

UNIT 3: DESTINATIONS

PASSPORT TO THE WORLD

Resources Guide

OUTCOMES:

- Students will be able to identify the factors that make a destination attractive or unattractive to travelers
- They will realize the wide variety of destinations available to travelers
- Students will be familiar with the ways in which destinations and companies market and sell themselves
- Students will be able to find and use sources of information that are available on destinations
- They will be able to confidently discuss the concepts of “sustainable tourism,” “eco-tourism,” and “geo-tourism”

Introduction:

In modern times due to technological developments and reductions in transport costs, people travel far and widely throughout the world. A century ago, travel was a luxury; most people never went beyond their native village or

city. Now it is a rare person who has not traveled beyond his/her local town or city. Employees of even very small companies travel to other countries to do business. Young people travel more often than their parents ever dreamed of. TV and movies have showcased countries all around the globe.

An infinite variety of destinations is now available to the tourist to suit his/her budget and travel needs. As a result, destinations now compete for visitors

FAST FACT:

Writer Ian Fleming used Jamaica as the setting for six of his James Bond novels.

much more extensively than they did historically. In some cases, destination officials and business owners become very aggressive about building facilities to encourage tourism; if they are not careful, the very things that made their





destination unique and enjoyable get destroyed by too many people, too much building, too much garbage, too much use of water, etc.

Sustainable Tourism:

The issue of traveler's needs must be considered in the context of the issue of ensuring sustainability of destinations.

As noted in a comprehensive survey¹ the concept of sustainability has gone beyond environmental preservation to ensuring the sustainability of the culture itself:

FAST FACT:

The World Tourism Organization predicts that international tourist arrivals will more than double from about 625 million at the turn of the century to 1.6 billion in 2020.



The concept of sustainable tourism is not new to the travel industry. In the past, its primary concern was to sustain balance with the ecological environment and minimize the impact upon it by mass-market tourism. The term "Geotourism" is closely related, but is concerned instead with preserving a destination's

geographic character—the entire combination of natural and human attributes that make one place distinct from another. Geotourism encompasses both cultural and environmental concerns regarding travel, as well as the local impact tourism has upon communities and their individual economies and lifestyles.

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¹ The Geotourism Study: Phase I Executive Summary, National Geographic Traveler, Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), 2002



The Balance Between Uniqueness and Standardization:

A concern of the travel industry is that too many destinations are beginning to look just like each other. The Geotourism Study quoted above stated:

In an effort to please everyone and to make them feel “at home”, the travel industry risks sacrificing the very things that attracted consumers in the first place. What has resulted is a loss of distinctive characteristics, an erosion of local customs and cuisines, an absence of regional architecture and general culture. ...it is these factors that primarily attract the consumers who take the most trips, spend the most money, and produce the greatest volume of visitors overall.²

However, another factor must be considered, and that is the corporate or business traveler who has a business purpose and wants to know that the hotel, restaurant or meeting place will be appropriate for conducting the meeting or convention. Certain standards of comfort, cleanliness and convenience are expected. This means that many destinations that want both corporate travelers and tourists have to manage the complex task of ensuring standardization of key elements while also maintaining uniqueness.

One concern of companies and government officials is determining how to keep popular destinations attractive. Another concern is how to sustain the unique characteristics that made the destination attractive to start with when more and more visitors arrive. Put another way, how can popular destinations remain sustainable destinations? These concerns exist in both warm and cold

climates, though tropical areas have been especially affected.³ If a destination gets more visitors than can be comfortably accommodated with the existing facilities, then sometimes environmental damage is caused when new facilities are added.

Examples include:

- ❖ Hotels may get built near fragile beach dunes.
- ❖ Increased visitors put a strain on the supply of fresh water.
- ❖ Sewage facilities may get overburdened.
- ❖ There may be more garbage than can be picked up and deposited using the current local methods and garbage disposal areas.
- ❖ Increased run off from hotels may pollute the ground water and/or lakes, rivers or oceans with the result that animal and plants die.
- ❖ Trees get cut in order to clear land for building.

² Op. Cit.

³ Climate is a major factor in encouraging or discouraging people's choice of particular destinations. In fact, countries with moderate climates, such as Costa Rica have become popular with retired persons, who often are travelers who liked the country and decided to live there. The south of Spain has many retirees from Britain, as does South Africa. In some areas of these countries, there have been so many retirees that overcrowding is now a problem.



Communities want the economic benefits that come when travelers spend money. But if they become so popular that resources are strained, then business and community leaders have a choice to make:

- ❖ **Try to limit development but maintain the revenues to the community by raising prices. Higher prices assumes that visitors will get “better” services, or**
- ❖ **Do nothing to limit development, but tax Travel & Tourism revenues to expand facilities such as water treatment and garbage collection**

FAST FACT:

Tourist submarines operate in the Caribbean, Red Sea, Mediterranean, South Pacific, Atlantic, South China Sea, Gulf of Mexico and Pacific, according to the consulting firm U.S. Submarines Inc.

One debate in the industry is whether travelers will be willing to spend more money in order help to sustain not just the environment and the economic well-being of a community's workforce, but the “geographic character” of the community.

FAST FACT:

There are days when Venice and its 60,000 residents see 150,000 visitors arrive and depart in one day.

The *National Geographic Traveler* survey suggests that some American travelers are willing to spend more to keep destinations sustainable. Do you think this finding would apply in your country?

