

TRAVEL MARKETING

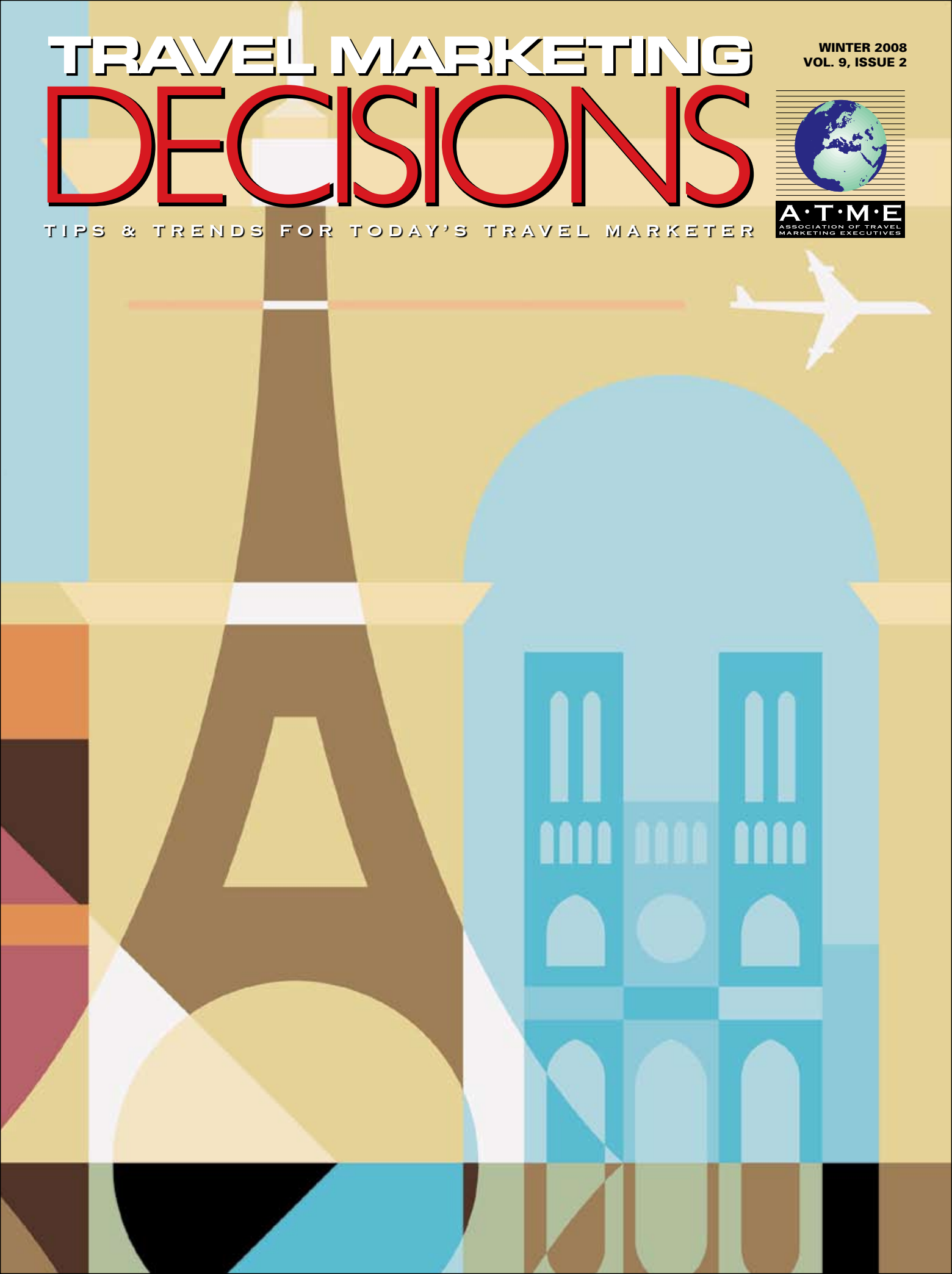
DECISIONS

WINTER 2008
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**TRAVEL MARKETING
DECISIONS**
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ATME has moved from the center of Manhattan to the bucolic town of West Tisbury, Massachusetts on the island of Martha's Vineyard. We have traded incessant sirens for the cackling and honking of herds of wild turkeys who roam about the island, one Tom with his many hens all half his size.

ATME's mailbox is in a corner of a General Store built in the 1850's. The Preservation Trust of the island saved this treasure from being shut down in the 1990's. No one could make it work economically, so now its a tourist destination as well as an important part of this tiny community offering at least one of everything you can imagine from milk, farm fresh vegetables, to nails, paint, and plumbing supplies.

The post office is run on a part-time basis by a man whose family used to own the General Store, and who's also an important person in the community. He has been County Commissioner and an Airport Commissioner for nearly 30 years. Its a very informal kind of place -- just enter into the post office area any time, take your mail from the back of the box and hunt around for packages with your box number on it.

