasty	Slow/sensible
Big leaps	Small steps
Uncontrollable	Monitored
Nonregulated	Regulated
Maximalist	Optimising
Exaggerated	Moderate
Short-term	Long-term
Particular interest	General interest
Controlled from outside	Self-defined
Weak resistance	Stronger resistance
Sectoral/thematic	Integrated
Price-oriented	Value-oriented
Quantity	Quality
Increase	Development

TABLE 4. CONTRASTING ELEMENTS OF HARD AND SOFT TOURISM
SOURCE: TURISZTIKAI ERŐFORRÁSOK [RESOURCES OF TOURISM]
(DÁVID ET AL 2007, P.40.)



Summarising the above, we can conclude that alternative tourism is a form of tourism that primarily aims to break with the negative effects of mass tourism, focuses on satisfying individual needs, and on the relations to the social environment, and pays attention to the principles of sustainable development. Alternative tourism has now gained deeper and more positive understanding. It is a kind of collective category that combines the manifestations of counter-mass tourism trends, such as soft, responsible and ecotourism.

Of these, soft and responsible tourism can be interpreted as forms of behaviour based on a specific value system, which the tourist conducts when using different product types, whereas ecotourism is an autonomous tourism product type with its own complex practices.

Mass tourism as a phenomenon obviously can not be eliminated, but hopefully the number of conscious tourists increases who choose responsible tourism that seeks respect for local people and the environment, and to preserve these values during their journeys. Alternative tourism is also a response to tourists who already had enough of mass-tourism's sketchy solutions and programmes, so they want unique and authentic experiences. Alternative tourism offers a deeper insight into the cultural and natural values of the destination visited, and gives an insight into the everyday life of the locals. Alternative tourism, therefore, represents the ecological values, the future generations and the interests of the local population as opposed to the strictly interpreted financial interest, while the tourist's experience will not be poorer but deeper and more meaningful.

One Version of Alternative Sectors: Ecotourism

The ecological footprint of humankind was so great in the 1980s that it already exceeded the Earth's long-term regenerative capacity. It is no coincidence that many internationally renowned scholars have already drawn attention to all the problems that today are most commonly referred to as global problems, which, unfortunately, have unquestionably become the major challenges of humankind. On all of these lists, the destruction of the environment has a prominent role, and regrettably, tourism also has a role in it. Tourism is the “industry of peace”, the “industry of the 21st century”, just to mention two of the most striking signs of the sector's significance. What was a privilege for most of the history of humankind, by now has become a mass phenomenon. Due to technical progress, universal right to paid leave, increasing cultural literacy, and other factors, significantly more tourists are travelling now than a few decades ago. In the years following World War II, the number of realised tourist arrivals in the world did not reach the present numbers of tour-

ists arriving to Hungary every year. Globally, the number of tourist arrivals has surpassed one billion, and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicts to reach one and a half billion by 2020 (Figure 17). Tourism has also become a major factor in the evolution of GDP as a traditional index of economic development, in some countries producing tenth or even more of the generated income.



