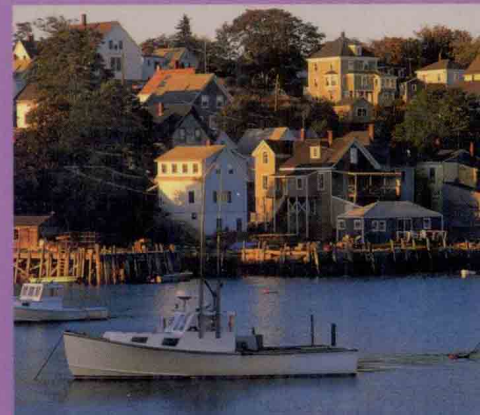# Bonita M. Kolb

TOURISM MARKETING FOR CITIES AND TOWNS

Using Branding and Events to Attract Tourists

Tourism Marketing for Cities and Towns

USING BRANDING AND EVENTS TO ATTRACT TOURISTS

Bonita M. Kolb, Ph.D

Recognizing the importance of preserving what has been written, Elsevier prints its books on acid-free paper whenever possible.

PREFACE

Tourism Marketing for Cities and Towns teaches readers how to develop a city's brand to attract tourists and their spending. The brand that is developed will use a city's already existing tourist attractions, distinctive cultural features, natural beauty, and/or heritage. These unique features plus the available tourist services can then be packaged together and promoted to tourist segments, including day visitors, business travelers, and traditional tourists. To create this branded package the reader must learn how to analyze the urban tourist product, target the correct visitor group, research their needs, and then develop a promotion plan. Special emphasis will be given to designing a promotion plan using branded events and tourist packages targeted at specific tourist segments.

What is unique in this book's approach is that it encourages those studying or working in tourism to view tourism development as a community-based effort to encourage economic development. Partnering with other city organizations and tourism businesses in planning events will provide the tourism office with additional resources. Collaborating with public groups will help to ensure that the community feels involved rather then isolated from the tourism industry. This information will be of especial value to smaller cities and towns that do not have a developed tourist industry.

Particular attention is given in the book to the concept of analyzing the city as a product. The city's main features, tourism services, and image are all carefully discussed because a thorough analysis of the city as a product is essential to developing a successful marketing strategy. Numerous checklists are provided of ideas for features and services that can be incorporated into a branded image. In addition to targeting potential tourists, the book contains information on promoting the city as a tourist destination to tour companies and convention-planning businesses.

This book is a combination of theory and practice. The theory is introduced first, but each chapter quickly focuses on how marketing can be implemented to develop tourism. In every chapter, numerous examples are presented of cities and towns that have successfully utilized branding and packaging to attract tourists. Of particular interest to teachers and practitioners is the inclusion of worksheets at the end of each chapter. The worksheet questions can be used immediately to put into practice student or practitioner ideas. When completed, the worksheets will form the basis for a strategic marketing plan.

This book is intended for students enrolled in tourism and travel programs. Specific classes in which it could be adopted include those on urban tourism, tourism marketing, destination marketing, and general tourism and travel marketing. The book could also be helpful in urban studies programs. Because many cities and towns rely on cultural facilities to attract tourists, the book would also be of value in cultural or arts marketing classes. Practitioners in the fields of travel and tourism, city management, economic development, and destination marketing will find this book useful in implementing their job responsibilities. In addition, practitioners in arts marketing will find this book helpful in targeting tourists as part of their audience development strategy.

The organization of the book follows the marketing process. The first chapter explains the history of tourism marketing and presents a broad overview of the subject. Chapter 2 discusses marketing theory and provides information on how to analyze the external environment for threats to the tourism industry and opportunities of which tourism marketers can take advantage. Chapter 3 goes into great detail on how to analyze the city by means of the concept of a core, supporting, and augmented product. How to analyze all of the information from the environmental analysis and the product analysis for strategic marketing opportunities is covered in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 examines how to segment potential tourists into groups based on external and internal characteristics, while Chapter 6 examines the motivation of tourists in choosing destinations. To attract tourists it is important to understand their needs, so Chapter 7 covers the topic of tourism research. Chapters 8 and 9 describe ideas on how to package and brand the city as a tourist product. Tourism promotion via advertising, public relations, sales incentives, direct marketing, and websites is covered in Chapters 10 and 11. Chapter 12 describes how to promote to tour companies and convention-planning businesses using personal selling, trade shows, and familiarization tours. In addition the chapter covers budgeting and ideas for collaborative efforts with neighboring cities and the state tourism office.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 Strategic Analysis

5 Segmenting and Targeting Potential Tourists

11 Sales Incentives, Direct Marketing, and Website Development

Tourism to Cities and Towns

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- Examine the history and current status of urban tourism.
- Establish the connection between tourism and economic development.
- Explain the application of marketing concepts to tourism promotion.
- Introduce the purchase process and its connection with targeting visitor groups.
- Present the relationship between branding and promotion.

