



Existing tourism trends, good examples and modern marketing practices for better recognizability of the existing less-known sites of cultural and historical significance

Project CB006.2.21.150 Sustainable Utilization of Cultural Heritage in Dupnitsa and Kriva Palanka

Lead Partner: Municipality of Dupnitsa

Project Partner: Municipality of Kriva Palanka

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Existing tourism trends, applicable to the current situation

- The tourism industry occupies an important place in the world economy and in the situation of economic uncertainty is an important engine that continues to generate growth through the creation of new jobs, the development of infrastructure and the realization of income in the balance of payments.
- According to data from the World Tourism Organization (WTO), in 2012, tourists worldwide exceeded the record 1 billion, reaching 1.035 billion people and realizing a sustainable growth of 4%.
- Regardless of the ongoing economic challenges in Europe and the world, WTO forecasts are for maintaining the trend of increasing the number of trips for the purpose of tourism in the world at similar or slightly lower rates and realizing growth in the order of 3.5% to 4% in the end of 2013.

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- In the long term, the expectations are for an average annual growth of tourists in the world in the order of 3.8% for the period up to 2020 and 2.9% average annual growth for the period 2020-2030
- . The decrease in growth rates in the second half of the period 2010-2030 will be due to a combination of factors, including reaching a higher base from which realized growth in absolute value will continue to be high, greater maturity of economies which will translate into a reduction in growth of GDP, as well as a shift from falling to rising air transport prices.
- The expectations are that in absolute value, tourist trips worldwide will reach 1.8 billion in 2030.

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- Undoubtedly, tourism is among the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, but after the initial shock, planning for growth in the new conditions is now on the agenda.
- According to analysis by The Economist, when COVID-19 arrived, cruises with thousands of strangers and gated complexes lost their luster, but in 2022 they will become safe and preferred places for vaccinated tourists to enjoy their holidays in peace. In this context, complexes offering the largest possible number of services - hotel part, restaurants, cafes, shops, etc., will be more in demand. Along with this, they should be communicative and allow for a variety of entertainment.
- **Interest in more unconventional destinations** is yet to grow as the pandemic has had an asymmetric impact on tourism - urban destinations in major regional centers have suffered more due to strict restrictions on the organization of conferences, exhibitions and cultural activities. At the same time, rural and mountain areas as well as resorts are preferred due to the growing demand for safer and individual tourism.

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Trends show that **young tourists are increasingly looking for off-the-beaten-path locations that offer opportunities for nature-focused activities, such as eco-tourism, photography or kayaking.** A recent survey by the European Travel Commission shows that over half of those surveyed who are considering traveling in the next year prefer to stay in hotels or resorts rather than short-term other accommodation. As before the pandemic was the opposite.

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- The **Amadeus 2022 Travel Trends survey** identifies six new developments that are shaping the future of the tourism:

1. Savoring the now. The old adage “trip of a lifetime” has never been more appropriate. Amadeus is seeing substantial increases in searches for travel to epic destinations or experiences. Searches for Tanzania—where travelers can see the Big Five in the wild—are up by 36%. Bookings to the Peruvian cities of Lima and Cusco, near Machu Pichu, are up by nearly 50%, and flights to Petra in Jordan—of Indiana Jones fame—are up by 22%. All of these signs suggest this trend will continue to grow, with the Indian Ocean islands and even Antarctica showing increased demand for travel.

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2. **Friendcations.** Smiles, memories, adventures created with friends = priceless. Tourists are targeting "Friendcation" type bookings. 2022 will be the year for traveling with smaller or larger groups of friends. Group bookings are up 83% since last fall according to Amadeus Demand360(R).
3. **Active Ecotourism.** Active ecotourism is another trend that has emerged since the pandemic. Tourists are interested in traveling in support of various global communities, according to Amadeus data. 37% of respondents say that opportunities for tourists to participate in the conservation of tourist destinations will help.
4. **Business Travel** is ready for takeoff. Business travel is back in 2022 with new technology introducing free mobile payments for travel. 72% of business travelers are ready to travel in the next year.

