



Erasmus IP
Innovation in Nature Based Tourism Services
INNO NATOUR

VOLUME 1, 2010

Carmen Năstase

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Description of the project

The course is designed for undergraduate and postgraduate students in the field of business, tourism, and environmental sciences and related disciplines. The first IP course was held at “Stefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania, from 26 April to 7 May 2010.

The main aim of this IP was to improve the multilateral cooperation between higher education institution, to increase the volume of student and teaching staff mobility and on the other hand to transfer the knowledge on innovation, innovation management and entrepreneurship straight from practice into the education by means of organizing a practical educational course, and by working with real world cases. The transfer targeted tourism enterprises sector and constituted a positive input to the improvement of regional innovation processes in European areas. The Erasmus IP followed to increase the degree of transparency and compatibility between higher education and advanced vocational education qualifications gained in Europe: in Finland, Italy, Austria, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania.

The secondary aim of the IP was to develop and test new curriculum and teaching materials in the topic of Innovations and entrepreneurship in nature based tourism services in Europe, addressing therefore the need of improving educational supply on the topic.

The IP course brought together students from six European countries: Finland, Italy, Austria, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. The countries were selected according to their innovation level, so within this IP was pursued the knowledge transfer and the experience exchange between countries with different levels regarding innovation. In this context, the IP allowed members of the teaching staff to exchange views on teaching content and new curricula approaches. The partner institutions involved in this IP course were: Savonia University of Applied Sciences from Finland, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences from Austria, University of Forestry from Bulgaria, Technical University in Zvolen from Slovakia and University of Padova from Italy.

Also, there were involved 4 enterprises from Romania, in the field of tourism services, which collaborated in providing information and support, being selected as innovative enterprises for the real world studies, and which were analyzed by students during the IP. Each enterprise had to nominate one member, which stayed in contact with students during the IP, participated at three meetings with students and offered information regarding the enterprise. The enterprises were: Bucovina Association Tourism, Conacul Domnesc Complex, Cai de Vis Stud Farm and Dorna Adventure Enterprise.

The main activities of the IP were divided in three stages:

Stage I: Students had to prepare an innovative case study from their own country

Stage II: 11 days of intensive course in Suceava, Romania: intensive course on special domains, work groups activities, field trips, excursions.

Stage III: Each student finalized his case study report. The final analysis was presented to the company that represented his case study.

The participation and successful completion of the course gave a student 10 ECTS credits. 3 ECTS were from the contact course, 4 from the case study prior to the course and orientation and reporting gave 3 credits each.

The **web page** of the IP course: www.innonatour.usv.ro

Students of the 2009-2010 Erasmus IP

No.	Name	Country
1.	Laura Juulia HASSI	Finland
2.	Heidi Kristiina TUOMINEN	
3.	Mari Johanna ROMPPANEN	
4.	Arja Elina PUUSTINEN	
5.	Reetta Leena Johanna HAMALAINEN	
6.	Matthias HUMPELER	Austria
7.	Katharina SCHMUTZ	
8.	Luca TOMEDI	Italy
9.	Nicola ANDRIGHETTO	
10.	Petia Petrova GEORGIEVA	Bulgaria
11.	Teodora TODOROVA	
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13.	Eliza SAVOVA	
14.	Dominica STRANSKA	Slovakia
15.	Petra VACHOVA	
16.	Andra Iuliana GHEORGHIU	Romania
17.	Bianca BOTEZ	
18.	Elena ZAMCU	
19.	Leonard BURTEA	
20.	Andrei RUDEANU	
21.	Paul IVAN	

Lecturers, Tutors and Experts of the 2009-2010 Erasmus IP

No.	Name	Country
1.	Carmen NASTASE	Romania
2.	Elena HLACIUC	
3.	Carmen CHASOVSCI	
4.	Angela ALBU	
5.	Laura BOURIAUD	
6.	Lucia MOROSAN DANILA	
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10.	Riccardo DA RE	
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12.	Magdalena PICHLEROVA	Slovakia
13.	Tsvetelina SIMEONOVA	Bulgaria
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Carmen NASTASE – INNO NATOUR Project Manager
 „Stefan cel Mare” University of Suceava,
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Current activity

- *Associate professor doctor*, University of Suceava, Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, Department of Commerce and Tourism
- *Scientific Secretary*, Faculty of Economics and Public Administration
- *Editor in chief*, The Annals of the Stefan cel Mare University, Fascicle of the Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, Journal classified by CNCSIS in the B+ Category, CNCSIS code 825

Trainer certificate of CEFE International-Competency based Economies through Formation of Enterprise (2004); Certification of Quality manager/Service, CERTQUA Management Bonn (2006); Certification of Auditor/Service, CERTQUA Management Bonn (2007); ARACIS Evaluator (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), Specialization *Management* (from 2007); CNCSIS Evaluator (The National University Research Council), Specialization Economics, *Management*(from 2007); Expert - ACPART (National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with Economic and Social Environment) (from 2007).

Areas of interest

Economics, Microeconomics, Entrepreneurship, Tourism area



Elena HLACIUC
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Current activity

- Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, University „Stefan cel Mare” of Suceava
- Member of the PhD School of the University “Stefan cel Mare” Suceava, Field: ACCOUNTING
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Author and co-author of over 20 books, monographs and course books, published at **accredited publishing houses MEDC/ CNCSIS**, from Bucharest, Iasi, Suceava or from abroad – Cernăuți (Ukraine) and Chișinău (Moldova), on economic issues, as well as over 100 articles in specialise reviews (economic and business), including studies and book reviews. Articles published abroad: over 35 papers, studies and reports. Over 15 **ISSI Proceeding Web of Knowledge** indexed articles.

Participant in over 100 scientific sessions and conferences (of which, 25 international conferences), organised by different scientific associations in the country or abroad; the scientific reports have been published in volumes edited by the academic institutions

Areas of interest

Basic Accounting, Financial Accounting, Public Institutions Accounting, Economic Projects



Adrian Liviu SCUTARIU

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Current activity

- *Teaching Assistant PhD. Student*, „Stefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, Department of Economy and Tourism
- *General Editorial Secretary*, The Annals of the Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Fascicle of the Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, Journal classified by CNCSIS in the B+ Category, CNCSIS code 825

Areas of interest

Economics, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Tourism, Regional Development.



Laura Bouriaud

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Current activity

- *Associate professor, PhD*, University of Suceava, Faculty of Forestry
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Project manager for partner USV in FP7 MOTIVE (Models for adaptive forest management in Europe); coordinator for USV contribution to the European Forest Institute Regional Office Vienna (EFICEEC); reviewer for Small scale forestry journal (Springer), Forest Policy and Economics (Elsevier); reviewer and member of the scientific committee of Annals of Forest Research (CNCSIS B+) and Spanish Journal of Rural Development (Universitatea Santiago de Compostela, Spain); teaching in Forest law and Forest policy (Bachelor level) and Particularities of management in forest sector and Management of human resources (Master level).

Areas of interest

Policy formulation, innovation and research policy, forest contractors and entrepreneurship in forest sector, property rights on forests, illegal logging, science/police interface, private forestry, public regulation, governance, forest law.


Carmen CHASOVSCI

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Carmen has graduated in tourism and has a PhD. Title in Human Resources Management. The main competences are in the domain of tourism, management, tourism development through participatory approach, strategic development and entrepreneurship. Carmen published several books in these fields and attended to several professional programs and scholarships in Japan, Germany, Italy and Austria. She worked since 2001 as consultant for tourism for GTZ (German Organization for Technical Assistance), as trainer for different organizations in Romania (ANAT- National Association of Tourism Agencies, ANT – National Tourism Agency, BRMC – Romanian Stock Exchange Unit) and attended as invited key speaker at different international events as for example SEE Consultancy Network Conference in Croatia, Danube Competence Center in Serbia and many others. Today Carmen is associate professor at University of Suceava.

Trainer certificate of CEFE International-Competency based Economies through Formation of Enterprise (2004); Certification of Quality manager/Service, CERTQUA Management Bonn (2006); Certification of Auditor/Service, CERTQUA Management Bonn (2007); member in national certification body for Ecotourism in Romania (since 2006), Certified Trainer in Belbin Methodology (since 2008); Editor of 3 scientific revues.


Lucia Morosan-Danila

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Current activity

- *Assistant*, University of Suceava, Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, Department of Accounting and Finance

- *Consulting* activities in accessing European funds

- *Training* activities for lifelong learning programs

PhD student at Academy of Economics, specialization Management; coordination of European projects; specialisations in Romania, Finland and Slovakia; economic and social exchange Romania-France

Areas of interest

Accounting, Management of human resources, Project management, Funding, Cost management Lifelong learning.



Gerhard Weiss

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Current activity

- *Leader of Work Area 1 “Forest policy and economics”, EFICEEC*
- *Chair of COST Action E51 on Innovation policies in the forest sector*

Areas of interest

Forest, environmental and innovation policy, innovation in forestry and the wood industry, bio-energy, nature-based tourism, nature conservation, climate mitigation, financing mechanisms for forest ecosystem services.



Magdalena Pichlerova

Technical University in Zvolen, Slovakia

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Position

- *Vice-dean for foreign relations, Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences*
- *faculty ERASMUS coordinator*
- *Lecturer, doctor, Technical University in Zvolen, Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences, Department of Landscape Planning and Design*
- *Executive Editor of Ecological Section, Acta Facultatis Ecologiae, Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences, scientific peer-reviewed Journal, ISSN code 1336-300X*

Current activity

At present focused on tourism and landscape development and interactions; interest specialized in the advancements in the scientific and interpretative tourism and its relationship with natural, cultural and industrial heritage; participation on the inscription of the Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians on the World Heritage List in 2007 by developing schemes for soft tourism utilization of the properties inscribed; took part in a project funded by the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) for the dynamic visualization of landscapes' natural history;

Since 2000 a project manager with the Center for Scientific Tourism in Slovakia (abbr. CVTS, more on www.ecosystems.sk) where had a chance to participate in its cooperation with the Yorkshire Dales National Park based on the Dales Millennium Trust activities.

Areas of interest

Tourism potential and landscape use for tourism, forms of tourism, world cultural and natural heritage as well as one of Slovakia, management of sites on the list of UNESCO world heritage, advanced methods used to determine recreational potential of the area, hydrogeology

Other information

A graduate from the Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences at Technical University in Zvolen, Slovakia, PhD. in the field of hydrogeology, completed 1-year study stay at the University of North Wales in Bangor, at the School of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences where she was mainly concerned with ecological studies. Since graduation she has been an assistant professor at the Department of Landscape Planning and Design at the Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences of the Technical University in Zvolen. Her favourite leisure time activities are travelling, hiking, reading and taking pictures. She brings up her 4 years old daughter Eva Magdalena with her husband, Viliam.



Tsvetelina Simeonova

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Currently activity: she is finalizing her thesis in Environmental Management and looking forward for new challenges.

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Current activity

- *PhD student in Real Estate Appraisal* University of Padua, Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Territory and Agro-Forestry System (TeSAF)
- *Case study assistant* in NEWFOREX (243950) project within the 7th European Framework
- *Professional Forestry Consultant.*

Areas of interest

Forest Economics, Econometric, Microeconomic, Non-Tiber-Forest-Products (NTFPs), Mushroom supply chain. Theory and method: demand study - reveal preference – Choice Experiment model, Social Network Analysis (SNA), Analysis of Clusters. Techniques: enquiries (interviews and questionnaires).


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Real Estate Appraisal and Land Use Economics PhD Student

Master Degree in Statistics for the Demographic and Social Sciences (2008). Field job in Public Administration (focus groups management, questionnaire design, data analysis, sampling frame) and in NGO's (Internship of microcredit in Cusco - Perù).

Areas of interest

Social Network Analysis, Social Capital, Local Governance, Public-Private Stakeholders Conflicts Management.


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Education

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Innovation system, Innovation tools, Development Methods of companies, Growth and Internationalization of enterprises.


Kati Partanen

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Current activity: working as a Substitute Principal Lecturer in Savonia University of Applied Sciences, in town of Iisalmi in Finland. I'm specialized in agricultural economics and agricultural and rural policy. I'm also a farmer and active in international farmer organizations.

RESULTS OF THE ERASMUS IP INNO NATOUR 2009-2010

DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY ENTERPRISES

Bucovina Tourism Association

Bucovina Tourism Association is a Nongovernmental Organization, founded in 2001 from a German project for economical development. Its members are enterprises involved in the tourism business, such as hotels, restaurants, tourist agencies, pensions, handicrafts etc. At the present moment the NGO members are 37.

The main goal of the Association is to promote Bucovina as a tourist destination and to distribute advertising materials at national and international fairs. Their aim is to increase the number of tourists in Bucovina and make the area more attractive at national and international markets.

Cai de Vis Stud Farm

“Cai De Vis” Stud Farm was founded in 2006. In the beginning it was just a little house for vacation and it was not orientated for tourists and guests. They had two horses and a stable for them, and the people who were interested in horse-ridings started to ask also for an accommodation, so that’s how the idea came out.

The place is located in Varful Campului, Botosani county, about 60km from Suceava.

In the beginning they were only the family and the manager. Nowadays the company has three owners (husband, wife and brother); one manager (cousin), who’s also an instructor; two horse-riding instructors; three farmers; one tractor-driver and one cook.

The farm property is 100ha and contains a guest house, a house for the owners, a summer house, two horse-stables, one cow-shed and one for the goats. They also own 14ha of forest which is located near the farm.

The guest house includes four double-bed rooms dedicated to the different seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter) and one apartment with traditional interior. There’s also a kitchen, which can be used from the guests of the house, dining room and a common bathroom. Internet connection and TV are available in every room.

The main activity that is offered is horse-riding, but they also offer tracking (6 different tracks); cycling (7 bikes available); guided trips to the local monastery and to other cultural places (for ex. visit to the house of a famous Romanian poet); hunting; hiking; badminton; sledge; carriage rental (for weddings) and other open-air activities. They also organize equestrian shows for the children groups. The food provided is all home made from Bio products. The customers can order food or if they want they have the opportunity to cook by themselves.

Dorna Adventure

Dorna Adventure is a business idea initiated by two partners, being a private company. The enterprise was created in 2005, providing boats rides on Bistrita River. After, that, every year they've tried to bring something new. So, the next year they bought ropes and alpinism equipments, continuing with paint ball equipment, equestrian tourism and horsemanship (in Dorna Candreni area) and bikes for mountain bike.

Dorna Adventure organizes activities based on active tourism for individual persons (tourists) or team-building activities for firms. All activities are developed in nature, and the firm utilizes only equipments that don't endanger the environment.

Dorna Adventure utilizes the "nature gifts" that the Bazinul Dornelor beneficiates: the water for rafting or the boats ride on Bistrita, mountain ranges for nature observation, cliffs for rappel or climbing (nature based resources).

Dorna Adventure, within its programs, offers something unique in the area, and also offers additional options for spending time for tourists.

The idea for this enterprise came from the passion that the owner has for the active tourism. He performed as a salvamont from 1996 and at present he works as chief to the Tourism service from Vatra Dornei Municipal Council (from year 2000)

Conacul Domnesc

Conacul Domnesc is located in an old noble mansion completely renovaded and furnished to European standards, on 10 hectares in the middle of a dendrologist park. The business started in 2006 by an entrepreneur initiative with years of experience in another types of business. After they built the restaurant and the hotel, in 2007 the Big Hall was finished. In 2008 the SPA Centre was finished, too.

Conacul Domnesc really is, since its origins, a veritable mansion. The old mansion was built by a wealthy Armenian family came through the place, somewhere around 1820. This family is given also the construction of the local church.

Today it is a hotel complex, which has in its structure:

- Hotel;
- Restaurant – Wine cellar;
- Summer Terrace;
- SPA center;
- Polyvalency Hall;

The whole assembly is disposed on a surface of over 10 hectares in a dendrologic park, which has also a private lake.

The hotel has two floors plus attic and offers 40 elegantly furnished accommodation places, large and spacious rooms, most overlooking the park.

FINAL REPORTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

Bucovina Tourism Association

WG1 - Innovation in Business Tourism Services

Nicola Andrighetto - Italy

Matthias Humpeler - Austria

Fikri Molamehmedov - Bulgaria

Mari Romppanen - Finland

Andrei Rudeanu - Romania

Teodora Todorova - Bulgaria

Otilia Albu - Romania

Lucia Morosan-Danila - Romania

1 Description of the case study:

1.1 General information about the NGO

The object of analysis is Bucovina Tourism Association. On the basis of the collected materials during the two weeks in Suceava Working Group 1 analyzed the organizational structure and activities of the NGO. Bucovina Tourism Association is Nongovernmental Organization, founded in 2001 from a German project for economical development. Its members are enterprises involved in the tourism business, such as hotels, restaurants, tourist agencies, pensions, handicrafts etc. Before the economical crises the number of members reached 55, but due to decrease of touristic interest in the area in the crises, some of the enterprises withdrew. At the present moment the NGO members are 37.

At the annual meeting of all the members a board committee is elected. The board committee has 9 members, including a president and vice-president. All the important decisions of the NGO about the activities are made by the board committee and are executed by the manager – Mrs. Lacramioara Beilic. She is the only hired employee of Bucovina Tourism Association.

The main goal of the Association is to promote Bucovina as a tourist destination and to distribute advertising materials at national and international fairs. Their aim is to increase the number of tourists in Bucovina and make the area more attractive at national and international markets.

They advertise at local press, tourist journals, internet (www.bucovinaturism.ro), fairs (mainly Germany and also Austria, Holland, Poland, Hungary, France, Spain, Italia), and direct advertisement. The NGO is financed by membership fees, government funds and European founding.

- 80% of the costs are covered by the fees

- 20% are covered by the government and the E.U. project

The budget for 2009 was 10.000 EUR. The membership fee is between 100 and 250 EUR, depending on the type of the enterprise e.g. for tourist agencies it is 125 EUR, and for hotels it is calculated on the bases of the number of beds.

New members are welcomed but they have to fulfill some quality standards. Some of the problems are lack of financial resources, conflicts between the members, the competition of other touristic destinations in Romania e.g. Transilvania, and the long distance between Bucharest and Bucovina.

The most valuable partnerships of the Bucovina Tourism Association are between the NGO and the “Stefan Cel Mare” University, the City Hall and other NGOs in Bucovina and at national

level. The most important stakeholders are the owners of enterprises, employees of the companies, tourists, journalists, other NGOs, tour operators etc.

1.2 Goal of the case study:

To offer innovative solutions to the stakeholders. The case study report aims to analyze the NGO and come up with some innovative ideas to improve the functioning of the Association being in favor of achieving its goals.

1.3 Methods used

1.3.1 SWOT

The SWOT analysis is a tool to analysis the internal and external environment of a company. The important factors are divided into strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This tool is useful to match the company's resources and capabilities to its environment. In a group conversation all factors a thought thru.

1.3.2 Brainstorming

It is a process for generating creative ideas and solution through intensive and freewheeling group discussion. Our group was divided to pairs and each pair had a different task. Analysis, discussion, or criticism of the aired ideas is allowed only when the brainstorming session is over and evaluation session begins. We also had a special technique in developing the main ideas.

1.3.3 How and How

Method used in a creative session to find the innovative solutions.

1.3.4 Voting

Is a method where majority decides about the matter discussed.

2 Description of the case process

Working Group 1 is an international team and consists of members from Finland, Austria, Bulgaria, Italy and Romania. At the beginning we took part in some team-building activities so that we would work effectively as a team. Each of the members of the team was a leader for one day. We established some rules that were important for the working process - rules such as "No interrupting", "Speak only in English" and "Everyone should be equally involved in the team work".

We learned some basic information about the NGO – object of our case study and came up with a list of questions for the meeting with the stakeholder. We made an interview with the stakeholder – executive manager of Bucovina Tourism Association – Mrs. Lacramioara Beilic. She was very kind and gave answers to all our questions. After that we formed an opinion about the activities of the NGO and made the SWOT-analysis for the NGO.

It became clear which of the problems we had to focus on are: lack of financial resources, need of improvement of the webpage and conflicts between members. We made a SWOT-analysis for Bucovina area as well. Aside from the many things Bucovina area has to offer, the most important problems were garbage, bad image of Romania, location in a distant part of Romania and lack of attractions for young people and families.

After a brainstorming session we chose some proposals and innovative solutions with emphasis on seeing the problems as opportunities. All the information we used in making the Power Point Presentation and for the intermediary report. In the process we thought of some other questions to ask the stakeholder at the next meeting.

We made the presentation in front of all the working groups and the executive manager of the NGO. We asked her to define the 3 best ideas to concentrate our further work on. As most creative ones she chose restyling of the webpage and internet advertising, branding the association logo and making the area more attractive for families.

Phases of the case

The phases of the case process are the following:

1. Creating the group sections (group rules, leaders)
2. Meeting with the stakeholders
3. Using methods to define the problem (SWOT, brainstorming, voting)
4. Defining the problem
5. Creative session
6. Prepare the final report and presentation

3 SWOT analysis of the case study

3.1 SWOT analysis for the Bucovina region

Table 1 SWOT analysis for the Bucovina area

Strengths	Weakness
Landscape (natural and cultural)	Public transportation (lack of international airport)
Natural and cultural heritage	Image of Romania
Fresh air and water	Infrastructure
Accessibility by car	Garbage
Food	Dust
	Lack of funding from the Bucovina Region Municipality
	Distance from the capital
Opportunities	Threats
Better infrastructure	Transilvania
Tourism	Environmental problems
Nature kept on its natural stage	Government
Different activities, common offers	

3.2 SWOT analysis for the NGO

Table 2 SWOT analysis for the NGO association

Strengths	Weakness
International advertising	Small budget
Simple structure	Quality of webpage
The biggest NGO in Bucovina	Language
The most known association in Bucovina	Fast changes in the structure (Short time president)
The members are the most important hotels in Bucovina	Conflicts between members
Guaranteed quality	Lack of new idea
Opportunities	Threats
Attracting young people, different target	Other NGO's

EU-project (funding)	Further loss of members
Diversify the offers	Lack of motivation
Taking advantage of all the potential	
Mass media advertisement	
Diversify the offers	
International expansion of advertisement	
Specialized advertisement for the target groups	

3.3 Web page

Table 3 SWOT analysis for the Web page

Strengths	Weakness
Cheap	The website and its name are only in Romanian.
Network between main attractions in Bucovina	Two web pages
Description how to get in Bucovina	No map of Bucovina
Description of Bucovina area	No prices for accommodation
Opportunities	Threats
Internalization (3 languages at least)	Necessity to update the website (time loss)
Comments section (blog)	Necessity to pay attention to blog and answers in short time
Prices and availability of each accommodation	Expensive
A list of hotels divided for the quality services	
Restyling web-page with more attractions and pictures	
Map of Bucovina in the main page	
New name (Bucovinaturism.com)	

3.4 Bucovina Logo

Table 4 SWOT analysis for the Bucovina Logo

Strengths	Weakness
Cheap	No visibility
Easy to apply	No English translation
Easy to recognize	Too small to be seen
Unique image	Not all the pensions and hotels have it
	No rules about the logo for all members
Opportunities	Threats
Bigger than it is - visibility	NGO members not respecting the use of the logo
Multicolor- impressive	Other similar logos
Official logo of the association must be on all hotel doors	
Flyers and stickers on the reception	
Obligate the hotels to use the logo	

3.5 Promoting the area for families

Table 5 SWOT - promoting the area for families

Strength	Weakness
Families in Bucovina	Not enough attractions for children
Landscape and nature	Lack of funds
Fresh air, clean water, opportunity to fish and barbeque	Long distance
Quiet	Public transportation is not comfortable
Opportunities	Threats
Promotional packages for families	Focus on limited target groups
New image of Bucovina area (international promotion of Bucovina area)	Hotels won't accept this idea
Focus on all target groups	Invest without considering the risk
More attractions for families(water park, alternative zoo)	Other region competition
Pensions with friendly pets(cats, dogs, horses)-pet therapy	Competition between members
Create more playgrounds for children	Bad treatment for the animals

4 Problem definition:

- Limited accessibility to Bucovina area
- Limited funding opportunities
- Competition
- Conflicts between members
- Loss of members
- Lack of regional strategy of tourism development in Bucovina
- No particular target group and no attractions to families with children

5 How did the present economical crises influence the enterprise?

During the interview it became clear that the NGO is trying to survive in the present economical situation, having in mind the loss of members and reduced funding opportunities.

6 The Innovation Plan

Based on the analysis that the group made, the three most useable ideas were chosen. In the following lines the ideas will be analyzed and explained in detail.

6.1 Idea one: The Homepage

6.1.1 Description of the present situation:

There are two Webpage's (www.bucovinaturism.ro, www.bucovinatravel.ro), one of them in Romanian and the other one in English only. Both Webpage's are under construction and do not serve the needs of the tourists. The two Webpage's are promoted through the folders on international fairs, and it should serve as a platform for tourists already in Romania. The Sites do not provide crucial information for the tourists, like prices, maps, etc.

6.1.2 Utilization of the new Webpage:

The most important aspect would be to have only one Webpage with several language options (English, German, and French). A webpage with international purpose has to have an address in English, for example: www.bucovinaturism.com, more people will find and visit the site. In a time of participation a weblog, giving customers the ability to write and ask comments can be an additional feature. All the tourist related information should be available as easily as possible. The hotels and guesthouses should have rates included in their descriptions. In general, the appearance of the pages could be simpler, in a way that texts and pictures can be seen together. All attractions especially for children for example zoo's and water parks should be presented on the site. On the main page there could be a map of Bucovina area.

6.1.3 Conditions and stages for realization:

- Gather ideas from the members
- Visualize the new look, on paper
- Request for quotation (minimum of three different companies)
- Make an order (no prepayment)
- Control and supervise (check for errors, try all buttons)
- After launch, regular checks and controls of the weblog

6.1.4 Estimation of resources needed and funding possibilities:

The need of working hours for the NGO will be approximately 50h (6hx2/per week x 4). The Homepage itself will cost approximately 1000€-2500€ depending on the idea used. For funding the members could participate with an extra fee of 25€/member = 925€ → 37%-100%.

6.2 Idea two: The Logo

6.2.1 Description of the present situation:

At the present the members aren't obliged to use the logo, it is only used randomly. A common used logo, visible for tourists during entering the destination could have a positive influence on the customers image of the member and organization. The logo can be used for branding.

6.2.2 Utilization of the new logo:

The logo's size should be at least 15x15cm, made as a transparent sticker, which can be easily mounted at any door or wall. It takes a lot of time to develop a Logo, once it has been released it also has to be continuously put in place. A functioning brand logo can improve and widen the common understanding as well as advertisement and sense of quality for the customer.

6.2.3 Conditions and stages for realization:

- Make the use of the logo compulsory for all members
- Use the already existing logo
- Order different sizes for field implementation
- Choose one or two sizes and order (amount of 150-250)
- Send out the logos to the members

6.2.4 Estimation of resources needed and funding possibilities:

The logo stickers in general are very cheap, the maximum costs should not be above 100€, required working hours 5h.

6.3 Idea three: Promoting the area for families.

6.3.1 Description of the present situation:

The area of Bucovina does not have a certain target group, this gap could be filled with families or young people. There is no information about children attractions in the webpage or the brochures.

The members should put pressure on creating attractions for children and families.

6.3.2 Utilization:

From a marketing point of view, families are getting more and more important. They tend to travel a lot regionally by car during the holiday seasons and they are willing to pay for good services. But they demand a safe, clean and attractive surrounding for the children. This target group prefers package trips.

6.3.3 Conditions and stages for realization:

- Search for possible attractions (water park, zoo, playgrounds, action park, friendly pets: cats, dogs, rabbits, horses → pet therapy?)
- Create packages with the members and other service suppliers
- Create a map
- Advertise (online, newspaper, brochures, fairs, ect.)

6.3.4 Estimation of resources needed and funding possibilities:

The costs to the NGO will be approximately 500€ for Newspaper advertisement, the online advertisement is for free, brochures will also have to be printed again.

7 Conclusions

After brainstorming, SWOT analysis, meetings with the stakeholder and loud discussion, our group reached the following conclusions:

- The innovation starts from small things.
- Innovative methods can be easily followed if the members are willing to accept them.
- Our NGO has a small budget and it needs some new ideas with immediate effects
- New ideas have to create a network between the members (more cooperation in the organization)

8 List of references

- The interview with the stakeholder (28.04.2010, 3h)
- The webpage (Online 03.05.2010: www.bucovinatourism.ro, www.bucovinatourism.ro)
- The brochures of the NGO
- The lectures (Inno Natour RO, 25.04-08.05.2010)
- Trips in Bucovina area (Vatra Dornei)

Cai de Vis Stud Farm

WG1 - Land Based Business

Bianca Botez - Romania

Eliza Savova - Bulgaria

Laura Hassi - Finland

Luca Tomedi - Italy

Leonard Burtea - Romania

Enrico Vidale - Italy

Liviu Scutariu - Romania

Iulian Condratov – Romania

Description of the case study

“Cai De Vis” was founded in 2006. In the beginning it was just a little house for vacation and it was not orientated for tourists and guests. They had two horses and a stable for them, and the people who were interested in horse-ridings started to ask also for an accommodation, so that’s how the idea came out.

The place is located in Varful Campului, Botosani county, about 60km from Suceava. The road is a little bit difficult to pass and there aren’t any signs directing to the farm, but the location is really good from environmental point of view.

In the beginning they were only the family and the manager. Nowadays the company has three owners (husband, wife and brother); one manager (cousin), who’s also an instructor; two horse-riding instructors; three farmers; one tractor-driver and one cook.

As the number of customers increased, the demand of more products and services also augmented. From here the necessity for investments, in order to expand the property and the business itself. They started with an investment of 300.000 euros, mostly loaned from some banks and a little part of the money they got from the other family business they own. They started buying more animals and now they have 12 horses, 7 cows and 300 goats and a total investment of 700 000 euros to the present day.