TOURISM MARKETING DEFINED

Although marketing is a new field of academic study as compared to such fields as chemistry and philosophy, marketing is not a new human activity. After all, people have always produced surplus goods or services that they wanted to barter or sell. To do so they first needed to find someone willing to make the exchange. The practice of marketing simply takes this basic human behavior and plans its strategic implementation.

Tourism is also a new field of academic study, but it too is an activity with a long history. After all, people traveling to visit other places is not a recent phenomenon. As early as the religious pilgrimages of the Middle Ages, seeing the sites was always a part of the reason for undertaking a trip.

The marketing of tourism is simply applying the appropriate marketing concepts to planning a strategy to attract visitors to a destination, whether resort, city, region, or country. While there are many definitions of marketing, the definition used by the American Marketing Association on their website, www.marketingpower.com, perhaps defines marketing best: "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals."

The definition describes marketing as an exchange that satisfies both the individual (the visitor) and the organization (in this case, the city and its citizens). Unfortunately marketing is sometimes misunderstood as only selling; with the city convincing the tourist to visit even if they really don't want to come. While selling is an important part of promotion, there would be no long-term gain for a city to focus only on convincing people to visit without first making sure the city offers the experiences they desire. Even if a city used high-pressure sales techniques to convince tourists to visit, this would be a shortsighted strategy because tourism success relies on repeat visitors. A tourist swayed by a sales pitch that paints an unrealistic picture of what the city has to offer would most likely be unhappy with the experience and not visit again.

The definition states that the marketing exchange should also meet the needs of both the city and those who live there. The city has a mission to provide for the needs of its citizens, including maintaining the infrastructure, providing for public safety, and encouraging economic development. Therefore developing the city as a tourist destination should be undertaken only if the economic benefits improve the quality of life for the city's citizens. The economic benefits tourism can provide include increasing tax revenue so that more money is available for infrastructure maintenance, attracting visitors who may someday relocate to the city, and providing for economic development through attracting new businesses. Therefore marketing cities is providing a product that meets the needs of visitors while improving the quality of life for the city's citizens—the primary mission of the city.

What's in a Slogan? Topeka by Any Other Name . . .

The City of Topeka decided they needed a new marketing campaign to attract tourists, so they assembled a committee of 11 citizens to provide ideas on an appropriate brand image. The group decided to focus on Topeka's railroad heritage and the importance of freedom, themes that were to be incorporated into a logo and slogan.

To involve the community in the process of developing the campaign, the group then requested ideas for slogans from local residents. Good suggestions were received, such as "Topeka, a great place to grow" and "Topeka, the beat of the heartland." Sorry to say, not everyone had such a positive view; or else they just had a sense of humor. Other suggestions included "Topeka, not as bad as you think" and "Topeka, you won't get a lot of unwanted relatives visiting you." It is not anticipated that the last two will be used! (*Topeka Capital-Journal*, 2004)

Questions to Answer

- Do we have a slogan we can use in promoting our city?
- If we do, when was our slogan last reviewed?
- If a new slogan is needed, how can we involve the community in its development?

HISTORY OF URBAN TOURISM

The activities of cities and towns have always been of interest to both visitors and those who stayed at home. Postcards of city scenes produced in the late 19th century were designed to show Main Street bustling with markets, parades, and festivals. In fact, when Main Street developed, one of the most important criteria in planning the layout of a building's site was to maximize the traveling public's exposure to each business (Francaviglia, 1996).

The marketing of places in the United States can be traced back to the selling of the western frontier to American citizens. Once the railroads had connected the populated east with the sparsely populated west, efforts were initiated to motivate people to travel. The "See America First" movement, an early example of such an effort, was started to encourage U.S. citizens to use the new cross-continental railroads to visit the west. To meet the needs of the new tourists, entrepreneurs first built luxury hotels in places such as