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EVENT AND FESTIVAL TOURISM PLANNING: ORGANIZING AND MANAGING EVENTS TO ATTRACT TOURISTS

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Abstract. Event and festival tourism planning has become a crucial aspect of attracting tourists from all over the world. This article focuses on the strategies and management techniques required in organizing successful events and festivals to allure tourists. The aim of this study is to highlight the significance of well-planned events and festivals in captivating tourists and generating economic benefits for the host destination. Moreover, it delves into the various considerations that event planners and destination managers need to address, including selecting the right event and festival, market segmentation, destination branding, logistics management, and ensuring visitor satisfaction.

Additionally, the article presents case studies from different countries to illustrate successful event and festival planning practices. By examining these examples, it becomes evident that effective event and festival tourism planning not only enhances the local economy but also enriches the cultural, social, and recreational experiences of tourists. Finally, the study explores potential challenges and future trends in this field to provide insights for event organizers and destination managers striving to boost their tourism sector through impactful events and festivals.

Keywords: Event tourism, Destination, Management, Festival

Introduction. In the ever-evolving landscape of global tourism, the role of events and festivals has transcended mere cultural celebrations to become powerful catalysts for attracting tourists. These vibrant and exciting celebrations are not only a source of entertainment for the local community but also an opportunity to showcase the unique culture, traditions, and attractions of a destination. However, successfully organizing and managing events and festivals to attract tourists requires careful planning and execution. This article delves into the world of event and



festival tourism planning, exploring the various strategies and considerations that go into creating unforgettable experiences for visitors. From selecting the right type of event to marketing and infrastructure management, this article provides essential insights for destination managers and event organizers seeking to harness the potential of events and festivals to entice and captivate tourists.

Festivals, events and tourism

Festivals and events stand as testament to the rich tapestry of human culture, each carrying a unique story, tradition, and flavor. From grand-scale music festivals that resonate with the beats of diverse genres to local celebrations deeply rooted in heritage, these occasions offer a lens into the soul of a destination. These navigate through the intricate intersection of festivals, events, and tourism, shedding light on how these dynamic components collaboratively shape the travel experience.

Festivals make various positive contributions to the destinations such as increasing the satisfaction level of the visitors, prolonging the stay in the host community, making encouragement to the economic activities. Tourists attending these types of festivals are more interested in art and culture in comparison with the other tourist types and they desire to visit the cultural inherits and historical touristic places as well. In this context, they intend to stay longer and spend more money in the destinations (Çelik & Çetinkaya, 2013).

Events have an important advantage in decreasing the effect of its seasonality and it makes benefits from natural attractions in off-season. For example; if the high season of the destination is summer time, winter activities may be a source of benefit or events should consist of indoor activities regardless of the weather. Many destinations prefer to organize the celebration activities of local people and provide these people with more authentic activities. If this strategy is implemented in a successful way, then the seasonality problem of the tourism industry may disappear. There are so many advantages of event tourism for the destinations where they are organized as follows (Getz, 1997: 55);

- To attract tourists (especially in the off-peak season)
- Make diversification in tourism industry
- To make the distribution of tourism equally demand between different destinations in the country
- To create new sources of revenue for the regions
- Increase the awareness and attraction of destinations
- To make the new infrastructure and services or develop the current infrastructure and services



- To attract the media's attention to destination
- To help destination to have a brand by making strong and active images
- To encourage people thinking that one visit is enough to make a re-visit the destination

Three key aspects of strategic festival management have received significant attention from researchers – stakeholder management; festival success factors and conversely, festival failures; and festivals and environmental sustainability. The importance of understanding and managing stakeholders is widely acknowledged (e.g. Reid, 2007), and it may very well be that further research will simply underline this. However, in relation to other aspects of management, there are certainly areas where more research is required. For example, whilst knowledge transfer appears to be taking place in successful festivals (Stadler et al., 2014), transfer of knowledge is not well defined, or even explicitly acknowledged. Interestingly, festival failure has apparently been the subject of more research than festival success but further areas for useful contributions remain. These include succession planning and risk management.

Getz and Page (2016) also argue for further research to better understand the role that festivals play in bringing together disparate groups such as visitors and residents. Complex relationships between communal identity and place emerge as people have various sets of connections to multiple notions of “place” and “home”. There is also a small but growing body of knowledge on festivals and sustainability; however, this topical area offers considerable potential for future research, and ample room for further theoretical and practical contributions. Duran et al. (2014) propose a framework – the Sustainable Festival Management Model – which highlights that stakeholder participation, especially non-governmental organisations, the tourism sector and local people who might be impacted by the festival, is vital for the development of a sustainable festival.