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5. **Wanderlust Streaming.** This trend isn't entirely new—people have been planning their trip to Rome since Roman Holiday came out in 1953—but now, thanks to smart speakers, AI, and targeted online advertising like Amadeus Media Solutions, tourism boards can make our Hollywood-inspired travel fantasies come true faster.
6. **Futuristic and Fast.** No more long commutes; more time to explore the world

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- Incorporating technology into day-to-day operations is essential to minimize human error, maximize service efficiency and enhance the guest experience. **There are five technological trends that are changing tourism:**

1) Gamification of travel planning

Beyond novelty, using gamification for online advertising has been proven to increase data traffic, customer loyalty, brand awareness, user-generated content, online engagement and revenue. Popular European airline Lufthansa has introduced Lufthansa Surprise, which allows passengers to choose from nine categories with themes such as nature, cities or parties. The destination is gradually revealed to the user after making a choice of at least seven out of twelve criteria and after booking. Through challenges, rewards, missions, shares, companies can take advantage of human motivation. Imagine a travel planning website that challenges users to solve a travel puzzle where they will score, be ranked, and receive points toward their next trip

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2) Virtual reality tours

By using VR (virtual reality), companies can now provide digital tours to their guests. The upside: VR makes prospective travelers dream about the experience before they even arrive.

3) Contactless travel

Adoption of contactless technologies such as self-check-in, technological room upgrades, mobile keys and digital payments increased 66 percent during the pandemic, according to the Stayntouch/NYU Tisch Center of Hospitality report. The trend is expected to accelerate in the future. The application of robotic receptionists, facial recognition and scanning, guest voice control, robotic assistants and doormen, and more can be expected to increase in the future.

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4) **A chatbot instead of a digital concierge**

A chatbot as a digital concierge means a 24/7 ability to engage users, answer their questions and fulfill their requests. The percentage of hoteliers offering chatbots on their websites is expected to grow to over 29% before the end of 2022, up from 14.5% in 2019, according to the Stayntouch/NYU Tisch Center of Hospitality report.

5) **Location Based Services**

Today's travel is all about personalized, localized experiences, and hoteliers can use location-based services to create them. By seeing a guest's location through their smartphone, hotel companies and tour operators can offer more intuitive local recommendations. Without needing assistance from staff, guests have instant access to local information, such as the nearest grocery store or the best restaurant nearby.

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- **The main positives** associated with the region of the municipality of Dupnitsa and the region Kyustendil, as well as Kriva Palanka and North-Eastern Region of North Macedonia as a tourist destination can be summarized in the following:
 - ✓ Good location/favorable geographical position;
 - ✓ Cultural and historical landmarks;
 - ✓ Favorable climate;
 - ✓ Nice food;
 - ✓ Traditions;
 - ✓ Standard of living, which generally allows to maintain acceptable prices of the tourist product;
 - ✓ Possibility to practice various types of tourism on a relatively compact territory and short distances;
 - ✓ Advantageous tourist offers/packages;
 - ✓ Good accommodation conditions.

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- **The modern profile of the global tourism and young tourists** is distinguished by the following characteristics:
 - Search for more travel products and package - nature, adventure, exoticism, risk, sport alongside the classic products - recreation, culture and cuisine.
 - Possessing a more developed awareness of the gentle and sustainable use of the natural environment, by which he understands development between the natural landscape and urbanization, as well as the opportunity to enjoy intensively.
 - Search for an "innovative tourist product" - the combination of a standard service with a specific product that meets the interests of the tourist - sports, winemaking, music and culture

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- Has tourist experience that allows him to assess the value of tourist services and choose the best value for money. The vacation decision is price oriented.
 - Search for a "hit" product, such as innovative tourism
- Desire for activity as confirmation of one's individuality. Not only participating in the experience, but choosing its elements himself. Seeking self-realization
- A desire to satisfy more of his spiritual interests because he is more educated. Apart from the main product, he is also interested in the availability of additional one's programs.
- Temptation from a variety of everyday destinations and products or exotic, long-haul adventure travel.

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- During the active seasons there is a combination of the "mass and specialized tourism" type, and during the inactive seasons - a combination of two specialized types of tourism. The most common combination, and probably the combination with the greatest potential, is that between cultural and other types of tourism. The CBC region subject to this Study offers exactly such an opportunity.

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Good examples for popularization of less known sites of cultural and historical significance

- Cultural and natural heritage are among the strategic factors for sustainable development of tourism, including hotel and restaurant business as a part of the touristic product. They gradually turn from an object of preservation into an instrument for development. The integrated approach to the protection and valorization of the natural and cultural heritage is an important precondition for increasing the attractiveness of regions both for investment and for development of quality living environment while preserving regional identity.
- **How to popularize less known sites of cultural and historical significance?**
 - ⇒ explore local traditions, customs, rituals, festivals, myths and legends, lifestyle, crafts and cuisine and create and promote own programs or thematic tourism products.
 - ⇒ create and offer products tailored in scope and time with the calendar of local events – fairs, festivals, gathering, for example.

