

IMPLEMENTATION OF MARKETING IN RURAL TOURISM

Ciprian Pavel

***Abstract:** Because estimates of growth in the choice of Romanian and foreign tourists to rural pensions can be observed the growing need to ensure higher efficiency of marketing activities. And given the growing importance of actions to protect the product quality and the environment is observed the need for marketing of rural tourism that respects the perspectives of conservation of natural, cultural and human, necessary for responsible and ethical tourism.*

As competition and demand conditions change over time, the strategic marketing programs must be adapted appropriately to the corrections in the marketing plan for the results of marketing to lead to sustainable tourism.

***Key words:** rural tourism, eco and agro-tourism, marketing, strategic marketing program*

Introduction

Rural tourism market is the result of interference of the two components: demand and supply of rural tourism. The evolution of rural tourism activity is not reflected only by analyzing fluctuations indicators that emphasizes supply situation: number of rural tourist accommodation structures, existing accommodation capacity, accommodation capacity in operation. There are also two other important indicators with which (to complete the image of changes) the rural tourism activity is facing. They capture the state of rural tourism demand and are represented by the number of tourists arriving in reception rural tourism in Romania and the number of overnight stays related to those units.

National Association of Rural, Ecological and Cultural (ANTREC), estimates an increase of about 15% of Romanian tourists opting in 2013 for rural pensions in the context of a general increase in domestic tourism¹.

¹ http://www.capital.ro/tendinte_ale_turismului_rural

Implementation of marketing in the rural areas provides superior efficiency in the activities concerning the rural tourism. Peculiarities of application of marketing are defined both consumption and tourism market characteristics and the specific nature of the activities of agritourism businesses.

Perspectives of expansion of rural tourism business

Necessity of extending rural tourism business is the result of creating favorable conditions for harmonization of elements including: offer various types of accommodation; supply of agricultural products, traditional folk art, crafts and folklore is done directly by the farm family and rural community; the offer of natural surroundings and environmental requirements are compatible with tourism activities; offer of paid jobs in rural areas.

Table 1. Establishments of tourists reception and tourist accommodation capacity in Romania in 2011

Type of establishment	Number of establishments in 2011 in Romania	Existing accommodation capacity(number of beds)	Rooms
Agro-tourist boarding	1210	20683	9668
Hotels	1319	175149	88428
Tourist boarding houses	1050	20499	9788
Others	1424	67172	18054
Total	5003	278503	125938

Source: National Institute of Statistics²

Situation of tourist accommodation structures and accommodation capacity in Romania shows large share of agro-tourist boarding in total number of accommodation.

Of growing importance given actions of protecting product quality and the environment results the need for marketing of rural tourism that respects conservation the perspectives of natural, cultural and human, necessary for responsible and ethical tourism in agriculture and resources in such a manner that to be sustainable in the long term. Rural tourism can not be divided by ecotourism.

² www.insse.ro/cms/rw/pages/turism

In the specialized literature there are at least two views on the phenomenon of agritourism: first show that the public interest in the environment can be used to make a product marketing; other claims that same interest can be used for conservation of the resources on which is based the product. These two views are not mutually exclusive, on the contrary can be complementary. What is needed is an effective integration of both views so that agriculture and resources can develop sustainable long term.

Fundamental for a sustainable tourism industry is accepting the key principles underlying the concept of rural tourism:

- Not to deteriorate the resources and be developed in a manner that protects the environment;

- Provide long-term benefits resource, (entrepreneurs) local community and agriculture (benefits may be related to preservation of scientific, cultural, social and economic);

- Provide tourists a direct participation and relevant experience;

- To spread education among all participants: tourists, farmers, local communities, NGOs, agriculture and tourism (before, during and after);

- Encourage all participants to recognize the intrinsic value of the resource;

- Involve acceptance of the resource based on her own terms and the recognition of its limits, in this way spreading a marketing oriented supply and consumption;

- Promote ethical responsibility and moral behavior of the participants to the natural and cultural environment.

These principles, despite the high standard, increasingly begin to practice in eco and agro-tourism operations and are given as an example of best practice in sustainable tourism.

In rural tourism, with a good marketing and a development plan can be obtained considerable actual and potential economic value. Benefits may include:

- Economic diversification in rural and peripheral regions of industrialization;

- Long-term economic stability;

- Trend to higher expenses and longer stay in rural areas;

- Demand for local goods and services that benefit the local economy;

- Infrastructure development;

- Increase farmers' incomes.

In recent years the concepts of eco and rural tourism have become key elements in selling certain products; somehow this reminds us of the tendency of manufacturers to mark products as "green" or to show that take

into account environmental cues. It is clear that 'green' sells. Almost every time the prefix "eco" will increase interest in the sale, although in recent years has been a proliferation of advertising in tourism with reference to: eco-tour, eco-travel, eco holiday, eco-adventures, adventures environmentally sensitive eco-safaris, eco-expedition and of course ecotourism.

Rural tourism as tourism generally assumes a prominent profile in economic growth expectations in this regard occur the expectations that tourism establishments to be developed and managed to high environmental standards. Such expectations must be willing to know the meaning of obstacles that stand in the way of rapid and widespread implementation of best practice environmental management in the tourism industry. Consequently tourism industry development requires increased requirements reflected a concern for long-term support resources available to tourism. Changes in industry and agriculture must justify the resources claimed as a requirement for their sustainable management. The major advantage of adapting marketing strategies of rural tourism is that it can identify from the beginning a number of problems that may occur during the execution of development projects.