The strategic aspects of event and festival tourism planning

The strategic aspects of event and festival tourism planning involve a comprehensive approach to organizing and managing these gatherings with the aim of attracting tourists. Key considerations in this strategic planning process include:

1. Destination Branding: Events and festivals serve as powerful tools for destination marketing. Strategic planning involves aligning these occasions with the destination's brand identity, promoting unique selling points, and creating a distinctive image to attract a specific target audience.

2. Target Audience Identification: Understanding the demographics, interests,



and preferences of the target audience is crucial. Strategic planners analyze the market to identify the type of tourists they want to attract and tailor events to cater to those specific preferences.

3. Economic Impact Assessment: Strategic planning encompasses a thorough assessment of the economic impact of events and festivals on the destination. This includes evaluating the potential for increased tourism revenue, job creation, and business opportunities for local enterprises.

4. Collaboration and Partnerships: Building strategic partnerships with local businesses, government entities, and community organizations is vital. These collaborations can enhance event offerings, secure sponsorships, and facilitate seamless coordination for a successful event.

5. Infrastructure and Logistics: Ensuring that the destination has the necessary infrastructure to accommodate an influx of tourists is a critical strategic consideration. This involves assessing transportation, accommodation, and other logistical elements to provide a positive visitor experience.

6. Sustainability and Community Engagement: Integrating sustainable practices into event planning is increasingly important. Strategic planners focus on minimizing the environmental impact, engaging the local community, and ensuring that events contribute positively to the destination's long-term well-being.

7. Innovation and Technology Integration: Incorporating innovation and technology enhances the overall guest experience. This can involve digital marketing strategies, smart event technologies, and interactive elements that engage visitors and contribute to the event's success.

8. Risk Management: Developing a comprehensive risk management plan is a strategic imperative. This includes contingency plans for unforeseen circumstances, health and safety protocols, and crisis communication strategies to ensure the well-being of both tourists and locals.

9. Cultural Sensitivity and Authenticity: Strategic planners strive to maintain the authenticity of the destination's culture while offering unique and memorable experiences. Balancing the integration of local traditions with the expectations of tourists is key to success.

10. Measuring Success and Evaluation: Establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) and methods for evaluating the success of events is crucial. This involves assessing visitor satisfaction, economic impact, media coverage, and other metrics to refine future planning strategies.

The strategic aspects of event and festival tourism planning revolve around



aligning the unique characteristics of a destination with the preferences of the target audience, ensuring sustainable and impactful experiences that contribute positively to the destination's overall development.

Implications for future event and festival research

There are several implications for future festival/event research resulting from the brief overview provided. Cudny (2014) called for more theoretical research to underpin the development of festival studies in future. Much of the work that has taken a business perspective, perhaps not surprisingly, has focused inwards on the festival – how to market, manage, stage it and provide a good quality service and experience (see Park and Park, 2017).

Furthermore, there are no pedagogical articles specifically related to festival studies. There is a relatively limited body of knowledge relating to teaching event management. For example Getz (2010) highlights that events students should learn and be able to apply both event specific knowledge (such as understanding the meaning, importance and impacts of festivals and events, and in addition their limited duration and episodic nature) as well as management specific knowledge including marketing, finance and accounting. Additionally, initiatives such as the development of the International Event Management Body of Knowledge seek to define research and understand the parameters of events and the knowledge, understanding and skills required in order to succeed in a contemporary environment (Silvers et al., 2005).

Summary

The article delves into the importance of strategic planning and marketing in event and festival tourism. It emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach, which includes understanding the target audience, determining the objectives, and developing effective marketing strategies to promote the event and the destination. The authors also discuss the significance of collaboration and partnership between various stakeholders involved in event planning, such as government agencies, local communities, and tourism organizations. Furthermore, the article highlights the importance of effective event management practices during the actual event. The authors suggest that ensuring seamless logistics, providing high-quality facilities, and offering engaging activities and entertainment are key factors in creating positive experiences for tourists attending the event.

Overall, the article presents a comprehensive overview of event and festival tourism planning, emphasizing the importance of strategic planning, marketing, and effective event management. The study provides valuable insights for destination management organizations, event planners, and tourism professionals interested in



harnessing the potential of events and festivals to attract tourists and stimulate economic growth.

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