This kind of informality means that the Postmaster starts to know everything about you, gathering his information from the mail you receive. So I wasn't too surprised when he asked, "Just what kind of an organization is the Association of Travel Marketing Executives anyway? When I told him that ATME was a professional association of marketing executives from airlines, hotels, cruise lines, tour operators, attractions, etc., his immediate response was "Oh, you can get me great travel deals!"

To keep my mail going into the right box, of course I replied "Of course." Now I have to deliver.

But the real point is on this island community of 15,000 year-rounders there are about 15,000 people with passports -- many of them more traveled than anyone I know in New York.

In the supermarket, bank, post office and restaurants you hear countless conversations about their travel exploits to every place on the planet. Because this community makes 80% of its income during the summer months when the population swells to over 125,000 they must travel off season. From October through March is travel season for Vineyarders.

So leave the light on -- they are coming to your destination, property, cruise and attraction. And if anyone tells you that serious travel is headed for hard times, remember that it is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity.

Yours truly,



Kristin Zern
Executive Director/Publisher
kzern@atme.org

ATME CALENDAR

April 29 - The Luxury Market - NY Lunch - NY Yale Club

June 11-12 - Annual Conference - Las Vegas - Red Rock Resort

September 23 - Marketing Issues Forum Lunch - NY Yale Club

Fall Think Tanks locations to be determined

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Culinary Tourism:

Does Your Destination Have Potential?

BY DENNIS A. MARZELLA



Liza Graves' report on her success with marketing elite culinary adventures is merely one manifestation of the culinary tourism opportunity that awaits astute destination marketers and entrepreneurs alike. Culinary tourism is a vacation based around culinary endeavors such as wine country retreats, farmers market visits, culinary festivals, chef-lead cooking classes and restaurant, brewery and farm tours.

Sixty percent of American leisure travelers reported they are interested in taking a trip to engage in culinary activities within the next 12 months, according to the Travel Industry Association of America. This magnitude of predisposition suggests there is savory opportunity for small communities, as well as major destinations or attractions, to tap into this growing demand. How should you go about assessing your destination's potential? There are several existing or potential destination dimensions to consider:

- Local restaurants offering a unique and memorable experience
- Nature of local or regional cuisine
- Farmers markets
- Traditional artisan products and locally-made wines/beers
- Culinary festivals

Local Restaurants

A unique food and drink experience has the power to lure tourists like museums, recreation and shopping. Forty four percent of leisure travelers now find the opportunity to try different and unusual cuisine a very desirable attribute of a vacation, according to YBP&R/Yankelovich, Inc. 2007 National Leisure Monitor™.

Inventory the restaurants in the area separate them into "experiential categories." Go beyond the typical text-heavy restaurant guides. A destination Web site is a perfect place to bring the experience to life using high-quality photographs, live camera feeds and a feature allowing travelers to make reservations online. Encourage restaurateurs to support culinary tourism through their creativity and good business practices.

As a coordinator of leisure activities for well-heeled lodgers in Northern California's wine country, Liza Graves has seen the appetite for elite culinary adventures evolve firsthand.

"In the beginning, it was simply 'Make me a restaurant reservation' or 'I want to go to a well-known winery,' " says Graves, who co-founded the villa rental company BeautifulPlaces in Sonoma, Calif., five years ago. "But in the past two or three years, the requests for special, authentic experiences have doubled or tripled."

– USA Today

What can an individual restaurant do to promote culinary tourism?

- One of the main philosophies driving culinary tourism is the idea that tourists can get something in one of your destination's restaurants that they can't get at home. A restaurant should capitalize on this idea by identifying a local or regional specialty and creating their own version of it.
- Chef demonstrations or in-the-kitchen chef training are two other ways to create an unforgettable dining experience for guests by showcasing a famous chef or locally-grown or manufactured ingredients.
- Enlist the locals to be culinary tourism ambassadors. One of the top questions tourists ask locals when visiting a new place is, "Where's a good place to eat around here?" If restaurants build loyalty with locals, chances are they will direct tourists to their favorite restaurant.

- Make it easy for visitors to get through the front door by providing plenty of parking, a complimentary valet service or advertising a place where parking is available. Limited parking discourages culinary tourism. Out-of-towners are likely to pass over your restaurant if they can't find a convenient place to park.

- When it comes to culinary tourism, encourage local players not to view other restaurants as competition. Aligning with other restaurants in the area for a culinary event will benefit a city's entire dining scene. A group of restaurants can make a larger impact than one restaurant can individually.

Restaurant weeks are an ideal way to create a critical mass which may be promoted through public relations or other forms of marketing communication. In addition to attracting tourists to a city, a restaurant week brings local epicureans into restaurants they may have never visited or have not visited recently.

Restaurant weeks also generate awareness for the city's restaurant scene. For example, Sarasota, Florida launched their first restaurant week event in 2006. Twenty five restaurants participated in the inaugural event and offered prix-fix meals for lunch and dinner. This event garnered articles in local, regional and national publications that helped build credibility for Sarasota's restaurant landscape, a culinary scene that was overlooked by tourists and underappreciated by locals. The city continues to host the restaurant week based on the success of the first event.

