



BOOK REVIEW:

David Flores-Ruiz (Coord.). Manual de Gestión de Destinos Turísticos. 2014. Tirant Humanidades. Valencia, Spain, ISBN 978-84-16062-09-6.

Francisco J. Riquel-Ligero
International University of La Rioja (Spain)
&
GEIDETUR-University of Huelva (Spain)
francisco.riquel@dem.uhu.es

Tourism has become, especially in recent years, a critical industry for the social and economic development of regional areas. Furthermore, in the context of the current economic situation in Spain, tourism is one of the industries that have best withstood the effects of the economic crisis that has beset the country.

One of the main challenges facing the sector involves identifying a management model capable of addressing the complexity of the current tourism offer, one that is linked to the territory and aimed at providing visitors with unique experiences. This is why I consider that Manual de Gestión de Destinos Turísticos contributes to defining and analysing the main variables established by the scientific literature for the management of tourist destinations. It achieves this by following a logical sequence, taking as its starting point the definition of a tourist destination, proceeding to link it to the territory, and finally addressing the main aspects affecting the offer and the management of a destination.

In my view the book also makes an important contribution by providing the reader with the tools needed to relate the classical models of strategic thought, which have been so thoroughly analysed in the literature of Management, to the management of tourist destinations, with a clear distinction between strategic and operational factors, applying this focus to the so-called “coordinating body”. One of the great practical contributions of the book in my opinion is that the authors have succeeded in carrying out a review of the main management models of tourist destinations, identifying the strategic variables their managers need to weigh at the time of making decisions related to the competitiveness of the destination.

As is well known, all management, whether of a company or a tourist destination, involves identifying and understanding the target market. *Manual de Gestión de Destinos Turísticos* underscores this point, which is so often relegated to secondary or tertiary importance in the marketing strategies pursued by the various government agencies with responsibilities in the field. Establishing a suitable definition of the destination’s mission or goal (as suggested in the book), one that is accepted and shared by all the territory’s main players, provides a starting point that helps to demarcate the essential aspects of the management of the destination, while simultaneously guiding and lending cohesion to a process of decision making that needs to take account of the various constitutive players in order to approach the target markets. These target markets exhibit tastes, habits and fashions that are dynamic and shaped by a multiplicity of factors that elude the attempts of agents in the destination to influence them. This having been said, it is essential to be aware of them, monitor them and share relevant information among all the players concerned. The book makes appropriate use of scientific methodologies for researching tourist markets, and this is why I believe it makes a significant contribution in supplying the industry with the tools and techniques needed to improve understanding of the markets and the strategic positioning of the destination.

In short, this book succeeds in addressing some of the main weaknesses currently afflicting the industry. The next challenge for the authors involves so-called action-research approaches, identifying successful practices in the subject areas covered based on the impact indicators defined in the book itself, paving the way to longitudinal studies capable of analysing how the tourist destinations evolve over time. An indispensable book for approaching the debate, which suggests the need for an institutional model that fosters the establishment of processes and products linked to territories as tourist destinations.

P.S.: If you would like to review a new or recent book, or you have a suggestion for a book to be reviewed in the journal, please contact Steve Watson, Book Reviews Editor, at s.watson@yorks.ac.uk