The farm property is 100ha and contains a guest house, a house for the owners, a summer house, two horse-stables, one cow-shed and one for the goats. They also own 14ha of forest which is located near the farm.

The guest house includes four double-bed rooms dedicated to the different seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter) and one apartment with traditional interior. There’s also a kitchen, which can be used from the guests of the house, dining room and a common bathroom. Internet connection and TV are available in every room.

The main activity that is offered is horse-riding, but they also offer tracking (6 different tracks); cycling (7 bikes available); guided trips to the local monastery and to other cultural places (for ex. visit to the house of a famous Romanian poet); hunting; hiking; badminton; sledge; carriage rental (for weddings) and other open-air activities. They also organize equestrian shows for the children groups. The food provided is all home made from Bio products. The customers can order food or if they want they have the opportunity to cook by themselves.

The farm produces 250l of goat milk per day and 150l from the cows; 40 - 60 kilos of basic cheese per day during 6-7 months, but depending on the requests of the customers other kinds of cheese can be made. Four different types of goat cheese, three different types of cow cheese, meat and vegetables are also offered from the farm.

The price for a double-bed room per night is 50euros for two persons and 45euros for one person. The apartment's cost is a little higher- 70 euros per night for two persons, 75euros for three and 80euros for four persons. The prices decrease if the customers stay longer, and they're lower during the out of season period (from 05.01 to 14.06; from 15.09 to 20.12). There are also special packages for children, students and groups. For this summer they offer some weekend packages for family, 7 days child camps, camps for discover the life at the country side etc.

Transportation is not provided by the owners and furthermore the location is not connected to a public transport network, that's why it can be reached only from customers with their own car or using bus rental services.

The maintenance of the place add up to the total of 3 250 euros per month. The average work salary is about 270euros per month.

The advertisement goes mostly mouth to mouth- they don't put a lot of investments in that particular sector. They have some advertisements on the national radio and the national TV channel, but they don't pay for it- they offer free accommodation and services to the advertising companies for exchange (barter). They also have posters and flyers in the schools in Romania and in other countries, but the owner does them by himself- he has a professional studio for photos and graphical design. They participate in some fairs too but only on a regional and national level.

The company is a member of the Romanian association for rural, ecological and cultural tourism- ANTREC. The membership fee amounts on 150euros per year and the participation in this organization is a really good advertisement for the company. The owners are intending to start cooperating with some tour-operating companies from the 23rd of May, which will provide them a constant steam of customers.

There is a solar panel installation on the guest house and two ecological waste collectors. The water they use comes from two underground rivers, and they also use woods for heating from the forest they own.

Description of the case process

The working group, which participated in the analysis of the company, was formed by 6 persons from 4 different countries - Romania, Italy, Finland and Bulgaria, on the age of 22-26 years old. Each of them has education related somehow to tourism, and also they all have different interests, skills and cognitions in that particular field of study.

Eliza Savova is studying Ethnology in Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski" in Bulgaria and has cognitions in the field of ethnography, religions, culture, traditions etc. She has also participated in several tourist fairs and conferences. Luca Tomedi is studying Forestry and Environmental sciences in University of Padua in Italy and has knowledge in forest management and environmental sustainability. Enrico Vidale is studying Payment for Environmental Services in University of Padua in Italy and has interests in international trading and marketing. Leonard Burtea is studying Management in Suceava University "Stefan Cel Mare" in Romania and is interested in marketing, economy, accounting, management etc. Bianca Botez studies Accounting and Informatics in Suceava University "Stefan Cel Mare" in Romania and has much cognition in the field of economics, accounting and informatics, and also she has participated in another Erasmus IP course related to tourism innovations. Laura Hassi is studying Tourism and Hospitality Management in Savonia University of Applied Sciences in Kuopio, Finland. She has cognitions in tourist service and management. One day all of them are intending to develop their own tourist companies, and the ideas that they've proposed in this report are a part of their future business plans.

The analysis processes carried on for one week - 4hours group work per day. The group has one leader- Laura Hassi (Finland), but actually all the members have equal participation in the working process and also equal contribution to the final results of the group work. The group work

process was based on sharing different opinions and ideas and making group decisions about their final selection. When there were two opinions about one issue the majority decided.

The main data was collected by three different methods - an interrogation, field observation and web research. For the first part of the analysis - the interrogation- was prepared a questionnaire with all the basic questions about the company. The questionnaire was compound by the questions of all the members of the group. There was one interrogator- Eliza Savova (Bulgaria), two translators (because the respondent didn't speak English) - Bianca Botez and Leonard Burtea (Romania), and three writers- Laura Hassi (Finland), Enrico Vidale and Luca Tomedi (Italy). The interview was taking place in the guest house of the farm, between the working group and the manager of the company-.

The second step of the analysis process was the field observation- detailed tour in the company property, leaded by the manager, who also provided detail information about all the different features, products and services of the farm.

The final information source was the web page of the enterprise and also some other internet sites with useful information, related to the company. The information about the prices was entirely uploaded from the web site.

In the working process some more questions came out, or another needed to be more clarified and for this reason there were extra questions sent via e-mail to the owner, who gave a quick, precise and full respond to them. That was necessary in order to fulfill the gathered information and to clear up the confusions.

After collecting the data, a SWOT analysis and a problem definition of the company was made, again with the participation of all the members of the group. Every single actor gave different propositions for the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the company and pointed the problems for its development.

The final part of the group work was consisted of brain storming different ideas for innovations in all the sectors of the company and also proposing some solutions for the problems which the company is facing in its development. After finishing the analysis of the enterprise, all the information was put into one presentation, which was sent to the owner of the company.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths:

❖ *Low Labour Costs*

In Romania the labor cost is very low comparing to other countries. The minimum salary is 600 Ron.(150 euro), comparing let's say to France where is 1350 euro.

❖ *Home-made (Bio) Products*

All the products that the enterprise offers are Bio-products (vegetables, different types of cheese, meat, etc.) They are been produced in a traditional way.

❖ *Family Business*

Being a family business is easier to run the enterprise, to control all the aspects (with the help of the family members)

❖ *Solar Panels*

Thanks to solar panels the cost of energy is reduced. In the same time the solar panel is a way to protect the environment. Although they have spent a lot of money on them, the investment will be recovered in less than 4 years

❖ *Hospitality.*

The Romanian's are the most polite and hospitable persons you'll ever meet.

❖ *Forest*

The forest is a huge strength because it offers a lot of possibilities. First off all it offers wood for heat and building, then you can go for a walk, you can hunt, etc.

❖ *Kitchen access***Weaknesses**❖ *No Signs*

If you decide to go there it's almost impossible to find that place. There aren't any signs at all.

❖ *Transportation*

You can go there only by car or something like that. There isn't any public transportation. Also the enterprise doesn't offer transportation, and the road represents another weakness because is in a bad condition

❖ *Website*

The web page is only in romanian language, so its impossible to a foreign to see what services are offered. Also the information is not update, and some sections are under construction.

❖ *Poor Land For Agriculture*

The land is not so good for agriculture. Because the enterprise is trying to make bio-products, they don't use chemicals to improve the quality of the land.

❖ *Advertising*

The advertise is made special in schools, fairs, radio, TV; but they don't have a constant budget for advertising, their investment in publicity is very low.

❖ *High Prices*

We think that 50 euro/ night for a room is too expensive, even that the services are very good. For a regular Romanian family it's too much, considering the level of salary in Romania

❖ *Common bathroom*

It should be a bathroom in every room because maybe some clients want privacy.

❖ *Air conditioner*

In the summer months is essential to have an air conditioner.

Opportunities:❖ *Low Land Costs*

The enterprise can extend by buying new lands. The costs in the area are low comparing to other regions, let's say around Suceava city.

❖ *Landscape*

The views are extraordinary. Nearby there is a river, a monastery and also a memorial house: Eminescu's House

❖ *Member Of ANTREC*

ANTREC means: "National Association of Rural and Ecological Tourism". Being member of this association the enterprise has some facilities, for example advertising to national and international fairs.

Threats:❖ *No Public Transportation*

Because there isn't public transportation the tourist without a car are forced to abandon the idea of going there.

❖ *Infrastructure*

If the infrastructure continues to degrade there won't be any tourist to come there in conclusion the profit of the enterprise will go down.

Problems definition

During our analyze we have found two main problems. *One of the problem* is represented by the autumn-winter months (november, january, february). In this time of the year the number of the clients is decreasing. *The second problem* is coming from the Government. They don't offer enough funds for agriculture. If the land is poor and the financial help from Government is low, you can't produce as much as you want.

Crisis

The crises influenced the enterprise in **two ways**.

The negative aspect was that the number of the clients decreased and they were forced to reduce the price for the products.

The positive aspect: because of the crisis the prices for construction materials, services and equipment were very accessible.

Innovation plan

After a brief analysis of our case study about “Cai de Vis” Company, we have run a brainstorming activity that collected some ideas about the future enlargement of firm supply.

Here the main ideas started for the immediate and concrete possibility the company has for developing a multiple-service based activities around the horse riding business. Afterwards the brainstorming activity stepped into new ideas external from the main business as an alternative option for the company itself. The main focus was linked to the concept of local-based network and land promotion through local handicrafts or a provision of multiple-services for the local guests, in terms that the supply or company's offer is suitable for a wider panel of stakeholders.

In table 1 we have gathered together all the ideas coming out from the first section of the brainstorming. The order we set up the ideas into the table is the same order they came out, in other words at random. The order of the columns is reported as follows:

- ❖ Ideas: products of our brainstorming
- ❖ Internal investment: possibility to invest in this idea in terms of internal financing for rising up the volume of business activities and reducing the risks
- ❖ External investment: possibility to have investment from local, national, or European subsidies in terms of rising up the volume of business activities and reducing the risks
- ❖ Local-based network: it's a step from economical capital to social capital increasing the linkage among the local entrepreneurs that share inputs as well as outputs.
- ❖ New business: the feasibility of a new business next to the main one of the company
- ❖ Winter activity: the availability of tourist service provision during the winter time
- ❖ You will also find adjectives describing per each idea the feasibility within a given column.

Table 1: Brainstorming activities: findings suggestion and feasibility

Ideas	internal investment	external investment	local-based network	new business	winter activity
Eco-Pub!	Possible	-	suggested	Totally	Possible
Benches and tables in the forest!	Suggested	-	Possible	-	-
Farm education!	Suggested	Possible (CAP EU subsidies)	difficult	Totally	Concrete

Workshop for painting eggs!					
Workshop for Martisor elaboration	Possible	Possible	Possible	-	-
St Theodor- horses patron's day, including horse- races + blessing all horses around!	Possible	Suggested	Suggested	Possible	-
Traditional wedding arrangement!	Suggested	-	-	Possible	-
Commercial open day!	Extremely suggested	Possible	Possible	-	-
Turkish bath/Sauna with horse shits!	Suggested	Suggested	-	Totally	Concrete
Welfare centre!	Possible	Possible	-	Totally	Concrete
Manege	Suggested	Possible	Possible	Possible	Concrete
Horseshoes improvement!	Possible	Suggested	Suggested	Possible	Possible
Pet therapy!	Difficult	Difficult	Suggested	Totally	Concrete
Environmental sustainable tourism	Suggested	-	Suggested	Totally	-
Art in forest	Extremely suggested	Suggested	Suggested	Totally	-
Hunting activities	Suggested	Suggested	-	Possible	Concrete
Quad	Suggested	-	-	Totally	Concrete
Snowmobile	Possible	-	-	Totally	Concrete
Camping area	Extremely suggested	Suggested	Suggested	Totally	Possible
Adventure park for Children and adults	Extremely suggested	-	Suggested	Totally	-
Souvenirs and handcrafts selling	Suggested	Extremely suggested	Extremely suggested	Totally	Concrete
Transportation	Extremely suggested	Possible	-	-	-

In this section we will explain six of the main ideas that result from the previous table. We choose them in order to get some key issues to show how it is possible to innovate a running business without decreasing the outcomes of the main business. By mean, we will analyze step by step what are the main characteristics of the ideas, how could it be possible to implement to the company and finally how could be the linkage to the other local service supplier.

❖ **Eco-pub**

Located into the forest next to the main building it will provide some pub services using hand-made wooden kitchen supplies (wooden glasses, dishes, cutlery as well as furniture and the house itself). Nevertheless food, beverage and other starters should be provided by local supplier in order to involve locals as much as possible promoting as well the image of the place through food. It's worthwhile to mention that the main purpose of the eco-pub is to provide services for the daylight tourists that are using both the company and other services like cycling, hiking, hunting and so on. For the night they may provide also common shared room in the house where they can rest once during their stay. About the investment issues it will take something like 500.000 euro with the

involvement of 3-4 people during the peak of the season. For the environmental issues there might be some professional help from foresters using the most advantage bio-technology to manage this kind of waste product.

❖ **Farm education**

We thought that the training of the new generations could be a key solution for waste reduction in the surrounding area. Through the farm and the farm know-how the company may lead an internal soft-policy that could be a driven force or a symbol for the other farmers or stakeholders. So using this simple tool you may imprint an image in the young guys about how it is possible to have less waste just using a different ways of behave. Here, the investment is just on the way you manage your company, for instance getting some standards like ISO 14000 or 9001 in the branch of milk, kid breeding or agricultural production.

❖ **Sauna with horse manure**

Coming from the northern society, horse manure has been used for centuries as a common fertilizer as well as heat producer like normal fuel. The idea was born just thinking how much this magic bio-product costs as fermented manure in the greenery shops or agricultural consortium in the western society. So why throw it away as just a normal dropping? There is more remunerative ways to invest your special waste: make a sauna heated by horse manure. The process is quite easy to make and it needs only sun, a place to store the fresh shit in a wide place where you smear the droppings in a thin layer, and finally a shed where it is stored. After that you just need to build a sauna (suggested Finnish one) using the wood harvested from the forest. Moreover, it's suggested to build a double sauna one for male and the other for female with shower incorporated. The total investment could be something like 40.000 euro.

❖ **Hunting**

Common activity in the Eastern European Countries is hunting in the fall. The low season during the late fall makes the hotel empty. A great opportunity could be to organize some cooperation with Hunting Tourist Company. The investment here is taking just contacts with the local hunting administration and the Hunting Tourist Company. More ideas may grow once you are in the business, like "theme hunting", "horseback hunting" etc.

❖ **Art in forest**

The use of the forest next to the farm could be improved by a permanent or casual local art exhibition in order to attract more people to the area. Basically, it is made up of path where you can wander around without getting lost and watching the pieces of art. The total investment should be considered almost zero!

❖ **Camping area**

The last proposal regards a camping area. This facility is based on providing a space next to forest or in a place where you may host hundreds of people in tents or campers, caravan parking place. The main idea was to provide a facility for families offering them also cycling, hiking paths or horse riding. The investments could be something like 60.000 euro consisting bathrooms and parking place in two hectares of land both forest and agriculture

Dorna Adventure

WG 3 - Environmental and Recreational Business

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Petia Georgieva - Bulgaria

Reetta Leena Hamalainen - Finland

Andra Gheorghiu - Romania

Dominica Sranska - Slovakia

Riccardo Da Re - Italy

Tsvetelina Simeonova - Bulgaria

1. Introduction (Description of the case study)

Our group is supposed to make a case study on environmental and nature-based tourism. The case study company is Dorna Adventure. There are six members in our group and one tutor teacher. We started our working with brainstorming where we thought about the questions we wanted to ask to the stakeholder. We had an interview with the Dorna Adventure stakeholder and after that we did SWOT analysis. On the weekend we had the chance to go on a excursion, a field trip in the adventure park. After these we thought about what we knew about the company and started making power point presentation. We collected new information by phone-interview.

2. History and Foundation

Our case study is about Dorna Adventure, situated in Vatra Dornei town. Dorna Adventure is a private company. It was found in the year 2005 by two mountain salvators of municipality of the area, after market observation, demands (high) and supply (low) analysis and market niche examination.

They have three payed employees and seven volunteers working for the company. Since 1996, one of the owners worked as salvation guardian in the mountains; according to this he has experience in the nature sporting sector.

In the first years the company increased his popularity and his incomes, reaching for instance an average of 9 team buildings por year. In consequence of the world economic crisis in 2009 the tourists demand decreased (above by big companies), and according to this the benefit of the last years couldn't be reached anymore. In 2010 the company decided to try a new innovative strategy for enlarging target offering new activities and services; the co-operation with new local actors and with economic agents from Vatra Dornei region is one of the keys to build stronger networks. Among the actors there is also the Municipality, as one of the owner works at the tourism service in Vatra Dornei.

3. Product (Services and Activities)

Dorna Adventure co-operates with local actors, such as hotels and other activity providers. Travel agencies send the tourists to Dorna Adventure to do something new and to have an adventurous holiday. The company prefers to have groups or team building instead of individual tourists. The most common tourist group is the one who stay long and have already planned the whole package what they want to do on their holiday. Then there is another type of tourists who

prefer shorter stay and have no plans ready. The last group are the companies, who are interested in team building activities.

The company offers adventure activities such as river rafting, biking, hiking, horse riding and team building activities, both to tourists as to big companies.

4. Marketing and Competition situation

Dorna Adventure makes advertisement and promotion on the back of track maps and on flyers. The local hotels recommend Dorna Adventure to the tourists. They also had one commercial on national television. Now they are looking for sponsors to the company.

There are two other companies who are working in the same branch in this area. The companies compete and at the same time co-operate with Dorna Adventure, so if one company can not take all the customers, they recommend each other.

5. Insurance system

In Romania there is no company that would offer an insurance for adventure activities. That is why Dorna Adventure does not have an insurance for its customers and everybody should have their own insurance. The companies that come for team building activities must have own insurance for their employees. Dorna Adventure makes all customers to sign a regulation, so if anything happens it is not company's fault.

6. The three pillar model

Dorna Adventure is based on the three pillar model which is about ecological, economical and social impact.

a. Ecological impact

On the weekend we visited the Dorna Adventure Park and had the chance to do some of the proposed activities, like bicycling and river rafting.

As we could observe on our excursion there has been a lot of pollution in the adventure park especially in the river and its surroundings. Not only that, there has been also a lot of waste in the water, like bottles, other kind of plastic materials and dead animals. Finally, the water was not in a good condition for swimming use at all.

The whole concept about innovative company goals is based on activities in nature.

The aim of Dorna Adventure is to get the customers, especially from urban areas, a better understanding about environmental issues. It should be an achievement to "educate" not only the youngsters among us but also the older participants.

The idea of environmental friendly equipment would be for example longer lasting equipment instead of changing them every year or half and half leased and own equipment.

b. Economical impact

Between 2007 and 2008 the company increased their budget and it offered an average of 9 team buildings per year. The economical crisis had a big influence on the company: for instance, in the year 2009 there have been only 2 team buildings.

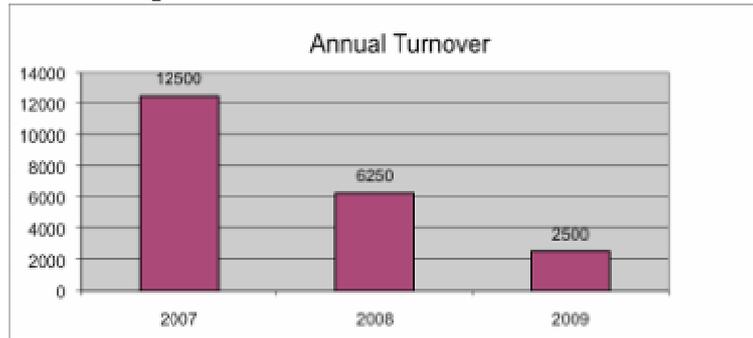
The municipality gives Dorna Adventure 10 000€ per year; this money is divided between equipments and employees' payment. The owners work three days per week for the company and the other days for themselves (i.e. the Municipality).

Dependant on the annual support of 10 000€ from the Municipality is a necessity for surviving purpose. In the future this dependency should be built up step by step to

achieve total independency. Today they have three kinds of tourism: individual, groups and team building for bigger companies.

Before the financial crises began they had an annual turnover of 12 500€ per year in 2007. September 2009 when the collapse happened they certainly had a loss of the bigger companies and the team building activities. Team building activities are one of the highest priced activities and the main source of their income. For 2009 they had a loss of almost 10 000€ in the annual income.

Graph n.1 – Annual turnover from 2007 to 2009



c. Social impact

An aspect on Doma Adventure Park is that every participant has a certain wish to keep the benefit in the region of Vatra Dornei. The demand on local products from the tourists site was that high that 60-70 % of the traditional food is produced by the hotels, restaurants, inns and local stores.

7. Innovation plan

The present economical crisis has influenced Doma Adventure's incomes, and the decreasing of the annual turnover was so high that the organization needed new innovation for attracting new tourists. At the same time, economical infrastructures from Vatra Dornei Region started to look for their services because they wanted to offer something new to clients, both locals and old clients as new typologies of customers.

For describing the novelties that Doma Adventure is trying to offer, it is better to look at the figure below (picture 1), well describing how innovation can be categorized.

About products, until now, the main innovation is the effort of the company to offer each year always new activities for stimulating old tourists' desire of returning and for opening the supply to new kinds of customers. For instance, the last attractions have been paintball and "tiroliana"; these new activities are very successful even though it is impossible to see the effects in the annual turnover now.

At the same time they have introduced some services (i.e. Shuttle Service from Hotels) for facilitating the access to the activities area, and for making more comfortable longer stay than the few days to which tourists are used to spend in the region.

Each activity needs new technical and safety devices: Doma Adventure invests 30% of the income to that and also looks for environmental friendly equipment without impacts in the ambient where the activities take place.

Finally, the most innovative organizational tool is the network creation among several actors in the region, for being able to offer complete packages and better services. In these **months they**

are also planning to co-operate with Travel Agencies for acquiring new clients and finding the sponsor from a big company to buy new activities’ equipment.

8. SWOT Analysis

Dorna adventures strong points are that they give discount packages for long stays. The manager works also for the municipality; that could be an advantage because he knows all regulations and the local area and can manage better the networks among other stakeholders. The company is very flexible and offers customized activities for each customer. The employees of Dorna Adventure have frequent team meetings so everybody knows what is happening in the company. They also work actively on preventing polluting the nature and make co-work with schools and students.

The weaknesses are that there is not enough co-operation with local and national responsible bodies on environmental issues. The river is really polluted and that does not attract more customers. They are not exploring all the market opportunities, for instance asking for tourists feedback. They have not found out if they can have support from European union or other financial source. They could also have sponsors for the company. Dorna Adventure should have a new working web page in different languages (at least in English). Many possible customers use internet and if the web page does not work, they lose potential customers.

Opportunities are the co-operation with the other companies from the branch. It is good they are not competing but helping each other. Tourist agencies tell the tourists about Dorna Adventure. The schools also work together with Dorna Adventure to increase the environmental knowledge among children. There is also a chance to get funding from the European Union which they should try to have.

Threat for the company is that they are so dependent on groups and team building customers. When the financial crisis started, they lost many of these customers. Also the customers for long stay were gone. If nothing is done to the pollution in the river and nature around it, it will not attract people to visit there and use Dorna Adventures services. So that is a big threat for the business and future. Dorna Adventure is dependent on municipality because it owns the area where they do their activities. If municipality decides that it needs the area for something else, the company has to move. They also get financial support from the municipality to get new equipments and to pay to the employees.

A brief summary about the analysis done on Dorna Adventure organization in Table 1.

Table n.1 – SWOT Analysis

<p>STRENGTHS Discount packages for long stays The manager works in the Municipalities Flexibility Frequent team meeting Activities on waste collection and prevention</p>	<p>WEAKNESSES Not enough cooperation with local and national responsible bodies on environmental issues They don’t explore all market opportunities Not working web page</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES Cooperation with the other companies from the branch Cooperation with tourist agencies Cooperation with schools on environmental activities Existence of EU funding opportunities</p>	<p>THREATS Dependent on the group conditions Dependent on long stay conditions Pollution Dependent on the park for the volunteer</p>

9. Suggestions

In correspondence to the above described weaknesses we have developed for each of them the following suggestions in order to strengthen the company's position on the market (a deeper link between weaknesses and suggestions is given in Annex 1):

- Local motivation campaign for getting more volunteers
- Turn-over among volunteers to make the work less hard
- Better organization to attract more local and individual tourists
- Consultation with a marketing specialist and territorial survey
- Half leased and half own equipment
- Signs-check done by themselves or projected by a common plan with Tourism Ministry (or other public Administrations)
- Development of effective webpage
- More activities to promote responsible attitude to the environment
- Waste collection initiatives

In order to help the stakeholders to develop their business in a sustainable way our working group chose to go deeper in the following directions:

1. Development of effective webpage.

Nowadays the webpage is the face of the company and most often it is the place where the customer makes the first contact with the company. Rely on this, we consider important the following to be taken into account:

- All the information should be in different languages
- Stories from participants
- News for coming events
- Possibility to register online
- Discounts for early bookings of activities (at least 2 weeks)
- Discounts for last minute bookings (one day in advance)
- Newsletter subscribe possibility
- Facebook account
- Advertising banners for sport equipment companies, hotels, restaurants, etc. on contract basis
- Advertising banners of Dorna Adventure webpage on webpages of hotels, tourist agencies, etc.

2. Better organization to attract more local and individual tourists

In accomplishment of this aim certain contribution would have the following initiatives:

- Every Saturday special event

Every Saturday a different activity could be offered – rafting, cycling, paintball, tracking, climbing, horse riding – longer than usual, competition spirit, more..

The potential customers could be students, local people, tourists with one weekend stay, and it is appropriate for all age groups.

The promotion could be done by:

- Posted month graphic on the webpage
- Posters with the month graphic in schools, universities, public places

- Package offers for students

Special discounts with a set of activities (horse riding, rafting, cycling), camping, dinner of local dishes, camp fire, music, more..

Potential customers are the students.

The promotion could be done by posters at Universities, own webpage, webpage of universities, sport clubs of universities, more..

- Weekend trekking offer

Full weekend nature experience, long trekking routes, long night with camp fire and local food, music, overnight in tents or huts.

Potential customers are local people, tourists with one weekend stay or longer and it is appropriate for all age groups.

The promotion could be done by posters and directly in their own webpage.

3. More activities to promote responsible attitude to the environment & Waste collection initiatives

Here we have the following idea:

- Summer Environmental Festival

A musical event to promote waste collection and more responsible attitude to the environment.

It includes:

- Waste collection
- Competitions
- All activities on 50% discount
- Open air concert
- Sale of beer and local food

The event would start with organized waste collection

The stimulus could be: free drink for certain quantity of collected waste, 50% discount on the activities, free entrance for the concert

The possible sponsors could be: environmental foundations, other NPOs/NGOs, beer producers, artists willing to support the good cause, sport companies.

ANNEX 1

WEAKNESSES	GENERAL SUGGESTIONS
Based on volunteers (dependency)	i) Local motivation campaign for getting more volunteers i) Turn-over among volunteers to make the work less hard
Focus only on companies and group tourists	Better organization when it comes to local and individual tourists -> phoning them directly Feedback survey
They don't explore all market opportunities	Marketing specialist, territorial survey
Need to buy every year new equipment	Half and half leased and own equipment
- Avoid responsibility - Not enough cooperation with local and national responsible bodies on environmental issues - Not enough initiatives on raising environmental conscious	Signs-check done by themselves or projected by a common plan with Tourism Ministry (or other public Administrations)
Not working web page	Better if done by inside informatic (someone has to learn web pages management) and in different languages (at least English)

Conacul Domnesc

WG 4 - Rural Development in Tourism Services

Elena Zamcu – Romania

Elina Puustinen – Finland

Heidi Tuominen – Finland

Paul Ivan – Romania

Petra Vachova – Slovakia

Magdalena Pichlerova - Slovakia

1. Description of the case study

Name of the enterprise: SC Iacob's SA

Location: Scheia, Suceava County

Business address: No. 45, Agronomului Street

Contact information: Tel.: 0230 526.966, e-mail: office@conaculdomnesc.ro, web:

www.conaculdomnesc.ro, www.conaculdomnesc.com

Year established: 2006

Company background: Conacul Domnesc is located in an old noble mansion completely renovated and furnished to European standards, on 10 hectares in the middle of a dendrologist park. The business started in 2006 by an entrepreneur initiative with years of experience in another types of business. After they built the restaurant and the hotel, in 2007 the Big Hall was finished. In 2008 the SPA Centre was finished, too.

Number of employees: 60

Legal form of enterprise: SA (Romania) - corporation

Persons engaged in managing the enterprise (chief executive manager): The entrepreneur is the proprietor of this business and another one. All the management of this business is hired.

Annual turnover: Annual turnover was 4572507 lei - 1143126 E in 2008 and the profit was almost 80000 E.

Market and competition situation: Conacul Domnesc has a hotel with 84 beds, a restaurant with 180 seats, a wine house, a summer restaurant. Also, they can offer two conference rooms, a Big Hall and a SPA Centre with one of the modern fitness equipment, covered pool, sauna, football pitch, and tennis ground. The landscape is unique because the complex was built in a dendrologist park.

In the city we can find a couple of hotels or wellness centers but those companies are nowhere near the same high standard as Conacul Domnesc. Here are lots of possibilities to do many different kinds of activities. Competitors simply don't offer the extensive range of activities that Conacul Domnesc does.

However, the marketing manager consider that the only competitor is Imperium Hotel, from Suceava city. We analysed the services of Imperium, too, and we saw that the services are different. For exemple Conacul Domnesc is a 3*** hotel and Imperium 4**** and the prices start from 100 lei/ night (of both hotels). Comparing with Imperium Hotel, the main competitor, Conacul Domnesc offers:

- the wine house;
- the multifunctional Big Hall;
- SPA Centre;

- Sport ground;
- Dendrologist park.