A restaurant week allows a restaurateur to show off the unique atmosphere, cuisine and service their restaurant can deliver to a guest. New York, Chicago, Boston, Denver, San Diego, Miami, Atlanta and Philadelphia are a few of more than twenty six major cities hosting restaurant weeks. A growing number of smaller communities are following suite with scaled-down culinary activities and dining promotions.

In order to encourage widespread participation, destination marketing organizations should take the lead with respect to marketing efforts including the creation of appropriate collateral. It is reasonable to charge participating

restaurants a nominal participation fee to cover promotional efforts and advertising costs.

Culinary events are typically held during slower months. During Miami's low season, the Greater Miami Convention & Visitor's Bureau (GMCVB) hosts Miami Spice throughout the months of August and September. Nearly eighty of Miami's top restaurants offer a set menu of three courses, which includes an appetizer, entrée and dessert for \$35 at dinner and \$22 during lunch. The dining promotion offers locals and visitors a chance to sample signature dishes created by world-renowned chefs for a fraction of the price they would pay on a regular visit and generates traffic for area restaurants during the slow season.

Nature of Your Local or Regional Cuisine

The desire to experience regional and local cuisine is a major reason for participating in culinary travel. Consider these important facts from the Profile of Culinary Travelers, 2006 Edition, published by the Travel Industry Association of America:

- 85% of culinary travelers enjoy learning about the local culture and cuisines of different travel destinations
- 66% of these travelers say they want their travel always to be "experiential," so they make an effort to seek out regional cuisines, culinary specialties, local wines/spirits, etc.

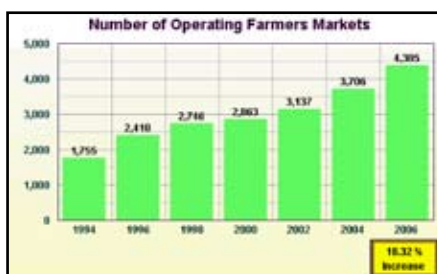
Look for local restaurants that have built a reputation around local cuisine. Perhaps a local chef may be suitable as a spokesperson for your destination. Consider including such an individual in a promotional tour in conjunction with other destination marketing efforts.

Roy Yamaguchi is credited by some industry observers with reinventing and reinterpreting Hawaiian cuisine. Opening his first restaurant in Honolulu, Yamaguchi became renowned for using only the freshest, locally-grown, raised or harvested ingredients and combining them in a unique style that married the best techniques and flavors of European and Asian cooking. This "Euro-Asian" style has become his signature and is now appreciated by consumers on the mainland and other world markets.

Another way to showcase a region's cuisine is to publish a cookbook with favorite restaurant recipes and specialties indigenous to the destination.

Farmers Markets

If you do not already have a Farmers Market in your area, now is the time to encourage cooperative efforts. The U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics show that farmers' markets have grown 66 percent since 1994, allowing greater access to local produce and expanding consumer awareness. The number of Farmers Markets increased 18.32% between 2004 and 2006.



Source: USDA

More chefs and local farmers are working together to satisfy consumers' appetite for fresh, home-grown foods. Farmers who work directly with chefs will tweak their harvests in ways that support the chefs' visions.

An event with local appeal may be expanded into a regional event that creates a broader geographic draw. In order to do this, destination marketers should identify regional producers.

With more widespread interest in healthful cuisine, an Organic Farmers Market may be in the cards.

There are more than twenty local organic growers between West Palm Beach and Homestead, Florida, according to Cassandra Maas, Director of Culinary Development at Quantified Marketing Group in Lake Mary, Florida. What kinds of producers are within your region?

Traditional Artisan Products and Locally-Made Wines/Beers

The Travel Industry Association reported 70% of culinary travelers like to bring back regional foods, recipes, wines, etc. from

places they have visited and share them with friends and family. There are a wide range of products that may appeal to visitors: cheese, fruits, produce, coffee, syrup, locally-crafted beer and wine. You may take many of the products for granted, but consider the states or regions that have built their reputations around artisan products: Wisconsin = Cheese, Napa and Sonoma = Wine, Vermont = Syrup, Kona Coffee and Macadamia Nuts = Hawaii, etc. Accordingly, inventory the products native to your locale, and you may find a basis of appeal to cultivate culinary tourism in a more assertive manner.

Culinary Festivals

Festivals are a cultural phenomenon throughout the world. Another way to tap into the potential of culinary tourism is to create a culinary festival. Such an event may be held on a grand scale such as the Taste of Chicago, the world's largest annual food festival. Held in Chicago, the two-week long Taste of Chicago event attracts millions of residents and tourists from around the world who are eager to sample a variety of food prepared by Chicago's most popular chefs and restaurants. The 2006 Taste of Chicago drew a record 3.6 million attendees.

It's not always necessary to create an event on such a grand scale. The Stone Crab, Seafood & Wine Festival in Longboat Key, Florida and the Strawberry Festival in Plant City, Florida are examples of successful smaller-scale events. Your inventory of artisan products or locally-made beers/wines may yield the basis for creating a culinary festival.

