

## ROMANIAN TOURISM PROMOTION

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### **Abstract:**

*The tourism industry is unlike any other because, instead of a product, you are selling a place and all the things it has to offer. You are competing with the entire world every time you promote tourism in a given destination, and this high level of competition demands a creative and unique approach. To be successful, your marketing should constantly put forth the best possible image of your destination, while creating interest on a broad scale in as many ways as possible. Romania has to conceive an efficient promotional mix in order to attract more tourists.*

**Key words:** *tourism promotion, Romania, marketing*

**JEL classification:** L83, O13.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The promotion in tourism stands in an ensemble of efforts of communication which regards the permanent transmission, on different channels, of some messages destined to inform also the potential clients but also the touristic operators about the characteristics of the touristic products and services offered, with the purpose of consolidating a positive image and cultivate a favorable attitude towards this and the firm, and also to determine, in the mentality and customs of buying and consumption of the tourists, convenient modifications of the suppliers' industry (transmitter or beneficiary of the messages).

Seems natural to attach to this attempt of defining the observation that, in general – although now - the touristic promotion undergoes a process of perfecting and adapting, being necessary to act towards adapting the strategies by the virtue of positioning between a product with complex characteristics and the permanent evolution and a consumer with a diverse motivation and an accentuated flexibility of the demand, in the conditions of a market which is a continual transformation. So, from the product to the consumer, by means of the specific market, these essential factors from the "route" of touristic promotion, mark out the striking characteristic, complexity and the tendency of changing (evolution). That is why, the elaboration of a strategy for promotional communication at the level of the touristic enterprise, integrating it in the global strategy, conceiving a promotional mix in order to realize in an efficient way the instruments of the promotion, which constitute the premises and rigours for coordinated actions, coherent, interdependent (intelligently correlated) in this essential domain for a touristic operator. (Nedelea, 2003)

### **2. TOURISTIC PROMOTION - CONCEPT, PARTICULARITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

Taking in consideration the main role of the performance in the touristic domain, the particularities of the promotion in tourism are being influenced by the characteristics of being intangible, variable, inseparable and perishableness of the services. We remark these difficulties with which the marketers from the tourism are being confronted in their approach of presenting a tangible product, not created in the moment of promotion and which can vary regarding this moment.

The promotional activities in tourism need important investments due to the large geographic areas of the touristic markets, of the manifestation of a bitter international competition

and the intangible character of the touristic product. From this last perspective, it can be said that the intangible nature of the touristic services leads to the growth of the importance of the promotional strategy, the main element of this, consisting in the investment (partnership) with tangible attributes of the services, by connecting them to certain specific benefits. In this way, the communication media need to suggest the rapidity and the efficiency of the performed services by the touristic agencies, the high level of comfort assured by them, the used images reproducing the exterior and interior aspect of some accommodation structures, restaurants and modern entertainment centers.

In hospitality, due to the dominant part of the intangible elements in the structure of the touristic product, *the image of the touristic offer*, which corroborates the ones of the firm (welcoming unit, travel agency, etc.) of the services and product, and also of the touristic destinations, influences in a definite way the buying decision of the consumers. The image that they create regarding the places, objectives and human communities which will be visited, at the qualitative level and the diversity of the services, contribute to the development or the diminution of the degree of attractiveness of a touristic area (spa, area, country) Plus, we consider that is necessary that any image of the offer or of the touristic product be integrated and harmonized with the global image of the region and country which consists the specific destination.

Let us mention in the context, that, beyond the promotional and systematical efforts, at the formation of a touristic image, concur a series of factors associated to the beneficiary: touristic information accumulated by this one (before and during the voyage), the way in which the tourist will evaluate (through the personal exigency and anterior experience) used services during the trip and in the touristic destination, the estimations or even judgments in accordance with his personal values.

The sources of the touristic information are diverse, but the main impact has it the personal communications. In this way, the tourist' decision regarding the destination, optimum period for the trip and the touristic agency which can mediate the voyage, is being influenced by the recommendations and information usually subjective of the persons from his company (social channels) which have "experimented" the respective touristic services. At this there comes also the information obtained from the touristic units (voyage agencies, hospitality structures, touristic offices), expert channels (opinion starters, recommendations), also through impersonal communicational media (media, "atmosphere" and "events").(Nedelea, 2003)

In their concerns to offer the potential tourists the possibility of finding out in detail the structure and the components of the services and touristic products and to cultivate them a highly convincing image regarding the vacation destinations, the touristic firms need to assure a complex and multidirectional information of the potential clients, depending on the segments of the market to which they are addressing to. During this, in the initial approach it must be regarded de fact that the image of the touristic product which is being promoted is influenced especially by the quality (comfort level, classification category) and the diversity of the complementary modular services, also in the level of attractiveness of the touristic sights (natural, cultural resources).