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➤ Food Festivals in France

Kick off the gourmet year with a trip to the southwest and the **Dordogne region**. Famous for its local culinary delights, the area is a major center for black truffles, also known as "black gold" in France. **The Sarlat Truffle Festival**, held in mid-January, offers a delightful array of dishes and products featuring the intensely aromatic mushroom. At the festival in the town of Sarlat-la-Canéda, visitors can browse stalls and stands at the acclaimed truffle market to taste numerous products, from delicate slices of truffe on toasted bread to infused oils and fresh pasta laced with it. People can also take part in cooking workshops, demonstrations, and other events.

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➤ Carnival in Ivrea, Italy

- Ivrea's unique spin on Carnival has made it famous in its own right, though many people don't even realize it's part of the country's Carnival celebrations. The culmination of the festival is known as the Battle of the Oranges, and began in 1808, though it's an allegory for an event that took place in the 12th century. The story goes that a duke was attempting to assert his "jus primae noctis" right (which supposedly gave medieval lords the right to claim the virginity of a serf woman on her wedding night, before her new husband was allowed to sleep with her) when she fought back and killed him. Upon his death, the people rioted, burning the palace.

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➤ The romantic tradition lives on the day of Sant Jordi, Spain

- On April 23 takes place the Sant Jordi's Day, one of the most popular celebrations in Catalonia. During this special day, the streets and squares of towns and cities become a huge open-air bookstore and florist, with many cultural and musical activities.
- April 23 also coincides with International Book and Copyright Day, a holiday that is institutionalized in more than 100 countries, most of them Spanish and Portuguese-speaking. During this day, many writers hold book signings and exchange impressions of street reading with the readers.
- This date is a good opportunity to get the latest publishing news and get the signature of some of your favorite writers, especially in the city of Barcelona, where book stalls run through the main streets of the city, **such as the emblematic Passeig de Gràcia.**

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➤ The Catalan Calçotada, Barcelona's traditional circle dance

- Throughout the region of Catalunya or within the Barcelona area, you may have come across a curious but enthralling spectacle of Catalan dancing; where circles of people join their hands together and with them raised; dance with very small, precise steps, slowly round and round whilst people join to make the circle bigger. This is the Sardana: the traditional national dance of Catalunya.
- It is very special to the Catalans - not only does it bring the people of Catalunya together; it is a symbol of their national pride and identity. To understand the meaning behind the dance, it is important to look at the historical context behind this supposedly simplistic idea of Catalan dancing.
- The Catalan dancing is complimented by a 'cobla' a small group of musicians accompanying the dance with a selection of brass instruments and lead by the 'flaviol' a type of flute whilst the tambourine sets the rhythm.
- The best times to see an authentic Sardana are at a festival. The Focs de Sant Joan festival on the 24 June is one such example.

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Modern marketing practices for better recognizability of the existing less-known sites of cultural and historical significance

Tourism Marketing is a marketing strategy that uses specific marketing plan and techniques to promote touristic products and services such as destinations, hotels and transport services, etc.

1) Email Marketing for Tourism

Email marketing continues being a valid tool for marketing practitioners in tourism sector. It can be used for different purposes, such as lead nurturing and loyalty programs. Email marketing helps brands to stay in a continuous contact with their prospects and clients and to help the relationship evolve.

2) CRM tools for Tourism

CRM tools are in high demand when it comes to tourism marketing. Marketing specialists of the industry value a tool that allows not only to keep the data base of the clients neat and organized, but also create campaigns based on segmentation of the contacts and to stay tuned about the progress of each contact. Automatization that many CRM tools offer, allows increasing the efficiency of the marketing efforts while decreasing the time and resources spent.

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3) HubSpot, the solution for Tourism marketing

Inbound marketing is a non-intrusive way of marketing that adds value to the customer. These are marketing campaigns people actually fall in love with.

There are innumerable actions of Inbound marketing you can take to attract clients towards your brand. However, they all converge on the same thing: creating content and sharing it. Content must be interesting and your design has to be attractive. Then you won't need to chase your target audience, instead those consumers will want to know about you. This methodology has always in mind the potential customer. And do you know what is your main secret? Promote your product in a personalized way.

HubSpot is the most effective tool for your Inbound Marketing strategies, and HubSpot has contributed greatly to the tourism industry. It is an all-in-one software that has email, SEO, social media, landing pages, blogging or sites, publications and monitoring of social networks, CRM... It allows you to work all phases of Inbound Marketing and Smarketing in an integrated way, easy and comfortable. And, in addition, you will be able to know metrics and analysis of results in real time.

Blogging is a good way to tell stories, share unique insights about the destination, share travel tips, etc.