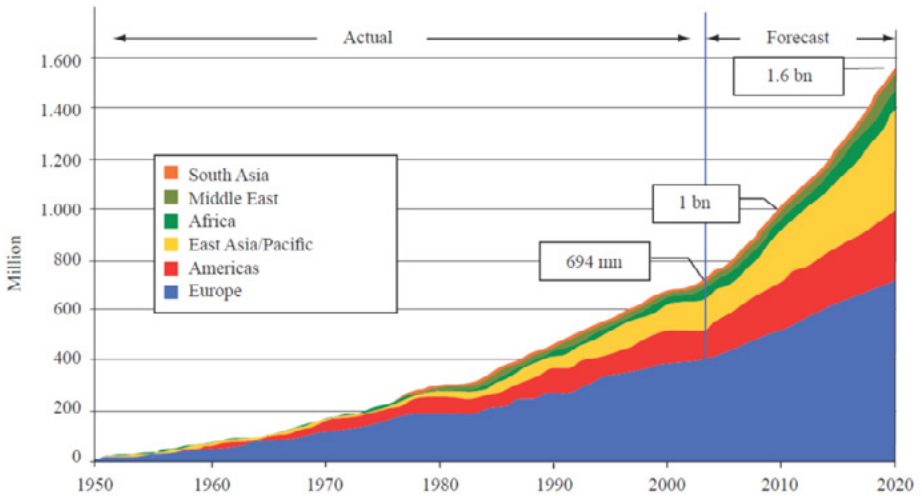


FIGURE 17. EVOLUTION OF TOURIST ARRIVALS ACROSS THE WORLD 1950–2020.
SOURCE: WWW.UNWTO.ORG

However, with the dynamic development of tourism, the negative impacts of the sector have also emerged shortly after the unilaterally emphasised positive effects. The further increase in the volume of tourism¹ means a fantastic business and economic opportunity, but it also entails a huge responsibility for the stakeholders, and, for the sake of sustainability, it requires a more environmentally conscious approach from the travel sector.

¹ It is projected that only the Chinese middle class as potential travellers will increase by about 300 million over the next decade, but the dynamic yet less intensive development of other BRICS countries will need to be considered as well.

The Effect of Tourism on the Environment

Prior to the industrial revolution, humanity travelled with environmentally friendly means, but with the industrial revolution, horse-drawn carts and sailing ships were replaced by coal-fuelled steam-driven vehicles. The interaction between tourism and the environment became stronger in the mid-twentieth century, when, among others, the motorisation resulted in mass tourism, and increased the number of people travelling for longer distances.



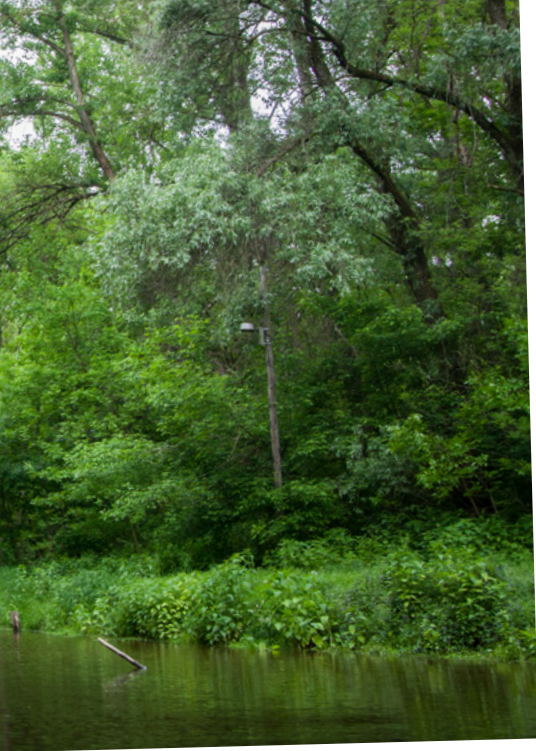
(Mass) tourism harms the environment. There are effects that can be clearly identified, have obvious or visible signs, such as waste, destruction and constructions. By contrast, identifying the indirect impacts is more difficult because the effect is exerted through intermediate factors, and is mixed with those appearing in our environment—for instance, the harmful emissions of means of transport.

The biggest environmental damages occur in the most popular tourist destinations. In several cases travelling is directed towards protected

areas and national parks, as unique treasures and natural rarities are displayed. In many cases, environmental stress is concentrated not only in space but also in time due to the seasonal characteristics of the tourism sector. The crowdedness of mass tourism and the traffic jams it entails often show their negative effects on different areas, and are harmful for the environment. Its forms are:

» **Pollution of the air:**

most vehicles are run by different petroleum products, the emission of which damages the



air and the ecosystem. Noise pollution is an artificial sound effect that interferes with the life of the living creatures;

» **Pollution of land:**

where tourists appear, they usually leave garbage behind. In holiday resorts, the use of disposable, less environmentally friendly devices is common. Soil can be chemically damaged along the busy traffic routes, while it is thickened by treading, and thus physically degrading the quality

of the soil. By removing the surface cover vegetation, soil erosion is enhanced—this may also occur after the creation of ski resorts—but the rocks are also damaged by the clipping of clamps into the walls, or by the breaking of stalactites during climbing;