A promotional factor with a high importance in tourism is the degree in which the touristic image, created as a result of the promoting actions, corresponds also to the expectations and preferences of the consumers, but also with the realities with which they come in contact during the voyage. Well-known the importance of the image in promoting the touristic product, we observe the apparition in the case of some firms of a tendency to resort at the creation of an ideal image (unreal) of their offer. Falling into the temptation of such a policy leads without any delay, to risks, there may come up some negative effects on the activity of the touristic operator. It is easy to understand that the discrepancy between the positive image deceiving to the tourist and the inferior reality of the expectations involves natural disillusionment and, as a consequence, to renounce in the future at the respective acquisition (or the other proposed by the same) or, it can get at the critical situation that the tourists solicit compensations. Depending on the degree of satisfaction provoked by the usage of the touristic product, its beneficiary can recommend (or, on the contrary will make a "promotion", in the negative sense) to the persons of his entourage to that package, that destination

or intermediate travel agency. As a consequence, we consider that it is extremely important that the marketers from the touristic domain take into account the tendency of the consumers of services, in general, and of the tourists in particular, of giving a much more importance to the communication by the word of mouth, in the detriment of the ones paid by different touristic operators. The force of persuasion and influence of the personal communication of an individual that has consumed a certain touristic product is considerable due to the credibility of the transmitter, who, in the opinion of the receiver, is objective and cannot be suspected of a bond without any firm that offers touristic services. Hereby, we appreciate that, assuring first of all, the satisfaction at the most high level of exigencies and preferences of the tourists, is recommended that the staff implicated in such an activity suggest them (even through discreet inducement) to make an oral promotion, telling to their friends about the satisfactions that they had during the voyage and holiday destinations.

The whole communicational system of the supplier touristic industry must contribute at contouring of a specific identity in order to emerge it from obscurity and differentiated from the competition. A specific identity in the public awareness means, of course, more than a simple and commune image, without any informative and prestige reference. It can be realized through systematic steps, starting with the formation of a distinct physical identity. Associated with the fame, once obtained, the identity will facilitate the spreading of a positive public image, sustained continuously by physical elements easy to identify (brand, symbols, logos, etc).

It also seems important to accentuate that the messages, the whole communication destined to the promotion of a touristic product, to be more efficient, must have at its base the research of the needs and motivations of the potential tourists. The touristic image offered to the public becomes "productive" in realizing the purpose for which it has been conceived only if it demonstrates implicitly that the object of the communication (a certain product, destination or touristic sight, range of services) is being adapted at the needs and preferences of the tourists. Plus, temporarily, the actions of communication in tourism are being positioned in the period before selling the product (the purpose of the promotion being the acceptance by the potential tourists) but also in the period of the consumption (when it is wanted to stimulate the commerce of complementary touristic services during the voyage or at the place of the vacation).

*The purposes of the promotion policy* in tourism are being formulated differently, depending on the stadium in which the regarding potential consumers are being situated, aiming to change them from the cognitive or emotional stadium, to the behaviorism, meaning at the final act of acquisition of the touristic product.

1. Within the framework of the *cognitive stadium* it is pursued to draw the attention of the potential consumer upon the existence of a certain touristic agency and also of its offer, being desirable formulations such as:

- the growth of the notoriousness of the welcoming unit "X" from 15% to 25 % within the European tourists, during this year, in comparison with the last one.
- informing of almost 70% of the present clients of the tourist agency "Y" regarding the launch of a new touristic product ("equestrian circuit to discover the rural area of Maramures").

2. In the *emotional stadium*, the purpose of the touristic promotion may be, also, defined in statistic terms, existing sociological means of measuring the options based on feelings, attitudes, preferences:

- during the present year, the consumers' proportion who have a favorable attitude towards the suppliers' firm will increase from 20 % at 30%.
- the development from 10% at 25% of the proportion of the potential consumers which prefer the station "X", to other ones.

