

Marketing for sustainability: opportunities and threats for DMOs

Prof. Xavier Font
University of Surrey
United Kingdom
x.font@surrey.ac.uk

 /xavierfont

Marketing is part of the sustainable tourism solution

Marketing is responsible for many of the impacts, positive and negative, in a tourist destination. The type and quantity of customers that we receive, the expectations we generate, the behaviors that we encourage, the services that promote ... are the reasons why the visitor creates these impacts, and these behaviors are the result of marketing and communication.

Sustainable marketing is the application of techniques for a destination, a resource or product to serve the needs of the visitor and resident today and to have the opportunity to do so in the future. This means that the entities in charge of marketing have a broader vision of their responsibilities and assess the impact of their actions in a more holistic way.

01 Reduce environmental and social impacts

Normalise the consumption of sustainable tourism products and services

Public sector as buyer of services

Benefits for certified businesses

Copenhaguen 70% hotels certified,
80% of food bought by the public
sector is organic

*Indicator: Percentage of tourism
services certified as sustainable*



Sustainable Copenhagen



Photo: Mikael Colville Andersen

02 Reduce the carbon footprint from transport

Reduce the distance travelled by tourists

Increase length of stay

Optimise methods of transport

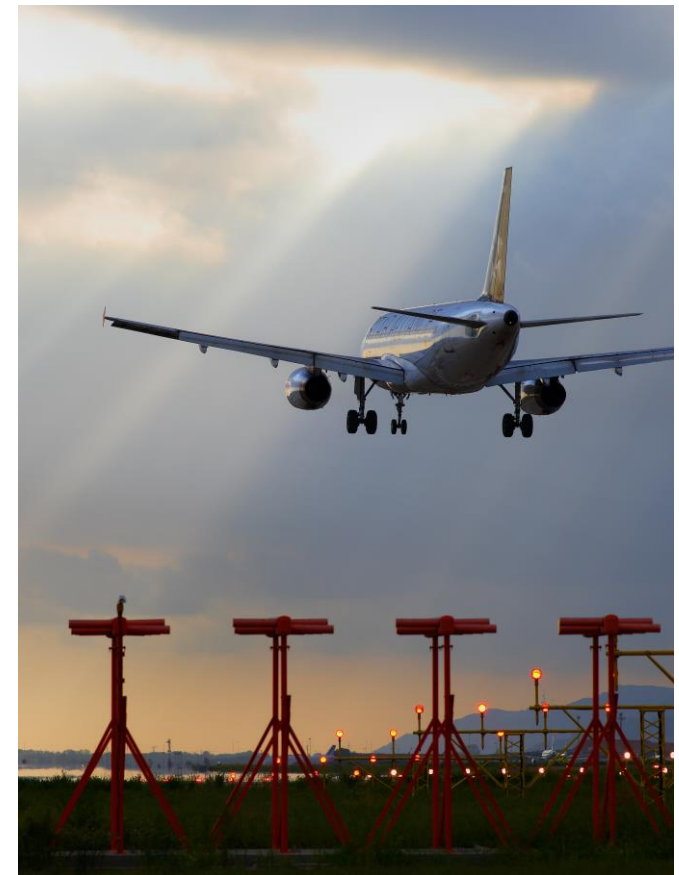
Target to fight climate change: 2 tonnes CO₂