Implications

The future of culinary tourism looks bright. Expect destination marketing organizations to more fully exploit this marketing opportunity by placing more emphasis on this basis for economic development. There is a rising opportunity for select resorts to build brands underpinned by culinary tourism activities.

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WORLD TRAVEL MARKET

THOSE THREE WORDS TELL IT ALL!

BY PEGGY BENDEL



This year's record-breaking number of exhibitors and buyers reflects optimism among nearly all destinations that tourism will continue to be an important driver for their economy.

Focusing on a sampling of destinations from around the globe, I interviewed top marketing executives about their outlook for the future, and it is a very positive picture, with several destinations looking to establish a presence in the North American market in the year ahead.

Later this year, we will focus in depth on two rising destinations, Dubai and Chile, for their perspective.

What is the major opportunity or threat you see ahead of your destination in the next 3-5 years?

Opportunities

For Joe Motse, Marketing Services Manager of the Botswana Tourism Board (BTB), opportunities abound. Established in 2006 and fully operational in 2007, the BTB's goal is to make tourism Botswana's #2 industry (after diamonds) in five years. The popular "Ladies #1 Detective Agency" novels by Alexander McCall Smith have drawn much positive attention to the country, to be amplified when the BBC will introduce their viewers to the series in March, followed by the US. "Conservation is our strong suit, with more than 38% of our land reserved for conservation purposes," Motse commented. "We're the size of Texas, with a population of only 1.6 million, so there is plenty of room for people AND animals."

Tourism has increased rapidly in Cape Verde, the archipelago off Africa's West Coast, with 20+% annual growth for the past five years, reported Victor Fidalgo, President of the Cape Verde Investment Promotion Agency. "In 2006, we welcomed 280,000 travelers; by 2010, we expect 500,000, the same as our population," Fidalgo noted. With six new golf course coming online in the next five years, designed by such greats as Ernie Els and Jack Nicklaus, as well as a half-dozen or so marinas, tourism is poised to continue its increasing importance to Cape Verde's economy, rising from 3% of GDP to its present 18%.

Dominica, known as The Nature Island, is well positioned to capitalize on the

increasing interest in "green travel" and nature-based activities, says Steve Bornn, CEO and Director of Tourism for Discover Dominica Tourism Authority. Heightened interest in our planet's welfare will lead many travelers to place a premium on such locations, Bornn predicts.

Latvia's entry into the EU in 2003 has resulted in a 20-30% annual increase ever since, to a total of 4 million visitors, noted Uldis Vitolins, Director of the Latvian Tourism Development Agency: "Tourists said 'OK, let's go!'" The ensuing lack of capacity is now being remedied with the arrival of such international brands as Marriott and Sheraton. Introducing more travelers to such unique attractions as Rundale, a palace designed by a St. Petersburg architect, and Furmala, formerly

What is the major opportunity or threat you see ahead of your destination in the next 3-5 years?

a resort for the Russian intelligence service, and now enjoyed by many Scandinavians, is another focus.

Namibia's opportunities are in such markets as North America, China and other African countries, says Shareen Thude, Strategic Executive: Marketing and Research with the Namibia Tourism Board. "The market is looking for quality, particularly in eco- and responsible tourism: we're recognized as the best in the world," Thude commented. "We are also looking to expand our season beyond the traditional July-October period, with a focus on growing January-June," she added.

Nepal's tag line is Naturally Nepal. Once is not enough, and Diwaker B. Rana, Manager, Tourism Marketing and Promotion, sees many reasons for travelers to Nepal

to return. Wellness tourism, including spa hotels, medical centers and yoga, is increasing. "Our best years were 1998-99, when we attracted some 500,000 visitors, plummeting to 260,000 in 2003. The settlement of the political situation was a major boost for tourism," he noted. "PATA forecast annual growth of 8%, but our actual growth has been closer to 32%."

Adding new 5-star hotels, while refurbishing others in Lisbon, Madeira and the Algarve, has improved Portugal's product offerings in recent years, said Jose Antonio Preto da Silva, Director of Tourism for the Portuguese Trade and Tourism Office in London.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines attracts a sophisticated clientele, so they are less affected by new US passport regulations than other Caribbean islands, says Vida Bernard, Director of Tourism. "Most of our visitors from the US already held passports, so we saw only a minor decrease," she commented. "There's an opportunity to develop more boutique hotels, in line with our goal of sustainable travel: we're not looking to be a mass-market destination."

Jason Baptiste, Marketing Manager for, the Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Development Company, looks to Latin America – particularly Panama – and Canada, where many Trinidadians live, as markets of opportunity.

Threats

For several countries (Botswana, Dominica, Slovakia) a lack of direct air service, and often, service within the country, remains a constraint. Namibia shares their concern that airlift must keep pace with growth.