Partners: Travel agencies, local mass-media, tourism magazines. Conacul Domnesc is member of Bucovina Tourism Association. Some of the most important partner are the Betty Ice Company, the Carpatica Bank and Credit Europe Bank. Conacul domnesc has important collaborations with travel agencies from Bucharest, Cluj or Timisoara (Annex 1).

2. Description of the case process

In the first stage the group used pre-prepared questions for the stakeholders. The information needed was then obtained via personal interview with Ms. Saghin Mioara, the chef of the marketing to the Connacul Domnesc as well as through inspection of the place. Each member of the group was also given a folder with some specific information of the case study place.

The group was presented by main requirements of the stakeholder that were later processed in more details. At the same time a general observations and general suggestions were elaborated. Further information was also obtained via e-mail communication.

The group worked on a presentation presented to the stakeholder and additional information was again obtained through the e-mail communication.

Within the working group later on specific tasks for each member of the group were determined that were afterwards summarized in the final report and in the final presentation of the case study.

The main method used was the SWOT analyses, defining the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats observed after the inspection of the place and the interview with the stakeholder (see chapter 3).

3. SWOT analysis

A SWOT is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective. The technique is credited to Albert Humphrey at Stanford University in the 1960s.

A SWOT analysis must first start with defining a desired end state or objective. A SWOT analysis may be incorporated into the strategic planning model.

- Strengths: attributes of the person or company that are helpful to achieving the objective(s).
- Weaknesses: attributes of the person or company that are harmful to achieving the objective(s).
- Opportunities: external conditions that are helpful to achieving the objective(s).
- Threats: external conditions which could do damage to the objective(s).

Strengths and **weaknesses** are often internal to your organization. **Opportunities** and **threats** often relate to external factors.

STRENGHT	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant prices (for 3 years) • Space potential • Winehouse (crama) • Park • Lake • Potential of surroundings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition • Advertisement • Permanent arrangements • Transportation • Language limitation • Intensive aroma of the spaces

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperation • Adapation of the spaces for dissabled people • No specific image of the place
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of surroundings • Sport area • Multifunctional use of the hall • Park • Cooperation • Teambuilding activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPA“ even if it is only the pool and sauna • Road to the lake • Equal approach to guests • Old information on the web site

Strengths of Conacul Domnesc, we could say are the constant solid prices, which have now remained the same for three years. Huge park and the lake create many possibilities for the further use of the serious potential of arounding space & surroundings, but for that, the company needs to find out more about the legislation and the conservation of the nature, since some of the rare trees in the park are protected by law.

As **opportunities** could be mentioned the use of the park and also the “wedding hall” more multifunctionally. But the cooperation with other businesses might just be the most important factor as making the business work better. Potential of the surroundings could be transferred into sports and outdoors activity area. Also teambuilding for the companies would be a great customer magnet, when most of the customers are business men.

Weaknesses of the company are the lack of advertisement and public transportation. As basic weakness of course the competition, but that is something we all need to suffer of, no matter which company we are talking about. We should consider if the competition could somehow be turned into a partial cooperation. One serious and easily repairable problem is the language limitation in info signs and on the website. All the signs of somehow important information should be also in English. And the Romanian website would need a link to connect the English website. The smell of the chemicals and, too strongly used, also of the air fresheners could easily give some headache and nausea for the more sensitive persons. Some more space and abilities for disabled people could be considered. Permanent arrangements like the decoration of the big hall could be reconsidered, is it really a profitable investment and would they want to use it more widely for differential purposes. If not, the beautiful set scene should be more advertised for weddings, birthday parties and other specific celebrations.

One detail which really bothered us was that we really couldn’t make a specific image of the place itself, and when asked, the management of the place said, they had no idea either.

Main aim of the complex should be to make visitors feel comfortable and this is a role of employees. Suitable personal attitude of employees is making a good impression and this could be one of the reasons of good reputation of the place, which is extremely important.

For **threats** we found out that the spa is quite small to be called as spa, because there is only one swimming pool and a Jacuzzi. Of course there are other services that are completing the name of the spa, for example the gym, sauna and the massage treatments. Still our opinion is that, some guests might have higher expectations for the spa, and get disappointed. And it would be better to call it as swimming pool, sauna and Jacuzzi, together with fitness centre, and then the customers could have less of expectations and have a nice surprise when realizing that actually it is better than just a normal swimming pool.

The term spa is associated with water treatment which is also known as balneotherapy. Spa

towns or spa resorts (including hot springs resorts) typically offer thermal or mineral water for drinking and bathing. They also offer various health treatments. In Romania, the word “spa” has a broader sense, sometimes used for all activities involving the swimming pool or sauna. This was the reason why we found confusing the use of term “spa” for foreign visitors.

4. Problem definition

Company management gave us some requirements and according to that they expected us to solve these problems or give some general suggestions.

First of the requirements was problem with selling alcoholic drinks in the restaurant. Manager stated that there is a big difference between number of sold food and drinks and this may be caused by the fact that many customers are coming by their own cars.

Second question was how to use the winehouse (crama) permanently not only for occasional actions. One of the reasons for this could be closed atmosphere of the place.

The other problem, which had to be solved, was that weekend packages can not be sold. This could be caused by the business image of the place and businessmen need accommodation especially during the weekdays so that is how the “empty” weekends are created.

They also expected us to make general suggestions for innovations.

One of the problems could be general picture of the place, which can create impression that this hotel is mostly for businessmen not for families. It is a shame, because we are sharing opinion , that they could fill in the “empty” weekends. This image is connected to the local atmosphere, which does not have to be comfortable even for some businessmen.

5. Present economical world crisis and the enterprise

The current economic crisis has resulted in decreased number of tourists throughout the country, Romania was the last in Europe in terms of occupancy in hotels. However, economic crisis has led Romanian choose Romania as a tourist destination in the detriment of other countries and this thing was a positive one for the hotels from Bukovina.

The present economical crisis has only positive influences for Conacul Domnesc. Below (Fig. 1) it’s presented the evolution of the annual turnover and the net profit between 2006 (the first year of activity) and 2008 (the company did not published the financial report for 2009 yet):

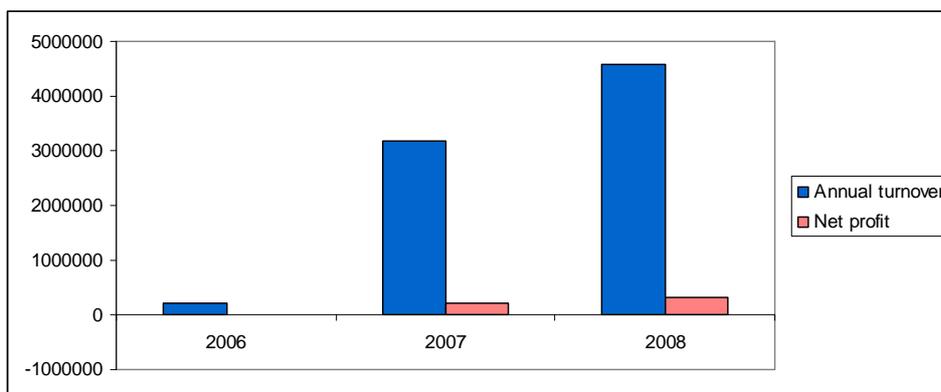


Fig. 1: The evolution of the annual turnover and the net profit (RON)

From the above diagram can be seen a spectacular evolution of the financial results from the second year of operation. For 2008 can be seen turnover increase by 43%. Regarding 2009, the

company estimates an inevitable loss of profit (due to constant prices) but an increase in turnover.

The table below shows the financial information for year 2008 in RON – EURO. We can see a little difference between revenue and expenditure, which could lead to a rethinking of policy costs. However, company's financial performance during the crisis can be clearly seen and appreciated.

Table 2: The financial informations for Conacul Domnesc (2008)

2008	RON	EURO
Annual turnover	4572507	1112532
Total incomes	4617291	1123429
Total costs	4232312	1029760
Raw profit	384979	93669
Net profit	328543	79938

Regarding the customers in the structure by nationality, for the first four months of this year is apparent that Romanian is the most, followed by customers from Italy, France, Germany (Table 3).

Table 3: The structure of the clients for the hotel in the first four months of 2010

	SPAIN	GERMANY	AUSTRIA	BELGIUM	DENMARK	FINLAND	FRANCE	GREECE
January		3		1	2		11	
February		8	2	1	3	2	5	
March		5	2	3	3		2	1
April	2	5			1		9	
THE NETHERLANDS	IRELAND	ITALY	UNITED KINGDOM	HUNGARY	POLAND	CZECH REPUBLIC	TURKEY	RUSSIA
1	2	10						2
1		8			1		2	2
1	2	12	3	1	2	1	2	1
4		10				1	5	5
ARGENTINA	USA	AUSTRALIA	UKRAINE	R. MOLDOVA	ROMANIA	TOTAL		
		2		5	262	301		
	3	3			410	451		
2	1		2	6	455	507		
			8		440	490		

Innovation plan

In our innovation plan we focused on giving the most detailed responds for the requirements of the management.

When it comes to issue of selling more alcoholic drinks we have made a few suggestions. First of them would be to use standing brochures with pictures of specially offered drinks. These brochures can pay attention of guests, who can not decide what to drink or just want to try something new.

Promoting of selling drinks can be also made by personal recommendations of the drinks. Employee of the restaurant can give suggestions about drinks, which are suitable for chosen meal. Except of promoting drinks and possible increase of sold drinks this can create more personal atmosphere between guest and the waiter.

Another problem mentioned by manager was use of the winehouse (crama). Innovations suggested for this issue can be connected with innovations for the problem with selling alcoholic drinks because we think that whole Conacul Domnesc complex is missing place only for having

drink.

Many people, who want only to drink wine or beer prefer spend time in pub style spaces rather than in a restaurant. Winehouse (crama) is a perfect place for this purpose. We suggest longer opening hours than in the restaurant for this place and small snacks could be served here. For promoting selling more drinks there can be some “happy hours” organized. For creating cozier atmosphere in this place one of the suggestions is to place here table games such as chess and cards. Other suitable facilities can be darts and billiard table.

Innovations for promoting weekend packages are equal to general suggestions of innovations. First of all we think that it is important to show potential guests the reason why they should come to area of Suceava city. Main focus should be put on promoting the possibilities and activities in the surroundings (monasteries, outdoor activities etc.).

According to image of this place we would suggest to focus on target groups of old couples, businessmen, companies and nature loving/willing people. For appealing customers there are many options such as segmented advertisement for foreign and local tourists at the airport, buses, taxi, newspaper associated with the target group, web etc. On the other hand, one of the positives we found, was the advertisement placed on the buses, as you can see on Fig. 2.



Fig. 2: Advertisement of Conacul Domnesc on the bus

Recommended option would be to cooperate with such partners that would increase the number of clients, for example owners of horse sledge. Another example could be to cooperate with organizers of big events in Suceava by providing accommodation for participants. One of the possible suggestions could be collaboration with providers of similar services in different regions. By this they could be able to compete with chains of the hotels but having advantage in keeping uniqueness of each hotel.

In advertisement should be used unique signs of Conacul Domnesc and its strengths. Good examples of these are big hall, fitness, tennis court, SPA and a local park.

We prepared some innovations for some of these examples. Size of the big hall is a big advantage in organizing fair trades and permanent events such as exhibitions. However, one possible problem can be permanent decoration which is limiting the use of this hall. It depends on which purposes the owner wants to use this hall, but we suggest that

removing this decoration could make this hall multifunctional and by that suitable for bigger number of actions.

We would also recommend creating a typical image for the Conacul Domnesc. This could be easily done by either creating a slogan for the complex (e.g. Conacul Domnesc – a place where you get in touch with nature) or offering a special meal or a drink that would make the whole complex well-known (e.g. Conacul Domnesc coffee, Conacul Domnesc steak, etc.).

Another big strength of Conacul Domnesc is a local park, which has big room potential. There are a few precious trees located and we believe that highlighting them can bring the uniqueness to this place. Additional suggestion for this place would be to place here more vegetation to refresh the tremendous space. This would create possibility for creating an educational trail here, which would lead to the surroundings.

Innovations for SPA are founded mostly on improving the interior. This space could be cozier and massage room should be bigger. In case of personal requirements of the guests, there should be possibility to make special arrangements for using SPA outside of opening hours.

Another place with big potential is tennis court where could be tournaments organized. There is a problem with empty hours in the mornings and for this we would suggest happy hours and discounts. For guest services hotel can provide tennis instructor.

General innovations for the hotel are to invest more into details in interior. We think it would be good idea to determine rooms for guest with dogs because many people with dogs have problem to find accommodation during their vacation.

Returning clients are very important for hotel so they could be rewarded by certain discounts.

Because the county and the surroundings have a big touristic potential we recommend to offer information about all the touristic attractions. That can be made with a map and another useful information. In this way the tourists can visit in the surroundings: Suceava's Fortress, Village Museum, Saint John Monastery, Zamca's Fostress, The Armenian Monastery, The Salt Mine and the Catholic Church from Cacica. Also not to forget the beautiful landscapes from Bucovina.

The Big Hall can be used for theme events and concerts, they could have some annual events, they can identify with them. For example Conacul Domnesc can organize every year a festival, or a contest.

About the questionnaire, they tried to apply one but without success. It was too long and it took too much time to complete it. At the first meeting our team noticed that the questionnaire had some weaknesses but at this moment the questionnaire is improved. Now it is more accessible and easily to complete (Annex 2).

The lake can't be used because of the road, but it will be a big opportunity for Conacul Domnesc to use it. It can attract more tourists for spending there their free time, for fishing, barbeques or picnics.

7. Applicability to group members home country

Finland

We did not see too much common applicabilities between Conacul Domnesc and our pre-cases so we decided to compare this company to our home countries- Romania, Slovak and Finland.

Conacul Domnesc has really attractive and fancy meeting rooms and their clients have also picked up this point. In Finland hotels' haven't invested much to meeting facilities and to atmosphere of these places. The meeting rooms are usually full of technology (computers, smartboards, monitors..) and this can create very sterile and cold spirit of the place

Because of that they have a huge risk to lose some of the potential customers for the competitive enterprises, which has better and more stimulating and attractive meeting spaces. Conference tourism is growing all the time and that's why hotels should find their weak points in services for businessmen.

Slovakia

Conacul Domnesc creates impression of cosmopolitan hotel. By this its main target group is mostly businessmen and older people. Depending on demands of management it could be advantage or disadvantage in the same time. Biggest disadvantage of this could be losing big group of travelers from abroad because these people are usually searching for accommodation typical for visited country.

Inspired by touristically developed countries many businesses are trying to copy their style and by that they can lose the uniqueness of the place which is really precious and touristically attractive. Eventually this does not have to be the best strategical step for making business because uniqueness of places is what many tourists are searching for. This is a mistake made by many companies in Slovakia and many of them have already lost big amount of visitors.

Romania

The ideas from our innovation study and our final report can be perfectly applied for Conacul Domnesc and not just for it. But establishing new target means more services and more resources that the company has to offer. We think that the returning clients program it's a great idea for all this kind of businesses. Developing of the wine house (crama) in a pub style can make Conacul Domnesc a big competitor for other pubs and restaurants. In time, spending the evenings there can become a habit for a lot of people from surroundings, especially for the young ones.

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INDIVIDUAL POST CASE STUDIES OF THE STUDENTS

Werfenweng

Matthias Humpeler

Austria

Abstract:

The region of Werfenweng has developed a concept to offer tourists a car free holiday. Since 1995 tourists can choose to use the services of the soft mobility concept. They come by train, bus or leave their car keys at the local tourism association and use only the public transportation system. The goal of the municipality is to develop the region to a completely car free region. The following case study explains and shows how the concept is working and which future developments are possible.

Description of the case study

General information about the region Werfenweng

The object of analysis is the region Werfenweng, located in the state of Salzburg, Austria. The information for this case study was gathered from an interview with the mayor and the following documents provided by the mayor: Informationsmappe Sanfte Mobilität, Endbericht Werfenweng mobil+, Kriterienkatalog Alpine Pearls 2007, Presstext Austria Werfenweng.

The region has a long history of tourism, but when the highway “Tauernautobahn” was established in the year of 1994 the number of tourists reduced drastically. The municipality developed in the following years a variety of tourism ideas. In a federal state contest of the year 1997 for innovative and natural based tourism Werfenweng won with its concept and finally became a model region for “soft mobility – car free tourism” (Online Werfenweng 03.05.2010). The concept was so successful that other regions also participated, based on the EU projects Alps Mobility I and II the association Alpine Pearls was founded in 2006.

The target of the concept “soft mobility” is, to reduce or even stop the use of fossil fuel powered vehicles in the region. From the very beginning potential tourists are involved by offering special packages to use the train or bus for arrival and departure. If the tourists arrive by car they have the choice to give up the key in the local tourism center. The municipality developed a variety of transportation possibilities, for example: electronic cars, bicycle, horse cars, taxi service, gas powered cars. The transport system can be used after the purchase of a “mobility passport” which costs 6 €. For all participant tourists an additional fee for overnight sleep of 0,5€ is added. The total additional costs for the public transportation system is covered by the fees explained above.

Since the new strategy has been executed the region has developed positively, the overnight sleeps changed from 162 000 to 212 000 in the first 4 years. In Werfenweng are 44 hotels and guesthouses participating the mobility project, additional 10 indirect for example: taxi, sport store, etc. In the past year 25% of the tourists came by train and bus, 10% chose to give up the key and also use the mobility option. On the right side, the illustration shows the mobility pass, which gives the customer the allowance to use the special transportation offers.

In general can be said, that this concept is functioning very well in all fields of sustainability, first of all the environmental footprint is reduced continuously, the community is strengthened and



Figure 1 mobility pass (Werfenweng Endbericht 2005)

economically many jobs were created and safeguarded. During the interview the mayor Dr. Brandauer explained also difficulties, to convince on the one hand the citizens to reduce their use of the car and on the other hand to persuade the hotel and guest house owners to participate to a car free dedication even when the greatest part of the customers are from Germany, a very car focused target group. He mentioned that the biggest contribution to gather trust was when the first bookable product was available and the first new customers arrived.

This pre-case study was done for training reasons and was intended to be the first level for the upcoming Inno Natour Project in Suceava, Romania 2010. The writer appreciates the help of the Alpine Pearls member Mag.a Cornelia Zangl and the mayor of Werfenweng Dr. Brandauer for providing help and information.

Stakeholder:

- 44 hotels and guest houses + 10 companies (taxi, sport, etc.)
- Mayor
- Tourism organization
- Alpine pearls
- Residents
- Train & bus service

Goal of the case study:

The goal of the case study is to analyze the region Werfenweng and find new innovative solutions for further development. These proposals were analyzed using the SWOT method and a brief overview of a possible implementation given.

Methods used

SWOT

The SWOT analysis is a tool to analysis the internal and external environment of a company. SWOT stands for strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The internal factors are strength and weaknesses. The external factors are opportunities and threats. This tool is useful to match the company's resources and capabilities to its environment. This method is been widely used because of its capability to lighting up a big variety of opportunities which than can be used to develop new innovative products or services. The very same method will be used to check new ideas for their behavior in the field of operation as the company they are developed for is.

Brainstorming

It is a process for generating creative ideas and solution through intensive and freewheeling group discussion within the Inno Natour group. In a brainstorming season, all ideas are free put together a critic analysis of the aired ideas is allowed only when the brainstorming session is over and evaluation session begins. Due the large distance of the author and the stakeholders, only interview sessions were used to gather information.

Description of the case process

The process can be described in general as a "learning by doing" process, during the Inno Natour intensive course the whole procedure of how a case study is being made was exercised in a team group work. Before the course begins, each team member introduced an innovative tourism project form each country.

The region of Werfenweng was chosen for this case study because it's very unique combination of environmental tourism and economic success. The region has had to come up with a

solution to rebuild customer stock after the highway Tauernautobahn was build. The oldest practical example of car free tourism can be found in Switzerland, where total car free regions were established 1988 (Online 05.05.2010, GaST - Association car-free Switzerland Tourism regions, www.auto-frei.ch). The fundamental difference between car free tourism concepts in Switzerland and Werfenweng is the fact that Werfenweng put more effort into the marketing and tourist involved products and services. The customer is informed and motivated from the very beginning, to disclaim the use of his car.

The information about the region was scanned and a set of questions was developed. In a feedback loop the questions were checked with other members of the Inno Natour group and discussed. These questions were then used to interview the mayor of Werfenweng Dr. Brandauer, the duration of the interview was 40min. The collected information from the interview, website, Informationsmappe Sanfte Mobilität, Endbericht Werfenweng mobil+, Kriterienkatalog Alpine Pearls 2007, and Presstext Austria Werfenweng were used to develop new ideas for possible products and services, related to natural based tourism.

Phases of the case

The phases of the case process are the following:

1. Choose a topic for the case study
2. Interview with the main stakeholder
3. Using methods to define the problem (SWOT, brainstorming, voting)
4. Defining the problem
5. Creative session
6. Prepare the final report and presentation

SWOT analysis of the case study

SWOT analysis for the Werfenweng region

Table 6 SWOT analysis for the Werfenweng region

Strengths	Weakness
Landscape (natural and cultural)	Customer group
CO2 emission reduction	Car use in the region still high
Fresh air and water	Infrastructure
Accessibility by train, bus, car	Costs
Functioning product and services	Acceptance from citizens
Concept is working	
Public transportation system	
Opportunities	Threats
Better infrastructure	Public opinion on car free tourism
Car free tourism becomes more popular	Financial problems
Total stop of cars	
More activities for tourists	
Economy not depended on energy prices	

SWOT analysis for the transportation system

Table 7 SWOT analysis for the transportation system

Strengths	Weakness
Huge variety of services	frequency
Simple structure	Regular cars can be a danger
Local jobs safeguarded	range
Divided into purpose, fun, peace and slow transportation	
Guaranteed safety and quality	
reliable	
Opportunities	Threats
Attracting young people, different target	financing
EU-project (funding)	Accidents with regular cars due speed differences
Further development	Bad cooperation with train and bus companies
New vehicles = new attractions	
Cheap for customers	
Less accidents	

SWOT analysis for future developments

Pedestrian zone in center

Table 8 SWOT analysis for the pedestrian zone

Strengths	Weakness
Huge sensual impact on town center	Transportation concept for citizens
New attraction for customer	Citizens disapprove
Economic development	Costs for modification
Special feature for advertisement	More traffic on side roads
Less sound emissions during day	More sound emissions during night
Opportunities	Threats
More bars, cafes, shops in city center	Problems with local citizens
Festivals and special activities during the year	Loss of car related jobs
Quality of living increases	Expensive
Center gets more beautiful	
Reuse of former parking spaces	
New city map with extra tourism packages	
New name for center	

Parking lot

Table 9 SWOT analysis for the parking lot

Strengths	Weakness
Step to total car free region	costs
Easy to apply	Space consumption
Easy to recognize	Distance to local houses
	Old and disabled people have higher distances to walk

	Loss of nature
Opportunities	Threats
Silent city	Complete denial of citizens
Nearly zero emissions in region	High costs
High living standard	Thefts duo high concentration of cars
Drastic reduction of accidents	
Use of bicycle	

Promoting the area for mentally disabled people

Table 10 SWOT - promoting the area for mentally disabled people

Strength	Weakness
Social attractiveness for all tourist groups	Distance to big cities
Landscape and nature	High investments
Fresh air, low noise, attractive to health institutes	Unpopular for young tourists
New customer group with special needs	Infrastructure for special needs not in place
Opportunities	Threats
New institutes -> new investments	Investments
Image	Potential of target group unknown
Jobs	
School for training	

Problem definition:

- Conflicts with residents about further project steps (pedestrian zone in center)
- Hotels sometimes do not offer the tourists participation on the project.
- Conflicts between members
- Tourists demand further development heading a total car free region.

How did the present economical crises influence the enterprise?

During the interview it became clear that the region has suffered a loss of tourist overnight stays. The impact of the crisis was on a medium economical level.

The Innovation Plan

Based on the ideas mentioned by the mayor, the three most useable ideas were chosen. In the following lines the ideas will be analyzed and explained in detail. These ideas will most likely be realized in future.

Idea one: pedestrian zone in center

Description of the present situation:

In the resent years interviews with tourists done by the hotels and the tourism association showed that customers who used the SAMO concept where asking for further development of the car free town. A major step toward the realization is a car free city center, which would be than transformed to a pedestrian zone only. On the right side, the illustration shows the city center of Werfenweng, marked in orange.



Figure 2 Center of Werfenweng (Online 10.05.2010, GoogleMaps)

Utilization of the new pedestrian zone:

For this project a traffic assessment for the fluentness of the traffic would be necessary. In rush hours traffic must remain fluent to avoid extra emissions and annoyance of the residents. In the next step advertisement and a resident meeting should be held. The residents located in the center are the most vital stakeholders for the realization of this project, because they are the most affected. In the third step the new pedestrian city center should be used for advertisement in on the flyers and homepage. Other stakeholders for example private sport companies or associations should be inspired to use the new space for a variety of tourism related activities.

Conditions and stages for realization:

- Traffic assessment
- Gather ideas from residents, let them participate
- Visualize the new look, on paper make advertisement
- Put the change to a vote
- Build infrastructural changes during low season (for adjustments of the residents)
- Control and supervise
- Develop several street festivals with involvement of residents and companies

Estimation of resources needed and funding possibilities:

The need of time resources depends on the resident behavior, but in general 6 month of planning and 14 days of construction is plausible. The costs of infrastructural changes to stop cars getting into the center should be limited to 50.000€. Other costs for new streets are yet not taken in account, because these costs will be calculated during the traffic assessment.

Idea two: parking lot**Description of the present situation:**

The idea of having a parking lot outside of the town can be seen as a vital part of the car free town. The residents won't give up their car completely, but if a huge parking lot outside the town is available the transportation system could be adapted and used to maintain transportation from the parking lot to the resident houses and hotels. At present the residents and tourists are using to get inside the town and park in front of their houses or hotels, which is a optical problem for the car free concept.

Utilization of the new parking lot:

In a traffic assessment the ideal position for the parking lot can be found easily. After preparing a concept which should involve the major stakeholder: residents, hotels inside the town, and transportation service companies. The ground for the parking lot must be bought and the lot itself build.

Conditions and stages for realization:

- Planning and assessment
- Advertisement for the project
- Residents should be involved
- Buy and build parking lot
- Double use of the parking lot can be developed, for example solar panels on the parking lots roof
- Advertise the idea on the homepage

Estimation of resources needed and funding possibilities:

The need of time resources depends on the resident behavior, but in general 3 month of planning and 30 days of construction is plausible. The costs of infrastructural changes to stop cars getting into the town should be limited to 100.000€ Other costs for new signs and bounds are yet not taken in account, because these costs will be calculated during the traffic assessment.

Idea three: Promoting the area for mentally disabled people.**Description of the present situation:**

The region of Werfenweng does have in general families as a target group. If the total car free region is going to develop further the region could also target health related tourism.

Utilization:

From a marketing point of view, disabled people are getting more and more important. There was no market till in recent years developments of psychological science have shown that nature and animals can be a vital part for psychological illnesses treatment. The quality of service is different and safety standards are higher, but places with a quit behavior and a low speed are rare it is a potential field of interest.

Conditions and stages for realization:

- Search for possible attractions (pet therapy)
- Create packages with the members and other service suppliers
- Advertise (online, newspaper, brochures, fairs etc.)

Conclusions

After brainstorming, SWOT analysis, and interviews following conclusions were reached:

- The SAMO concept is working, a very well thought true combination of innovation and natural based tourism.
- The ideas put up to discussion are ambitious but realistic and necessary to reach the goal of a car free region.
- The municipality has a short budget but with a integrated financing model further development is possible.
- A functional product and service is most vital for such a challenged project.

List of references

- The interview with the stakeholder (15.04.2010, 40min)
- The webpage (Online 10.04.2010: www.werfenweng.org)
- The lectures (Inno Natour RO, 25.04-08.05.2010)
- Trips in Bucovina area (Vatra Dornei)
- Informationsmappe Sanfte Mobilität
- Endbericht Werfenweng mobil+
- Kritierienkatalog Alpine Pearls 2007
- Presstext Austria Werfenweng
- <http://maps.google.de/>

The Power Arena Of Groß Gerungs

Katharina Schmutz
Austria

Introduction

About my pre case study

Prof. Weiss from BOKU - University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna helped me -in the decision making process- which kind of topic for the pre case study would be suitable for Inno Natour.

As Prof. Weiss comes from the Department of Economics and Social Sciences, more specific from the Institute of Forest, Environmental, and Natural Resource Policy his conception was towards the field of natural based tourism.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study was to figure and find out the innovative aspect of the tourist attraction in the project.

The work followed three main problems:

- a) The innovative aspect
- b) The acceptance from the region
- c) Implementation from the idea to the project itself

Conception of Investigation

First of all it was about collecting ideas, as already discussed in the introduction I made an appointment with Prof. Weiss from BOKU, to figure out which project would fit best to the course.

I had three objects of interests.

Two of them are located in the same area in Lower Austria. The third one is in Carinthia, the southern state of Austria; which was not a good option for me to visit because of the bad accessibility by public transport and the relatively far distance.

The two other ones are not far from each other; plus my grandmother is living closely to them; which was a big point for me, because I could stay there for free and had the advantage that she lives in a smaller city where she knows a lot of people.

Project 1:

Title: “The mystical Waldviertel”

I heard about “the mystical Waldviertel” by word-of-mouth recommendation from hoteliers, inns and friends of my family. I wanted to figure out which kind of organization stands behind this title. Four e-mails were sent to tourist offices, tourist informations and to a regional planner.