» **Water pollution:**

in the activity of tourism, communal sewage can return uncleaned to nature. In baths, the use of sunbathing substances can pollute the waters, just like the oil and fuel emitted by crafts. Due to illegal building of piers and replenishments, i.e. arbitrary water reservation, the ratio of areas covered by reed and sedge has greatly decreased;

» **Damage to living organisms** due to collection, destruction, or because human presence disrupts animals', or prevents their natural reproduction. The construction of tourism infrastructure leads to the shrinking of the living space of living creatures, and as a result of increased road traffic due to tourism, animal deaths by cars may become more frequent;

» *Damage to the landscape:*

landslides due to ski slopes, lifts, roads, air pipes, horse-riding paths, and constructions that do not fit into the given area (landscape).

In most cases, by the damage of the environment we strain precisely the resource that offers the tourist attraction. It is not by chance that tourism has a distinctively negative nickname, which is “suicidal industry”.

Tourism can have a positive effect on the natural environment with proper control and management:

» By the *designation of protected areas*, they can be saved from further damage (not just because of tourism);

» In the area of tourism destinations, the *demand of the population and the local government to embellish their environment*, establish parks and plant flowers;

» By the deliberate *introduction of plant species in the area*, the flora is enriched;

» *Education related to tourism*

contributes greatly to the change of attitude and to the development of an environmentally conscious attitude;

» *Infrastructure along the tourist paths* can be interpreted as a positive impact that does not disturb living creatures in the area, but has beneficial effect on the conservation of natural conditions, such as information boards, tourist signs, garbage collectors, designated fireplaces, or the building of belvederes. With these paths, the size of the area visited by tourists can be controlled, so treading and damaging can be greatly reduced.

An Answer for the Challenges: Ecotourism

At the Rio Summit in 1992, most countries in the world signed an agreement on the protection of species and natural habitats. The contract signed in Rio contained the “Precautionary Approach”, stating that resource utilisation should only be allowed if the user can demon-



strate that their activity does not endanger biodiversity, i.e. the use of natural resources shall be monitored and planned for long-term sustainability. This must be taken into account in all economic activities, including tourism. Sustainable tourism and ecotourism have emerged from the recognition of the sensitivity and popularity of natural phenomena, and that the interactions between guests and hosts, as well as the sensitivity of the cultural heritage are fundamental conditions for sustainability.

UNWTO has developed the concept of sustainable tourism,

and the definition is used by the European Union as well: “The development of sustainable tourism satisfies the needs of today’s tourists and tourist receiving areas while preserving and developing future opportunities. The pursuit of sustainable tourism promotes forms of resource management that can meet economic, social and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, basic ecological processes, biodiversity, and living systems.”

According to the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) Ecotourism Program, “ecotourism is a journey and a visit to the environment in relatively undisturbed natural areas, the enjoyment of their natural, historical and cultural values in order to save preserve them by reducing the adverse effects of the visit and by giving the local population social and economic benefits”.

According to the Ecotourism section of the Conference, “Ecotourism is a collection of concepts and an approach. As a collection

Ecotourism is a journey and a visit to the environment in relatively undisturbed natural areas.



concept, it denotes different forms of tourism that are based on the sustainable use of natural biological resources within the bearing capacity of the given ecosystem. (...) Ecotourism is also an approach that aims to make all forms of tourism sustainable so that tourism can contribute to the preservation or restoration of ecosystems, and not to have negative impacts on natural resources.”

It should be noted that many other definitions (ecotourism, soft tourism, green tourism, gentle tourism, natural tourism) have also emerged to describe the phenomenon. However, in terms of the content, condition and operating circumstances of

ecotourism, all definitions agree.

Optimally, all tourism activities and all market segments should take ecotourism as an approach. This is particularly important for tourism based on natural and cultural heritage, where there is a potentially higher risk of damage to the environment and to the socio-economic structure of the destination, not to mention that as tourism will reach more and more people in the coming decades, there will inevitably be more pressure on the territories concerned. Below, we present the benefits—economic, environmental and societal—of sustainable tourism to tourists and the population of the host country.

Economic Advantages

From the point of view of the visitor, we can talk about economic advantage when visitors think that they received something valuable for their money they paid to participate in that programme. It happens when there are competitive businesses and good tourist infrastructure in the visited area.

