

# Promotional Activities Focused on Foreign Tourists

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By M.A. IRENA RUZIN, INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM, Bitola, Macedonia

## **1.1 Current situation in Macedonia compared to the world trends in cultural tourism.**

Museums in Macedonia are financed by the Government of Macedonia- Ministry of Culture. A part of the museums will be under local government with the decentralization plan.

Macedonian museums work with the public, especially with children. Recently we were praised by Martin Wats, a foreign expert, who was impressed with the number of students including in our educational programs.

It is a pleasure for me to say that the museum marketing in Macedonia is slowly gaining its rightful place. Museums understand the importance of marketing. Till now some museums have successful sales of museum copies and regular updates to the media.

A large part of the museums are increasing their marketing budgets to take place of the unpaid types of promotion, which are publicity and PR which was formally used.

After analyzing the situation we came to a conclusion that promotion of cultural values is necessary outside the country and to foreign visitors if we want to attract them to become our visitors, as we wish.

It is not unusual that foreign tourists are tired of all types of tourism which can be found all over the world. Tour Operators are sending us signs that foreign visitors are interested in cultural tourism. In the past few years there has been a strong emphasis on cultural tourism and promotion of one nation's culture, in a manner that they can only accomplish.

Carnegie says: You will need 2 months to reach the visitors if work to meet their needs rather than you will need 2 years if you wait for them to reach you.

Tourists are asking for unique places, best kept secrets places, places that represent the locals from pastime. From a cultural aspect, culture differences are no longer a barrier but an opening to the evaluation of one region's culture. Culture as a function has the factors of tolerance, development and further more creativeness.

## **1.2 Cultural tourism - characteristics**

The characteristics of the cultural tourism are that it is not a mass tourism. The tourists are not coming only to visit to museums or archaeology sites but they also come to visit other attractions. Visitors like to understand what they are visiting, cultural and historical meanings, as well as to remember the impressive details, to discuss present and past and to take a souvenir for home.

Cultural tourism gives the cause to research and to realize the different types of ways of living by the presentation of habits, religions and traditions. Also the intelligent ideas of one cultural heritage which till then was unknown to the tourist.

One must always remember that the satisfied visitor will tell less people than the unsatisfied visitor who will tell many more...

The marketing plans and strategies of the museum should be built on different cultural models due to the fact that every one of them are unlike in interests, values, motivations, and lifestyles. It is important that we should know the target group so we can confirm what way to establish communication with them.

## **1.3 Opportunities and perspectives for cultural tourism development in Macedonia**

Macedonia has plenty of resources and possibilities that are necessary for the development of cultural tourism.

Through the research together with students of the University St. Kliment Ohridski in 2004 we confirmed that tourist of culture who came to Macedonia most often were:

- - business people
- - delegations
- - couples
- - young adults

Cultural tourists-What they do?-According to European research

- 75 % of cultural tourists visit cultural heritage sites
- 42 % of cultural tourists visits museums and galleries
- 30 % of cultural tourists visit local events
- 17 % of cultural tourists attend concerts
- 10 % of cultural tourists attend the opera or theater
- 14 % of cultural tourists consider themselves as cultural visitors

Macedonia is recognized as a multicultural country with high tolerance and respect. When you travel through Macedonia you will be overcome by the breath taking architecture. In just a few square meters you will find orthodox churches, catholic churches, mosques, synagogues. Exhibited artifacts and the archeological exhibitions gives us information that from the Neolithic period, settlements were present in Macedonia. All artifacts or exhibits which fall in the cultural heritage of Macedonia are evidence that Macedonia was a crossing road for many different cultures, tribes, nations, heritages up to now. Ancient archeology sites are very attractive, old bazaars and entire streets with important monuments are under the Institute of Protection of Cultural Monuments.

Identification of the resources and their evaluation confirm that Macedonia has the potential for development of tourism.