Enquiry for the mystical Waldviertel			
e-mails	Replied	Info	
Regional management Waldviertel	yes	Organization does not exist *	
City Council for cultural affairs	yes	Link to Kraftarena Groß Gerungs	
Destination Waldviertel GmbH	yes	Organization does not exist	
info@waldviertel.at	no	no	

*Mrs. Silvia Kellner from the regional management of Waldviertel sent me additional information that "the mystical Waldviertel" had been a marketing strategy in 1990, but didn't work out very well.

The word "mystical" has a negative aftertaste; it is often associated with bad weather: fog, rain, coldness; darkness, horror-stories, the unknown.

Therefore in 2004 the regional management created a new brand with this slogan: "Where we are, it's at the top". This new innovative brand is now used and represented from regional institutions, economics and tourism.

As I had assumed before was the fact that I thought "the mystical Waldviertel" was about natural based tourism; I had to figure out that it

a) doesn't even exist and b) is actually designed for a family brand for regional institutions, economics and tourism.

So I decided to take project number two.

Project 2:

Title: "The Powerarena Groß Gerungs"

To get a better information pool for my investigation I arranged a three days trip to Lower Austria, where I was able to talk to a secretary of Waldviertel tourist information, secretary of the municipality and the farmer who was one of the creators of this project.

The secretary of the tourist information hand me out flyers, newsletters, information sheets, trekking and cycling maps, regional newspapers.

The secretary of the municipality gave me the address of the farmer. Unfortunately the farmer had no time for a face - to - face interview because he was on the way to till his fields.

About the Region Waldviertel

The area of interest is about 140km away from Vienna. It is situated in Lower-Austria, northwestern from Vienna.



Figure 1: Lower Austria with four quarters: Waldviertel, Weinviertel, Mostviertel and Innviertel

The area of the Waldviertel is around 4.600 km² big. The object of interest is located in the western central of the Waldviertel and defined as the highlands from Lower Austria.

The main region of Waldviertel consists of 99 municipalities; with 240.000 inhabitants in 5 districts (Gmünd, Horn, Krems, Waidhofen an der Thaya and Zwettl). The region is predominantly

agrarian, industrial areas are around cities (Gmünd and Schrems). Agriculture and soft tourism, as well as trade and commerce are the prevailing income source of the resident population.

Tourism in the region Waldviertel

Waldviertel is touristic seen barely tapped. Mass tourism is a foreign word in this region, but for people with certain ideals it is a magnificent place to spend the holidays.

Today the region is valued for its extensive natural areas and the associated recreational value. Barely tapped, the region is famous for its quietness and its archaic nature. Not only nature - which offers a great quantity for sportive activities - plays an important role in the Waldviertel, but also cultural heritages like castles, monasteries and ruins.

In particular tourism in the Waldviertel is based on natural and soft tourism, which reflects as well in forms of wellness tourism, like mud bath or Kneipp cure.

Products of the region

The agricultural sectors focus on direct marketing, like selling their products on markets in and around Vienna or directly on the farm.

Lots of agrarian products, like the typical grey poppy - and out of it made goods - are being merchandised. Also the fish farming (mostly trout and carp) plays a relevant role, it is more or less a niche product. Especially in Christmas time a very demanded product in the region of Vienna and surrounding.

Foundation and History

Two private persons founded the Power arena of Groß Gerungs in 1992.

At the beginning the idea was to implement the old method of dowsing rod. Dowsing in the highlands of the Waldviertel has been an ancient used method to find water fields; it is not scientifically proofed, but very popular there.

The knowledge of dowsing has declined and it is nowadays hard to find somebody who has practice in it. Mrs. Floh and Mr. Prinz saw a certain demand (demand –high; supply-low) on this old method and tried to develop a strategy for its re-establishing.

They offered sporadically guided tours; which were pretty simple made as Mrs. Floh told me, because you just need a dowsing rod and a bit of feeling for it and if you are talented you are able to know how to do it after one session/tour. It became quite popular in the region and gained interest not only from the local people as, as well from the whole region. The information about it spread till Germany.

So Mrs. Floh and Mr. Prinz decided to put more effort in this project and developed a whole new strategy. As it was possible to do the dowsing everywhere, they were looking for more attractive places for the guided tours. They knew from oral tradition that special places exists in their nearby neighbourhood. Some of them were already on trekking tours, but not specially signed or directly accessible.

Mrs. Floh and Mr. Prinz had the idea of including those places with their dowsing project.

Meanwhile Mrs. Floh had left the private enterprise where she had been employed and went to the municipality as a council for cultural affaires. Accordingly to that fact she had a lot of possibilities to gain money for the emerging project, called the power arena of Groß Gerungs, but this should have been a very long and hard way till there.

Product, Services and Activities

The Power Arena of Groß Gerungs offers a lot of possible things to buy, to do and to explore. It co-operates with local actors, such as inns, hotels, private apartments and local tourist

agencies. It is not anymore only a guided tour for dowsing interested people, the range expanded from the first target group to family holidays, school groups and people with special interest in nature based tourism.

It is possible to say that there are three kinds of tourists:

1. People who are interested in dowsing; mostly retired persons;
2. Nature based tourists with interest on special, adventurous places;
3. Families;

Power Arena Groß Gerungs offers in local shops, inns, supermarket and city council some merchandising articles, like caps, T-shirts, miniature stone pyramids to buy.

Every Place of Power lies on a marked trekking tour. The maps are freely available in every tourist office/information place. So the visitor can decide if he wants to make a tour by feet or by car. The places have all a access to parking spaces.

Short description of the 5 Places of Power:

Stone Pyramid

The Stone Pyramid is 11km away from Groß Gerungs. There is a parking space only 1,4km away from the Stone Pyramid. The Stone Pyramid is a archaeological phenomenon, because nobody knows how old it is. The scientists from the Ludwig Boltzmann are quite sure that there could be a grave underneath, but as there are no financial supports foreseen from the municipality, the proof has to wait.



Before the storm Kyrill 2007 reached the Highlands of Waldviertel - and destroyed among others the Stone Pyramid - the municipality spent already 100.000€ for restoration purpose. Till 2010 there is no results if the Stone Pyramid is going to be restored again; as people were very astonished that after such a long time (?) without restoration the pyramid was still recognized as such and after the restoration the first storm destroyed it almost entirely.

There are as well 2 hotspots where you can climb on to get a better view to the Stone Pyramid.

But still the Stone Pyramid is still a very popular place to visit.

Kierling Stone



Has been - as well as the other Places of Power - scientifically examined from the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute. It is located 4,5km from Groß Gerungs and has a parking space 900m away from the Kierling Stone. On top of the stone there is a whole, which unexplainable always filled with water. There is a legend that the water has a positive effect for beauty and health.

Beside the stone there is an installation called the "Lauschinsel" -translated the island of sound. Where you can lie down and listen to the sound of nature.

The Globe

The Globe is situated 6km away from Groß Gerungs and has like the other Places of Power a parking space 1,4km away from the hot spot.

The Sacrificial Stone

Located northwestern from Groß Gerungs there stands the 3m tall Sacrificial Stone.

It is the only place with no car access, but it is 15min. walk from the centre of Groß Gerungs. It is one of the best-marked places. Not only the Sacrificial Stone makes this place to one of the favourites, but also the installation the Power Arena Groß Gerungs made for this place. Like a telephone made of wood to illustrate the sound transmission.

On top of the stone you can see kind of a basin, nobody knows if it is made by hand or weathering.



The Wackel Stone



Is situated in one of the most beautiful areas of the highlands and lies directly on the trekking tour to the Klaus chappel. „Wackeln“ means to wobble, waggle. If you push the stone in a soft rythm then people can see how this 24t heavy stone is wobbling.

There is as well a natural Kneipp unit in the little beck beside. The Wackel Stone is like the other Places of Power on a marked trekking tour.

The 3-pillar model

The Power Arena of Groß Gerungs is based on the three-pillar model:

- Ecological,
- Economical and
- Social impact.

a. Ecological impact

As I had the opportunity to visit the project I had the chance to walk along the arranged trekking paths. They are all very well signed with orientation marks. The parking spaces are not too big and made out off grit and not asphalt. Which is on one hand better for the soil and easier to repair if storm or rain leaves damages. Garbage boxes are located on every parking space and sometimes as well beside the attractions. There are educational signs who inform visitors of special insects and animals living in the area and indicate a certain behaviour e.g. in the woods (be quite, don't leave your waste in the nature!) The hot spots seemed to be very clean; no waste lied around. Mrs. Floh told me also that the nearby farmers look if the area is clean and if not they clean it up themselves; which indicates as a higher level of environmental sense.

b. Economical impact

The project itself is economical seen not rentable, but if the hoteliers have to pay a certain fee to the owners and organize trekking tours it would be helpful to generate new attractions and activities.

The last 10 years the overnight stays can demonstrate a augmentation from 7.000 to 20.000 overnight stays, but Mrs. Floh pointed out that there is no statistic for the Power Arena.

From the guided tours, which cost 40€ till 20 persons and 73€ from more then 20 persons, the owner have to give 20% to the association of culture and the rest goes more or less directly into advertisement. The municipality supported the project financially, but there are no exact numbers how often they received money and which amount they got. It depends on the thing which has to be done, Mrs. Floh explained to me.

c. Social impact

The reaction and resonance from the local population was very positive. The participants of The Power Arena of Groß Gerungs (such as hoteliers, farmers, stores and shops) have a certain wish to keep the benefit in the region of the highlands of Waldviertel.

The project tries to play an educational role and to reveille the interest from schools, so that children can see easy ways to find water (dowsing) and the history of the region.

Innovative aspect

It is to say that the innovative process occurred ten years ago, after creation of a homepage. The Power Arena of Groß Gerungs had reached a certain level of recognition and popularity, where they had to create new impulses to stay up to date and to generate new ideas to attract more people.

In 2003, scientist under the administration of DI Dr. Noemi Kempe from the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for environmental science of Biosensor and Bioenergetics (IBBU) tested the energy fields with four other members of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute. The test persons had to stay 20 minutes close to an energy field, like the world ball, or the Kierling stone. After this relaxing stay the scientists could detect a positive effect on the tested person, such as a strong impact to the cardiovascular meridian.

At the same time they started to improve the infrastructural aspects, such as creating parking spaces, suitable as well for bigger buses and orientation signs, supported and made by the tourist organisation.

Furthermore the two inventors have been always in contact with the regional tourist organizations and developed totally new kind of adventure/experience trekking tours. The speciality about those kind of trekking tours are that the “Places of Power” got the main attractions and were included from the beginning on as well as signed with information’s (history and special energy spot) about them.

From the beginning of this century they tried to stimulate the interest of all kind of tourists; they defined reachable goals (such as orientation signs, parking spaces to package tourist attraction in hotels with guided tours).

Finally they created a local network from hoteliers and stores who sell products and services related to the Power Arena Groß Gerungs.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Manager worked for the city council of cultural affairs	Old homepage: no new events
Flexibility	No events at all
Generated network local-rural form hoteliers to tourist organization	No team meetings; neither with the other owner, nor with the municipality anymore
Interesting tours	Don't explore all market opportunities
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Cooperation with local actors: such as new hoteliers or new members of the city council	Financial dependency of the municipality
Cooperation with schools-> educational impact	Reparation after a storm is made by themselves
Financial support for the EU	To stay up to date with the homepage;
New ways of advertisement	To generate new activities

Struggles and Problems

First the proprietors have to struggle with the fact that they have a very big competitor in the cardiovascular centre in Groß Gerungs. They tried to get them as partners but there was no interest from the other side.

The mayor of the municipality is not very convinced about this project and cancelled the financial support for the next coming years. Mrs. Floh tried to get a Leader project for the Power Arena of Groß Gerungs but the application form never has been sent to them; it has the deep impression that the mayor is not pleased with this project.

Volunteers from the region tried to fix and restore the places, but they won't do it a second time, because they didn't get an appreciation from the municipality/mayor.

Sources

Tourism Organization: <http://www.waldviertel.at/>

Power Arena of Groß Gerungs: <http://www.kraftarena.at/>

Regional management of Waldviertel: http://www.rm-waldviertel.at/content/Lang_1/71.asp

Highlands of Waldviertel: <http://www.waldviertler-hochland.at/system/web/default.aspx>

Pandion-D

Eco & Hobby tourism

Eliza Savova
Bulgaria

Introduction

Pandion-D is a tour-operating company. It was established in 1990 by Mr. Nickolay Dilchev, who is a professional biologist.

The company is specialized in the field of eco, hobby, active and ethno tourism. The firm organizes tours for observation of birds, plants, butterflies, mammals, dragonflies, moths, reptiles, active tourism (skiing, mountain hiking, cycling etc.) It also organizes tours for people who would like to learn more about Bulgarian customs and traditions, ancient history, culture, cuisine, folklore, orthodox cloisters, rural tourism etc.

The number of employees varies during the seasons between 2-15 people. Few of them are at a full time job and several hired during the season.

The company has one owner- the founder, and two family members involved in the business- his wife and his son. The employees include professional guides and drivers, which are hired for the tours.

The annual turnover of the enterprise depends on the season and varies from 80k to over 100k Euros.

History of the firm

The firm was founded in the early 1990, one year after the end of the socialist regime, when the capitalism was just reentering in Bulgaria and there were few companies offering alternative tourism. Mr. Nickolay Dilchev, who is a professional biologist and ornithologist, had great interest and love for the birds and started traveling in different Bulgarian regions in search of the different kinds that can be found in Bulgaria. At that time there were no bird-watching agencies or guides in Bulgaria, so he decided to develop one of his own.

At the beginning he had just one bike and binoculars, but he already knew the places where the different species can be seen and decided to establish contact with several European companies, developing such kind of tourism. At that time there was no Internet, so he wrote hundreds of letters, but no firm was interested in cooperating with him. A friend of his, who was living in France, found some people, who were interested in bird-watching, and advised them to try the itineraries that Mr. Dilchev had established in Bulgaria. They accepted the offer and in the end they rested really satisfied and pleased of the tour and the attention that they received during their stay. That's why they recommended the firm to the owners of a bird-watching company in Belgium with which Nickolay Dilchev was trying to establish contact earlier with no success. The Belgium enterprise then connected him itself with a proposal for cooperation. That's how the business started- with not even a penny for advertisement.

The company started with investment of only one binocular and one tube for observation. When the business started there were no other bird-watching agencies in Bulgaria and the services that they offered were really innovative for the local tourist market. The quality of their tourist products and the special attention that they paid to every single tourist ensured them great success on the European market. Gradually they started to develop their business by offering other kinds of observation tours in Bulgaria, leaded by professional guides. Recently they built their own guest

house, where their tourists stay, but which is also open for everyone who prefers nature-based accommodation.

Although there are other companies in Bulgaria offering that type of tourism nowadays, Pandion-D rests the most-competitive and well-known among them.

Products and services:

The main service that they offer is the bird observation in different regions of Bulgaria where rare species can be seen. They provide their own transportation for the tours- two cars with capacity for 9 people each. If the group is bigger and doesn't want to travel separately they hire private transportation. The tours are guided by professional ornithologists- Mr. Dilchev himself guides the tours when he has the possibility. The routes are various and depend on the species that the tourists want to see or the places they want to visit. The price of the tourist package is also variable- it depends on the route, the duration, the type of accommodation and nutrition. There are prepared packages, but they can also be changed if the customers demand.

Except the bird-watching tours, they offer also tours for observation of mammals, reptiles, dragonflies, butterflies, plants, moths etc. They're also guided by professionals in the different fields corresponding to the different tours. They propose the itineraries of the tour, because they know the places where the species can be seen. The price is formed on the same principle as the price of the bird-watching tours.

The company offers also special tours for people who are interested in the culture, history and traditions of Bulgaria. That includes visit of cultural, historic and religious monuments, food and beverage tasting, participating in different local fests and holydays. This particular tour is still not very well developed but is included in their business plan.

They have build their own guest-house in Vetren- a village in North-eastern Bulgaria, near the town of Silistra and the famous lake-reserve "Srebarna", which is known for its great bio diversity and is part of Unesco's cultural heritage. The house is designed in traditional for the region architecture and is placed near the river of Danube. It's surrounded by nature and provides quietness and calmness to the visitors. It has five double-bed and two one-bed rooms, a kitchen and a tavern. Every room has its own bathroom, TV, air-conditioner and the interior is in traditional style. The kitchen can be used by the customers or they can order home-made food and beverage, prepared by the owners. The tavern has also a traditional interior and seats 30 person top. They offer bikes for cycling tours, fishing rods and guided tours to the reserve. The price for one person per night for a double room is 20 euros, for an extra person- 5 euros. The price for one person in a single room per night is 25 euros. The food and beverage are not included in the price.

Marketing and advertising

When Pandion-D started it was the only agency in Bulgaria offering bird-watching tours. At that time this type of tours was developing in Western Europe but the owner didn't have any contacts with the European firms, so in the beginning he was trying to get in touch with some of them. After he was recommended to one Belgium Company they reached him themselves and soon they started working together.

At the beginning they depended entirely on mouth to mouth advertisement and on recommendations. They didn't put any investments in advertising but it didn't take much time for them to gain popularity on the European tourist market, because of their good products and services, and because of the special attention they paid to every single tourist. Now there are several agencies in Bulgaria for eco and hobby tourism, who imitate the products and the services that Pandion-D is offering, but still they're not so competitive on the market.

Nowadays the tourist market is full of products and services and the advertise is very important, that's why Pandion-D participate every year on international tourist fairs in Western Europe, where they can not only advertise their products, but also find new partners. Recently they invested in making brochures and posters for the guest house they own. They also have two web-sites: the main Pandion-D web-page and one for the guest house.

Partners

Pandion-D is working with tour-operators from all over the world- Europe, USA, Australia, Japan etc. They have many partners from Europe- Britain, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Scandinavian countries. Because of the originality and the high quality of the tourist products offered by the company, Pandion-D is chosen as a local partner of European PanParks foundation.

The owner of the company is planning to form a group of active local people, who will be involved in the sustainable tourism- local guides, owners of guest houses, food and beverage producers, craftsmen, souvenir producers etc.

Description of the case process:

The case process carried on for 2 weeks and consisted of 3 parts:

1. Introduction to the company- the main data was collected by searching in the web page, observation of the working process and interrogation of the owner of the company- Mr. Nickolay Dilchev and one of his employees.
2. SWOT analyzes- pointing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the company.
3. Innovation plan- including definition of the different problems, which the company is facing in the present and suggestions for innovations in services and products.

SWOT analyzes:

✓ Strengths:

- Family business
That presumes bigger involvement of the members of the family in the working process, more diligence from their side, transparence and loyalty in the company.
- Professional services
The services that they offer require special knowledge and skills, provided by professional guides.
- Own transportation
That's the main thing that such type of tour-operating agency must have. It's important to provide transportation from the beginning till the end of the tour, so that the tourists can feel more comfortable and save during their stay. The members of the company always welcome and escort their foreign clients when they arrive and when they leave from Bulgaria.
- Hospitality and special attention paid to the guests
Going on bird-watching tour or staying in the guest house- the tourist wants to escape from the rush and the problems of his daily life, to relax and have fun, and of course to see and experience something different and new. That's why the special attention and the good cares are very important for the client.
- Guest house
Their bird-watching tours are orientated mainly to foreign tourists, but the guest house is offering accommodation for everyone who loves the nature and wants to be more close to it.

It provides extra finances for the company. It's also one of the stops in the tour program and accommodating the tourists there reduces the costs of the company.

- **Equipment providing**
There are some tourists who don't have their own equipment and it's very important to have it for the observation, so it's necessary that the company provides it.
- **Loyalty and responsibility**
The company is always loyal to its clients and partners, which is very important for its reputation and future development.

✓ **Weaknesses**

- **Seasons dependence**
The tours are held usually from May to October, because in winter time most of the species can't be seen. The guest house accommodates tourist yearly, but during the winter season they are few.
- **Transportation**
They have their own transport- 2 cars for 9 persons each, which is not enough for bigger groups and sometimes the groups must be separated in two cars. Some clients prefer to travel together so they have to rent a bus, which is an extra expense.
- **Web-page**
The main web-page needs to be renovated because it hasn't been changed in many years and the information about the tours and the prices is not enough precise and comprehensive.

✓ **Opportunities**

- **Nature-orientated business**
The nature is something that never goes out of style and is available and actual, and the nature-based tourism is just starting being popular and preferred from the tourists. Furthermore that type of tourism is sustainable and stimulates the local market development.
- **Participation in different organizations and associations**
Pandion-D is a member of the Pan Parks foundation and the Bulgarian association for alternative tourism, which guarantees that they perform sustainable tourism and makes them more competitive and preferred than the other companies in that branch.
- **Location of the guest house**
The guest house that they own is located near "Srebarna" national reserve- a home for many rare animal species, and also it's near the river of Danube- just 300m from it. It's quiet and calm and the nature is beautiful. That makes it perfect for accommodating people who love being part of the nature.

✓ **Threats**

- **Economic crisis**
The economic crisis is the biggest threat for the company, because it affects directly their turnover. There's a reflux of tourists, comparing to previous years- the groups are organized rarer and are smaller than usual. The raze of the pound toward the lev and the raise of the prices affect the budget too.
- **Market competition**
There are few agencies that imitate Pandion-D and their products and services- they copy their itineraries and their programs. Some of them cut down the prices in order to be more competitive, which affects Pandion-D's client influx, because many people would prefer the lower prices than the higher, but more qualitative. Furthermore the cut prices of these

companies reflect directly to the quality of their services and products and thereby they lower their prestige and the prestige of the tourist market in Bulgaria as well.

- **Bad infrastructure**
The roads in Bulgaria are in very bad condition and the access by car to some places is difficult.
- **Lack of professional guides**
The tours offered by Pandion-D are very specialized and can't be guided by a normal guide- the different tours require different professionals in the field corresponding. For example- the bird-watching tours must be guided by a professional ornithologist and the tours for plants-observation require a guide botanist.
- **No public transportation to the guest house**
The guest house is accessible only by car or private transport, so if the clients don't have a car they must rent transportation. It's not very remote to the town nearby, but still that may be a problem for some tourists.
- **Nature destruction**
The pollution, the forest cutting, the over-construction and some other damages that people cause, harm the nature and the bio-diversity in Bulgaria which are the main actors in the company. No matter how beautiful the nature in Bulgaria is, when it's polluted it makes bad impression to the tourists and also some animal species are already near extinction because their environment is changing with peoples influence.

Problems definition:

The main problems that the company is facing from my personal observation are:

1. The economical crisis, which affects directly the budget of the company by the drop of clients, the raise of the prices of many products, the need to lower the prices of the tours etc.
2. The concurrence of the other companies in that branch, who copy their products and services and attract their clients with lower prices. Pandion-D has already taken the initiative to make clusters with the other companies in that branch in order to regulate and negotiate the prices and the relations between them.
3. The high taxes and the bureaucracy, which is a matter of State policy.
4. One of the biggest problems in the field of eco and hobby tourism is the lack of well educated and prepared guides, that's why the company is personally involved in guide trainings and seminars for professional guide trainings.
5. The limited capacity of their transport is another problem for the company, because sometimes they have to rent buses for the tours and the transport costs a lot. They're intending to make an investment in buying their own bus in the future.

Innovation plan:

After a brief analyze of the case I have run a brainstorming activity that collected some ideas about the future enlargement of the enterprise. The main focus was linked to the concept of local-based network and land promotion through local handicrafts or a provision of multiple-services for the local guests, in terms that the supply or company's offer is suitable for a wider panel of stakeholders. In table 1 I have put all the innovational ideas for the tours and also for the guest house and some basic information about them.

Ideas	Investment	Location	Main actors participating	Eco friendly	winter season	Feasibility
Ethno tour	Internal	Bulgarian villages	Municipality, local people, guides	Totally	Possible	Possible
Team building tour	Internal	Bulgarian regions	Enterprises, Local people, guides	Possible	-	Possible
Educational tour	Internal external	Bulgarian regions	Local people, Schools, guides	Totally	Possible	Totally
Souvenirs selling	Internal	-	Local people	Possible	-	Possible
Swimming pool	Internal	Guest house	-	-	-	Possible
Sauna	Internal	Guest house	-	Possible	Totally	Possible
Solar panels	Internal	Guest house	-	Totally	-	Totally
Garbage waste collector	Internal	Guest house	-	Totally	Totally	Totally
Children playground	Internal, External	Guest house	-	Possible	-	Possible

Description of some of the ideas:

▪ Ethno tour:

The ethno tour must be leaded by professional guide with special education in the field of history, religions, customs, traditions etc. The aim of this tour is to introduce the tourist with the history, traditions, religion, customs, traditional food and beverage in Bulgaria.

The tour must take place in different interesting regions in Bulgaria and be organized in special time of the year when there are traditional fests or holidays, the celebration of which will be part of the program. The program can include also food and beverage tasting, visit to historical and cultural monuments, visit to religious sanctuaries, handicraft articles producing workshop, observation of traditional rituals and ceremonies, sightseeing with carriage transport etc. The guide must be prepared with all the information about the different practices of the local people.

The accommodation must be located in the village and must be in traditional style, so that the tourists can feel the local atmosphere and experience the local life. It is suggested that the local people and their products and services are involved in the business. Thus your business will encourage the local production and will stimulate the locals to protect and preserve the environment and the monuments in the area.

To start such a tour you must first find a professional ethnologist to point the most interesting and typical ethnographical regions and elaborate the itineraries and then establish contact with the municipalities and the local people in the different villages included in the itinerary.

- **Team building tour:**

That tour is orientated to different companies and firms which want to unite their staff by involving them in a team experience.

The tour can include everything you have in mind- animal observation, visit to places of interest, sport activities, tracking, rafting, cycling, fishing, barbeque etc. but this activities must be combined with some group games for raising the team spirit. For example- when you go on animal observation tours you can make a contest- who'll take more pictures of flying birds or who'll make the most beautiful picture of a butterfly etc.

When you visit some village with typical traditional handicraft you can organize a course for handicraft articles production, with the participation of the local craftsmen and afterwards make a contest for best hand-made article. You can organize rafting or sailing competitions with professional trainers or fishing contest on the Danube. You can include horse-riding, traditional dance classes, paintball games, rehabilitation day etc. For the evenings you can organize karaoke, drinking games, traditional music party, bowling, pull, night sightseeing, dancing contest etc.

You can make a team building tour in the winter season too- including skiing, driving in a sledge, snow fight, snow skating etc. If the trip is during the summer you can include several days on the sea-side. You can prepare exemplary tours and let the clients customize them if they want.

- **Educational tour for children:**

You can organize special tours with educational objective orientated mainly toward the children. In that manner they will be able to learn more about the birds and the other animals, about some historical and cultural places in Bulgaria, about the nature and everything that surrounds them. Also they will have the chance to see from where the food comes, because nowadays most of them think that it comes from the supermarket only.

You can include some games and sport activities, camping and barbeque, other activities depending on the season. You can hire some local people teach the children to play traditional dances or sing traditional songs, or you can just show them the traditional custom performances. In that case you'll have to take into consideration the age of the children and prepare the program with the participation of the teacher.

You'll need special guide, but there must be also a teacher with the group during all the tour, that will take responsibility for the children.

- **Souvenirs selling:**

You can buy some souvenirs from the local people and sell them to your tourists- in that way you'll stimulate the local production and in the same time your tourists will have a keepsake from the places they've visited during the tour.

Tourist Information Center In Rudozem Municipality

Fikri Molamehmedov

Bulgaria

RUDOZEM MUNICIPALITY

GENERAL INFORMATION

FACTS

- Total area: **191.3 sq.km.**
- Average altitude: **765 m.**
- Number of settlements: **23**
- Average temperature: **9,4°C**
- Population: **11336 people**

Rudozem municipality is situated in the Rila-Rhodope mountain area and occupies the south-east parts of the West Rhodope along the valleys of Arda, Chepinska and Elhovska Rivers. The territory of the municipality is **191,3 sq.km.** It borders on Smolyan, Madan and Zlatograd municipalities and on the south with the Republic of Greece.

The average altitude is **765 m.** above the sea level. The relief includes even mountain hills and steep valleys. The average annual temperature is **9,4°C**, the average summer temperature (in July) is **19,4°C**, and the average annual temperature (in January) is **1,6°C**.

Rudozem municipality includes **23 settlements** – **1 town**, **13 villages** and **9 neighborhoods**. The villages are dispersed evenly on the municipality's territory as far as the landscape allows.

The town of Rudozem is located **23 km.** south-east from the regional center Smolyan, **35 km** from the mountain resort Pamporovo, **292 km.** away from Sofia and **122 km.** from Plovdiv. The municipality has population of **11336** people. Most of them live in the villages. The town of Rudozem has population of **4600** people.

Strengths and opportunities

The main strengths of the municipality are:

- Large enterprises operating.
- Cheap production factors – young and qualified workforce, low prices of land.
- Small and medium enterprises, part of which successfully support the activities of the companies in the processing industry.
- Availability of underground resources.
- Significant forestry resources.

The most important opportunities for development of the municipality are:

- The country's membership in the European Union provides opportunities for attracting investment for development of small and medium enterprises, agriculture and infrastructure in the municipality.
- Natural resources for development of recreation mountain tourism, cave tourism, walking and biking tourism, ski-tracking, hunting and eco-tourism. Utilization of special funds for supporting municipalities in areas for special influence.
- Development of cross-border cooperation.
- Opening of border checkpoint "Elidje" with Greece.

- Development of the transport infrastructure of regional, national and cross-border importance (Road II-86 “Rudozem – Chepintzi – Xanthi”).
Young workforce.
- Development of agriculture and forestry, environmentally-friendly stock-breeding, hunting and primary processing of herbs, mushrooms and berries.