The economic advantage of hosts comes from created jobs and the diversification of the local economy, which makes the local community less dependent on a limited number of job opportunities. Sus-

tainable tourism leads to cooperation between enterprises and to their specialisation, which results in greater efficiency and thus higher profitability.

Environmental Advantages

From the point of view of visitors, we can talk about environmental benefits when they experience the beauty of the landscape. This is the case when natural and historic areas are available to them and if they have the opportunity to pursue activities in nature or cultural activities. These activities should be organised in a way that visitors accept the measures taken to safeguard the cultural and natural heritage.

From an environmental point of view, we can talk about environmental benefits when tourism is viewed as a means of protecting nature and cultural heritage. For the environment it is beneficial if tourism enhances the environmentally friendly production and consumer habits of tourists, and the local community.

Societal Advantages

It is a societal advantage for visitors if they feel at home, because tourism respects the lifestyle and culture of their hosts. Peace, tranquillity, prosperity, intellectual



Sustainable tourism should encourage personal contact and cross-cultural exchange of values.

stimulation etc. can be achieved if social factors are taken into account when developing tourism. Sustainable tourism should encourage personal contact and cross-cultural exchange of values so that the visitor can gain more knowledge of the place they are visiting. Hopefully this will contribute to a better understanding of different cultures and peoples.

Hosts can achieve better, more durable and greater number of workplaces to improve their living standards. If hosts do receive these benefits, the level of social justice is also rising. Hosts thus perceive that they are part of the community they live in. In this way, relationships between visitors and hosts are developed, in which hosts want to share their experiences with guests.

The Hungarian National Ecotourism Development

Strategy emphasises the **important role of national parks** in Hungarian ecotourism. In recent years, the number of visitors to national parks has increased dramatically. Growth is due to expanding programme offering, newly established facilities, and to the improvement of existing facilities.

There is a significant disproportionality in the number of visitors to national parks: the most frequented ones had 10 times more visitors than less frequented ones. National parks seem to be popular where tourism is otherwise strong. This also shows that it is not necessarily the “hard-core” ecotourist who visits such



establishments. The target audience of ecotourism is far from homogeneous; they are motivated to take part in ecotourism activities by different factors. The aforementioned National Ecotourism Development Strategy classifies tourists interested in ecotourism into the following segments:

- *devoted ecotourist;*
- *ecotourist;*
- *active green tourists;*
- *occasional green tourists.*

At the top of the scale, we find devoted nature conservation tourists making up only a few percent of all ecotourists, who are willing to give up the comfort of traditional tourism services to observe a unique natural experience (such as rare species). For them, underdeveloped rural areas of our country are the most valuable areas due to their biodiversity on the one hand, and to their underdevelopment as a result of political and economic reasons on the other, offering the mere existence of the large untouched areas, and also an aesthetic experience. It is not negligible that such things can be “sold” to them that are not expressively attractive, or even repulsive to the average tourist: the lack of “civilisation”.

Then, the ecotourist expects some amenities, while the main motivation of green and especially occasional green tourists is outside ecotourism: they are staying at an ecotourism infrastructure with different motives but can be tempted to participate in ecotourism programmes with relatively high attractive ecotourism infrastructure and tourist attraction (visitor centres, showrooms, nature trails).

The proportion of individual



segments within all visitors is estimated by the Hungarian National Ecotourism Development Strategy based on various surveys as follows:

- *occasional green tourists: 50–60%;*
- *active green tourist or “outdoor” tourists: 20–30%;*
- *ecotourists: 10–15%;*
- *devoted ecotourists 5–10%*

(Pannon Egyetem–Aquaprofit Zrt. 2008, pp. 61–65.).

Strengthening the Role of Ecotourism in Rural Development

Strengthening Ecotourism and Thus Its Potential

Over the last decades, the environmental status of the Carpathian countries has considerably improved in many respects. Due to the closure or modernisation of former industrial plants and barracks, the decrease in the use of chemical substances in agriculture – partly for financial reasons –, the modernisation of heating systems and cars, significantly less harmful substances are produced than before the 1990s.