Lack of awareness is also an issue for many. "We're still unknown, even among Europe," says Livia Lukacova, Advertising Department Manager for the Slovak Tourist Board. "We're eager for more travelers from the Baltic nations, for example. And we have strong competitors, including Austria, Germany and the Netherlands," she concluded.

For Namibia, skills development that will keep pace with the growth in product and demand is a challenging priority.

Portugal views its threats as those that face

the rest of the Western world, said Preto da Silva: "The price of petrol, terrorism and taxes. Competition is now global: UK travelers can take short breaks in Dubai or New York almost as easily as coming to Portugal."

Trinidad and Tobago's Baptiste sees emerging destinations, such as Dubai, China and Turkey coming on strong, while Cape Verde's competitors are southern Europe, the Canary Islands and the Azores.

What are the most important changes you anticipate in:

YOUR GEOGRAPHIC OR DEMOGRAPHIC TARGET MARKETS

Top markets for Botswana are UK/Ireland, U.S. and Germany, with visitors to the Okavango Delta skewing older (40+) and adventure travelers concentrated in the 18-35 range. Japan is an emerging market, which has recently shown tremendous increases from the Asian market, with Southern Africa contributing significantly to the African market.

Italian beachgoers from 18 to 40 are Cape Verde's primary market, followed by the UK and the Scandinavian countries. US visitors are usually part of university study groups from East Coast and California universities, driven in part by the Cape Verde diaspora to New England.

Dominican visitors are predominantly from the US, particularly the Northeast and mid-Atlantic states, followed by the UK and other EU countries, primarily Germany and France (there is a ferry from Martinique).

For Latvia, its surrounding neighbors – Estonia, Germany, Russia, Sweden, Finland, Poland – and the UK are prime markets, with the US producing a stable 30,000 visitors annually. Demographic targets include UK adventurers who enjoy the bobsled run, or a static dive (air-supported flight). More traditional products still hold appeal, such as Riga for the culturally-oriented traveler from all markets.

Namibia's primary market is German-speaking Europeans, followed by the UK, South Africa and Angola, the latter mostly US and other business travelers involved with Angola's oil industry who come to

Namibia for R&R. Secondary markets include the Benelux countries, France, Italy and North America. All markets have been increasing annually. Niche markets range from weddings and photography to new cultural activities; incentive groups are a growing segment, too.

Trade shows
and advertising
are working well
in Europe for
Cape Verde and
at the moment,
demand
outstrips supply.

Nepal receives a third of its visitors from India alone, with the UK in second place and the US and Japan more or less tied for third. Trekkers are usually in the 20-40 age range, while the wellness tourism skews older and more upscale.

UK travelers to Portugal focus on the Algarve, with an average length of stay of six days. Families, headed by 35-50 year-olds, and the always-desirable 55+ traveler, as well as golfers and groups, are key targets. Such niche markets as bird watching, wine tasting, gastronomy, city breaks and national parks are a focus, with river cruising in the Douro Valley increasingly popular. Mediterranean cruises often include stops in Lisbon, the Azores and Madeira.

Travelers to Slovakia, growing since the country's entrance into the EU in 2004, are led from overseas countries by the U.S., Japan, China and Korea (the latter mostly business travel). They are usually 50+, visiting from May to October, and enjoying the culture and Slovakia's unique wooden churches. Luxury travel, including spas, is on the rise.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines draws visitors from the UK, the US, Canada and other Caribbean countries; the stronger Canadian dollar is already having a positive effect. Targets include families with preschoolers, couples 40-65, and some honeymooners. Cruise passengers experience organized island tours, though there is no program as yet to lure them back for longer stays. Adventurers can sample the waterfalls, snorkeling and diving; more sedate visitors enjoy the oldest botanic gardens in the Western Hemisphere and traditional cuisine, such as jackfish, stuffed and fried and with farine (made from cassava), the national dish.

For Trinidad, the UK and America are top markets, in part because of the Trinidadian diaspora to both countries, complemented by Germany and Scandinavia. Visitors tend to be well-traveled and somewhat older than is typical for the Caribbean. Niche markets such as diving and ecotourism (particularly bird watching) are important, as are shopping and meetings/conferences.

YOUR MARKETING PROGRAM (MORE OR LESS EMPHASIS ON ADVERTISING, PR, INTERNET MARKETING, ETC.)

Through the star grading system, Botswana intends to strengthen its presence in the international market by publishing the ratings on its web site. The Board also continues to encourage industry partners throughout the country to strengthen training and ensure delivery of international service standards at all times. Through media and agents' educational programs to Botswana, the Board will broaden exposure in all spheres.

Trade shows and advertising are working well in Europe for Cape Verde and at the moment, demand outstrips supply, Fidalgo noted.

For Dominica, the Internet is key for cost – and cost-effectiveness, since their primary market is the US. Public relations is an essential element, says Bornn.

Latvia is experimenting with various tactics, many of which seem to work sporadically, but always need refreshing. "The Internet did not generate the clicks and visits we'd hoped," commented Vitolins, "but in 2007, French TV5 and CNN International were a success, and outdoor worked well in London. We host 300 journalists a year,

many from the US and Japan.”

