

UNWTO Conference

“Creating competitive advantage for your destination”

Some conclusions

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Key conclusions – ‘take home value’

- Started with the concepts of destination management – understanding what we mean by the term
- Then many good examples of destination management in practice – from the rural areas dominated by SMEs (Gyenesdiás, Írott-kő Natúrpark, Loch Ness and the Isle of Arran) to the cities of Santiago de Compostela and Wrocław
- ... and bringing together the SMMEs to work together (Northumberland and Durham in NE England) – giving them critical mass to attract the attention of the marketplace – and their own DMOs
- The example of Spain where the process of destination management planning is now well now well structured, linked into a national framework and backed up by quality assurance

Key conclusions – ‘take home value’

- We heard also about the power of new events to generate new business when and where it is required
- potentially to help reposition and rebrand the destination in the marketplace
- Manfred from Gratz told us about the importance of fulfilling the needs of residents as well
- and the fact that Graz was losing the long-term value of its time as Cultural Capital by not following through with full commitment
- Also, the power of celebrity – Ruanda, South Africa and Aviemore – to generate awareness and image

Key conclusions – ‘take home value’

- The importance of Strategy and Vision – where do we want to be in five years, in ten years, in fifteen years in the development and management of our destinations for tourism
- We heard from Paul Garrison about the need to understand more about our potential markets and the experiences they seek; to identify the market segments that are likely to be most productive for us and target them in a focused and cost-effective way
- Our segmentation needs to be more sophisticated – based on values and motivations, rather than geography and socio-demographic profile

Key conclusions – ‘take home value’

- In an increasingly competitive marketplace, it is essential to differentiate your destination from the competition. That was the powerful message from Graz – and from Mike and Terry
- To do this, you need know exactly what your competition is doing and identify those things that you have or could have that are of special interest and appeal.
- Links to the issue of brand

Key conclusions – ‘take home value’

- The brand: not a name, a slogan, a strap line or a logo, but a **promise** that is, or should be:
 - Relevant to its audience, appealing to the emotions
 - Differentiated from its competition
 - Compelling in its impact
 - Delivered consistently over time
- It is not a bolt-on to the marketing strategy; it is the essence of it
- Examples of destination branding from Graz and from India and Egypt – demonstrating appeals to the emotion, rather than promoting specific facilities

Key conclusions – ‘take home value’

- The Internet is becoming increasingly powerful and DMOs should focus on developing integrated e-business systems, where data can be pooled and shared
- e-Marketing, including CRM must be a key element – perhaps THE key element – in any DMO's marketing programme
- DMOs now face a major challenge from the huge growth user generated content. In the face of this, how can DMOs continue to have relevance in the marketplace?
- Another new frontier is electronic distribution to visitors travelling to and within the destination

Key conclusions – ‘take home value’

Terry Stevens & Yvonne Crook - rules of destination management:

1. Market research – market intelligence well disseminated
2. Vision and strategy
3. Critical mass
4. Partners and strategic alliances – and innovation
5. Branding – standing out in a crowded market
6. PR – getting other people to tell your story

Key conclusions – ‘take home value’

7. Making for most of IT
8. Capturing hearts and minds – creating stories
9. Creating the sense of place
10. Delivering the promise – satisfaction guaranteed
11. Innovation – keeping ahead of the game – winners don't stand still
12. Collective social responsibility – the more you give, the more you give back

Key conclusions – ‘take home value’

- Climate change
 - Implications for mountain destinations
 - Implications for air travel
- The debate
 - A focus on understanding and satisfying the market
 - versus
 - A focus on managing and coordinating the destination
- We need BOTH!
- Understanding what will motivate the market to come, differentiating what we are doing from our competitors
- And then managing our destination to deliver it