3. In the *behavior stadium*, the parameters of anticipation and engagement (in the end, control of the achievement of the objective) are found in precise formulations of some concrete objectives;

- realization until the month of April of the reservations at accommodation for the summery season in proportion of 65%;
- the growth with 10% of the number of the circuits sold in comparison to the last year;

By the anterior examples, it is obvious, we believe, an observation: in order of realizing a control of the efficiency in the advertising investments, it needed to avoid the conception by the marketers from tourism of some promotional objectives with general character, without quantification, of a certain type: "developing the touristic circulation towards the destination " X", by creating it a favorable opinion among the potential consumers from the areas that send out touristic fluxes". Instead of such a formulation, I will prefer a definition of the action objective of communication, such as: "developing in the next 12 months with 30% of the number of German tourists who spend their vacation in the Neptun station."

Without any doubt, in the practice of the touristic activity, "the repertoire" without elements of quantification is reach. Contains also formulations such as: "the development of the consumer's interest from the market with a touristic sending potential in comparison with the products given by the touristic agency or service provider..."; the stimulation of the touristic consumption and periods of extra-season (preferably: "the development with 25% in comparison with the last year of the tourists number accommodated in a welcoming unit from the seaside during the winter period"); the realization of high coefficients of using the touristic capacities (of transport, accommodation, alimentation, entertainment); the growth of the effective demand of complementary services and so of the medium touristic costs for the one day of the holiday. Without denying the value of the directions of action, such "objectives" have an efficiency inversely proportional with their level of generality and validity (for any similar touristic entity). Therefore, well-founded on a pertinent exploration of the market and on deep knowledge of the offer, of its trumps, the purposes of the promotion policy are, in our opinion, realist projections, which stimulate concentrated efforts, of some quantifying achievement limit (also in the initial state but also in the final one).

Similar to other domains that suppose some efforts of the same manner, the components of the proportional mix in tourism include touristic advertising, public relations, direct marketing and trade power. Everyone from these categories of means of communication present, however, a number of particularities, less numerous in comparison to the ones that marked the differences in the policy of price and product.

### 3. THE PROMOTION OF TOURISM IN ROMANIA

In the field of communication and promotion of tourism in Romania, we mention the follow objectives:

- To reconsider domestic tourism place in the framework of the Romanian tourism and increase the temptations of romanian tourist products in the internal market;
- Boosting intern domestic circulation;
- The number increase of holidays spent by the Romanians in the country;
- Increase the share of expenditure for the practice of tourism in the country in the structure of the budgets of population expenses;
- Many consumer segments attraction from both inside and outside the country, and the adaptation of the promotional strategy to the specificity of every markets;
- Regain markets lost after 1989 and penetration into new markets;
- Loyalty to current tourist clientele;
- The creation of a suggestive image of the Romanian tourism, both in terms of the potential and the social, cultural, psychological characteristics specific to our people;
- Suggesting an offer image that can satisfy a diversified range of preferences;
- The communication of an exact image of the romanian tourist product, highlighting the uniqueness character of tourist offer, reflected by a diverse relief, in a natural environment, unpolluted and uncluttered and the multitude of culture elements: folklore, monuments, habits, traditions;
- To highlight the representative products of our tourist offer: seaside, balnear and mountain resorts, regions with cultural attractions with historical monuments and art.

The strategic objectives in the medium term include:

- The restructuring programs and promotional tools for stimulating the interests of the population for tourist destinations in country;
- Ensure a large access of population to the tourism practices in Romania through the promotion of a system of tariff facilities at the agents economic level, and social protection measures at the state level;
- The awareness by various educational ways, at the level of the potential customers, of the of tourist product qualities and its competitiveness, compared with similar products on the world market;
- The increase in the tourist internal flows and their development in space, respectively enlarge the number of areas, regions, resorts, etc. trained in domestic tourism, and in time, by increasing the tourist season duration;
- The increase of stays average duration, currently situated at a low level (3,3 total days), especially for the area of seaside (6.6 days) and spa area (7.5 days), considered to be like stay high tourist products;
- Increase in average revenues / tourist. (Nedelea, 2003)

In order to achieve these objectives, it is necessary to define differentiated strategy of tourist products according to the following:

- The intensity of real (actual) and potential demand;
- The level of development of tourism products, correctly reflecting the price-quality ratio;
- The level of addressability of tourism products.

#### **4. THE STRATEGY TO PROMOTE CULTURAL TOURISM**

Taking into account that the cultural history potential of Romania is insufficiently known, the general objective of the promotion strategy of this product is to raise awareness of potential tourists about the attractiveness of this product, in order to increase the number of tourists and the incomes of this type tourism.