Registered cultural heritage till 2004

- 9 876 cultural spots
- 4 260 sites
- 1 726 Churches and monasteries
- 150 000 m2 Frescos
- 26 000 Icons
- 420 altars and other wood carvings from churches
- 102 Monuments from Islamic culture
- 24 Old bazaars
- 500 000 exhibits in the museums
- 1213 old buildings with city architecture
- 21 Museums in Macedonia ( Natural history, history, complex museums with archeology, historical and ethnologic permanent exhibitions, memory rooms, memory houses, etc.

If we want to achieve cultural and tourism development, we need to work on several levels.

When we talk about larger promotion we not only are thinking of the national strategy but also on a local level. The Bitola region is taking the first steps in this plan. The work to meet and satisfy the needs of the tourists is imperative in this phase.

The horizontal integration and collaboration of all organizations and stake holders that are involved and interested for development of cultural tourism is very important-cultural institutions, tourist agencies, hotels, transport organizations, local businesses, etc. All above mentioned should work together if they want to meet the tourist needs.

According to the expert's advice the main 6 potential improvement points are:

1. Planning - without a plan prepare to go in circles
2. Market Research - Determining the essence of what you have to offer and who is looking for that particular essence

3. Product Development - Protecting, enhancing, and developing the essence of what you have...for visitors and residents.
4. Promotion - Letting people know that you have a particular essence.
5. Hospitality - Giving people the essence that has been promoted to them.
6. Understanding Each Other - People tend to support who and what they know and understand.

It is imperative to effectively use the cultural heritage resources without causing damage to them because authenticity is a motive for the tourist as well as for a nation to preserve it. We should also pay attention to the service quality- it has to be in line with the European standards. This requires highly skilled and trained professionals.

The joint promotion of cultural and tourist products is recommended to be done not only on a national level but also the international level. Since cultural tourism is characterized by high consumption, high quality service we need to be aware that the possibilities are less for development in this field of tourism only and we should be tied together either other attractions for example natural attractions. We should not divide natural and cultural attractions but connect the two to make one tourist product.

From all of above mentioned we identified and explained the characteristics and we made a value assessment and we uncovered the benefit for everyone. We understand that it is necessary to make a strategy plan for collaboration to be formed not only on a regional level but on a national level also.

We need to put in our vision, the motive of travel most important, which is for information, knowledge and to experience the essence of the country. When we accept this we will have cultural tourism and satisfaction from our potential visitors.

Prof. Marioti from Italy states that the attractions of one region is in 2 groups, one based on which the region had before the actual cultural tourism began and the second on the attractions that were made to attract visitors and to keep them.

#### **1.4 Case study: "Museum Promotion from a non-museum location"**

Phase of idea

This project came about as an idea when we presented to foreign experts of museum marketing who were holding a seminar for us on this topic. At the end of the seminar we had a task to develop a project. A title was given to us and a completion was formed. For the best project, this one was chosen. The foundation that sponsored the seminar also financed this project with a small budget. The people who realized the project needed to be volunteers from Macedonia museums. They wanted us to see the result of the project which will be the focus of our future work and to give us the idea to apply for a similar project at other foundations. The museum professionals accepted this challenge.

Beforehand on this project we made many analyses so they served as platform for the general concept (plan for forum posters, program, printed material, dynamics, media plan, for the realization and evaluation.)

The location for this research was Ohrid, a city on a lake that is protected by UNESCO, where in the summer attracts many foreign tourists who were our main target group. Ohrid has many world wide known tourist attractions, the oldest university, churches, frescos and natural attraction.

The analysis done earlier showed that the museum does not have enough foreign visitors. The tourists are attracted mostly to the lake. Surveys showed that they are not our visitors because they do not know where we are located, they want to learn about us, they do not know how to organize a visit, they are interested in our history, architecture, tradition, habits, museums, archeological sites.