Business potential

Natural resources perspectives

- Lead and Zink ores
- Facing materials
- Industrial crops
- Bio-agriculture
- Authentic crafts

Resources of lead and zink ore and rock and facing materials like rhiolite, marble and sand are found on the territory of the municipality. A quarry for rhiolite has been found near Vitina village.

Agriculture and crafts

The growing of herbs and their processing are perspective activities for the municipality. Here may be grown thyme, marjoram, milfoil, St. John’s wort, lavender, calendula, salvia, etc. The industrial crops that may be grown in the area include flax, hemp, etc. Other suitable for growing species are the raspberry, the strawberry, blackberry, blueberry, etc. The preserved authentic crafts like weaving and preparation of rugs and fleecy rugs reveal potential for business development.

Development priorities

Objectives

The strategic objective of the municipality until 2013 is to modernize and make more dynamic the municipal economy and achieve sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life of the population.

The main priorities in the development of Rudozem municipality listed in its development plan for the period 2007-2013 are as follows:

- Development and efficient use of the infrastructure.
- Strengthening the municipal capacity for supporting the business and development of local partnerships.
- Development of the local economy and improving its competitiveness.
- Improving the immediate living environment and the living conditions of the population in the municipality.

The municipal development plan envisages the performance of projects and programs amounting to 90.9 million BGL in the period 2007-2013. The major bulk of funds – 83.8 million BGL will be directed for infrastructure improvement.

Tourist services

Ecotourism

The five ecopaths provide various and pleasant opportunities for tourism. *This five ecopaths is the big innovation in Rudozem municipality.* They have been constructed with the financial assistance of the PHARE Cross-border Cooperation Program of the EU. All eco-paths are secured

and blazed and provided with information signs and boards. The routes are also provided with places for rest, taps and toilettes. The Tourist Information Center may arrange a trained mountain guide to accompany the tourist groups. If requested in advance it is also possible to provide lunch (barbeque, grill) that can be served at the summer houses with the fireplaces after the tourists have finished their tour on the eco-paths.

ECOPATH – RAVNINATA VILLAGE

Length of the route:**5200 m.**



The length of the ecopath is 5200 m. The starting point is 7 km away from Rudozem town on the road to Ravninata village. The road is asphalted and is accessible for any vehicles. In the beginning of the ecopath there is a parking, a summer-house with a fire place, a toilette and a tap. In the area of Sveta Bogoroditsa Peak and at the end of Ravninata village where the route passes there is a table with benches. At the end of the route – in the foot of Sveti Todor Peak there is a beautiful summer house. The route is very attractive with its location, historical remnants and rich flora and fauna. Beautiful panorama views are revealed from Sveta Bogoroditza Peak and from Sveti Todor Peak – there can be seen the Rozhen Observatory, the Snezhanka TV Tower and the whole Rudozem municipality. Remnants from a church and a chapel dating back to the Middle Ages can also be seen on these peaks. The route passes near an ostrich farm which may be looked at against minimum payment and ostrich eggs may be purchased as well. The path is ramp allowing tourists without special training to walk including elderly people and children. The route may be shortened as the tourists may start walking from the end of Ravninata village where the eco-path passes.

ECOPATH – PLOVDIVTZI VILLAGE

Length of the route:**7000 m.**



The length of the eco-path is 7000 m. The route starts from Domuzola area near Plovdivtzi village at 10 km away from Rudozem town. The road is asphalted and is accessible for any vehicles. The eco-path continues to Babina Chuka Peak, which is located at 1414 m above the sea level and then goes to the final point – Plovdivtzi Dam. The route passes next to Bulgaria's border with Greece. Besides the beautiful and virgin nature the tourists will also be attracted by the preserved border military sites from the communist past – border wire enclosure and an old "mine field".

There are suitable places for rest on the ecopath – a fire place with barbeque and a toilette next to the border wire enclosures about 3 km from the beginning of the route; tables with benches next to Babina Chuka Peak (in the middle of the route) and at the end of the route next to Plovdivtzi Dam. The route passes through a various broken terrain. Due to the proximity of the ecopath to Bulgaria's border with Greece the tourists are requested to take their personal identity cards and to call in advance the Tourist Information Center (TIC) in order to inform the border police. The procedure for this takes about 10 minutes and does not require any other special arrangements.

ECOPATH – MOCURA VILLAGE

Length of the route:**5200 m.**



The length of the eco-path is 5200 m. The starting point is Mochura village located at 18 km away from Rudozem town. It can be reached via an asphalted road to Korita village (14 km from Rudozem) and then 4 km macadam road to Mochura village. It is recommended the last part to be passed with an off-road vehicle. Appropriate transportation for the tourists may be provided by the Tourist Information Center (TIC) against preliminary request. The route passes through high mountain meadows with virgin nature including almost all plant and animal species typical for the Rodopi mountain. The tourists will also be attracted by the preserved border military sites from the communist past. They will pass near the gate of former border troops barracks, a restored border wire enclosure and they will finally reach a border tower (a high metal facility – military observation point). The tower has been reconstructed and secured. Magnificent panoramic views in all directions are revealed from the top of the tower – vast territories from North Greece and South Bulgaria. A telescope is installed on the top of the tower and thus the tourists may observe the natural sights, wild animals and birds. Convenient places for rest have been constructed along the ecopath. In the beginning of the eco-path there is a table with a bench. In the middle of the route is located a nice summer house with fireplace, a tap and a toilette surrounded by beautiful meadows. A table with benches is located at the end of the route next to the tower. The path is ramp allowing tourists without special training to walk including elderly people and children. Due to the proximity of the eco-path to Bulgaria's border with Greece the tourists are requested to take their personal identity cards and to call in advance the Tourist Information Center in order to inform the border police. The procedure for this takes about 10 minutes and does not require any other special arrangements.

ECOPATH "KECHI KAYA - KOZNIK"

Length of the route:**4300 m.**



The length of the eco-path is 4300 m and it is located 5 km away from Rudozem town and 2 km from Ribnitza village. The starting point of the route can be accessed via a 3 km asphalt road and 2 km macadam road. At the starting point of the route there is parking, barbeque, tap and toilette. A table with benches is located in a picturesque area under the rocks about 1 km from the starting point. After climbing the Koznik fortress (about 40 minutes) there is a second table with benches. The route passes around the “Two Brothers” Rocks and reaches a rock edge with a third table and benches. The whole Rudozem municipality may be viewed from here as well as the town itself in the foot of the rocks. The route continues to the northeast in the direction of Varba village (Madan municipality) and reaches another rock edge where is located a fourth table with benches from which a nice view is revealed. After that it continues to a rock formation called “The Head” as in the middle of the way to it a fifth table with benches is situated. A summer house is found just over the rock. The route then goes down to the starting point.

ECOPATH "TZIGANSKO GRADISHTE - SADILISHTETO"

Length of the route:**9500 m.**



The length of the ecopath is 9500 m. The starting point can be reached from the road Rudozem – Elhovetz village - Plovdivtzi village - Koritata village -Mochura village. This is an 18 km road, of which 14 km asphalt. After Mochura village there is about 5 km macadam road reaching the starting point of the ecopath. In the beginning of the route there is parking, barbeque, tap and toilette. There starts a path going up to the border ridge and about two thirds of the path passes along this ridge. After climbing the ridge one can reach “Tzigansko Gradiste” Peak where a shelter can be found near the ancient Thracian sanctuary. The route then continues to the “Malkoto Chengene” Peak where a summer house is located, and then it goes to the “Brahimovoto” area where parking and a summer house are found. The path then continues to the “Sadilisteto” area where short rest can be made around the table with benches. A magnificent view is revealed from here to the Greek part of Rodopi mountain. One can see Dimario village as well as the entire gorge where the

Rudozem-Xanthi road will pass. This is the final point of the route. After it the tourists may return to the “Brahimovoto” area. They may continue their walk on a forest road to a shelter with parking, tap and toilette. Continuing to the starting point of the route the tourists will find another table with benches. This route is very picturesque because in the past it has been located beyond the military border wire enclosures. Due to the proximity of the ecopath to Bulgaria’s border with Greece the tourists are requested to take their personal identity cards and to call in advance the Tourist Information Center in order to inform the border police. The procedure for this takes about 10 minutes and does not require any other special arrangements.

TOURIST LANDMARKS MEDIEVAL FORTRESS “KOZNIK”



This interesting medieval fortress is situated on a rock above Rudozem town. It can be accessed via the "Kechi kaya - Koznik" ecopath. During the Turkish domination the fortress was referred to by the local population as “Erim papa” and by the Turks as “Kechi Kaya” (Goats’ Stone; Goats’ Rock). The fortress is an element from a whole system of fortresses in the Rodopi mountain that served for protection purposes in the past. Similar to the “Koznik” fortress are the fortresses “Beadnos” near Beden village, “Aetos” near Smolyan city, “Podvis”, “Tzepina” near Velingrad and “Assenova” near Assenovgrad. By the present moment archeological excavation works have revealed 50 m wall about 1.5-2 m thick. At certain places the thickness of the wall reaches 2 m. Many pieces of ceramics have also been found dating back to different ages, which will be studied and dated in details. An ancient Roman sanctuary has also been discovered.

ANCIENT TEMPLE BELOW “TZIGANSKO GRADISTE” PEAK

The legend about the fortress is the Rhodope version of the story about the Babylon tower. The gypsies gathered and decided to build a tower through which to reach God. They built part of the tower however some quarrel occurred and the tower collapsed. The name however remained and it is the same in all languages - “Tzigansko Gradiste” (in Bulgarian), “Chengene Hisar” (in Turkish) and “Giftokastro” (in Greek). This historical landmark may be accessed via the "Tzigansko gradiste - Sadilisteto" ecopath.

RUINS FROM ANCIENT TIMES



About 20 historical sites have been discovered on the territory of the municipality. They date back to the pre-Roman, Roman, late-classical period and the Middle ages. These are villages, necropolis, ruins from churches, fortresses and ancient roads. The studies of the ceramic materials have proved that this area was populated still in the early iron ages (1200 – 600 B.C.). The site in the “Seliste” area is particularly interesting. It is located on the south of Poliana village. The remnants of walls are up to 70 cm high. Two types of construction have been used – dry masonry with broken and cut stones stuck with mortar. Part of the found ceramics are similar to the ceramics from the “Tzepina” fortress (near Velingrad). Oak pipeline has been found in the area dating back to IV-III century B.C. used for irrigation. A clay pipeline dating to the same period has also been discovered. During the construction of the road in the “Rovisteto” area an early Thracian hill has been discovered. Ceramic fragments and stone hatchet dating back to the Aenolithic-Chalcolithic age which makes one think that the village existed in that period. It has been inhabited in the early period of the old-iron age (IX century B.C.) till the beginning of the new-iron age (VII-VI century B.C.). Traces from the early-iron age have been found in “Valchan kamak” area – the highest point of the ridge. The village has been inhabited by the end of V century B.C. Plenty of various ceramic fragments made by potter’s wheel have been found on the surface. The “Cherkvisteto” area occupies a hill on the north-east of Chepintzi village. Ceramics dating back to III century B.C has been discovered on the surface of the plateau. Pieces of slag have been found in the “Enekishino”, “Levisteto” and “Polianata” areas showing that the ore extraction and metal casting have been known in this region from the ancient times and that active economic processes have also developed here.

CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES



A number of churches and monasteries have been preserved to a certain extent – “Sveta Elena” monastery (known in the past as “Sveta Irina”) above Plovdivtzi village; the churches “Sveta Bogoroditsa” and “Sveti Todor” above Ravninata village. All of them are basilicas and date back to the late Middle Ages period.

THE MOSQUE AT THE “GOLDEN KORAN” IN CHEPINTZI VILLAGE



This mosque is the symbol of the village and is the only one in the country with two minarets each being 35 m high. The mosque possesses a very rich library with over 800 printed books in Arabic and Persian languages ranging from philosophy and astronomy to Islamic law and rhetoric. The mosque's library also stores 350 volumes of manuscripts – Arabic calligraphy of poetry, history, ethics and music as well as the oldest Koran in Bulgaria also called "The Golden Koran". It is over 600 years old and according to scientists from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences it had been made for a sultan.

Strategy for tourism development

PROJECT "THE UNKNOWN RUDOZEM - PROMOTION OF THE NATURAL "GREEN" TOURISM IN THE MUNICIPALITY" FUNDED BY THE PHARE "CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION" PROGRAM

The plan for development and management of the new tourist infrastructure in Rudozem municipality (2008-2010) has been developed under the Project "The Unknown Rudozem - promotion of the natural „green” tourism in the municipality” funded by the PHARE “Cross-border Cooperation” Program of the European Union, Grant Scheme BG2004/016-782.01.03-03. The project's goal is to support the development of the natural „green” tourism in Rudozem Municipality as an integral part of the local economy and to create favourable infrastructural and organizational conditions for wise use of the natural resources on the municipal territory.

ACCOMMODATION



"VICTORIO" HOTEL - RUDOZEM

22 places

restaurant-garden

Ms. Albena Dureva

mobile: 00359887972002

www.hotel.victorio-bg.com



"BAHAMI" COMPLEX - ELHOVETZ VILLAGE

15 places

swimming pool+restaurant

Mr. Brahim Chernarev
mobile: 00359899146717

"KINA" GUEST HOUSE - RUDOZEM

15 places

barbeque

Ms. Kina Tinkova

mobile 00359899146717

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Economical world crisis

Bulgaria faces the world economic crisis in good shape

The vice president of the World Bank encouraged the government to find sources of external financing should the need arise. Foreign minister Ivailo Kalfin retorted that the need will not arise, which won't be the case in other European countries.

Bulgaria faces the world economic crisis in good shape, yet there are great risks that require adequate preventive measures, stated World Bank VP Kristalina Georgieva at the annual meeting of business and government representatives. This year it is dedicated to the economic crisis. She encouraged the government to implement measures against negative effects, namely: coordinated efforts of all European governments, focus on domestic demand in developing economies, and reform of the Breton-Wood system and its institutions, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Foreign minister Kalfin responded that the mechanisms of external financing are clear, but this won't be necessary in Bulgaria. Georgieva also warned that the crisis is starting to affect industrial manufacturing in developing countries. It is getting harder to find loans and to use a wide leverage effect in terms of investments. "This will hit the population harder than it will companies," she said. She considers the possibility that developing economies will achieve 4% growth, but this can occur in the context of lower investments.

This economical world crisis reflecting on Tourist Information Center in Rudozem Municipality. Because many people don't have enough money to go trip. People in this situation search for new job, no for travel and holiday.

Swot Analysis For Tourist Information Center

Strengths

- *only one on Rudozem Municipality area;*
- *very beautiful landscape, big natural resources and more place for tourism;*

- *Guaranteed quality on tourist services.*

Weakness

- *Small budget*
- *Conflict between members*
- *Lack of new idea*

Opportunities

- *Natural resources for development of recreation mountain tourism, cave tourism, walking and biking tourism, ski-tracking, hunting and eco-tourism;*
- *Development of agriculture and forestry, environmentally-friendly stock-breeding, hunting and primary processing of herbs, mushrooms and berries;*
- *Project “The unknown Rudozem - promotion of the natural "green" tourism in the municipality" funded by the phare "cross-border cooperation" program.*

Threats

- *Lack of motivation;*
- *Conflict with municipality;*
- *Loss of members.*

Conclusions

The goal is to support the development of the natural „green” tourism in Rudozem Municipality as an integral part of the local economy and to create favourable infrastructural and organizational conditions for wise use of the natural resources on the municipal territory.

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Adventure Net

Petia GEORGIEVA

Bulgaria

Introduction:

Address of the office: Sofia 1505, Oborishte str, 92, Tel: +359/ 2 9446765

I started my work with reading all the information for the company in their website. After that I prepared questions and called to the office to make an appointment for interview.

History and Foundation

Adventure Net is founded in 2001 from a group of young people addicted to Nature and extreme sports.

Team:

Emilia Begunova – manager

Emil Begunov - coordinator extreme sports

Daniela Stoianova – office organizer

Koskata-photographer

8 rafting instructos – class 3

5 photographers

6 ski and snowboard instructors

At the beginning were only the owners. Because of their efforts and good work every year their budget increased and they take new employees(photographers, guides, etc.)

Every year the company is trying to offer something new.

-First started with river rafting, biking, hiking.

-After 2 years they already offered Kayaking and canoning.

-Now a days the offer- river rafting, biking, hiking, kayaking, canoning, diving, horse riding, ski and snowboard, rural tourism and teambuilding.

The financial crisis reduced many of the popular entertainments including teambuilding.

But at the same time many people then have a lot of free time.

Then “Adventure net” and some other similar companies start to organize more and more courses for different extreme sports.

The most polular courses are for scramble -and that courses can be offered in the city .

Product (Services and Activities)

-River rafting

-Biking, hiking

-Kayaking

-Cannoning

-Diving

-Horse riding

-Ski and snowboard

-Rural tourism

-Teambuilding

Marketing and Competition situation

The company prefers internet advertisement in their website and other internet sites. They also make posters and calendars.

There are many companies offering similar products and services and the competition is a lot not only in Sofia but in Bulgaria.

Insurance system

All customers have to sign that they agree with the insurance rules.

The three pillar model

“Adventure Net” is based on the three pillar model which is about ecological, economical and social impact.

The whole concept about innovative company is based on activities in nature, relaxing and cooperating with nature.

The companies used only nature friendly materials.

Economical impact-The economical crisis reduces many of the companies' products and the owners are searching new opportunities like courses and others.

They have three kinds of tourism: individual, groups and team buildings for big companies.

The firm is independent in financial aspect.

Social impact-that type of companies are very helpful for the small cities and villages because they are bringing clients in poor regions. They are cooperating with hotels, travel agencies etc. That is like financial support for that villages.

Innovation plan

The big competition in tourism makes the owners to search new opportunities for growing.

Also the present economical crisis has influenced Adventure Net's incomes, and the decreasing of the annual turnover was so high that the organization needed new innovation for attracting new tourists.

Until now, the main innovation is the effort of the company to offer each year always new activities for stimulating old tourists' desire of returning and for opening the supply to new kinds of customers.

They are planning to:

- Make more advertisement
- Attract more tourists from other countries
- Make excursions in other countries (tropical forests and interesting places far from civilization).

SWOT Analysis

Strong points:

- The company is independent
- The company is very flexible and offers customized activities for each customer
- The owners are young people full of energie and wish for progress
- They offer big variety of products
- They have products for each time of the yeas(each season)
- They have enough employees and variety of professionals-photographers, guides, etc.

Weaknesses:

- They don't have own transportation
- Don't have enough advertisement

Opportunities:

- Co-operation with the other companies from the branch
- With more travel agencies from abroad, hotels etc.
- The company can have advertisement on the radio or TV

Threats:

- The other companies from the same branch are big competition
- There are a lot of owners and if they are not in very good relationships the company will lose

SWOT Analysis

<p>STRENGTHS Flexibility Independence Variety of products</p>	<p>WEAKNESSES Don't have own transportation Not enough advertisement</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES Cooperation with the other companies from the branch Cooperation with tourist agencies from abroad Cooperation with hotels Advertisement on the radio or TV</p>	<p>THREATS Big competition A lot of owners</p>

Suggestions

- More advertisement
- Package offers for students with discount
- Attract more tourists from abroad
- Cooperation with tourist agencies from other countries
- Advertisement also in other countries

My opinion is that this firm is developing very well so I have few small suggestions orientated more to attract tourists form other countries.

Odysseia-In Bulgaria Adventure Travel

Teodora TODOROVA

Bulgaria

Introduction:

General information about Odysseia-In Bulgaria Adventure Travel

Odysseia-In is the leading Bulgarian operator for adventure and culture tours, a for-profit company specialising in adventure, cultural, eco, village and rural tourism. The enterprise creates and sells original tours on the European and international markets.

In **20 years** of operation they have established a name and presence on European and international markets. Their tours are known for originality, high quality, and accommodations aimed to provide an authentic experience. Odysseia-In has a team of professional guides, travellers and photographers. The tours introduce you to the people, culture and traditions as well as nature and wildlife in Bulgaria.

Odysseia-In is only an incoming travel company, which means that they have only foreign customers. The main markets are France, Spain, UK, Germany and Holland.

Odysseia-In is a special interest travel company that loves Bulgaria and knows her well. That means:

- providing unique opportunities to experience mountains and nature, villages, monasteries, culture, and history through tailor-made trips with professional multilingual guides;
- wanting to share knowledge of and love for Bulgaria and her nature, history, and people with our guests;
- Striving to develop Bulgaria as a leading destination for sustainable and ecological tourism;
- Encouraging the protection of our unique cultural and natural heritage by setting examples of successful and sustainable tourism;
- Supporting projects for restoration of religious sites and other buildings;
- Striving to provide high international standards for adventure travel, to develop sustainable tourism in Bulgaria, to make tourism and guiding viable professions for Bulgarians, and to protect the environment and Bulgarian mountains.

Responsible travel in Bulgaria was pioneered by Odysseia-In. This means to use the resources of the country very carefully, to minimize environmental impact and to preserve the natural and cultural heritage for the next generations. The firm policy is to work with local businesses and to support them. Over 1% of the Odysseia-In annual turnover goes to socially significant civil initiatives and projects such as: reforestation in Pirin Mountains, restoration of a medieval monastery in Seslavitzi village, campaigns for nature protection, etc. But above all with all businesses and social activities Odysseia-In aims to create new opportunities and job positions for the young people in the country.

High lights of 20 Years in Adventure Travel Business in Bulgaria:

1990 First foreign guests for mountain trips arrive in Bulgaria with Odysseia-In.

1998 Foundation of the Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism and the Mountains and People Association.

2002 The company is mentioned as one of the world's 75 best practice examples, during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg 2002, and the only ones in Bulgaria to run mountain guide trainings and encourage small businesses in villages.

2003 Foundation of the first Bulgarian training center for mountain guides – in partnership with the Mountains and People Association.

2004 First eco project: Reforestation in Pirin Mountains; First project for cultural heritage: Restoration of a medieval monastery in Soslavtzi village.

2006 Reforestation in Nature Park Vitosha.

2008 Third consecutive Annual Award for Corporate Donator given by the Bulgarian Donors Forum.

2009 Campaign for the Bulgarian Nature: “6 Euro per Guest”; Eco-Innovator Award of the Pari Newspaper; Founding of the For Eco Association together with other partners.

2010 Organization of Green Days Festival – an unique event held for the first time in Bulgaria.

Tours and services

The tours can be distinguished for:

- high quality;
- authentic establishments for overnight;
- professional tour leaders and mountain guides.

In the list of services are different tours such as:

Active holidays:

- Hiking
- Biking
- Ski mountaineering
- Snowshoeing
- Horse riding
- Kayaking
- Paragliding
- Climbing
- Caving

Rural holidays

Culture tours:

- Explore the Balkans
- Heritage tours
- Monasteries
- Festivals
- Wine and gourmet
- Thracian culture
- Sofia Holy Mountains

Nature tours:

- Eco-trails
- Bird watching
- Bear watching
- Botany tours
- Geological tours

Mission and goals of Odysseia-In

The mission of Odysseia-In is to turn Bulgaria into a leading destination for adventure tourism in Eastern Europe.

The firm has some other goals such as:

- To introduce contemporary standards for quality and safety of mountain equipment;
- Creating movies, posters and bilingual maps of Bulgarian mountains;
- Marking new, unknown mountain routes;
- Developing socially responsible and sustainable tourism in numerous villages across the country;
- Introducing the profession of the mountain guide.

Contact information

Name of enterprise: Odysseia-In - Being first!

Location/ Business address: 20-V Al. Stamboliiski Blvd., Sofia 1301, Bulgaria

Contact information: Tel: +359 2 989 05 38, Fax: +359 2 980 32 00, E-mail:

odysseia@omega.bg

You can contact Georgi Dimitrov - Product Manager for Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, UK, USA, and Japan on georgi@odysseia-in.com

You can contact Lubomir Popiordanov - Product Manager for France on lubo@odysseia-in.bg

You can contact Svidna Mihailova - Product Manager for Spain and individual trips on svidna@zigzagbg.com

Description of the case study

Innovation

In the 20 years Odysseia-In existed, it has implemented a lot of innovations. That fact was one of the most important factors that helped the firm develop and survive during the crises.

Innovation 1: Alternative tourism based company in Bulgaria

Just after the fall of communism, “Odysseia-In” became the first Bulgarian tour operator to offer sustainable adventure tourism.

Innovation 2: Creates and sells original tours on international markets

Innovation 3: Authentic establishments for overnight

Innovation 4: Sustainable usage of resources

The innovations, which Odysseia-In has implemented, are related to the sustainable usage of the resources in every aspect – from “green” attitude in the office (recycle of paper and other activities) to the way they plan and run tours.

Innovation 5: Supporting projects for restoration of religious sites and other buildings

They were among the first travel companies in the country and surely the first one in adventure travel business which started working with a reservation program (designed for us by engineers in Veliko Tarnovo).

Innovation 6: Work with local business and support them

Local people and their life are very important – they strive for the development and sponsor the development of local tourist businesses in the mountainous regions of Bulgaria.

Innovation 7: Donating money to socially significant civil initiatives and projects

- Financing the Mountain Guides Training Program
- Donating equipment for climbing and alpinist expeditions

- Helping renovate numerous monasteries throughout the country
- 5% of sells go to the information campaign for Bulgarian Association for

Biodiversity

Innovation 8: Creating BAAT (Bulgarian association for alternative tourism)

From then on the team develops and inspires its activity, creating a stable structure:

Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism (BAAT) and Association Mountains and People.

Innovation 9: Publishing maps, guidebooks and travel literature

Registered a publishing agency “Odysseia-In” and started publishing guidebooks for guest houses, handbooks for mountain guides and travel literature.

Innovation 10: Marking new, unknown mountain routes

Innovation 11: Introducing high quality standards for equipment

Started import and distribution of equipment for mountain hiking, trekking, climbing and travel, opened a store, called “The Wall” in 1997.

Innovation 12: Responsible tourism

Odysseia-In was the first travel company in the country, which started to plan and run its tours in a responsible way with minimum impact on nature and biodiversity.

Odysseia-In is still the only travel company to have a person with the duty of Responsible Tourism Manager – this is a working position very new to this part of Europe.

The most important components of responsible tourism for Odysseia-In are:

- Keep the Money Local
- Create Job Opportunities
- Protect Local Environment and Culture
- Give Back to the Communities Visited

Description of organization

Team

Lyubomir Popyordanov – Managing director

Founded the agency for adventure travels Odysseia-In in 1990, and couple of years later Zig-Zag Holidays and Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism, he has inspired most of the trips in Bulgaria. Since the beginning he continues his enthusiasm for the world's mountains. His numerous treks and climbs include regions like Pyrenees, Alps, Tatras, Pamir, and the Himalayas. Accomplished photographer with knowledge in all aspects of history and the environment has a remarkable gift for sharing it. Lawyer by education mountaineer by convictions he could be justly described as a voluntary PR of Bulgaria. Greatest will is encouraging young people remain in our country.

The other team members are 4 mountain guides, chief accountant, product manager, product manager for the French market, manager reservation department, travel consultant, manager contact department, manager reservation department and manager transport department.

Responsible tourism is what makes Odysseia-In different. And not just talking about it but taking action and being the pioneers and the ones that have a person with the position Responsible Tourism Manager.

Another thing is the high standard of operations.

Their leaders and guides are the best on the Bulgarian market.

A substantial part of the office members are working for the company for more than 5 years. A few of them are in the enterprise for more than 10 years now.

Innovation process

Odysseia-In has been the pioneer of many actions related to adventure travel in Bulgaria. The main difficulties were to encourage people to start business in remote areas of the country, to make them believe in the kind of tourism. Of course Odysseia-In was their main client in the beginning. Now some of these people run a prosperous business in mountain villages largely unknown 10-15 years ago. The truth is that they as a company have done much over the years to make certain villages in Bulgaria more popular for tourism.

The lessons learned are that a large part of the way to make successful business is a matter of integrity, faith and perseverance, common sense, talent, creativity and determination. That’s the key to understanding Odysseia-In – a phenomenon in Bulgaria’s business history, whose team still holds in high regard the company’s mission, corporate ethics and vision.

Partners

Odysseia-In is a member of the biggest German union of small tour operators, specializing in sustainable tourism - Forum Anders Reisen.

It is recommended by many guidebooks such as: The Lonely Planet and The Rough Guide and it has good partnership with travel operators from USA, UK, Germany, France, Spain, Japan and other.

They are proud partners of world renowned travel companies like Explore Worldwide (UK), Wikingen Reisen (Germany), SNP (Holland), Terres de Avature (France), Tuareg (Spain) and Mountain Travel Sobek (USA). These are among the largest adventure travel companies in the world and of course they have learned much from them. With most of them they run tours in Bulgaria for more than 10 years. They have high criteria of how exactly to run these tours, follow their requirements and often exceed their expectations. The high standards are a great challenge but this is one of the things that have made them Bulgaria’s prime company for adventure travel.

SWOT analysis of the enterprise’s innovation ability

SWOT analysis of Odysseia-In Bulgaria Adventure Travell

Strengths	Weakness
Original tours	Lack of own establishments for accommodation
International advertising	Questionable image of Bulgaria
Partnerships with big international travel agencies	
Guaranteed quality of tours (in accordance with international standards)	
Long established relations with local tourism business	
Professional multilingual mountain guides	
Diversity of services offered	
Ingoing travel agency	
Cultural and natural heritage of Bulgaria	
Flexible structure	
Web-page translated in 5 languages	

Opportunities	Threats
Increased interest in responsible tourism	Competition with other similar enterprises in Bulgaria or Europe
Taking full advantage of the potential of Bulgarian cultural and natural heritage	Influence of economical crises on international tourism markets
Specialized advertisement for different target groups	Garbage
Investing in own establishment for accomodation	Lack of understanding in local communities about the benefit of developing sustainable tourism
	Emigration of young people from mountain regions

How did the present economical crises influence the enterprise?