The main directions of action to promote cultural tourism can be:

- The establishment of the cultural heritage (historical monuments, museums, written culture, visual arts, etc.) which can be valorified by tourism;
- The promotion of thematic touristic circuits to highlight the monumental ensembles, the objectives of high tourist interest, but also less known and of great value, differentiated according to the specific market to which they are addressed: students, pensioners, professionals in different fields (art, architecture, music), scientists, etc .;
- Attracting some journalists, creators of opinion polls, editors of television who can realise the advertising to promote cultural tourism with the support of the companies travel agencies of the country;
- Joint realization with the Ministry of Culture and the local communities involved in educational actions informing and raising the interest in this form of tourism (symposiums, conferences, colloquia, advertising exhibitions, other events specific to cultural tourism);
- The promotion of new products for tourists which to put in value the main cultural traditional manifestations;
- To improve and diversify the advertising materials for the promotion of cultural tourism (leaflets, brochures, specialized guides, video cassettes, etc.).(Nedelea, 2003)

Promotion in tourism consists of a set of communication approaches aimed at permanently transmitting, in various ways of messages aimed at informing potential customers and tour operators about the characteristics of the tourism products and services offered for sale in order to strengthen a positive image and to cultivate a favorable attitude towards them and firm and to

determine, And the purchasing and consumption habits of tourists, convenient changes to the bidding company (sender or recipient of messages). Promotional activities in tourism require important investments because of the large geographical expanse of tourist markets, the manifestation of fierce international competition and the intangible character of the tourist product. From this last perspective, it can be said that the intangible nature of tourism services leads to an increase in the importance of the promotional strategy, the main element of which is to invest (associate) with tangible attributes of services by linking them to specific benefits. Thus, the means of communication must suggest the speed and efficiency of the services provided by the tourist units, the high degree of comfort provided by them, the used images rendering the exterior and interior appearance of some accommodation structures, restaurants and modern leisure centers. In the hospitality industry, due to the dominant weight of the intangible elements in the tourism product, the image of the tourist offer, which corroborates those of the company (reception structure, travel agency, etc). Similar to other areas of the same nature, the components of the promotional mix in tourism include tourism advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and sales force.



Source: [www.romanianmonasteries.org](http://www.romanianmonasteries.org)

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

From the viewpoint of the promotion particularities in tourism we can mention the fact that, due to the dominant proportion of the intangible elements in the formation of the touristic product, the image of the touristic offer, which corroborates the ones of the operator, services and products but also of the touristic destinations, influence in a definite manner the buying decision of the consumers.

One of the conclusions regarding this element of the market mix is that the tourism advertising may regard the familiarization of the potential consumers with a destination, a service provider (welcoming unit) or tourism agency, in order to attract them, prolong the seasonal period of the touristic activities, launching a new product or entering a new touristic market, promoting a favorable image of the touristic offer.

As a result of the intangibility of the touristic product, we observe that the advertising them is difficult to realize, no matter the advertising media – if it is printed (press, flyers, guides, touristic posters) or electronic, audio-visual: Internet, television or radio.

Without the ambition of formulating actual conclusions, strictly extracted and synthetized from the exposure of the approached issues, we record at the end some thoughts regarding the premises which, at the present stage of the beginning of a new millennium, obtrude the dimensions and particularize the steps of the promotion in tourism:

1. The emphasis on the globalization process is accompanied on the one hand by the expansion of the use of global distribution systems and the promotion through Internet on world level, and on the other hand by the reinforcement of the tourists' tendency (easier and easier to

satisfy) to travel and spend their holidays in faraway exotic places, over the borders, which don't make up anymore an obstacle in the way of the so called "planetary nomadism".

2. The touristic market is unique, but it represents one of the most important "dream markets" of the present day. In the case of the high-tech of life, the dream, and afterwards its actual living in the surroundings of the touristic destination can be not only an alternative for the spiritual and emotional poverty of the human being through its inclusion in the gearing of some sophisticated technical means from the professional and domestic universe, but also the chance of human regeneration under all aspects).

3. The world today (and probably, the one of tomorrow) is one of comfort, of aspirations' pluralism, people travel a lot and they atomize themselves through travel; the fundamental human attitude towards life has a more emphasized hedonistic tint.

In these conditions, well-inspired and skillfully conceived, the promotion steps benefit by premises which ensure the success, by orientating its psychological nuances and options for an offer under the sign of comfort generating satisfactions.

4. The mentioned favorable premises do not contradict still the valuations of the specialists from The World Tourism Organization, according to which almost no activity in the world needs such an active, clever, and aggressive promotion as the tourism. This assertion, which has the endorsement of The Worlds Tourism Organization, finds its confirmation in the arguments from point 3 of the present consideration, and, at the same time, in the complexity of the touristic phenomena.

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