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4) **Live Video Marketing**

Travelers are frequently searching for videos of destinations they want to travel to. The problem is that they no longer want just pre-recorded videos.

Live streaming videos are getting more and more popular. Young tourists probably love watching them (research shows that 82 percent of people prefer to watch live videos over social media posts); while you get to lower your video production costs and show your authenticity as a brand.

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5) **Social Medias**

Social media is one of the most effective marketing channels for the tourism industry. That's if you choose the right platform (where your customers are) and set up a strategy for each platform.

Facebook is the best social media platform for tour and activity providers, in terms of driving traffic to a website. It's a crowded social network but you can find your tribe by using specific targeting and advertising.

Instagram has one billion monthly active users; Instagram is a purely visual platform which makes it the perfect medium to market a destination. Instagram launched IGTV in 2018 to host vertical long-term video content on mobile devices. The platform has experienced tremendous growth since its launch, as marketers and brands have become increasingly reliant on mobile video content to boost engagement metrics and conversion rates.

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6) Engage Influencers

Micro-Influencer marketing really came to the forefront last year and is still rising today. An increasing number of brands are relying on influencers with smaller and more targeted audiences (versus influencers with larger and broader audiences) to market their products or services.

Micro-influencers usually have 1,000-1,000,000 followers and specialize in a specific niche within their industry. As such, they often have higher engagement, more loyal followers, and better conversions on their social channels. Plus, they are cheaper than the big influencers.

7) Travel Wisconsin

Travel Wisconsin ran a campaign to help potential tourists to imagine themselves doing various activities around Wisconsin. They used a funhouse mirror with local activities like tubing, and placed the activity in areas where people would be waiting, e.g. bus stops.

As you can see, experiential marketing is very different from traditional marketing strategies. Instead of spreading your message through traditional marketing tactics like print ads or commercials – messages that people don't want to see or hear – you're allowing people to interact with your brand in a fun way.

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8) Traditional culture as a tool to attract tourists

Northern Ireland has a huge potential for rural tourism. The government is encouraging this trendy type of tourism. From a tourism marketing point of view, the key message here is simplicity. The focus must be on how visitors can enjoy a 'back to basics' lifestyle during their stay. Make the traditional Irish culture the centre of your show. Show the true local faces behind the experience. Make sure the audience know that their experience here is nothing like anywhere in the world.

9) Travel Oregon

Travel Oregon has gained a reputation for creating some of the best campaigns. Their marketing is consistently out of the box, fun and performs to perfection. In one of their videos, they created a tour guide in the shape of a robot fish. Even on their blog, they add sarcasm and fun whenever they get the chance. Travel Oregon frequently combines print, sponsored posts, social media, banner ads and video to profound effect. Perhaps the icing on their incredibly impressive marketing cake is the Studio Ghibli-like video that re-imagines the US State as an 'adventure dreamland.'

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10) Storytelling

If great marketing and advertising centres around talking to the hearts of the audience, then it doesn't come more literal than the Fill Your Heart with Ireland campaign. A married couple from Sweden, who had never visited Ireland before, wore custom-made tech to track their physiological responses on their trip around the country. Heart monitors were linked to head cams and the data from the heart rate monitors was used to determine what footage would feature in the advertising - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLMsJLTYiQM>.

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CONCLUSION

- ✓ More and more countries in the world are investing in the development of their tourism industry, and this gives reason to expect a decrease in the traditional concentration of tourist traffic in traditional tourist destinations and an increase in the shares of other lesser-known destinations. Regarding this, Dupnitsa Municipality, Kyustendil Region and Kriva Palanka Municipality have an extremely favorable geostrategic position.
- ✓ Tourists have awareness of historical sites in Kriva Palanka and Dupnitsa and visit them as touristic destinations of great importance and high attractiveness. There are multiple unexplored sites of cultural and historic value in the region of Dupnitsa and Kriva Palanka; Limited investments and lack of public debate on the problematic; Decreasing interest among the target groups towards popular touristic destinations e.g., “crowded places”.

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- ✓ However, promoting through modern marketing practices and pinpointing the rich cultural and natural resources of the region will raise the awareness of final beneficiaries and stakeholders about the potential for development of alternative forms of tourism, as the promotion of the cultural heritage in Dupnitsa and Kriva Palanka will be done through modern technologies. Every industry has trends and innovations — the tourism industry is no exception. In a rapidly-evolving landscape, new trends are appearing and taking hold all the time. **Changing demographics, advances in technology, shifting social mores: these influences and others all help give rise to important new tourism trends.**

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