Average consumption in Europe 6.5-10 tonnes

New York to Barcelona flight: 2.3 tonnes

London-Barcelona flight: 0.5 tonnes

*Indicator: Carbon footprint for transport
per traveller per day*

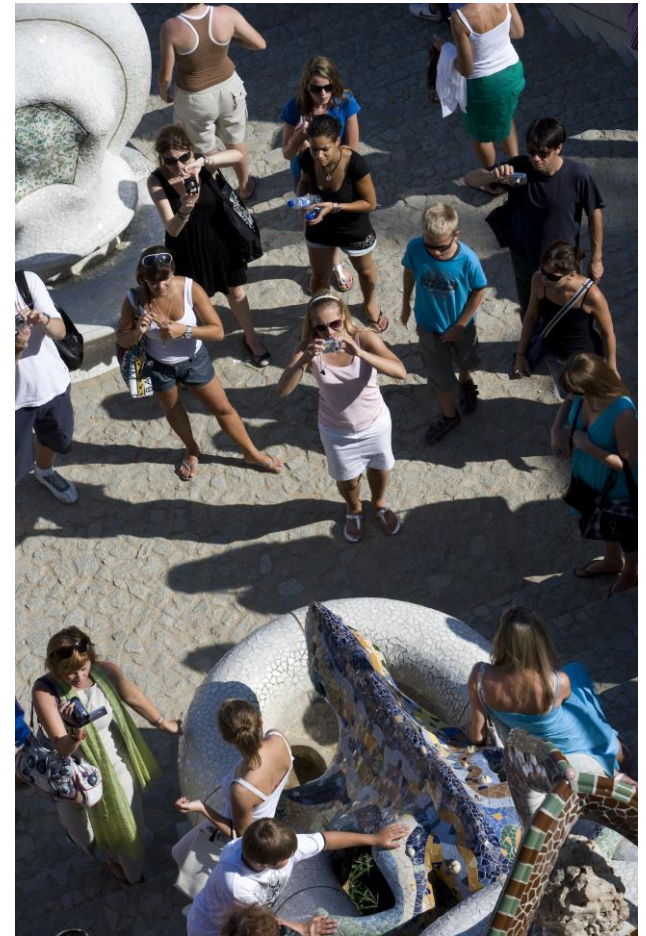


03 Normalise the behaviour of travellers

Increase customer loyalty
Target families and small groups
Target tourists that are not visible




Indicator: Percentage of travellers that repeat



04 Reduce seasonality

Reduce seasonality and redistribute tourism geographically 101 things to do in New York



The screenshot shows the 'I amsterdam' website. The navigation bar at the top includes 'I AM VISITING', 'BOOK NOW', 'WHAT'S ON', 'SEE AND DO', 'EXPLORE', 'PLAN YOUR TRIP', 'I AMSTERDAM CITY CARD', and 'LANGUAGES'. The main image is a field of yellow and red tulips. A red banner in the top right corner of the image says 'I amsterdam.' Below the image, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'About Amsterdam / Itineraries / A sustainable day in Amsterdam'. The main heading is 'A sustainable day in Amsterdam'. The text below reads: '“Going Green” is nothing new to the Dutch. Over 400 years ago, the city of Amsterdam planted trees along the canals to “green up” their beautiful city. And, with 400 km of bike paths, it’s a city where green transportation is no joke. So what else can you do to respect the eco spirit of the city? Well,

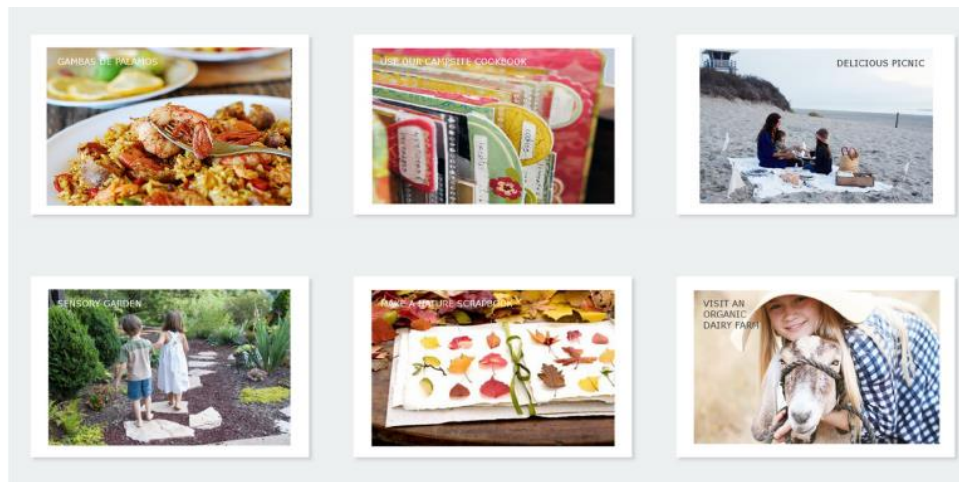
Indicator: Index of saturation of tourism

05 Compensate the negative impacts caused by tourism

Increase visitor expenditure on products and services benefiting the destination

Promote small, new and locally owned businesses

Promote businesses employing minority and disadvantaged groups



*Indicator: Visitor expenditure that benefits the destination
(TSA applied to market segments)*

In summary

Applying sustainability principles to marketing can be used to:

1. Reduce environmental and social impacts
2. Reduce the carbon footprint from transport
3. Normalise the behaviour of travellers
4. Reduce seasonality
5. Compensate the negative impacts caused by tourism