All in all, it can be said that surface waters are in a more favourable state than they were in the decade after the change of regime. It is, however, another question that the improvement is not primarily caused by strengthening environmental awareness of the population or economic organisations, but rather by the disappearance of industrial facilities and thus their polluting effects after the regime change.

The growth of biodiversity, the return of indigenous species and the increasing stock of disappearing species are positive developments.

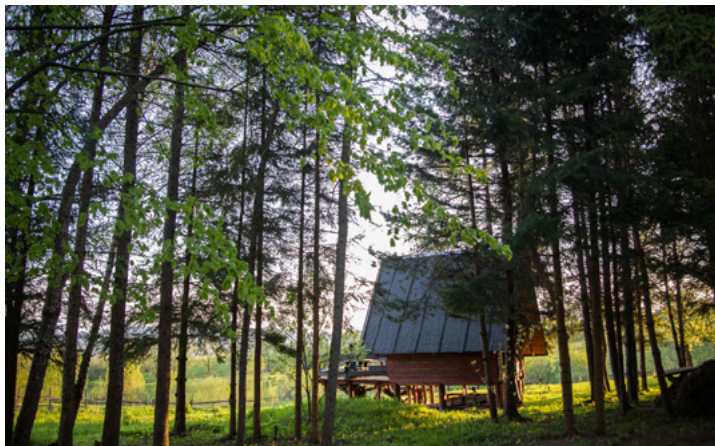


Establishing Further Protected Areas

The ecotourism potential of countries can not only be preserved, but can also be improved. The purpose of conservation is to maintain the current state and improve the amount or quality of the value (optimally both). Naturally, not only nature conservation and ecotourism based on natural values, but also the aspects of local economy and society, must be met during the developments.

An increase in ecotourism potential may be achieved by increasing the size of areas suitable for ecotourism, by making an area protected or by changes in the use of land, which is beneficial for the purposes of ecotourism.

The increase in size can also take place due to discovery. It may seem strange that some countries still have natural values to discover, but this is the case: in Hungary for example, some natural values are under “ex lege” protection, i.e. they become automatically protected values when they are discovered. “Ex lege” protected natural values are wetlands, saline lakes, caves, springs, gullies or hillforts. Among them, the



category of caves is constantly expanding by the exploration of new caves and the gradual expansion of existing ones by making them visitable.

Development of ecotourism supply

The following can constitute the ecotourism of a country:

- visitor centres;
- exhibition centres;
- nature trails, hiking trails;
- observatories and belvederes;
- cycling and equestrian routes, services;
- tour guiding;



- organised programmes;
- nature schools;
- accommodations;
- trade;
- equipment;
- information service, information and communication;
- professional background.

The Strategy addresses the development of ecotourism in a separate chapter. Among the articulated priorities, supply development occupies the second place (development of tourism infrastructure, supply, human resources, related products

and services, marketing, sales, visitor management, interpretation, experience elements, organisational background, and regional management). The developments are tailored to the identified segments of ecotourism demand:

- » Development of supply targeting occasional green tourists: providing professional guided programmes to suit the need of the target groups; theme guided tours (herbs, rocks, mushrooms, berries, spices, etc.); rental of sports equipment (for example, bicycle); sale of souvenirs; the sale of locally made products, bio foods and spices; selling local products at ca-

terings; organising various types of recreational events based on the existing capabilities; organisation of chamber arrangements—based on the products of the primary producers;

- » development of active supply, differentiated according to life-cycle groups;
- » development of ecotourism supply, differentiated according to life-cycle groups;
- » developing theme routes at national and regional level.

In the 1980s, the certification system of tourism products and accommodations based on ecological aspects was established as sustainability and green principles became a priority. These trademarks demonstrate that accommodations are in accordance with ecological principles—similarly to organic foods, it is appreciated by guests in services as well. The trademark is a guarantee for quality to the guest; it is a tool for the host to reach its future guests, and it is a help for tourism to promote environmental education (South Transdanubian Ecotourism Cluster qualification system 2011).