Nepal complements their web presence with sales missions, brochures and exhibits at trade fairs, supplemented in India with print and electronic advertising. They host some media, though few from the US.

Increased internet marketing, and the development and promotion of sports competitions and cultural events is a focus for Portugal.

Slovakia markets internationally with other members of the “European Quarter:” the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. The cooperation with US travel agents is a core element of their marketing, followed by agent fairs, media visits, collateral and their travel agent academy.

PR is the primary tool for St. Vincent & the Grenadines, focusing on national newspapers, supplemented by print advertising and some spot TV. They’ll test the Internet in 2008.

Online marketing for Trinidad and Tobago will increase, says Baptiste, particularly in North America, where they will spend more on Internet advertising, and use e-blasts with greater frequency.

YOUR OVERALL MARKETING BUDGET (UP, DOWN, THE SAME)

With the appointment of marketing offices in the UK and the US, Botswana’s budget will undoubtedly increase, and this will be reflected in the increased activities in the market, to ensure maximum benefits and exposure are gained by the destination, reported Motse.

Dominica’s budget is currently around \$1 million, with half of that going toward advertising in the U.S. Hopes are high for an increase, Bornn noted,

A stable, small marketing budget with a bigger push every two years has been the pattern for Latvia; partnering with other Baltic countries and sometimes Poland, has been successful in the past.

Namibia’s budget, now about \$4.5 million, is expected to expand next year, when a compact is signed to increase marketing and promotion in North America in 2009.

Nepal’s budget will rise with any increase in visitors, since funding comes not from the government, but from a 500 rupee (about \$US7) tax on each tourist.

Portugal’s Preto da Silva sees increased budgets dedicated to advertising and the creation and promotion of events, such as golf tournaments, designed to lure their target travelers.

Slovakia welcomed an infusion from a special EU budget from 2004 to 2006, and Lukacova expects their budget to rise, possibly including PR in key markets, as well as a road show for tour operators.

“Growing” characterizes St. Vincent & the Grenadines’ budget, while Trinidad’s Baptiste sees a stable budget for the coming year, and growth in the future.

What new directions are you exploring in your marketing/marketing communications?

Expanding product development – camel safaris in the Kalahari, increased emphasis on local culture, as well as the promotion of cities such as the capital city Gaborone, as a prime convention destination – will help Botswana spread the benefits of tourism to rural communities.

As Cape Verde’s supply of 4* hotels expands, there will be a focus on improving staff training and service levels commensurately, to assure guest satisfaction and avoid negative word of mouth.

Dominica has acknowledged the tendency for travelers to trust “people like me,” as shown by recent research in many fields, and their Web site is rich in true stories from past travelers, heightening credibility.

Latvia looks to continue the momentum of travelers from the UK, with an increase in flights from 3-4/week to 7-8 each day, in just the last four years. Looking to India, South and Central America, Namibia’s strategy is to drive trade growth through cooperative marketing with tour operators and other entities, building awareness through PR and consumer promotions.

Nepal will focus on volume (from India) and value (US and Japan), while exploring such emerging markets as China, Korea and the Middle East.

Year-round golf and the delights of the Algarve in winter, from wine-tasting to walking, cycling and painting will be a focus for Portugal, designed to spread business more evenly throughout the year.

Slovakia sees potential in Great Britain and Scandinavia in Europe, and in the Americas, Brazil and Mexico. “We’re also exploring niche markets, from destination weddings – we have many beautiful castles – to outdoor adventures such as Nordic walking, caving, and wooden rafting, complemented by wineries, and exploring waterfalls and gardens,” Lukacova commented. “We’re only 428 km from east to west, so it’s easy to reach all parts of Slovakia, and explore a variety of interests, even on a short break.”

St. Vincent & the Grenadines welcomed their largest property, a Raffles Resort, a few years ago; the first phase of the 250-room Buccament Bay Resort, complete with spa and a major restaurant, will open in 2008.

With Trinidad and Tobago’s economy doubling in the past two years with the price of oil, their #1 industry, “the industry has taken on a new face and shape,” noted Baptiste. “The new 428-room Hyatt on the waterfront in Port of Spain is the first new 100% government supported hotel in 40 years.”

Peggy Bendel is Senior Vice President/Travel Marketing for Development Counsellors International, the leader in marketing places (www.aboutdci.com). She has visited 52 countries, and visiting World Travel Market added at least that many more to her wish list!

