Chapter 5

The Role of Destination Management Organizations in Exploiting Global Opportunities of Tourism Destinations

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this chapter is to study the cooperation between Destination Management Organizations and hospitality stakeholders. The following research questions are addressed in this research: 1. What is the stakeholders’ attitude toward cooperation with DMOs in a new destination and in a mass-tourism destination? 2. In DMOs’ perspective, what are the most effective strategies to foster cooperation within the destination? 3. What is the level of commitment of hospitality stakeholders with respect to cooperation with DMOs? In order to discuss these points we provide an analysis of two Italian destinations. Specifically we examine an established mass-tourism destination and a new destination. By investigating this relationship we also analyze how cooperation has developed during the years within two destinations, and if actually hospitality stakeholders are interested in cooperating with DMOs, in achieving the destinations’ common goals.

INTRODUCTION

Destination management is an intrinsically cooperative activity. In fact, attractions, tourism enterprises, local businesses, service businesses and residents are called to work together to provide tourists with the best experience. Despite possible benefits, sometimes this kind of cooperation is hindered by the competitive behavior of various players and by the lack of coordination capabilities. Hence, often an ad-hoc organization (Destination Management Organization - DMO) is
established to promote cooperation and to manage cooperative relationships among stakeholders. The DMO should then identify governance strategies, promote cooperative behavior and coordinate the activities of the various subjects involved in the delivery of the tourist experience.

Obviously, the sound management of the relationship between the DMO and the local stakeholders is essential to achieve efficiency and to foster the economic development of the destination.

The aim of this contribution is to analyze the cooperative strategies actually implemented by DMOs with respect to their stakeholders. This analysis is carried out by focusing on two Italian destinations, specifically an established mass-tourism destination and a new tourism destination. Furthermore, the stakeholders’ commitment and attitude toward cooperation will be investigated.

Therefore the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What is the stakeholders’ attitude toward cooperation with DMO in a new destination and in a mass-tourism destination?
2. In DMOs’ perspective, what are the most effective strategies to foster cooperation within the destination?
3. What is the level of commitment of hospitality stakeholders with respect to cooperation with DMOs?

The contribution is divided in three main sections. The first section introduces a literature review to systematize the concepts and to propose definitions, the second one deals with methodology and survey results. Finally, the third section proposes a discussion about the results of the survey and the theoretical consequences.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Destination Management

According to UNWTO (2007), destination management can be defined as “the co-ordinated management of all the elements that make up a destination” (p.100). This definition is based on a strategic behavior (the coordinated management) and on a network of relationships between elements, roles, and entities. From an analytical point of view, destination management is composed by five building blocks:

- Elements of the destination, such as attractions, enterprises, services, infrastructures, residents;
- Destination Management Organization, which is leading and co-ordinating the destination and its tourist offer;
- Destination marketing, to inform, promote, and attract tourists;
- Experience delivery, i.e. all the activities aimed at delivering value to the visitors, it comprises management of the experience, events development, attractions management;
- Suitable environment, which is related to the development of a supportive physical, social and economic environment, it ranges from planning activities to human resources development.

A destination involves many stakeholders, both public and private, who satisfy the composite needs of the tourists: transport providers; attractions, events and cultural organizations; accommodation providers; restaurant, leisure and retail operators; intermediaries (tour operators and travel agencies) and media (Pike, 2004).
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