Any development program is based on evaluation of existing resources, without which no project is feasible. The development of rural tourism in the area chosen is achieved through a series of projects whose application ensures the success of the program. To run a project is necessary to know and understand the requirements of the marketing policies and facts in organizations that will carry out the project and the environment in which it will operate.

One direction of rural tourism development should be characterized by at least two aspects:

-First you need to have continuity, because generally cover's a bigger time horizon and for achieving them is necessary to have continued efforts. Romanian Governments efforts in transition was aimed at highlighting the errors of previous governments, renouncing in many cases the investments already made and redirecting funding sources. Good initiatives should be taken and continue regardless of political party in power.

-Second, a unified direction for tourism development must be closely linked with the developments in other industries, which provides the infrastructure for tourism services.

Implementation of marketing in rural tourism

Being in the sphere of the services market, tourism market takes a series of features determined by the general features of services. Most companies who are present on agritourism market are offering comprehensive packages of goods and services. The main motivation for the utilization of agro-tourism companies is the tourist (client) that identifies and uses service offered. When tourists is purchasing at his home in advance, a voyage, a place to stay, a way of transportation, etc., he get the benefit of them, but not the tourism service itself. The tourist will benefit of tourism service when he reach the chosen tourist destination. The transfer tourism product from the supplier to the consumer is made different from the specific distribution of material goods.

"The product (service) is a immaterial consumer good, invisible, imperceptible that consumed leaves behind a bill in the pocket of tourists and a pleasant memory (or bad) about what was offered"³. Therefore, the abstract nature of the benefits of travel determines different perceptions and evaluation from consumers, over the same benefits. The decision to purchase a travel product or service is influenced by the fact that it can not be seen, examined and compared before being acquired.

Full satisfaction of tourism demand is achieved through a comprehensive package of goods and services resulting from their combination and which are owned by different tourism enterprises. To ensure complete tourism offer, a tourism company uses the services of many businesses (accommodation, food services, transportation, telecommunications, commercial etc.)

In order to increase the competitiveness of rural tourism products not only domestic and international, tourism entrepreneurs are interested in launching original packages and with a high quality.

Romanian rural tourism entrepreneurs should be familiar with all the particularities of the product policy and it's components of agro and rural tourism product for being able to adapt better the products to the market demands.

Making an effective marketing strategy program for rural tourism product market involves three elements:

- Specific objectives which must be fulfilled for a target market. They must be subordinated to the objectives of the marketing plan of the company

³ V. Olteanu, *Marketing în alimentație publică și turism*, A.S.E. București 1984

and so specific that it can allow the management company to monitor and assess the evolution of the tourism product on the market;

- Established marketing strategy marketing plan to achieve competitive advantage in target markets.

- Develop tactical marketing programs necessary to carry out strategic marketing program according to tactical marketing plans and / or strategic.

As competition and demand conditions change over time, should be adapted and strategic marketing programs corresponding to the corrections in the marketing plan.

For a business plan can prepare one or more marketing programs. In the case of a single marketing program, it should contain all necessary actions to achieve the objectives of the marketing plan, and for developing several marketing programs, they are prepared for each market and the marketing mix element.

Combining services is an essential element in achieving a greater diversity of tourism product and is at the same time, a key factor in meeting the highest level of consumer needs and desires⁴. This combination increases the attractiveness of tourism product while lowering its perishability negative effect.

Marketing program should include both the actions of possible combinations of tourist services as well as their capitalization with other successful programs of destination (entertainment, cultural activities, sports etc.).

In all cases, marketing programs are needed to increase economic efficiency of enterprises in the short, medium or long term, constitute instruments for implementing the marketing plan broken down into time periods, for dimensioning financial resources.

In many tourism businesses, especially those with limited operations, is tried the preparation only of marketing programs.

Establishment of action without goals and strategies developed by following the steps provided in the marketing plan is, in most cases, an error with negative consequences for the future.

Conclusions

The effectiveness of a marketing program is given by the degree of achievement of targets set in the marketing plan. It is determined by

⁴ Balaure V., I. Cătoiu, C. Vegheș, *Marketing turistic*, Editura Uranus, București, 2005

comparative analysis of costs and sales revenue, after which compares the effort and the effect achieved by implementing a marketing program.

Efficiency is a major criterion in all phases of program marketing, in the sense that highlights the efforts of both financial effects of various actions and the program as a whole helping to a proper foundation for future decisions and marketing programs.

In the vision of marketing, profit maximization, as a reason of the existence of any enterprise, equivalent to a modern management, fully adjusted to market requirements, of consumers.

Marketing contribution to the achievement of such management is focused on providing market information necessary for the economic decision-making, in the elaboration of the criteria for evaluation of the activities, in determining the levels of economic and social performance, etc.

Applying tourism marketing functions and using its methods and techniques, rural tourism firms may assess, in better conditions, requirements and demands of domestic and international tourism market, to adapt to these changes to use with maximum efficiency, its own resources to meet the most varied requirements.

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NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

CIPRIAN PAVEL is lecturer at the Faculty of Management in Tourism and Commerce, Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University Timișoara. He holds a PhD. in Marketing since 2010, with a thesis entitled *Contribuții cu privire la politica de comunicare în marketingul produselor și serviciilor bancare*. He is author or coauthor of various books and articles: *Politica de comunicare în marketingul produselor și serviciilor bancare*, Editura Universității de Vest, Timișoara, 2013, *Bazele marketingului*, Editura Eurobit, Timișoara, 2011. He is a member in AGER and American Marketing Association.