Destination Branding for Small Cities

REVIEW BY BILL GEIST, ZEITGEIST CONSULTING

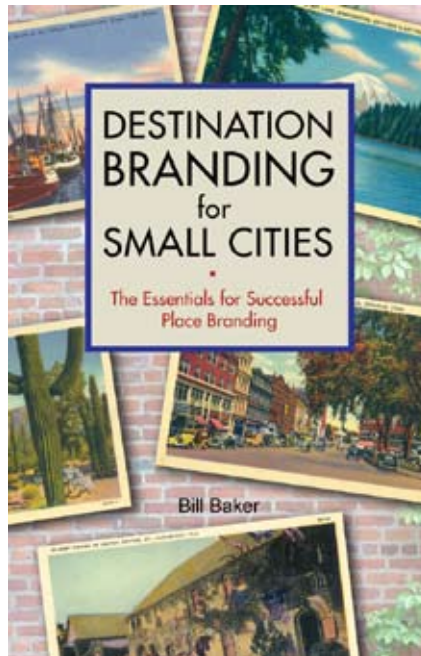
Destination Marketers around the globe are scrambling to develop, freshen or re-articulate their destination's brand identity. Sadly, most of these efforts fall far short of the mark because proponents confuse the science of branding with the art of advertising or the creation of a tagline or logo.

Internationally respected destination marketer Bill Baker makes the distinction crystal clear in the new book "Destination Branding for Small Cities." And, don't let the title confuse marketing practitioners in larger destinations. The tenets in Baker's book apply to virtually all destinations, regardless of size.

As traditional marketing strategies find less and less of a foothold with today's consumer, a strong brand is essential for any product. Baker makes the case that for destinations, it isn't even an option.

While many communities believe they do not possess a brand identity, Baker points out that virtually every place does. The challenge is that these organically grown brands may not communicate the desired marketing message to resonate with prospective visitors and provide a competitive advantage. Baker stresses the need to be honest about existing brand identities because what is already in the mind of the consumer will drive further experiential branding.

Thus, rather than "putting make-up on an aardvark," Baker suggests a seven step process that includes assessing the organic brand that currently exists, positioning the destination's attributes against consumer needs and desires and articulating the brand. And, to his credit, the seven step approach



is far from being a cookie-cutter approach. Baker knows that every destination is different and, thus, each process needs to be unique within his framework.

One of the strongest facets of the book is how Baker defines the differences between taglines, logos, slogans, key words and images. And, he does it with a wide array of examples of those destination brands that are sensationally effective...and those that fail to be distinguish themselves as anything more than a "me-too" slogan.

Baker has been in the tourism trenches for decades and was part of the team that brought Australia's "Shrimp on the Barbee" campaign to life. Thus, he knows that it takes far more than research and great creative to develop a resonant destination

brand. And, that's why three of the seven steps focus on the implementation stage. That's good news for Destination Marketers, as an ill-designed brand roll-out has cost many DMOs credibility in the eyes of their stakeholders. Baker cautions brand managers to be just as cautious with implementation as they are doing the initial brand assessment.

Just as the best brands are a collection of stories that make up a persona, Baker is a wonderful storyteller, weaving case studies in and out of his easy-to-follow steps for brand success. Readers will learn why the best brands got that way. They'll also read cautionary tales of destinations that veered away from the process and ended up with a snappy tagline that says little, if anything, about who they are and why anyone should care.

"Destination Branding for Small Cities" is the finest treatise on this much misunderstood topic to date. Baker's debut book clearly defines what destination brands are and aren't...and outlines a clear path for those that want to do branding right. If you are involved in the marketing of destinations, this is a must-read.

Destination Branding for Small Cities is published by Creative Leap Books, the list price is \$24.95 and is available from Amazon.com.

Consultant, speaker and author Bill Geist is the President of Zeitgeist Consulting, specializing in the Destination Marketing field. The second edition of his book, "Destination Leadership for Boards" has just been released. You can learn more about Bill at BillGeist.com.

PR Advice to Travel Marketers

BY PAMELA JOHNSTON

You don't need a PR firm, you need a PR strategist.

You want to create buzz, so your PR strategy is to bring attention to your company/ product/technology/CEO/ book. But generating buzz is not a strategy: it's the outcome of many strategies. Applying a PR strategy – whether for exposure or as a solution to a problem – is essential. Whatever the budget, the most effective ideas are ones that apply the message of the brand, but with a new approach. In the following example, you'll see the vast difference between attracting customers and attracting the right customers.

For example, take the Catalina Hotel, a cheap-chic boutique hotel in South Beach. The property was rightfully concerned about negative online reviews citing noise, late parties and lack of luxury services. The answer was not to simply contact some happy guests and ask them to post complimentary reviews.

Instead, the strategy had to start with the core problem: these complaining customers weren't the "right" customers in the first place. Our solution was to match the right customers with the hotel. We made lists of the typical happy customers by subgroup – The Rock Star, The Action Seeker, The Partier – and decided on a campaign that centered around matched and mismatched language key words for SEO for the greatest impact. What would potential customers see online and in print that would let them know that Catalina was or wasn't the right hotel for them?

And thus, Pimp My Fridge was born.

We came up with special minibars that guests could preorder in five categories: the "Get it On" minibar, the "Rock Star" minibar, etc...with customized ingredients including Visine, chocolate body paint,



cigarettes, a Barry White CD, etc... We publicized Pimp my Fridge as the ultimate in customization from Catalina and the press release would contain key words to support valid customer subsets. The Pimp My Fridge name would become the lead mismatch key phrase.