The economic crises affected the enterprise mainly in 2009. This was the most challenging year in the entire history of Odysseia-In. It is good to know that they are only an incoming travel company, which means that they have only foreign customers. The main markets are France, Spain, UK, Germany and Holland. In 2010 these countries, apart from the UK and Spain, have started to overcome the crises. This benefits the enterprise and so the expectations are better figures for 2010 and higher business results than in 2009, which was the worst year in the 20 years history.

Innovations help them “stay alive” during the crises.

What helped them through that period is also:

- Long established contacts with local business and companies;
- Flexible office and very fast reaction to the ever-changing nature of adventure business. Many of the members of the office are also tour leaders and mountain guides and are often in the mountains, villages and small towns.
- Good knowledge of Bulgaria’s dynamics and knowing how things change in the areas where tours are run.

Conclusion

Due to the ability to implement innovations Odysseia-In is the most successful Adventure travel agency in Bulgaria. Since the beginning the concept of developing business was to create and sell original packages, to promote largely unknown places and taking advantage of their unexploited potential in a responsible way.

Sources of information:

- The interview with the Product manager, Mr. Georgi Dimitrov;
- The webpage (<http://www.odysseia-in.com/>);
- Brochures of Odysseia-In.

Runni Spa

Elina PUUSTINEN

Finland

Abstract

My case study is about Runni Spa, located in middle Finland. It has a long history and is well known all over the country by its healing waters. Runni is very multifunctional tourist center, but one of its biggest problems might be, that it doesn't attract so many young people to experience the Spa and Surroundings.

Introduction

My Case study for Suceavas Innonatour course was Finnish Spa of Runni. I started my work by interviewing the marketing manager of the company via email. After collecting all the needed information I wrote my pre case study report, and after that it was quite easy to prepare a power point show by that. From internet I found several pictures of the subject.

In Romania we had several lectures about tourism and other related topics, and by the help of that information we started to create our Romanian Case Studies. My group was working with the development of Conacul Domnesc, a local Spa and business hotel. Beside the group work of Conacul Domnesc I achieved some new ideas for my own Case Study of Runni Spa.

After returning to Finland I started to work again and improve my pre Case Study project, which is this now. Maybe the hardest part was to start working alone, but it was also the best part because you can use all of your own ideas and you don't have to ask the opinion of others.

Case study descriptions

My case study is about Runni Spa, located in middle Finland. It has a long history and is well known all over the country by its healing waters. Runni is very multifunctional tourist center, but one of its biggest problems might be, that it doesn't attract so many young people to experience the Spa and Surroundings.

Information and History

Runni Spa is located almost in the middle of Finland, in city called Iisalmi. The accurate business address is Runnintie 407 A, 74595 Runni, Finland and the web pages can be found in the address <http://www.runni.fi/en/>. Spas business idea is founded around the healthy springs which is said to have some curing powers. The miraculous iron taste fountain is still bursting its healing water. The Company of Runni Health Spring is founded in 1904, but it is actually a part of corporation: Lomayhtymä Finland Oy.

Runni is one of the oldest Finnish spas and its long roots go as far as 18th century. Runni lived its glory on 1920-30. It has also operated as a nursing-treatment hospital for war invalids after the world wars. The old mansion was unused for 20years, till it reopened its doors in 2001, nostalgic atmosphere comes from old furniture and decoration.

Business Setups

The surrounding nature is the perfect setting for versatile activities throughout the year. You can explore Runni's sights on foot with Nordic walking poles, or by bike, canoe, cross-country skis or snowshoes, depending on the time of the year.

The Spa also provides and organizes a range of leisure activities for their guests' enjoyment. The activities are thematic and seasonal. A barbecue area is available for making pancakes or grilling sausages.

Spa offers half-, full- and neuromuscular-massages, some traditional bone setting and ear-candle treatments, not forgetting the Japanese foot massage, Indian head massage or reflexology. There are also many cosmetic and other treatments such as mud and salt, and dozen different baths to choose.

The Runni Spa provides the services of two hotels. Spa Hotel and Manor House Hotel comprise a total of 73 rooms and 155 beds. Single rooms, double rooms and rooms for 3 people are available.

All their rooms are non-smoking and feature WC, shower, color television, telephone, hair dryer and guest towels. The Spa Hotel's rooms also feature a radio and bathrobes. Some rooms are equipped with a balcony and/or are accessible by differently abled people. The Manor House Hotel's rooms have wireless Internet access.

Restaurant Mamselli serves buffet breakfast and lunch and on Sundays they have bit fancier Buffet Lunch, which is perfect for celebrating events. The restaurant also offers an à la carte and pizza menu. Live dance orchestras set tunes for dancing on three days per week.

In the Manor House Hotel, Restaurant Wesipehtoori is available throughout the year by prior reservation. During the summer, the Neulatammi summer café near the original Saarikoski Canal serves refreshments. The lobby café of the Spa Hotel is open daily and serves tea, coffee, snacks and refreshments, together with a selection of souvenirs.

Company Background

Runni is employing about forty permanent and few seasonal workers. Management group includes the managers of every department: the head director, spa-manager, sales-manager, office secretary and the foreman of cleanup. The chief executive officer is Merja Vidgren. Legal form of the enterprise of Runni Spa is Limited Liability Company (Llc.). The annual turnover is approximately 3 million Euros.

Markets, Competition and Partners

By the meanings of cooperation they work with some other tourism based companies but also with few others, such as educational natural-care company Villa-Runni. They have featured their marketing field with other Finnish spas (www.suomalaisetkylpylat.fi) and also make accompanied marketing with the main corporation (Lomayhtymä Finland Oy).

As competitors, depending on the variety of customer segments could be named all the other tourism companies: conference destinations, restaurants and treatment centers'.

Innovations and Marketing

The Spa is holding their own idea- and strategy days twice in a year and the main company is having the same once in a year. In addition all the departments are educating their staff and doing constant development for their products and services. In other words, innovative service improvement is done daily. Also benchmarking (comparing your own work and process to another businesses actions) and visits to rival enterprises are sometimes done.

When planning new innovations it should be paid attention to profitability, marketing, segments, competition situation, your own strengths in executing the services, resources. And if you are having a new innovation idea, it should be immediately written on process.

The advertisement is done mostly on newspapers, radio and internet. Sometimes even in tv, or by direct advertising in differential events or trade shows.

Influence of the present economical world crisis to the enterprise

Last year’s Hotel nights went down a bit, as everywhere else in Finland also. But still they managed through it better than average. They have tried to cut down the costs and tender the services they buy for themselves. Employees have been asked to be flexible, and the company hasn’t used as much fill-ins as normally.

SWOT analysis of the enterprise’s innovation ability

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for example of a project or business. It specifies the objectives of examined target and identifies the internal and external factors that are “good” or “bad” comparing to achieve that objective. The technique was created by Albert Humphrey at Stanford University in the 1960s.

A first step with SWOT analysis is to examine the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opprtunities and Threats which could have an effect on the “target”. A SWOT analysis may sometimes be confused into the strategic planning model.

Strengths: persons or company’s features which are helpful when achieving the objectives.

Weaknesses: attributes of the person or company which are harmful when achieving the objective(s).

Opportunities: external conditions that are helpful to achieving the objective(s).

Threats: external conditions which could do damage to the objective(s).

Strengths and weaknesses are often internal to your organization. Opportunities and threats often relate to external factors.

STRENGHTS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low prices • Space potential • Multiple choices for activities • Public transportation • river • Potential of surroundings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not so much for young people
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teambuilding activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little separated, long distances to “bigger” cities

Strengths of Runni Spa, we could say are the quite low prices. Surrounding nature and the river are creating many possibilities for the multiple activities to pursuit in arrounding space. On the summer you can for example try canoeing, swimming, and visiting the ruins of old spa springs. Also Runni is easily reached by train, bus or even by boat, so public transportation gets the serious points here. Runni is located between Iisalmi and Kiuruvesi, which are both approximately 20km away. Iisalmi is a city of 80 000 people, and Kiuruvesi is more like country town with the inhabitants of 10 000 people.

Weaknesses of the company are the fact that actually there isn’t any programme for young adults or under age teen agers in the evenings, for example if you go there with your family. Maybe the spa could offer some night swimming or just some board games, and they could inform it somewhere, so when the adults go for dance, the children could also spent their evening with something they are interested.

As **opportunities** could be mentioned the use of the surroundings more efficiently, as e.g. transferring some parts of the park into sports and outdoors activity area. Also teambuilding for the companies might be a great success.

Main aim of every business on hospitality industry is to make visitors feel comfortable, and this is the role of employees. Personal attitude of employees is important when trying to make a good impression for customers and even for competitors, and this could be one of the reasons for good reputation of the place.

For **threats** I could mention somehow same problem which we had in Romania with our group case study, Conacul Domnesc. At the time, in Romania we thought that the spa is quite small to be called as spa, because there was only one swimming pool and a Jacuzzi. In Runni its kind of the same thing, there are more swimming pools but the size of the spa is still quite small. In Runni they have one “fitness” pool for swimming the longer distances, but its only 13m wide, also one small cold water pool, two Jacuzzis’ and one children’s tub. Of course there are other services that are completing the name of the spa, for example the gym, sauna and the massage treatments. For specialty seekers: smoke-, turf-, and honey sauna. Our opinion in Romanian case was that, some guests might have higher expectations for the spa, and get disappointed. But I’m not so sure if I can adjust it here cause even when seen its small size, the spa of Runni has earned its name by other credits. Maybe if I could decide, the name would be Runni Spings or Runni Holiday Center, but even the name has its own long history, so what’s the point of changing.

Here’s some extra information about spas name-logy from our Romanian case study. The term spa is associated with water treatment which is also known as balneotherapy. Spa towns or spa resorts (including hot springs resorts) typically offer thermal or mineral water for drinking and bathing. They also offer various health treatments. In Romania, the word “spa” has a broader sense, sometimes used for all activities involving the swimming pool or sauna. This was the reason why we found confusing the use of term “spa” for foreign visitors.

Sources of information

- Runni Spa webpage, www.runni.fi/en
- Inno Natour webpage, <http://www.innonatour.usv.ro/index.html>

Maalaiskartano Pihkala

Laura HASSI

Finland

Abstract

My case study enterprise is Maalaiskartano Pihkala in Finland. Pihkala farm has existed already for centuries and it is one of the oldest farms in the region. The company offers various services and activities from hotel rooms and restaurant to meeting packages and cruises in the river. It has a riding school just next to it and their main client segment is the clients that come there to join in a meeting.

Pihkala is surviving pretty well nowadays and the ongoing economic world crisis affected it only positively by growing its annual amount of clients. They have a great business plan and everything is well organized and designed. I still made some new innovation suggestions which would lead their business into a more environmental direction.

Introduction

Background of the enterprise

Maalaiskartano Pihkala is situated in mid-Finland in municipality of Siikalatva in village of Kestilä. Pihkala is one of the oldest farms in Kestilä and they have always cultivated, kept cattle and, in the old days, produced tar. A farm was owned by the family Väyrynen until 1874 when family Riikonen bought it. Generations passed and the fourth owner of the farm, Veijo Riikonen started the tourism business in 1983. In the beginning the tourism was only a side business along the agriculture but its significance grew year by year. Finally in 1992 the last cows left the place and Pihkala became a full time tourism enterprise.

In the beginning of the 1990s they made some big investments in Pihkala and within the same time a huge economic depression took place in Finland. So they had pretty tough times back then. Little by little they improved their activities. Anyhow the business was profitable and they survived through hard times.

In 2005 a next generation of the family took place in running Pihkala's business. At that time Pihkala was also founded as a limited company and the riding school became a company of its own. The new person who runs the business is Tarja Hietaharju who came to the house in 2003 as an intern.

There are three standing workers in Pihkala. They use also temporary employees when there is a need for them, e.g. summer season, events. The old host Veijo Riikonen is still working at the farm and his daughter runs the Pihkala riding school with her husband.

Because Pihkala is a family business all of its stakeholders come from the family although most of them don't work at the company. The only stakeholder that comes outside of the family is Tarja Hietaharju.

The annual turnover of Pihkala is about 200 000 Euros (when the value added tax is 0%). The most productive segment of clients is the meeting clients, groups of employees of different companies which are having meetings in Pihkala. There are several other segments e.g. families, horse riders, those who come to spend their vacation there... There are also some foreign clients in Pihkala.

There are few competitors for Pihkala but none of them has the same concept as they have in Pihkala. In the region there are few countryside tourism companies but they offer usually only "bed and breakfast" and no activities. They also consider as a competitor a spa and wellness center Rokua

which is situated within 100 kilometers and offers a whole different range of activities. Nevertheless it may steal some older clients from Pihkala, especially during the winter time. Competitors for the business are also hotels in nearby towns and riding farms in the close region. Pihkala stands out from its competitors with a diverse supply of activities and especially from other farm tourism places with its quality space.

Pihkala cooperates with several associations such as Suomen maaseutumatkailuyrittäjät ry (The Countryside Tourism Entrepreneurs in Finland registered association), CharterFinland and Keskipisteen matkailuyhdistys (Tourism Association of Midpoint). Other partners are travel agencies and suppliers of goods. There aren't too much similar companies at the industry to work with so Pihkala has to mostly cope with itself. At this moment they are mapping cooperation with different kinds of associations. They used to have for several years a mutual marketing project with other similar companies from close regions but it has now ended.

Products and services of the enterprise

Pihkala has many things to offer for its clients: they have meeting and celebrating packages, food and beverage services, a place to sleep, outdoor and indoor activities, camps, riding etc. They have all the equipment that is needed in meetings e.g. adjustable rooms, wireless Internet connection, projector, white board... Packages include restaurant services and activities. The meeting package prices depend on how many days the meeting takes and how does people lodge: a one-day-meeting 31 Euros, a two-day-meeting with activities etc. 117 Euros. Pihkala has great space to arrange big parties like weddings and birthdays. The restaurant of the house takes orders from the groups of clients and makes them food. The meal prices start from 15 Euros.

There are 14 rooms which include own WC, shower, TV, radio and WLAN for altogether 33 people. Rooms are in the main building (9 pcs) and in the silo (6 pcs). For hotel guests there are a common microwave oven and a fridge. Hotel rooms are granted with five full stars by a national classifying system. Room prices vary from 39 Euros to 49 Euros. There are also 15 rooms situated in two barns. 43 people can sleep there also in the winter time. The barn room prices start from 26 Euros. Breakfast is included in every room price.

You can do many kinds of sport activities in the gym hall of Pihkala: badminton, basketball, floorball, volleyball, darts, wall climbing... and lots of other things you can find outdoors: wire robe track above the river Siikajoki, riding, archery, axe throwing, fishing, paddling, rowing and having a cruise in the river... They offer also activities for groups e.g. funny races.

Case study descriptions

The innovation process

Maalaiskartano Pihkala is already a very innovative company: they have figured how to take advantage of the river nearby (the wire robe track, the cruises). They have already a pretty good business plan which is working so my ideas will lead the business a bit to a different direction.

While a little thinking session, what could be a new innovation for this enterprise, I thought of our case study in Romania: I was in a Working Group 2 and our case study company was Cai de Vis ("The Dream Horses"). We used the brainstorming –method and let our ideas flow. The craziest ideas that came out were actually pretty good – also quite unique. I thought that why I couldn't use our great ideas in my own case study; we had already put some effort to them and these two case study enterprises (Cai de Vis and Maalaiskartano Pihkala) were actually quite similar to one another.

The presentation of the innovations

The innovations that would suit best to Pihkala are:

- **Welfare center** – they have already a sauna and a bathtub, so why not to offer some treatments like massage, foot care. This would be especially good for the meeting guests who want to experience something refreshing between the meetings. This innovation is quite easy to arrange: they would need to hire a cosmetologist to be an expert in treatments. Welfare treatments could be easily marketed to women who are having or arranging bachelorette parties because it is quite common to go some spa or so when you have your bachelorette party in Finland.

- **Sauna with horse manure** – if the company would use some of their horse manure for heating it reduces the amount that has to be carried away. This would not only save the money of the company but also the environment. Although this innovation is quite difficult to put in practice in Finland because of the strict regulations: it is hard to get a license to burn the manure.

- **Farm education** – the company could buy some new farm animals like cows, pigs, chicken. This could attract more people – especially the families with little children. It would give an image of a real farm with real animal – an authentic atmosphere. They could make some more money by offering little tours where they would tell about farm animals and how to use them in food production. They could tell the truth about farm life to urbanized kids. Of course the children could try to e.g. milk a cow during the tour.

- **Camping area** – Pihkala has no neighbors in the close fields so it could be easy to transfer one of them into a camping area. They wouldn't need to build any new cottages because they already have the hotel and the barn. They would only need to pull some electricity to campers and make the field tidy. Toilets, showers, kitchen etc. would be ready in the barns. The camping area would bring a whole new range of customers to Pihkala so they might need to transfer the restaurant to one that has opening hours – not only working with offers. The place is also perfect for campers: it is near to a bigger town (Oulu), it is near to water (river Siikajoki) and there is a lot to see (horses, cruises...).

- **Horse therapy** – you can do a lot more with a horse than just riding. It is proved that a presence of a horse has a calming effect. Horses can be used as a part of a therapy to people who are suffering from problems. Horses have already been used as a tool of a therapy treatment in Finland. This innovation would certainly have markets because people are suffering more and more. It would be important to find a very good therapist who will pull customers with his or hers name.

The innovations I thought myself on the basis of the first five ones:

- **Environment friendly actions** – many of the tourism industry companies are marketing themselves as an environmental enterprise. This is something that is going to be a very fashionable in the close future, if it is not already like that. People are getting more and more aware of their actions and the poor condition of the globe. By changing everything little by little into a greener one and taking advantage of it in marketing Pihkala could gain these new conscious customers. Greener actions could be e.g. buying food supply from the local companies, changing water saving taps, sorting the garbage and suggest the same to clients, shift from using papers to Internet, using ion-free and natural washing products, using solar panels to get energy. The list could be going on and on because nowadays there are several ways to protect the environment.

- **Water circulation** – with this section I mean the route of pure water that we use and the waste water that is used. Usually used water travels in water pipes and in sewers into a plant that purifies it and after it is pure again it circulates back into pipes of the houses to be used again. In rural areas the problem is the long distances of the houses. A new solution is that the same water goes round and round in just one house because there is a tiny own water purifying plant in the house. This future solution will save energy, water and money. In Finland I know one building that is already using this method and I think it will be a big hit in the future. So it is not something that can be done right away, but it is something to give a thought about.

- **Traditional farm day** – this idea came up when I thought of my ex summer job in an outdoor museum. There they arranged a traditional day once in every week. During the day was presented handcrafts, candles, foods etc. made in old traditional style and some of the products were made there at the museum in front of the clients. Sometimes we piled some hay the way they used to do it ages ago, wearing traditional clothes. These kinds of events keep the old and good traditions alive and teach them to the future generations. To put into practice this kind of a day needs people who have the traditional knowledge and who can do traditional items. Usually there are few persons with this know-how in every region. So they have to be in contact with these old masters and persuade them to the event. And of course this kind of an event is nothing without traditional Finnish folk music.

The influence of the present economic world crisis

Last year, in 2009, the economic world crisis had a positive impact in Pihkala’s turnover: it grew with a huge leap. Pihkala gained new customers who had changed their expensive hotel packages into lower budget rural accommodation. Due to the crisis people decreased the outgoing tourism and the tourism in home countries increased. All in all we can say that the company benefitted from the economic crisis.

Pihkala had a silent season during the winter months in this year, 2010. Nevertheless the entrepreneur was not worried about it because they will have almost full booked summer after that.

Despite the economic crisis, the annual turnover of Pihkala has been growing all the time – little by little. So in this case the crisis didn’t have a negative impact.

SWOT ANALYSIS

TABLE OF SWOT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ variety of services and activities ✓ variety of accommodation ✓ low prices ✓ family business ✓ easy to reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ website ✓ marketing ✓ lack of foreign clients
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ member of many associations and travel agencies ✓ landscape ✓ surroundings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ lack of local partners ✓ poor condition of the municipality

The analysis

Strengths

Variety of services and activities – the services are presented in the part 2.2. The main thing is to offer something to everyone; they want that everybody finds something that suits for them in Pihkala.

Variety of accommodation – accommodation forms are also presented in the part 2.2. Even though you can find nice rooms in affordable price there, I think the place is missing of a camping kind of accommodation.

Low prices – services are available and affordable to almost everybody. The price and the quality are at the right balance.

Family business – it is usually easy to do business with someone you know well and whom would you know better than your own family members.

Easy to reach – from the website you can find really good directions how to reach the place and when you get to the right road you will definitely find it. Roads are also in pretty good shape in Finland.

Weaknesses

The layout of **the website** of Maalaiskartano Pihkala is clear and elegant. From the front page you can find every detail in a strict order. You have a possibility to change the language of the site into English, German or Russian. However neither English nor Russian pages seem not to work at all. This might be a little inconvenience to fix the error but it's worth it: At least the English language is priceless to a company who wishes to gain foreign customers.

I haven't ever seen any **advertising** of Maalaiskartano Pihkala even though I used to live in Oulu, which is a bigger city situated near to Pihkala. So I would suggest more visible advertising to the company. They could also use Internet as a marketing channel. They do have the website but nowadays it is not enough to an enterprise that wants to retain its status.

Foreign clients bring a lot of money to a company. This is a fact. Many Norwegian tourists come to Oulu every year enjoy from the sun. So why not to try to cooperate with Nallikari (a camping area near the city center of Oulu and the sea) and Eden (a spa near the camping place) and do mutual marketing in Norway.

Opportunities

Member of many associations and travel agencies – it's always good to have partners. This is also a good channel to market their company in an inexpensive way.

Landscape and Surroundings – in these two lays a possibility to extend the business. Pihkala has a lot of field around it so some day it can make investments and take the land in use.

Threats

Lack of local partners – Maalaiskartano Pihkala is situated in a region without a lot of neighbors. It has to find its partners from a wider distance.

Poor condition of the municipality – the municipality of Siikalatva is not doing too well right now. It has high taxes so it means more expenses to the company. This can be a threat in the future when the small municipalities are disappearing and joining into bigger administrative regions.

Conclusions

Maalaiskartano Pihkala is a healthy enterprise and they have innovative people working there. Their business is in good shape and they have opportunities to grow it in the future. Right now anything new is not under development so something should be done so that they preserve their status. For an enterprise it is essential to develop all the time. Perhaps they can use some of my ideas. I'm sure they will invest in the environmental issues in the future.

Something that needs and can be done right away is the improving the website. It seems to be the best marketing channel at the moment for the company and it is not working properly. Also increasing other marketing e.g. advertising in Finland, in foreign countries and in Internet could be done as soon as possible.

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Savonia-Ammattikorkeakoulu

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Introduction

In Messilä you can enjoy all of the seasons

Old traditions are alive and well in Messilä today. The main building in the court-yard is the beautiful Manor House, built in the beginning of 1900 and now transformed into a pleasant restaurant and meeting place. The hotel offers different kinds of accommodation - traditional hotel rooms, romantic old store houses and logcabins with saunas.

Messilä is surrounded by woody ridges of Salpausselkä, and the lakes surrounding this area are clear and gorgeous, as they have always been. It is located in the town Hollola, 8 km from the city of Lahti, on the ridge of Salpausselkä, by the lake Vesijärvi. The area is only one hours drive away from Helsinki.

Messilä is southern Finland's biggest and most popular ski center and there are around 2 million visitors annually. Around 150 000 of these are fans of the wintersport snow season.

Messilä's amsements and benefits:

- 10 highlighted hillsides
- 10 lifts
- 222 meters from sea level (111 meters)
- 70 km crosscountry skitrack net (about 20 highlited)
- Professional skischool
- Modern skirental
- Bistro and slop cafe

In Messilä old traditions create a great atmosphere where you can relax and enjoy yourself.

Company background

Messilä was created in the village of Okeroinen which was amongst the biggest in Häme. It probably got its name from the first inhabitant of the village; a juror called Tiirismaa during the 1460's in the then village of Heyen Messisson

Messilän has had several owners over the years because the state may have descended through the daughters of families. For this reason Messilä was for a long time in the possession of the same family even though their surnames changed. The following have been the surnames of the latest owners, Polo Grenman, Melander, Söyring, Söyriö, Pullinen and Toivonen.

Tourism in Messilä began in 1859 when an engineer and colonel from Helsinki visited to design an observation tower, for Tiirismaa. It was around the year 1880 when food and drink was served in the house to the tourists and a decade later within the grounds of the manor house there was a guests' lodging built, the main building of the page state.

It was during the Salpausselkä Lahti ski games of 1920 when the concept of the Sports hotel was born.

But by the year 1969 there had been generational changes and the holiday resort started to transform into the hotel which works today. Messilä's most captivating attractions have been "Pidot vuosisadan vaihteen tyyliin", Kesämaa, Tanssivat vedet ja kesäkelkkarata, but the functions of each of these projects have finished.

The present buildings of the yard circle are mainly from the 1920's but some, like manorhouse and the cow-house are actually from the end of the 1800's and a few granaries have even been preserved from the 1700's.

Messilä is owned by three businessmen and they started their business venture in 1999. There are also 9 regular workers and there can be dozens of seasonal workers depending on the season.

Today Messilä is an active and versatile meeting and leisure center.

Contact information

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Partners

Messilä co-operates with many different kind of companys like restaurants, skirental, skischool etc, but most of these companies function in the same area with Messilä. Messilä also co-operates with Lahti travel, which is a local tourist information system in Lahti.

Products and services

Messilä is a farming estate dating back many hundreds of years which has been converted into a leisure centre offering numerous facilities in both winter and summer. Unique natural surroundings help to create dozens of activities for people to enjoy in the outdoors.

Pirunpesä cleft in the rock in Tiirismaa is a natural beauty location close to Messilä. About eight kilometers from Messilä is the winter sports city Lahti and ten kilometers away is Hollola church and village area.

Messilä skicenter: -Southern Finland's largest and highest slopes, in total there are 10 slopes including a street for snowboarders.

Mehiko skischool: -Teaching down hill skiing, telemark, snowboarding and cross country skiing.

Skimac rental: -

Jump up outdoor activities (sports and adventures): Jump Up Services provides different kinds of events and adventures in the middle of the beautiful nature of Finland.

- snowshoe activities, nordic walk, night wander,
- snowmobiles
- all-train-vehicle driving
- summer and winter, all about fun → finnish spirit packet, wild moose chase, wild west, winter Olympics, ice fishing...

Horse tables: - Messilä's Manor table is SRL's sanctioned and enforced riding school. There is a riding ring and two riding yards, one of which is international race track size.

Messilä golf: -In the summertime Messilä Golf course offers an amazing 18 holes all of which are set in stunning surroundings. The course has practice areas, golf lessons and a club restaurant.

Camping Messilä: -A nice and comfortable place for your caravan or tent to go near the lake Vesijärvi and the downhills of Messilä.

Restaurants

In Messilä there is a relaxed after-ski restaurant, a first-rate A lá carte restaurant and many other pleasant dinning opportunities which you can enjoy over weekends.

- The heart of Messilä is the old Manorhouse with its charming courtyard. From the first-rate A la carte menu
- The bistro is a more relaxed after ski restaurant with tasty burgers and pizzas.
- In old Smithy is possibility to spend a unique night in with small groups.
- The Hut, The Lobby bar

Summer season

The surroundings of Messilä are perfect for different kinds of outdoor activities. The list below shows some of the activities provided during the summer time.

At Summer time

- Golf
- Bikepark
- beach volley
- beach football
- Cycling
- Karaoke
- Dancing

Winter season

Hills of the Salpausselkä near Messilä are perfect for ski or downhill skiing. From the first snowfall in November you can have a go at cross-country skiing and other winter sports until as late as the middle of April. In winter time Messilä offers the following activities for example:

At winter time

- Downhill skiing
- Cross country skiing
- Snowmobile safaris
- Sledging and fishing
- Dipping into a hole made in a frozen lake

Meeting facilities

The cozy meeting rooms give a relaxing alternative compared to the dusty city cabinets. In all rooms there are Screen and flip charts. Additionally there is an Overhead projector, a television, a VCR and an ADSL internet connection available. You can also request a data projector.

Accommodation

The hotel offers different kinds of accommodation – traditional hotel rooms, romantic old store houses and log cabins with saunas.

Old store cottage- two separate bedrooms for 3 persons, toilet, shower, telephone, TV, living room with small kitchen (hob, fridge, coffee maker, dishes) and cloth dryer.

Log cabin- 2 separate bedrooms, attic for extra beds, kitchen (with kitchen utensils, plates and so on, Micro-wave oven, dish washer, refrigerator, coffee maker) and living room. There is also a fire place, telephone, TV, cloth dryer, sauna, bathroom and toilet in the cottages.

Ylöstalo- 5 bedrooms, full kitchen, living room with meeting facilities, two bathrooms and sauna.

With an adventurous spirit, you can even spend your night in a tent.

SWOT – ANALYSE

A scan of the internal and external environment is an important part of the strategic planning process. Environmental factors internal to the firm usually can be classified as strengths (**S**) or weaknesses (**W**), and those external to the firm can be classified as opportunities (**O**) or threats (**T**). Such an analysis of the strategic environment is referred to as a **SWOT analysis**.

The SWOT analysis provides information that is helpful in matching the firm's resources and capabilities to the competitive environment in which it operates. As such, it is instrumental in strategy formulation and selection. (<http://www.quickmba.com/strategy/swot/>)

Strength

A firm's strengths are its resources and capabilities that can be used as a basis for developing a competitive advantage.