There also are a large number of foreign tourists who are in Ohrid - congress tourism. The small number of foreign visitors to the museums is recognized, and research has been done on the reasons for this.

Not enough promotion in foreign countries or in Macedonia. That was the motive for the purpose of the project- to increase the number of foreign tourist through promotion and to bring closer our cultural heritage to the foreign tourists in Ohrid

In the center of the city near the dock is a Tourist agency Aviotours, which we signed an agreement with. They allowed us to use their offices in there attraction location and to organize trips to the locations that where the

subject of our promotion. This agency is situated near the dock where there is a high frequency of travelers and also is the main walkway in the city. Other partners in the project supplied furniture for the office space and also costumes for the team that was on the front line for promotion and information.

The team picked the colors, logo and slogan. The orange color which symbolizes to taste or feel something and dark blue which symbolizes wealth, pride, value. These colors were incorporated into our slogan. Which is "Visit a museum and feel the soul of Macedonia"

Promotional material was made up of several flags and printed flyers in the thousands (quality paper, clear text and all information from the sources). The materials were distributed to agencies, hotels, restaurants, beaches, taxi companies, bus station, airports, and stores and at concerts of famous stars that were taking place in this period.

The museum brochure contained pictures, facts, figures of museums through out Macedonia as well as road maps to the museums. The promotion for the brochure was organized in front of many invited guests as well local's. Many state and local media announced our project. The image of the media gave this project a great importance because they confirmed our valid information and guarantees this.

Each museum had the opportunity to present itself, their specifics and uniqueness and purpose through promotional materials, copies from exhibits, posters, and video material in the evening hours. This event was also supported with audio presentations from traditional Macedonian music.

Many tourists were attracted to the "Days of Wood Carving", "Days of Hand Weaving", "Days of hand crafts of Copper", "Days of painted pottery". This was worked by local artists and craftsman who present and sell their arts. It was very interesting to see that the tourists wanted to themselves work on these items

Another attraction was the presenting of t-Shirts to the public that had our slogan on it "Visit a museum- feel the soul of Macedonia"

The interested tourists want to know how to reach a museum in a chosen city. This is where our partner, Aviotours, provided them with transportation or advice for those with their own transportation.

At the end of the project we evaluated the results.

Quantity results :

- An increased number of visitors to museums and archeological sites which increased the income of the museum
- Aviotours agency increases their income.
- Profit for the artists / craftsman
- Profit for the local businesses.

Quality results:

- A greater acknowledgment of our cultural heritage
- New information on their wants and needs which help us to use in our long term goals.
- Success with partnership. (All museums, businesses, media and the volunteers)

The project lasted for 2 weeks and had a small budget but was very successful and useful for us to learn the right way to succeed. To invest a lot of energy into something will always end in results.

In the written report that we received from foreign experts for museum marketing. Who in 2004 visited and researched our situation in Macedonia museums through SWOT analysis the following suggestions were made:

To be more orientated to museum visitors instead of exhibits and to listen to there wants and needs.

To do research on the visitors which would be a base for our product. ( this should be completed by professional for museum marketing)

- To increase the offer of new exhibitions (permanent and temporary)

- To increase printing of promotional material.
- To work together with other museums in Macedonia.
- To accept a current approaches to visitors.

Another group of foreign experts in May 2004 suggested to:

- Fundraising work should increase. To be more self-sustainability.
- Much attention must be paid to international promotion of our museums and to our cultural heritage.
- To build working cooperation between the home and foreign tour operators and to offer to them our rich cultural heritage (to be added into their programs of organized tours)

We can conclude that we must accept the importance of orientation to a visitor unconditional. A marketing oriented museum should work in accordance to visitors needs and encourages visitors to visit a museum This can only be reached through continual communication with visitors.

The situation in Macedonia is optimistic, in terms of the understanding museum marketing and development of cultural heritage.

Ministry of culture of Macedonia supports cultural experts in their professional development and participation on event like this meeting.

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