The use of certification systems and their associated trademarks and logos are particularly important in the marketing of ecotourism, as ecotourists can choose between potential targets, products, service providers and programmes. It has therefore become necessary to establish a unified ecotourism certification system, to which entrepreneurs directly and indirectly assisting ecotourism can join. Such a certification system was developed by the South Transdanubian Ecotourism Cluster for five categories:

- accommodations;
- gastronomic services;
- programme service providers;
- festivals and events;
- other tourism service providers.

During the development of the certification system, already existing systems around the world were examined by experts, and after becoming familiar with their useful elements, they developed a system that can be applied in Hungary. Nearly thirty South Transdanubian providers joined the rating system (www.gyeregyalog.hu). Experience can be adapted elsewhere.



..... *Linking Ecotourism with Other Tourism Products*

It has almost become a cliché of tourism literature that the customer expects more and more intense experience for their money. Experience is increasingly becoming the centre in all sectors of tourism, whether it is about accommodation, catering, destinations, etc.—and ecotourism cannot be an exception. Michalkó defines tourism as “an experience with a change in environment” (Michalkó 2007), while the spread of the hedonistic lifestyle as a megatrend (Törőcsik 2011) also indicates the strengthening of the experience economy. Tourism is one

of the strongest sectors of experience economy (Zátori 2014).

Most tourism products do not consist of only a single product/experience element, but there are several simultaneous motivating factors for tourists. That is, the more complex the attractiveness of an area is, the more guests with different motivations it can satisfy, the more it can count on success.

The ecotourism offer can be enhanced by the creation of common complex tourism packages with other tourism forms. On the one hand, this is needed in ecotourism, because currently only a limited scope of guests considers natural attractions as the primary destination. On the other hand, ecotourism supply can complement the regional, as they can be destinations of single-centre



trips, and can offer special, small, segment-specific programmes—such as photo tours, animal watching, adventure tours (www.eturizmus.pt.e.hu).

Ecotourism is an excellent way of complementing the services of rural tourism, active and health tourism:

- » some activities of active tourism are closely linked to ecotourism. The Hungarian ecotourism strategy also discusses “eco-active”—cycling, pedestrian and water tourism—as an opportunity for environmentally friendly change, a basic principle of ecotourism;

- » rural and agrotourism, local product sales: ecotourists can revitalise local craftsmanship indirectly, as craftsmen can expand the supply by offering local handicrafts in green shops of nature conservation exhibitions while supporting the local community. Local products should be sold in visitor centres, and local food products should be preferred in catering establishments. The preservation of authenticity must be guaranteed and maintained by trademarks. In this context, the rural development department and the national park directorates have already come up with initiatives (national park logo products). The interest of ecotourists can help to preserve and even revitalise





traditions and holidays. Ecotourists also have a beneficial effect on local cultural programmes. Private accommodations are another feature of rural tourism that are closely linked to ecotourism. Rural accommodation is an important element of the ecotourism supply in many respects: they are linked to ecotourism in village and rural areas; the local community is supported by their use; rural accommodations, in their nature and design, fit into the image of ecotourism; they have small capacities, which is also a basic principle of ecotourism;

- » health tourism: a fundamental condition for the development of this tourism product is healthy environment, the diversity of natural and landscape conditions, their preservation and sustainable utilisation. If the improvement of conditions for ecotourism is linked to the development of health tourism, the goal of improving the quality of life of domestic population and the importance of a healthy lifestyle can be better achieved.

7 useful pieces of advice for ecotourism providers

1

Pay attention to the details! Real ecotourists have a holistic view, and expect everything to be ecological. As much as possible, strive for local supplies, from food ingredients to furniture. Be authentic in what you do!

2

Accordingly, local products shall dominate meals as well! They should not only be local, but healthy, chemical-free, and should come from ecological producers.

3

Discover your creativity and find an interesting ecotourism site at your place! Some good ideas: a night tour under the full moon with a local guide; collecting mushrooms with competent escort; observation of birds or wild animals, possibly photography etc.

4

Get to know the edible plants of the area! Share your knowledge with your guests, collect plants together and use them for your meals! You will have great success!

5

Get together with local service providers and develop a nature trail! There must be some good ideas to combine with an interesting topic.

6

Know the rules of treasure hunt, and create a trail for it!

7

Join forces with others, engage in community development, explore the values of adjacent villages together, and organise your own green trips!

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