Messilä has lots of strengths in their function. Messilä is southern Finland's biggest and most popular ski center, so Messilä has not real threats around it. The skicenter has been built around the beautiful manorhouse and old sheds have now been transformed into classic accommodation and meeting places and restaurants have been built in place of the old Manor, so Messilä has the own old-fashion atmosphere.

Versatile nature and activities guarantee the round-the-year consumption.

Messilä has also planned so that there are opportunities to move straight away from accommodation direct to the slopes.

Weakness

The absence of certain strengths may be viewed as a weakness. In some cases, a weakness may be the flip side of strength. Take the case in which a firm has a large amount of manufacturing capacity. While this capacity may be considered a strength that competitors do not share, it also may be a considered a weakness if the large investment in manufacturing capacity prevents the firm from reacting quickly to changes in the strategic environment.

Weaknesses of Messilä are not so much:

The size as a skicenter is not too big comparably to Lapland's skicenters, so future will show is the slope's size enough high for customers. There is also a lack in slopes, because snowboarding is growing trend in winter activities, and Messilä can't offer a comprehensive snowpark for snowboarders. They should also think how they can use effectively their slopes during the summer (innovation- bikepark), they should think if they wanted to do co-operate with different kind of sportclubs and they could keep nordic walking or running activities during the summer. To Messilä isn't good public transport, there is a bus, which is running couple times in day, but no one knows the timetable, they could develop that.

Opportunities

The external environmental analysis may reveal certain new opportunities for profit and growth.

The economic crisis has effect to positive way to their function. It has only raised the customer numbers. Because of that the new customers have also got to know about Messilä and they can recommend that for the relatives and friends.

The beautiful nature is always an opportunity and Messilä has a lot of nature around it. They have also a private outdoor-activities offering company, but they haven't seen a co-operate possibility with horse-tables.

The story of the Manorhouse is fascinating so they could use that one in marketing and also the private festive occasion would be a new a market hole.

Threats

Changes in the external environmental also may present threats to the firm.

Global warming creates threats over the skicenters, and nobody knows how it affects the future Finnish winter.

Messilä is dependent on snow and winter, so who knows what is going to happen for the skicenter, if climate warming keeps going.

Variability of the weather also brings its own difficulties Messilä.

Hard frosted and mild winters make difficulties to arrive to Messilä. On the hard frost there are not clients and too mild weather there is not a snow.

Skicenters are growing and they develop all the time, so time will show, has Messilä enough capacity to competition.

Market and competition situation

Competitors

Messilä is the vastest ski center in southern Finland and it has no real competition in the surrounding areas. There are a couple of other downhill skiing places in southern Finland like Serena, Himos and Talma ski, but those companies are nowhere near the same high standard as Messilä.

Of course Messilä competes with Lapland's big skicenter, but they aren't neither a huge threat for Messilä, because those are so far away.

Messilä doesn't see their "competitors" as a threat rather they co-operate with their partners.

Messilä competes more with the "leisure time" of potential customers and of course with other companies that offer leisure time activities such as swimming and fitness.

Benefit compared to competitors

Old traditions are well alive in Messilä today. Messilä has built around the old Manor milieu. Old sheds have now been transformed into classic accommodation and meeting places and restaurants have been built in place of the old Manor.

In Messilä there are lots of possibilities to do many different kinds of activities. Competitors simply don't offer the extensive range of activities that Messilä does. And Messilä has also planned so that there are opportunities to move straight away from accommodation direct to the slopes.

Marketing strategies

Leaflets were about two years ago the populist way to market company for new customers, but nowadays Messilä is going to remove those leaflets and focuses more and more on the electrical marketing and direct advertising.

The present economical crisis

The present economical crisis has had only positive influences for Messilä. Some inhabitants of near by towns have focused their holidays and days off to Messilä. They haven't time or money to travel to places like Lapland or higher places so they stay quite near their homes.

Innovation case

”Process by which an idea or invention is translated into a good or service for which people will pay. To be called an innovation, an idea must be replicable at an economical cost and must satisfy a specific need. Innovation involves deliberate application of information, imagination, and initiative in deriving greater or different value from resources, and encompasses all processes by which new ideas are generated and converted into useful products.” (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/innovation.html>)

When interviewed and asked about their most significant innovation case, a worker of Messilä wanted to specifically bring up the new product bikepark, which runs through the summer. Also in the winter season she mentioned a new artificial snowtechnique and a new lift ticket system.

Messilä’s future plan is one of the biggest innovations of its history. It aims to extend the harbor and a service center and the holiday apartments, which are located at the top of the site.

Messilä- future plan

Messilä an all-year-round tourism world.

Messilä envisages growth rising from 150 000 visitors per annum to 1000 000 visitors and in practice it would essentially, be a small-scale all-year-long entertainment town. Messilä would offer many services including health services which the inhabitants of neighbourhoods could also use.

There have been 6 700 flats planned to be built. Visitors would be served by a hotel, log cabins, baths, business premises, and good links between the community centre the service centre and the activity centre. Having the covered slope would also make downhill skiing possible throughout the year.

The harbor is envisaged to be extended to a thousand places for the shipping vessels. However, it would abort the top moving from the harbour, service centre and the holiday houses because there is a demand already for things to stay like they are already. With this vision Messilä would easily rise to the level of Tahko and Vuokatti.

There is no schedule because nobody knows how long the municipality of Hollola will require. The delivered diagram proposal has however been obtained and accepted.

Environmental issues

Messilä is along the energiatehokkuussopimus and the Agreements for the years 2008-2016 were completed at the end of year 2007.

The agreement system intends according to a national climate strategy and energy strategy to answer its part of our international bonds in the workplace that are against climate change. The objective will be to save energy and the goal is to obtain a saving of nine per cent by the year 2016.

The future challenge

The global warming has tribulation Messilä too. Winters changes all the time and it is difficult to know how to prepare for the next winter. Hard frost brings the clients away and mild weather ruins slopes. The best weather for winter season would be a stable -10 degrees.

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Metsäkartano

Mari ROMPPANEN

Finland

Introduction

I chose Rautavaaras Metsäkartano as case study, which is a nature tourism company.

Nature tourism is diversely defined action, which highlights nature environment, tourism, a person's experience about the nature and ethical questions. Nature tourism is tourism, which attractions and activities are based on nature's environment and actions are put in to practice in nature. (<http://www.metla.fi/julkaisut/workingpapers/2005/mwp020.htm>)

The wonderous Metsäkartano nature tourist centre is an all-year-around holiday, training, meeting & seminar and youth camp jamboree resort. It is a perfect location for families and vacationers seeking for peace, clean air and genuine nature surroundings for recuperation and activity programs in inhabited wilderness. It is surrounded by hilly forests, lakes and rivers. The exact location is nearby the Tiilikkejärvi national park within Kainuu and northern Carelia in the county of northern Savo, in the altitude of over 200 metres, just under 2 hours drive from Kuopio.

Company background

One of the results of the year 1975 EC (European Community) meeting was a decision to start to develop international youth traveling and youth movability in Europe. In Finland ministry of education was initiative and gave youth boards of provinces a mission to start to map out where in their regions might be possible locations for international youth centers. From many candidates, the uninhabited headland of Yläkeyrity in Rautavaara in the region of Kuopios province (nowadays the city of Kuopio), was selected. In January 1978 ministry of education ratified a developing program considering youths course and camping centers and along with that the establishment of Metsäkartano was confirmed.

To manage the future youth center, a wide based Rautavaaras course and camping center-foundation was established. In the foundations documents of establishment, the foundations mission among other things is said to be to “advance youth's international co-operation, educational leisure activity and knowledge of nature and environment”

At first, everything happened in the one and same main building. When the organization expanded, more accommodation facilities were built in the same courtyard. Accommodation building Justeeri was built in 1985 and Simikka right after in 1988. A poor shaped road leading to Metsäkartano was overhauled and turned in to a highway in 1987. Nearby situated Rautavaaras municipality's camping hut Metsäpirtti and Metsäkämpä, (built in the early 50's for lumberjack's hut) included, there was accommodation facilities for 135 people. After deciding to diversify their actions it became necessary to build more premises. Activity center Savotta with its versatile sport facilities and community classes was built in 2001. Lastly, in summer 2005, Marjamaas vacation apartments were taken to use. They represent the most spacious and highest quality of accommodation in Metsäkartano. After building of Marjamaa the number of beds increased to 180. In addition, there is camping area in contact with Metsäkartano, with 45 electrified caravan places and a service building.

With in over 20 years, Metsäkartano has achieved a steady position among one of Finlands biggest youth centers. Metsäkartano is also known as one of the most significant eastern Finland tourism centers. Its location in the middle of the nature, by the lake with sandy beach, Tillikkajärves

natural park and nearby wide and significant NATURA areas creates excellent conditions for the development of the rural tourism.

Metsäkartano is owned by Rautavaaras course and camping center- foundation. It employs 12 people around the year 6 fixed-termed . Responsible for managing Metsäkartano is executive director Jari Korkalainen. (interview: Tuula Laakkonen)

Contact information

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Partners

Metsäkartano co-operates with many different facets, for example ministry of education, regime of woods, public government, primary schools, parishes etc.

Products and services

Metsäkartano offers different kind of products and services for winter and for summer seasons. There is a possibility to rent equipments, for example canoe, a rowing boat, ski equipment, snow shoes, kick sled etc, and have an English speaking guide for every activity. There is also a liability insurance, that covers possible harms or injuries, if occurred in programs of Metsäkartano.

Summer season

The surroundings of Metsäkartano are perfect for different kinds of outdoor activities.

There is a list under of the activities they provide during the summer time.

- Hiking trips to pothole Pumpulikirkko, to the Nature path of Leutotuuli and to the wilderness and nature paths of Tiilikjärvi national park (8-40 km)
- Canoeing trips to the nearby Ylä-Keyrityy uninhabited lake area where no disturbing motor boats are allowed.
- Salmon fishing on the salmon pond of Ylimmäinen Apulainen, other fishes (perch, pike, lavaret) on the lake, licences required
- Additionally during summer and fall time the grounds are full of berries and mushrooms ready for pickings. A trip to pick up berries (bilberries, cloudberries, lingonberries) or mushrooms (boleti, chantarelles, milk caps etc.); what about preparing your own meal!
- Archery and mountain biking
- Adventures on low rope track or a bit higher up.
- Wall climbing experience on a 10 metre high wall + adding the ceiling area
- Handicrafts on nature materials: bone, stone, felt, clay.

Orienteering to discover the control points on our fixed control-point track (<http://www.metsakartano.com>)

Winter season

Snow-clad hills near Metsäkartano are perfect for ski or snowshoe expedition! From the first snowfall on in November you can have a go at cross-country skiing and other winter sports until as late as the mid of April. In winter time, Metsäkertano offers for example the following activities:

- Up to 25 kilometres of cross-country skiing of which 5,6 kilometres is lit suitable for beginners and trainees
- Nature field trips with special snowshoe gear
- Kick sled relay racing and skiing on deep snow

- Ice fishing with nets and rods
- Snow sculpturing and exciting games in snow
- Dog team sleigh rides, horse-drawn sleigh rides and ski-doo rides

Activity building Savotta

The activity building Savotta was built in 2001 and offers additional functions in the fields of sports, arts and crafts. The mirrored gym area (22 by 13 metres) with a removable stage is suitable for dancing, floor ball, volleyball, badminton, self-defence courses, 10 metre high climbing wall (10 m)+ ceiling.

- An exercise gym / Physical fitness testing / massage area
- Maintenance service for skiers and hikers.

Additionally there is

- An art gallery and chapel
- Ceramics workshop, bone, wood and other workshops
- Band space
- Photographers have a darkroom
- Party goers have a roomy lounge and disco
- Lounge bar with its star covered ceiling for evening festivities etc.
(<http://www.metsakartano.com>)

Accommodation

Total capacity is 175 beds which covers the following choices:

For vacationers seeking for exoticism there is a peat-tepee and an open-fire tepee.

Wilderness hotel standard is offered in 30 rooms (15 m²) varying from singles to a family size (65 m²) suite covering total capacity of 92 beds in two different log buildings called Justeeri and Sirnikka in the manor grounds. Rooms have WC, shower, radio and telephone and the buildings have kitchenettes and comfortable lounges with a fire place, for relaxation after outdoor activities.

Groups can choose also from the two cottage options: Forest lodge Metsäpirtti (176 m²) which has 22 beds in six rooms, an attractive main room with log fire, a kitchen with all appliances, an electric sauna and two toilets and the distance to the main building is 400 metres and to the beach 50 metres. Restored in 1996. A real hide-away is the authentic restored (1998) Lumberjack's cottage Metsäkämpä (160 m²) rich in atmosphere and direct on the beach. It is a 26 person charming lumberjack housing in 4 bed rooms and in a big living room with log fire and a well-equipped kitchen. An excellent sauna - the best for miles around, a lavatory/ecofriendly outdoor facility. The whole lumberjack milieu is 1 ½ kilometres from the main building along a forest path.

Other facilities in the main building: A 135-seat atmospheric dining room with log fire serving delicious food. Fully licenced. A cosy café and reception area. A 40-seat lecture room. 6 saunas. Lecture and teamwork rooms for up to 300 persons. Several campfire stops and forest settings for cooking and resting. (<http://www.metsakartano.com>)

Market and competition situation

There are a lot of rural and nature tourism enterprises in Finland, because we have great requirements for it and also a great deal of demand too. The most of our tourism is domestic tourism.

Compared to international departure areas in tourism, Finland is sparsely inhabited periphery, where attractions based on nature's attraction are diversely available in different seasons. At the same time, Finland is known as an advanced and modern country, where society structure is in

order and where a tourist feels her/himself safe. Most of the incoming tourists are from big, jammed cities. (<http://www.metla.fi/julkaisut/workingpapers/2005/mwp020.htm>)

Duration and regularity of the seasons have created good average requirements for both winter and summer seasons and extreme conditions, for example natural catastrophes, don't create any major problems. However, weather conditions are quite unpredictable and it makes it almost impossible to create definite tourism seasons. For example, the skiing season in Lapland is long, but the unstable weather conditions in southern- and western Finland are an obstacle for proper winter tourism to develop. In Finland, there are a great frames for finding conditions and surroundings that really differ from your daily living environment.

(<http://www.metla.fi/julkaisut/workingpapers/2005/mwp020.htm>)

That is also one of the reasons, our tourism is mostly domestic, if you live in southern Finland and go to Lapland for example October or November it's like going to abroad.

Competitors

Metsäkartanos biggest competitors are strongly linked to customer segment and location. They mention for example sport academis, skiing center Vuokatti and other youth centers.

The present economical crisis

The present economical crisis has effected on the action of Metsäkartano. Some international customers, especially from Russia and Germany, have cancelled their bookings for groups. Finish companies have used their services less than years before.

SWOT- ANALYSIS

Swot- analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) is a method developed by Albert Huphrey, which is used to create a strategy and also as a learning and problem solving method to identify, evaluate and develop the problems. It's an excellent tool to help a corporation to plan its actions, ventures and projects.

(<http://www.qualitasforum.fi/Laadunty%C3%B6kalut/SWOTanalyysi/tabid/132/Default.aspx>)

In the following, I will evaluate Metsäkartanos action via swot- analysis.

Strengths

Metsäkartanos most significant strength is the authentic nature and Metsäkartanos architecture, which fits in to the surroundings and respects the surrounding views. Supporting this, Metsäkartano uses what they call "Green Power", which means that 100 percent of the electricity used comes from reusable sources like water, wind and biofuel.

They also have very versatile services in Metsäkartano from accommodation and good food, to activities and renting equipments. They also provide guides with language knowledge and liability insurance for the activities. Different kind of events such as camps, midsummer parties, hunting club for women only, concerts, yoga retries, balls, quarry courses etc., held in Metsäkartano, are a great plus to the range of services provided. You can have whatever kind of holiday you want in Metsäkartano, an active one, or relaxing one. And You can definitely experience something new if you wish.

International youth work is a definite strength for Metsäkartano, it benefits all the parties involved.

Metsäkartano has great websites. There is a lot of information there and they are updated regularly. They also change the websites look every season and you can change the language in English.

Weaknesses

The biggest weakness of Metsäkartano is that it is rather unknown other than eastern part of Finland and it is not really properly advertised. That might be because it is owned by Rautavaaras course and camping center- foundation, and they don't have as much money as for example big companies or chains to advertise.

Opportunities

Developing the international youth work further on is a great opportunity. Metsäkartano also has a great potential to attract more foreign customers, but that would demand putting some more money and effort to advertise the place on the whole and especially in other languages, such as Russia and Germany .

Threats

Threats of Metsäkartano are mostly the competitors and the present economical situation.

Innovation case

Innovation is a change in the thought process for doing something or "new stuff that is made useful". It may refer to an incremental emergent, or a radical and revolutionary changes in thinking, products, processes, or organizations.

As I did some research about Metsäkartano, to me, it seemed that the most potential issues for innovative thinking and new idea laid in developing the international youth work, environmental issues and marketing the whole business more effectively.

When interviewed and asked about their most significant innovation case that has happened in Metsäkartano, a employee of Metsäkatano wanted to bring up especially the environmental issues and -values, international youth camps and that's what I also want present in the following.

International youth work in Metsäkatano

International youth work and –tourism is a key focus for Metsäkartano Youth and Wilderness Centre. The purpose of all international youth work is to promote multicultural understanding, sense of belonging, and intercultural dialogue. Metsäkartano has impressive environment, facilities and services for international groups in the heart of Finland. We offer excellent premises and professional staff for your international events and camps around the year!

The staff of Metsäkartano participates actively to international trainings and seminars for development of international youth work and contact network. The international volunteers and summer workers have also influenced to the international atmosphere at Metsäkartano. As a member of Finnish Youth Centres Association, Metsäkartano takes part to the activities of European Network of Youth Centres (www.eycn.org).

The International Award for Young People

Metsäkartano is involved with the activities of The International Award for Young People, which is known in Finland by name Avartti! It is an international programme for 14 – 25 -year-olds, and it functions in 119 countries. Metsäkartano offers great location for adventure camps and other Avartti-activities.

Leonardo da Vinci - European Job Training

Metsäkartano participates EUs Leonardo da Vinci - programme by receiving international trainees. During February-April 2009, Metsäkartano hosted a Greek trainee. The project was coordinated by Youth Centre Villa Elba in Kokkola. The sending organisation in Greece was Filoxenia.

European Voluntary Service

Metsäkartano participates European Voluntary Service (EVS) as a hosting organization. Metsäkartano has received young European volunteers during the several part years. The latest volunteers have arrived from Poland (2006) and from France (2007) each for 10 months. Each EVS volunteer has provided an important learning experience for both staff and visitors of Metsäkartano Youth Centre. We wish to welcome EVS volunteers also the next years. EVS is a part of the Youth in Action –programme of European Union.

Nordic Co-operation

Metsäkartano is active in developing its Nordic youth cooperation, which includes cooperation with Nordic countries, Åland Islands, Färoe Islands, Greenland, Baltic countries and Russia. In August 2008, Metsäkartano hosted together with Hyvärilä Youth Centre a Nordic Youth Camp on Environment and Climate Change, funded by Nordic Childrens and Youth Committee NORDBUK. (<http://www.metsakartano.com>)

Environmental issues

Metsäkartano operates according to environmental ethics on principle of sustainable development. In the vicinity there are extensive Natura 2000 and other ecological areas open to visitors either on their own or with a guide.

Natura 2000 - life project

Restoration of mire and bog ecosystems in north Savo with reference to environmental education

Objective

The project covers five areas (12 400 hectares) in the North Savo region, East Finland. All areas are included in Finlands proposal for the Sites of Community interest (SCI). Two areas are also designated as Special Protection Areas (SPA). Almost one half of the project area is covered by prioritised habitats (aapa mires, bog woodland, western taiga, active raised bogs). There are also smaller areas of habitats determined in the Habitats Directive (e.g. Fennoscandian natural rivers), which are directly targeted by the project. The five project areas are situated close to each other and form the most important conservational complex of forests, mires and small watercourses in North Savo. The mires in the project area are of particular importance, as they are located in the transition zone between aapa mires and active raised bogs. In the Community, aapa mires are only found in Finland and Sweden, significant part of the remaining active raised bogs and bog woodland are located in Finland. The flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans*), known to live in natural forests of three project sites, is found in the Community only in Finland.

Draining has partly changed the natural condition of mires and bogs in the project area. In some western taiga areas there is lack of decaying wood and deciduous trees essential to most threatened forest species. A North American tree species (*Pinus contorta*) has once been planted to the area. Spreading of this foreign species to nearby western taiga areas is a threat to these ecosystems still in natural state. The rapids of River Tiilikkajoki, flowing through the project area, have once been cleared to help floating of timber. In some of areas intensive recreational use may damage the natural state of the environment. The project areas are located in a region with a very high unemployment rate. The attitude of local people has been critical towards the Natura 2000 ?network, since it is believed, that these areas cannot be used economically. A local camp school centre and a holiday resort (Metsäkartano) is situated near the project area. The centre would like to use the Natura-sites in their educational activities, if proper material would be made available.

The main objective of the project is to maintain and increase the Natura value of the sites. The most important means to this target is to restore the habitats to their natural condition. Damages caused by recreational use are prevented and repaired. Local people are activated to participate in the process of management planning to compromise between contradictory aims concerning the use of the area. Special attention is paid to promote environmental education and environmentally sustainable touring in nature through the nature resort centre of Metsäkartano.

Actions and means involved

Ditches in some drained aapa mire and bog woodland areas will be filled in. Decaying wood will be increased by different restoration methods. Small gaps will be opened in homogenous forest stands to increase the proportion of deciduous trees in the area. Burning will be used to create young forest stands and to increase the amount of charred wood. *Pinus contorta*, a foreign tree species, will be removed from the forests. Rapids of the river Tiilikanjoki will be restored. Land will be purchased and compensations will be paid to protect the Natura-areas. The effects of restoration measures will be monitored in mire and bog ecosystems and a new monitoring method will be developed for the purpose.

Public meetings and guided visits are going to be organized to involve local people in management planning. Information will also actively be disseminated through media and Internet and by school visits. Environmental educational material will be produced. The participants of the project (North Savo Regional Environment Centre, the Finnish Forests and Park Service, the Communes of Rautavaara and Varpaisjärvi and the resort centre of Metsäkartano), will form a steering group to coordinate the project. Two fulltime project employees will be hired to the project.

Expected results

Two management plans and six restoration plans will be elaborated. About 480 ha of mires, 180 ha of forests and 17 rapids will be restored. Compensation will be paid for 1100 ha and another 240 ha will be bought for conservation. Five brochures and a touring map will be produced. Three hiking routes (40 km) and one nature trail (8 km) with information boards will be constructed. Eleven information points and seven simple fire-places will be constructed. Ten guided trips, six public meetings and at least ten visits to schools will be organized. The project will produce a computer game concerning the Natura-network and the Life-project. A permanent exhibition dealing with Natura-areas and the project will be established in Metsäkartano.

(<http://www.metsakartano.com>)

SOURCES

- <http://www.metla.fi/julkaisut/workingpapers/2005/mwp020.htm>
- <http://www.metsakartano.com>
- <http://www.qualitas-forum.fi/Laadunty%C3%B6kalut/SWOTanalyysi/tabid/132/Default.aspx>
- www.ecn.org
- Interview: Tuula Laakkonen, Metsäkartano

Villi Pohjola

Reetta-Leena HÄMÄLÄINEN

Finland

Abstract

My case study is about Finnish nature based tourism company Villi Pohjola, which provides fishing, hunting, nature excursions, cabins and lodges to travellers. Villi Pohjola also offers meeting places to companies and team building. Villi Pohjola was found 1996, and 2008 it bought Erässetti Oy to become a part of Villi Pohjola. The company is owned by Metsähallitus, which is a part of Finland's government. The manager of Villi Pohjola is Johanna Tolonen and the company has 40 employees.

Villi Pohjola is the biggest company working on its field, because it works all over Finland and even makes excursions to Russia and Sweden. Enterprises incomes in year 2008 were 10 million euros, but last year was less profit because of the economical world crisis. Especially companies used Villi Pohjola's services less last year.

Villi Pohjola's latest innovations are buying Erässetti Oy and starting to rent also privately owned cabins and lodges. This way they have more places to rent all over Finland and customers have more options to choose from. Erässetti Oy takes care of international customers and their needs.

The enterprises strengths are its size, good co-workers and customized packages to every customer. Weaknesses are that it is hard to control when the company works in such large area and the dependence on fishing and hunting times in Finland. Villi Pohjola's opportunities are that it co-operates with many enterprises and with private cabin and lodge owners. Threats are economical world crisis and greenhouse effect.

Villi Pohjola should try to attract all kinds of travellers, not just the ones who are interested in fishing and hunting. Many people enjoy just spending time in the woods and sleeping in a simple lodge.

Introduction

My task was to pick up a Finnish nature based company and have an interview with it. The goal was to get to know how the company works and how it has developed. I chose my company to be Villi Pohjola, which provides different kinds of nature excursions to groups and rents lodges and cabins all over Finland. After the interview I had to make a SWOT-analysis about the company and think ways it could develop.

Case study descriptions

Villi Pohjola was found in the year 1996 and it is owned by Metsähallitus, which is a part of Finland's government. The company provides hunting, fishing, and nature tours to groups and individuals. Nature tours are also made over Finland's borders to Russia and Sweden. Villi Pohjola rents cabins and lodges all over Finland. Also meeting services and team buildings are offered to companies.

The latest innovation for the company was when they bought Erässetti company in the year 2008. Erässetti's name was changed to Erässetti-Wild North and now that part of the company takes care of the international customers. The manager of Erässetti-Wild North and Villi Pohjola is Johanna Tolonen. All together the enterprise employs 40 people at the moment.

Market and competition situation

Villi Pohjola has homepages in internet in two languages: Finnish and English. The pages are easy to use and from there people can see straight away what the company offers and even check out if there is any free cabins. Beside the webpages enterprise has advertises about the services they provide in some Finnish fishing and hunting magazines.

Villi Pohjola is Finland's biggest company providing nature based services. There are cabins and lodges all over the country as well as nature tours and places to hunt and fish. The competition is between smaller enterprises, mainly offering nature safaris and cabins. They are not a threat to Villi Pohjola, because it is so much bigger and works in a larger area.

Innovation

Villi Pohjola is a big company, which makes innovations after long thinking and without taking too many risks. It has already a steady place in Finnish markets, so the need for change is not that big. Villi Pohjola still wants to reach bigger markets and have more customers and that is why the enterprise has started to co-operate with private cabin and lodge owners. Villi Pohjola rents also privately owned cabins and this way gets a bigger markets and more customers.

Environment for innovations is good: Villi Pohjola asks from customers are they happy with the services that enterprise provided to them. Based on customers answers they start to think ways to develop and bring new products to the markets.

In the future Villi Pohjola will concentrate on renting the lodges and cabins and holding on the old customers. It is cheaper to the company to get the old customers come back and use their products than try to attract new ones all the time. Of course Villi Pohjola still advertises its products to everyone and tries to attract new customers, but the main target are the old ones.

Influences of present economical world crisis

Because of the economical world crisis, Villi Pohjola lost clients in all categories of its services. There were less companies doing team buliding meetings with Villi Pohjola's products. Also tourist groups from other countries, such as Russia and Sweden, were less than previous years. When there is economical world crisis, usually travelling in home country increases. In Villi Pohjola's incomes this did not show: there were less cabins and lodges rented and nature hikes used. Before the economical world crisis, Villi Pohjola's incomes were 10 million euros per year. In year 2009 the amount of incomes was 15% less than previous year. Year 2010 is going to be a better year again, because there has been more customers than it had been in same time previous year. The final numbers are hard to say yet because there is still six months left to make profit.

SWOT analysis

Strengths of Villi Pohjola are that there are lot of cabins and lodges to rent, also from private owners through their co-operation with the enterprise. Villi Pohjola's back ground is well secured when it is owned by Metsähallitus. When it is owned by Finland's government, there is no fear of bankruptcy and it also brings good reputation to the company that it is trustable. Villi Pohjola has a lot of co-work with different kinds of companies, starting from janitor firms to safari companys. Villi Pohjola offers something for every taste: there are lots of options what to do in Finland's nature. If customer wants, the whole package can be customized just the way they want. Strong point for Villi Pohjola is also that they have many international customers and they get as good service as the Finnish ones.

Weaknesses are that the enterprise works all over Finland. It is hard to control everything when the area is so wide. The company is very dependent on times when it is allowed to fish and

hunt. For example, many birds make babies in spring and that time it is not allowed to hunt them. And some bigger mammals, such as bears sleep through wintertime and during that time they have to be left alone.

Villi Pohjola's opportunities are that they co-operate with many other enterprises that work on the same and on other fields. It has companies it can rely on and everything does not have to be done alone. The co-work with private cabin and lodge owners is also an opportunity: Villi Pohjola can offer more places to spend a night and a bigger variety of choices. The private owners get money from renting their cabins and lodges, so everybody benefits.

The economical world crisis is a threat to Villi Pohjola, as it is to every other company too. If the bad economical situation continues, people do not have money to travel and that is a loss to Villi Pohjola. Green house effect can also become a big problem to Villi Pohjola: if there is no more snow in Finland, many animal species will move away or die. Then there is nothing to hunt and fish.

Conclusions

Villi Pohjola is the biggest company on its field in Finland. Co-operation with many other enterprises make it even stronger and a clear market leader. It was interesting to see how company this big works and handles things. Also innovations and how they make it happen was new thing for me. All enterprises need each other even though they are competing with each other from the same customers. The result is better for everyone when they help each other.

My recommendations for Villi Pohjola are that they should advertise more and try to get themselves known among "normal" people who do not fish or hunt. For instance, I had not heard about the company before I started to look a subject for my case study. But now that I know what they offer, it would be really nice to take part in one of those nature excursions. They could have more customers while advertising in some daily magazines which are read by all kinds of people, not just by fishers and hunters.