Another issue is the sustainability of **local culture**. This topic will be addressed in more detail in the next unit.

Travelers' Preferences:

In your earlier discussion of customer needs, you have seen that there are different types of tourists with different interests and needs. Review the results of the Gfk Group's survey of travelers from 16 different countries. The survey findings are summarized in the press release your teacher can hand out, or which you can view on the Internet at http://www.gfk-verein.org/index.php?article_id=88&clang=1



How do your country's travelers compare to travelers from the countries surveyed by the Gfk Group? If your country was one of the countries that was surveyed, how do your country's travelers compare to the rest of the travelers who were surveyed? How do your own travel preferences and motivations compare to those of the travelers who were surveyed?

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Destination Marketing:

Because Travel & Tourism is so competitive, marketing and advertising are essential features of the industry. Destinations use many different strategies to sell destinations and holidays to the customer. Business organizations are urged to hold their conventions at particular resorts or convention centers; tourists are given promotional deals to try to persuade them to pick one destination over another.

And to make it all more complicated the Internet and the thousands of destination web sites give travelers vast amounts of information. Twenty years ago, travelers had to rely on travel agents, advertisements in magazines and newspapers, and the recommendations of friends or business colleagues in order to get destination information. Now they have almost too much information to process.

Destinations and the companies that serve them develop strategies that try to:

- **Create interest.**
- **Foster desire.**
- **Inspire action.**
- **Target a specific age group, social class, nationality, special interest group, etc.**

FAST FACT:

In southeastern India there is a train station with a two-letter name: lb. Is this the shortest name in the world for a station?

FAST FACT:

Tanzania is home to the tallest mountain in Africa, Mount Kilimanjaro (5,895 meters or 19,341 feet tall), and shares Africa's largest lake, Lake Victoria, with Kenya and Uganda. The lake covers 68,800 square kilometers, or 26,000 square miles.

FAST FACT:

In 2010 about 36 million people visited Hong Kong and its 7 million inhabitants, or 5 times as many people as live there.



THE TYPICAL APPROACHES THAT ARE USED BY DESTINATIONS TO MARKET THEMSELVES ARE:

- **WEB SITES.** The costs involved are for design and implementation of the web site, a computer (a “server”) to host the site, and the cost of updating and maintaining the site. Review the material in Unit 1 to see how to find country web sites.
- **PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS** in which articles about the destination are printed in travel magazines and newspapers, and placed in electronic media. Such campaigns are usually developed and implemented by public relations agencies. The destination’s companies or government pays the public relations (PR) agency to prepare news releases and articles that will interest people. Some prepare “video” news releases that can be shown on TV. The costs involved are for the time spent by the agency’s personnel who do the research and writing, and for associated expenses, such as travel or photography.
- **ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS** are also used. Often a destination will use “co-op” advertising, which is a method by which the destination (often the government) will share the cost of an ad with a travel agency. A charge card company, like American Express, or a credit card company, like Visa, will prepare an ad about the destination, or about a restaurant or hotel. By sharing the cost of the ad, these companies hope that the traveler will not only use the advertised facility but also will use the financial card. Most advertising campaigns are developed and carried out by advertising agencies that specialize in Travel & Tourism. The agencies determine what message should be in the ad and where the ad should be placed – on TV, radio, newspapers, magazines or the internet. The costs involved are a function of what the particular media charges for running the ad. Typically, the ad agency charges a percentage of the cost charged for the ad. Today, though, some agencies also work on a flat fee basis.
- **WORD OF MOUTH.** Satisfied visitors tell their friends. But, so do dissatisfied visitors. Some marketers estimate that a positive endorsement is heard by 10 people, but a negative one, or a complaint, reaches 50 people. You can also find descriptions and photos of virtually every world destination, as well as independent reviews by people who have visited the destinations, at www.worldisround.com. Increasingly, people are finding out about destinations from the Internet, not just from their friends.
- **GENERAL NEWS** that is reported on TV and radio and is not part of a planned marketing campaign. Although destinations may not select this last approach – especially TV news—it is a major source of destination information for many people. A news story about a tourist getting mugged, or a business traveler getting cheated, becomes a negative sell for these destinations. Bad news is hard to overcome with ads or visually beautiful video news releases.

FAST FACT:

Hungary's thermal springs have attracted visitors since Roman times two thousand years ago.

Investigate how your hometown or city promotes itself to travelers. In particular, see if there is any special effort made to encourage young people to visit. If you were writing about your town for other teenagers, what would you say?

You can visit the GTTP website and see what other students have written about important tourism issues in their countries. Go to www.gttp.org and click on "Students" and then on "Research Award" to find out about student case studies. Past case studies are in the "Archives."

American Express has information on many destinations that its customers want to visit. Many companies, in fact, help destinations market themselves. If Internet access is available, you can visit the American Express website at the address shown below, can click on a country and then a specific destination to find extensive information: http://www.amextravelplanning.com/destinations?us_nu=dd&inav=travel_searchdestinations

FAST FACT:

By 2020 China is expected to become the fourth largest source of tourists in the world, even though it is not yet on the list of the top 20 sources of tourists. The World Tourism Organization also expects China to be the most popular destination in the world, ahead of the current most popular destination today, France.

**FAST FACT:**

The world's largest pilgrimage destination is in India. It is called the Vishnu Temple in the city of Tirupati. Around 30,000 people

visit this temple daily, donating about \$6 million US dollars everyday.
Source:
<http://india.gov.in/myindia>