A whirlwind started with the front page of USA Today, an AP syndicated piece and a flurry of blogs and online newspapers created the desired electronic trail. In addition to reaching an audience of 1.5 billion in 12 weeks, the customized fridges actually added another revenue stream for Catalina. At the end of the day, the campaign took less than \$8,000 to execute.

Before you get into execution and using the services of a PR firm, make sure you and your partners understand the strategies that are shaping the campaigns. That knowledge translates into capitalizing on opportunities and turning on a dime when executing. PR for today's companies is a moving target.

Pamela Johnston is the President of Pamela Johnston Inc. an award winning, full service PR firm known for creativity and results. Having crafted images and campaigns for well known corporations, tourism destinations, luxury goods, technologies and retail companies – PJ Inc. mobilizes customers, gets client messages heard and has proven expertise in both traditional and PR 2.0.

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SIDEBAR SOUNDBITES:

- Just because it's in PowerPoint, doesn't mean it's a plan.
- Run different campaigns for different goals and different media targets, not one single campaign for all.
- Layer PR campaigns with the right mix of offline, online, broadcast, and social media.
- Don't be afraid of real creativity – pushing the limits is where innovation takes place.



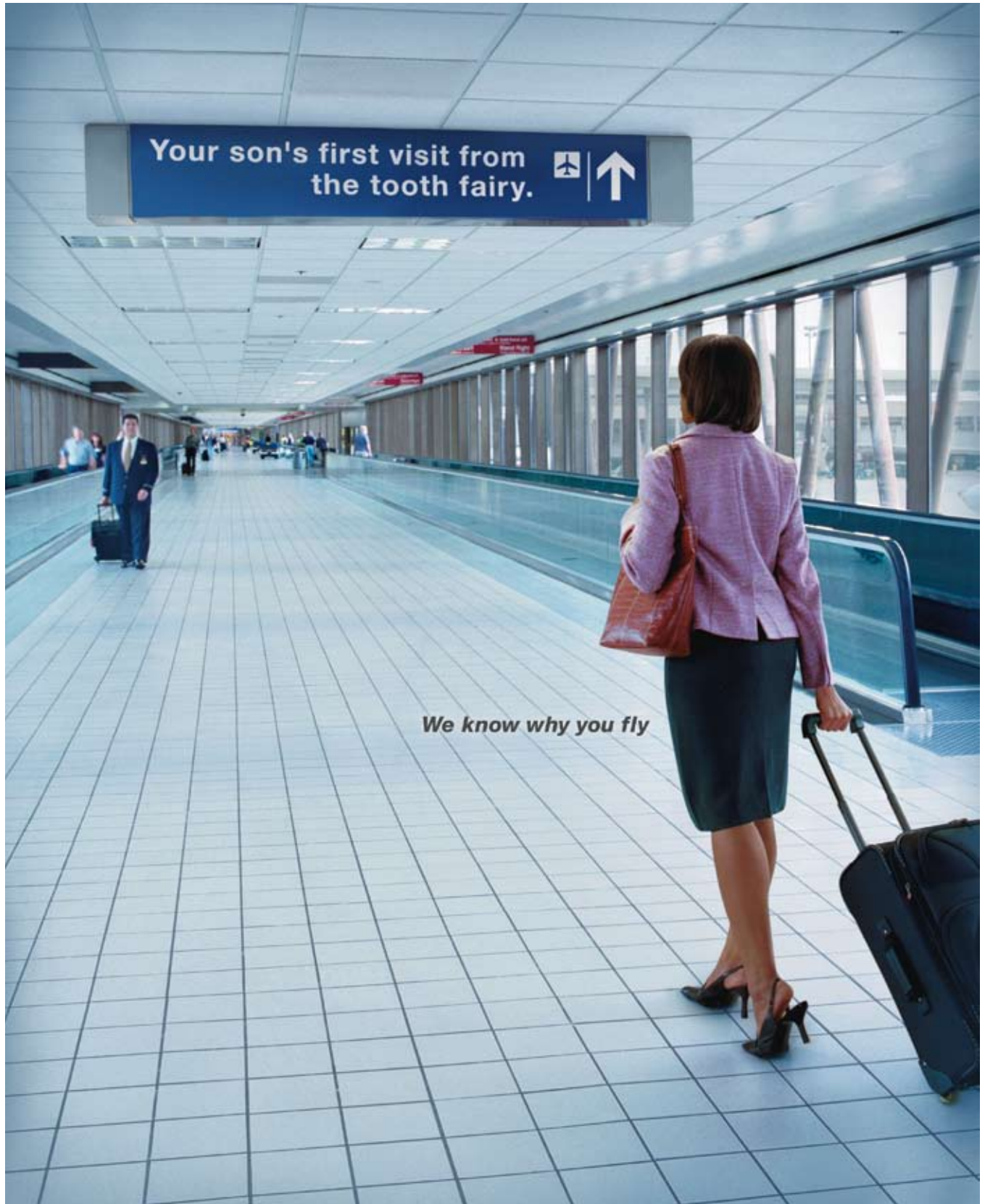
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