Sources of information

- Interviews with Villi Pohjola's manager Johanna Tolonen and worker Matti Keränen
- Lessons kept in Inno Natour Intensive course
- webpage of Villi Pohjola, www.villipohjola.fi
- Finnish webpages advancing travelling, www.mek.fi

Marzadro S.P.A.

Luca TOMEDI

Italy

Abstract

Marzadro S.P.A. is a good example of how an enterprise developed and is still competitive on the market through the years.

Everything started from the smart idea to transform a typical “poor product” (grappa) in a product of enjoyment, requested and well paid from tourists and locals as well.

Nowadays Marzadro family has built up the bigger distillery in Trentino Alto Adige region.

Three generations of the Marzadro family work today in the enterprise. From the founder Attilio, now 89 years old, to the offspring Stefano, Andrea, Anna until the nephews and nieces.

Marzadro S.P.A. works 50 thousands quintals of marc with a capacity of 500 quintals per day.

About 16 millions of euro was the turnover of Marzadro S.P.A. during the year 2009, with a net income of 600 hundreds euro.

Nowadays about 50 employees work for this enterprise.

The export count for only about 10 % of the total income. The interested countries are mainly Switzerland and Germany.

About 8 % of the total income is invested in marketing. The products are studied from an internal team which moving on both, the Italian and external territories.

Guided visits to schools and tourists are organized; a restaurant area and a meeting room are eventually rented.

Every year 40 thousands tourist visit the building located in Nogaredo near Rovereto.

Be innovative, offering continually new products and services, is one of the main strengths of this enterprise which seem to haven't affect at all the actual crisis.

Introduction

Hystory:

The roots of Distilleria Marzadro date back as far as 1949 in Brancolino di Nogaredo, in the heart of Vallagarina, in Trentino. It is a suggestive land, furrowed with vineyards carefully “cultivated” throughout the generations, that climb up towards the peaks of the mountains, starting at the bottom of the valley dotted by fruit trees. A pioneer start, characterized by tenacity, self-will and many promises, kept throughout the years.



Attilio & Sabina Marzadro

Attilio Marzadro is the protagonist of this story, together with his sister Sabina. He understood how to cultivate his land to its best in order to obtain, from his vineyards, the pomace

more suitable for the distillation of Grappas, becoming the “proprietor” of this centurial art. Attilio Marzadro grew up in the mountains, and wanted to pass on to his children this precious inheritance made up not only of intuition, enthusiasm and passion but also of wisdom, experience and a deep love for the land and its culture.

The Marzadro family, now extended to three generations, kept its traditional inheritance intact with great commitment and professionalism, while seeking constant innovation. Behind this romantic aspect of recuperating and maintaining old traditions, Marzadro is in fact a dynamic company, continually up to date and evolving in order to exploit its potentials to a maximum as concerns preservation of the environment, while absolutely respecting the quality of the raw materials and processing systems (Marzadro S.P.A., 2010).



Attilio Marzadro with its first “delivery vehicle”



Case study description:

Trentino tradition:

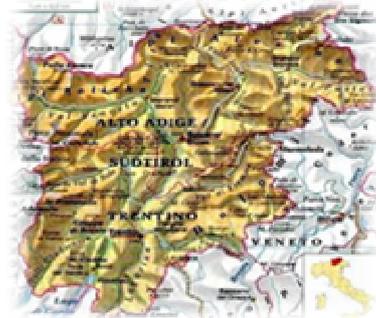
Grappa, initially called “aqua vitae”, meaning “water of life”, has very old origins. The Trentino people have always embraced the art of distillation, first of all, because great wines yield optimum pomace, the raw material required for distillation and second, because Trentino mountain people have been dealing with copper and alembics for generations. In this region, Grappa is a symbol of the genuineness of the farmers’ culture, identifying with a population that is used to living

in symbiosis with the seasons' and the moon's rhythms and that works in harmony with, and respects, the environment.

Marzadro contributes to recovering these cultural and territorial values of the Trentino region, which are represented in Grappa, a typical product that belongs to the ancestral history of these mountain people. One of the strong points of the Marzadro philosophy is to have succeeded in combining tradition with modern life style. As a matter of fact, while refining its distillation techniques throughout the years, the distillery preserved tradition as well. In fact, the pomace is, still to this day, distilled with the traditional method of discontinuous "bain marie" alembics (Marzadro S.P.A.,2010).

Structure and location:

Marzadro S.P.A. is born in Nogaredo, a town near Trento in Italy in the now far 1949.



The Marzadro Distillery is a vast and spacious complex built in stone, wood and glass which expresses itself in an harmonious architecture immersed in a luxuriant vineyard surround. The Marzadro family entrusted the architects Walter Maurmayr and Günther Plaickner from Bolzano with the realization of the complex. The architects, basing their work on the concept of "contemporary artisanship", gave life to a structure that integrates perfectly with the surrounding territory.



For example, the roof is covered by a green carpet made up of 60.000 pre-cultivated plants, belonging to the lichen species. This solution was adopted not only for aesthetic purposes but also to guarantee a better insulation, and therefore save a large amount of energy. The high ecologic value of the new complex is also noticeable in the spatial orientation of the offices which are positioned in such a way as to take advantage of as much natural sunlight as possible.

The new structure comprises three buildings dedicated respectively to production and storage, pomace deposit and administrative offices (Marzadro S.P.A., 2010).

There's free access to the garden, no gates or fences surround the building, offering to the visitor a sensation of freedom and relax

Activities:

Started as a small family business, Marzadro S.P.A. is now developed in the bigger of the about 36 distilleries in Trentino Alto Adige region.

The founder Attilio Marzadro, now retired, still visit every day the enterprise, which is actually managed by his son Stefano, helped off course from the others brothers and sisters.

Nowadays 50 persons are employed in the different activity that build up the enterprise. About 20 in the administration and marketing and the rest 30 are involved in the productive process.

Grappa is the name give to the product of the distillation of the grape's marc. Although in the past was consider a poor product, Attilio Marzadro and his sister Sabina were able to exalt the traditional value of this product, arranged and adjust it for the relish of the present consumers.

Also if the entire activity born under the name of Grappa, Marzadro S.P.A. doesn't produces only this type of distillate. Other products and services are required to be competitive on the actual market.

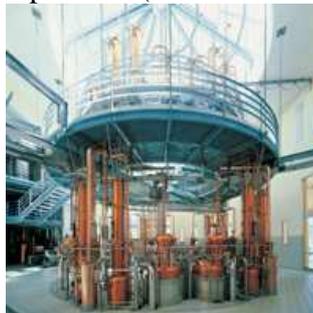
The distilling process of grappa doesn't provide work for all the year but is taking place only for 100 days, from September to December. In fact, only is in this period of the year, fresh marcs are available from the surroundings vineyard harvest. Marzadro transform about 50 thousands quintal of marcs per year, which are mainly acquired in Trentino (60 %), and the rest in Alto Adige and Veneto regions.

During this three months the stills works day and night to be as much efficient as it can.

Huge steel container, cooled with liquid nitrogen, are used to maintain the freshness of the raw materials. About 500 quintals per day, are processed during those days.



The distillation takes place in alembics using the traditional “discontinuous bain-marie” system belonging to the Trentino culture. The alembics are hand-made out of copper and, thanks to the properties of this metal, an excellent heat conductor, the characteristically peculiar fragrances and aromas are enhanced to their maximum. Each phase of the Grappa production is monitored through a computerised control system which does not allow the pomace to undergo sudden changes in heat, thus maintaining a constant temperature (Marzadro S.P.A.,2010).



The distiller devices are briefly divided in three parts. In the first room the pomaces are stored and warmed with the “bain marie” method which avoid potential burns. After that there’s what is called “depurating room” where copper filters, to divide good vapors (light that reach the upper still) from bad vapors (heavy which condense), are placed. Aloft copper stills are placed. Here the lighter vapors, which pass through those filters, condense and are collected. This is how to obtain Grappa. Marzadro S.P.A. produced about 300 thousands liters per year of anhydrous grappa (100 % alcohol content). Later on, this grappa will be processed to reach 40 % of alcohol content.



All the grappa produced is strongly checked and counted from the Italian financial police (Guardia di Finanza) with a specific counting device. In fact the production of grappa, as others liquors in Italy, is taxed from the Italian State. The tax is about 3,5 euro per liter which is the lower in Europe.

The Grappa is carefully analysed by the Istituto Tutela Grappa del Trentino, a competent official body guaranteeing the quality of the product, that has been created in 1968 in the Province of Trento with the goal to protect and promote real Trentino Grappa. The Institute is responsible for controlling the origin of the pomace and the production phases that guarantee the quality of the Grappa. The entire activity is carried out in collaboration with the Istituto Agrario San Michele all’Adige (Agricultural Institute of San Michele all’Adige) and the Chamber of Commerce of Trento that take care of respectively carrying out the laboratory and organoleptic exams, in order to certify the clearness, harmony of fragrances, smoothness and typical taste of the Grappa. Rigorous vigilance and control, therefore, that have conferred on Marzadro Grappas the title of certified high quality distillates, complying with all prescribed processes and respecting all required parameters. Proof of this qualities are also the multiple awards obtained by Marzadro on the occasion of important national and international events (Marzadro S.P.A.,2010).

About 6 thousand hectoliters of grappa are aging right now in the enterprise’s cellar.

Every year Marzadro produces and sell about 1,5 M of bottles (Trentino, 2010).

This bottles are not just of Grappa though.

Also other types of liquors are prepared and experimented during the “inactive” period, when grappa is not distilled.

The most sold is “Anima Nera” (Black Soul), a liquorices liquor, which sell about 300 thousands bottles per year (Trentino, 2010).

Other activities became soon really important for the well developing of the enterprise. Here the necessity to offer to the customers also different products and services.

Here the idea to let the enterprise free to be visit from the people. Guided tours, where the history and the distilling process itself is showed and explained in all its parts, are organized. Also courses of Grappa tasting and identification are offered. Here is teach how to taste, recognize and enjoy the grappa in the proper way. Grappa is not something to just “get drunk” but something to appreciate for its taste, smoothness and fragrance.

Schools are the main customers for this activity but also tourist are lately increasing their interest.

An extra area of the distillery is reserved as a restaurant for special events if booked in time. A meeting room is also eventually rentable.

Every year about 40 thousands tourists visit the new corporate



The grappa produced is not just one type. The taste and the smoothness of the grappa very depend on the type of used marcs (grapes variety), the aging process (steel or wooden barrels), the natural flavor which is added (mugo pine, asperula, nettle, cumino).

When the grappa is aged in steel barrels the properties remain unchanged through the time. If is aged in the wooden barrel, instead, those add to the Grappa a specific flavor depend on the type of wood which the barrel is made of, the size of the barrel and for how long the Grappa remain into the barrel.



The most sold grappa from Marzadro is the “dic’otto lune” (18 moons) with 400 thousands bottles per year (Trentino, 2010). This is a grappa made mixing four different reserves. Each of those aged for about one and an half year into different wood barrels such Oak, Ash, Cherry and Acacia.

The flavors used to confer certain tastes to some grappas are directly collected from the nature after asking a special permission to the forestry police department.

Also hand-painted bottles are prepared. The main customers of this type of product of course are the tourists which can buy a good looking bottle which can be hold also as a souvenir.



Off course, a lot of works cannot be done mechanically. That’s the reason why, so many employees are needed.

The last product born in Marzadro factory is the fruit preserved under grappa. This is also a traditional method that was used in the past to preserve fruit that Marzadro put forward again on the market as a dessert.

The most expensive grappa is the “Affina” which cost 135 euro (Trentino, 2010). Is a limited ediction of three reserves, aged for 8 years in small acacia, cherry an oak wook casks .

Also package that combine different products and a lot of different gadget as openers, glasses, etc.. are offered. All of this purchases are composed really carefully because Marzadro aim a lot on the esthetic aspect of all its products

Marzadro S.P.A. is also member of some local associations. First of all “Istituto tutela grappa trentina” (Safeguard Trentino’s Grappa Institute) which give to the products an authenticity guarantee brand. It is also member of “Strada del Vino” (Vine Road), “Casa del Vino” (Vine House), “Movimento Turismo Vino” (Vine Tourism Movement). The partnership of this kind of associations help the promotion of both: Marzadro enterprise and the Trentino region where tourism is one of the most important resources.

Another important membership is with A.N.A.G. (Associazione Nazionale Assaggiatori Grappe ed Acqueviti) which is a national level organization for distilled products tasting.

Marzadro sell most of its products in Italy. Just the 10 % of products is sold abroad, mainly in Switzerland and Germany.

Marzadro S.P.A. deal mainly with restaurant, vine bar and vine house. Only a few part is sold on large distribution. This is one of the reason why the actual crisis seem to be unknown by the enterprise. In fact, the supplies to that customers remain quite stable anyway.

The only fact that probably affect the selling of Grappa is the always more strict laws on alcohol consumption and driving consequences. However grappa, as a product of enjoyment, is mainly consumed among the domestic room or after a big meal occurrence.

In 2002 the enterprise got some financial incentives from the European Community. About 6,5 % of the invested capital used to build the new corporate.

About 16 millions of euro was the turnover of Marzadro S.P.A. during the year 2009, with a net income of 600 hundreds euro and an increase in income of about 2,9 % respect to the previous year.

SWOT Analysis:

To better understand the run of the Marzadro S.P.A. through the market, a SWOT analysis has to be done.

It consist in some kind of “brainstorming” where Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and eventual Threats for the future development of the enterprise are listed. Each characteristics will be further analyzed to adjust problems, search different solution and make worthwhile choices .

Strength:

- No large distribution (fixed customers)
- Open to school/visitors
- Location
- Quality
- Good marketing plan
- New products / dynamic
- Family involved

Weakness:

- Grappa unknown out of Italy
- 3rd generation of the family

Opportunity:

- Strategic position (visible from Highway A22 – nearby vineyards)
- Family business
- Location

Threats:

- Increase the export (nowadays only 10 %)

Strength:

The commercial strategy of Marzadro to avoid the large distribution and deal just with only restricted customers as restaurant or wine-houses, seem to be worthwhile. In the 2009 Marzadro S.P.A. turnover was about 16 M, about 2,9 % more than the previous year. “People like to drink good, probably buy less but don’t renounce to the quality” is what Stefano Marzadro said in the interview published on the “Trentino” news paper on 21st of April 2010.

The opportunity that Marzadro give to the customers to see how its product is made, involving also the Trentino’s heritage, is something that seems to be really appreciate from tourists. Being Trentino a region famous also for the quality of its vines, typical food and products, a “circuit” visiting several distilleries, vineries, restaurant and museums it was built up. Also the municipality is involved in this project organizing touristic packages. In fact the “circuit” bring benefits to everyone: restaurants, vineries, distilleries, and the region itself which attract tourists.

About 40 thousands tourists visit every year the Marzadro enterprise. After the tour, where is possible to observe the entire process of distillation, there’s a show room where all the products are exposed and where is possible to buy it. Allowing the customers to observe how what they will buy is made, is a really successful choice which stimulate the curiosity of many people and give them also a prove of the quality of the products. In fact the quality, together with the traditional aspect, is one of the most stressed points also in the marketing strategy of Marzadro S.P.A..

Marzadro S.P.A. invests 8 % of its total income in marketing. The products are promoted on local televisions and radios, newspapers and wallpapers.

Be dynamic and always experiment new products to offer on the market is become really important to be competitive nowadays. Also if some products are already well affirmed, the curiosity of the people has to be stimulated, to reach all different types of customers. That’s why new products, for different ages, social levels and special events are continuously created and promoted.

The fact that many persons from the family are involved in the enterprise could be a strength because people that usually work for their own business often they working also with passion. On the other side there can be discussion and arguments in taking decision and developing ideas. Of course a manager is required. After Attilio Marzadro, now retired, the son Stefano take his place.

Weakness:

Grappa is not so well know out of Italy probably because is confused with other distillates from other countries. But it’s not the same. Grappa is smoother, tastier and aromatic than the others distillates. The process to make it, probably more expensive and time consuming, conferring to Grappa an inimitable fragrance.

Nowadays the 3rd generation of the Marzadro family start to be involved which, looking at the history of other enterprises in Italy, it has never be really successful. In fact usually, already the second generation is enough to destroy the “empire” built from the pioneer, especially in families with a lot of heirs.

Opportunities:

The new corporate building is well visible from the highway A22, and is located near the tollbooth Rovereto Nord. Highway A22, Brennero-Modena connect Austria to Italy and is passing just beside to the Garda Lake, the major lake in Italy. This is a big “magnet” for tourists that can easily access to the enterprise, have a visited tour, taste the product and eventually buy it directly from the internal shop.

The corporate lies also on a groundwater resources which permits the enterprise to pump directly the water needed and save a lot of money. The distillation process is really water

consuming. That's why the same water is used twice. First is used to cool the stills, then, when is already warm, is used again for the bain-marie method.

Threats:

As is mention above, one of the bigger threats for the nearest future is to try to increase the export. So far only 10 % of the total income comes from foreign markets.

Something to make the brand well know also out of the Italian border need to be done.

An idea could be to increase the participation to international fairs and probably try to contact and promote the Grappa to Italian restaurants abroad.

Conclusions:

Marzadro S.P.A. it can be consider an enterprise that has been really successful on the actual market. The high quality of the product it deals is the main strength of this enterprise, and, the opportunity give to the everyone to observe the process of the entire production, is also an innovative strategy to sponsor and certificate its products. Betting on the high quality of the products it sell, and not on the quantity, it has been the best strategy specially in Italian market. The quality of the Italian products, from gastronomy to artisanal crafts, is what makes famous this nation all around the world. Probably, with the actual crisis, people buy less but they don't want to renounce to the quality. Now customers start now to realize that "we are what we eat" and, if some years ago was just a matter of quantity, now the people start to think at the genuine aspect of what they consume.

In Trentino this trend is starting to face also on agriculture. A lot of farmers are recently converting their crops in bio-crops, adopting specific cultural techniques and avoiding the use of chemicals. The products will probably be more expensive and not as big or as perfect in shape that the ones cultivated in the conventional way, but certainly they'll be healthier and more environmental friendly.

Being dynamic, is also one of the main strength of Marzadro S.P.A.. Try always to explore new solution, tastes and try to combine it with the classical ones is something that the enterprise really care. Marzadro want to offer to its customers the wider opportunity of choice that it can without, for this reason, renounce to the quality of its products.

The strategy of combining tradition with modern life style in both, the corporate building and in the products as well, seem to be the perfect marketing choice. If some years ago Grappa was just a product enjoyed by elderly people, now with the new flavors and new products offered from Marzadro, Grappa is well appreciated from all the ages and social levels.

Offering some other services is also a way to increase the business and attract to the factory potential buyers that, if satisfied from the received service, can came back again or suggest other people to visit it.

Sources of information:

- Interview with Fabiola Marzadro on April 19th,2010 and May 21st, 2010.

References:

- Marzadro S.P.A., 2010. Website. Available at: <http://www.marzadro.it>
- Trentino, 2010. Local newspaper "Trentino", Wednesday April 21st, 2010. Pag.10, economy page, Italian language.

Consorzio of Colli Berici

Nicola ANDRIGHETTO

Italy

Description of the case study

General information about the association

Consorzio Colli Berici-Basso Vicentino is the association of all the Pro Locos of the Colli Berici and South Vicenza Province Area. Pro Locos are associations, directly linked with municipalities, of volunteers who work to promote local heritage, products and to safeguard the environment. The Consorzio tries to coordinate all the activities of the different Pro Locos, and its office works as an information point for tourists (I.A.T.).

The main goal of the Association is to promote the area of Colli Berici as a tourist destination and to coordinate initiatives among different commercial activities. The main objective is to increase the number of tourists and makes the area more attractive at national and international markets.

The Berici Hills ('Colli Berici') are a group of hills in North-East of Italy, in Veneto Region, near Vicenza, originated on the bottom of an ancient sea over at least a hundred million years. The Berici Hills have a shape of parallelogram and with a total area of about 165 km². The profile is evenly curved, compact and not particularly high on the level of the plain. The zone is rich of Medieval Villas and particular flora.

It's important to remember that the Veneto region is characterized by a high number of tourists, that prefer more famous city (Venice and Verona) and seaside (Adriatic sea). So the association wants to increase the tourists in Colli Berici area that often is not known as a touristic destination and is abandonment by the inhabitants that don't find interesting commercial activities and prefer live in the city.

It's possible to find advertisement about this association at local press, internet, municipalities and web (www.colliberici.it). The association is financed by municipalities funds and by the incomes that derive from different activities. The main activities of the association are:

- Outdoor (natural and historical) trips with specialized guide
- Eno-gastronomical fairs
- Creation of map of trail for bike
- Creation of book (handbook for restaurants and hotels)
- Botanic course

As it's possible to see from these activities, this association wants to differentiate touristic offer, linking restaurants, hotels, sport association and farmers. For these activities the tourists have to pay a small fee to take part. As it's possible to understand the budget is limited, but with some opportunities to increase it.

The most valuable partnership of the Consorzio Colli Berici is between the association and different municipalities. This partnership is fundamental for the association because the municipalities can provide volunteers, infrastructures for the fairs and link with commercial activities.

Goal of the case study:

The main goal of this work is to offer innovative solutions to the association involving all stakeholders. It's fundamental to offer new possibilities of incomes and to involve more citizens in activities. The citizens involved can be farmers, students, restaurant hotel owners etc. The case study report aims to analyze the association and come up with some innovative ideas to improve the functioning of the Association being in favor of achieving its goals.

Description of the case process

This work was thought and partial done before the INNONATOUR, that was held in Suceava from 26th April to 6th May. During this IP course one case from Romanian contest very similar of this case study was analyzed. Through this IP course it was possible some improvements in the knowledge and in the competences. The case study analyzed in Suceava presents the same main goal of the Italian association (promotion of an area by the coordination of different activities), and also some weakness and problems are similar. The main difference is the kind of association. The Italian association considered is not NGO, so it’s possible to focus in alternatives incomes. Anyway first of all the main objective of the association is to try enlarge the links and involve others stakeholders, that live in the area.

For the Italian case study I provided information from web-site (www.consorziocolliberici.it) and from direct collaboration, indeed I took part to some activities organized by this association.

SWOT analysis of the case study

SWOT analysis for Colli Berici region

The region can provide a natural and historical heritage. The Berici hills can represent an interesting opportunity for a brief outdoor trip for the citizens of city. The farmers of the area are famous for the typical products like olives and wine. The forest and nature are particular and interesting, but they need maintenance, and in this moment the cleaning of forest is not economic convenient. For the forest maintenance is necessary external funds, but the region Veneto prefers gives money to the area more famous like Dolomiti and important cities. The area needs a public transport efficient also during Sunday. In the last years the hunters intensify their activity, they have the permission, but surely the presence of hunters can influence the tourism in a negative way.

Strengths	Weakness
Landscape (natural and cultural)	Public transportation (lack of efficient bus from the city)
Natural and cultural heritage	High prices of accommodations and restaurants
Fresh air	Competition with very touristic city
Proximity to city	Competition with mountains more famous
Typical Food	Area characterized by a strong presence of hunters that not allow others kind of tourism
Excellent infrastructures	The forest need cleaning and maintenance

The area and the actors of tourism in the last years try already to focus on some innovative ideas as the development of organic food and take advantages from the different attractions that Berici hills provide (historical and natural). It’s necessary to pay attention to the competition between actors and between activities and “hunters lobby”, that is very important.

Opportunities	Threats
Organic food	Competition between actors
Increase the value of attractions (historical and natural)	Competition with hunters activity
Different activities (also sport)	

SWOT analysis for the association

The association is surely well organized, even if the association is small and with easy organization. The association is not big and often is not known at regional level. The association utilizes in the best way the partnership with municipalities. It’s necessary to pay attention to the collaboration with municipalities, because this collaboration can be influenced by the political life. The website is good and presents all the activities in two languages (Italian and English)

Strengths	Weakness
Quality of web-page	Small budget
Simple structure	Association not known
A lot of new ideas	Strong dependence from political life and decisions
Collaboration with new ideas	

Opportunities	Threats
Attracting the world of university	No independent from political life
Collaboration with university	Not all citizens not attract from this association
Diversify the offers	
Taking advantages from nature potentials and historica	
Ecological activities	

Innovation proposal

I want to propose and develop two possible ideas as can be considered innovative. The first one is easier and more “political” and deals with the improvement with the partnership with University of Padova. The second one is very innovative, and maybe it’s more difficult to develop. This proposal is the creation of central for the production of heat from woody biomass. This proposal needs an significant investment by municipality (the Consorzio can coordinate different stakeholders) and an high level of technology

Problem definition:

- Association not known
- Forest not maintained
- Lack of ecological culture among citizens
- Guides with an academic career

The Innovation Plan

Idea one: The collaboration with University

Description of the present situation:

At this moment most of the guides are people very motivated but with just a passion of nature, without academic career and they requires a small income. Furthermore now the collaboration with academic world is low.

Utilization of this collaboration

My idea is to involve students that can do a role of guide without requiring an income. Indeed they can be guide as stage period, that university requires for the graduate. This collaboration can improve the image of association and the interest of teachers and researchers. The forest of the area need maintenance and new ideas to improve the quality of selvicolture.

Conditions and stages for realization:

- The will of partners (associations and university)
- Not bureaucratic problem from the university to create a stage into association
- A control by the teachers during the stages, the guides have to be trained

Collaboration with university of Padova (SWOT analysis)

The students can do the stage as guide during outdoor trip or hand book collaborators. At present, there is a requirement of the students to find a possible stage and this is can be an opportunity for the association to find cheap and young guide. This proposal can also improve the image of the association into the University and improve the relationship with the professor and researchers that led new studies in the area.

Strengths	Weakness
Cheap	Quick change of guided
Young and motivated guided	Necessity of coordination among guides
Image of the association	
Opportunities	Threats
Collaboration with university world	Necessity to check the quality of each student
Attract students	Old guides??

Idea two: The heat plant

Description of the present situation

At the present there isn't organization to collect woody biomass from prunings. All farmers and forest owners make cuttings during the year. The forest is often abandonment and there isn't cut to improve the silvicolture. In Italy at the moment there is a political will to develop ideas that are innovative for the ecological problems. The heat plant from woody biomass is considered a bio-energy. Another aspect is the will of the modern society to clarify the problem of CO2 emissions among citizens and children.

Utilization:

Obviously this proposal is ecological friendly and at long time can be economic convenient for the heating of some buildings. The plant can work with woody biomass deriving from different sources (forest, gardens, sawmill..). Another idea is the development of small area where the problems of CO2 emissions are explained in easy way to children. So it's possible the link with schools and environmental associations that can make easy the research of funds

The plant can heat a public building (school or municipality office), it is an idea that can reduce the emission of Co2 and can be a good example for the future. Maybe this idea can be utilized only as a project to improve the knowledge this topic, that will became an important sector for the future

Biomass central to provide heat (SWOT analysis)

Strength	Weakness
Ecological solution, good example for the area	Necessity of continue funds for the maintenance of the central
Funds for the government	Difficult coordination
Possibility to maintain clean the forest	
Cheap at long time for the heating	
Opportunities	Threats
Promotional image of the association	Pollution (is not real..), but the people don't want the central near own home
Development of the activities linked (ecological example and games for the children..)	Farmers can't accept this idea
Development of ecological ideas among farmers	Invest without considering the risk

Conditions and stages for realization:

- High funds
- Collaboration with municipality
- At least 1 professional to coordinate the project
- Collaboration with farmers and forest owners

Sources of information:

- The webpage
- The brochures of the association
- The knowledge of the area

National park Muránska planina

Dominica STRANSKA

Slovakia

Introduction (Description of the case study)

I'm supposed to make a case study on environmental and nature based tourism.

The case study company is: Guarding of a national park Muránska planina (tableland).

I had an interview with national park's stakeholder and after that I did SWOT analysis. I collected new information by phone interview.

History and Foundation

The guarding of NP Muranska planina is located in Revúca, the city near this national park. The enterprise was established 23th September 1997, by government regulation.

In the 19th century was this area a part of lordship Coburg. They took care about nature. Now the organization takes care about the nature and tourism in this area.

The guard has 12 employees: guarding chief, forestry man, works for environmental education, guards or a nature, zoologists, botanists, regional informatics, landscape painter and so on.

The enterprise Guarding of a NP Muranska planina is government organization. They offer some kind of activities: horse riding, national park has a special species of horse Hucul, they breeding them and do a hippo therapy. Bicycling on the mountain paths, mountain climbing and paragliding, skiing on the ski resort.

National park has a management style, they pay attention for a several kind of protection: regional protection, that means environmental protection, protection of a plant and animal species (they do a monitoring of endangered species), protection of inorganically segment of a nature, protection of a wood (they use wood selection) and protection of a biotopes (for example they cut the grass on rare meadows) and so on. They make a environmental activities for schools and environmental education for all ages groups.

Product (Services and Activities)

They offer some kind of activities: horse riding, national park has a special species of horse Hucul, they breeding them and do a hippo therapy. Bicycling on the mountain paths, mountain climbing and paragliding, skiing on the ski resort.

National park has a management style, they pay attention for a several kind of protection: regional protection, that means environmental protection, protection of a plant and animal species (they do a monitoring of endangered species), protection of inorganically segment of a nature, protection of a wood (they use wood selection) and protection of a biotopes (for example they cut the grass on rare meadows) and so on. They make a environmental activities for schools and environmental education for all ages groups.

Marketing and Competition situation

The enterprise Guarding of a NP Muranska planina makes advertisement and promotion on the internet and by educational agency. And also they have advertisement on the post cards. There is one other company who is working in the same branch in this area. The

Company compete and at the same time cooperate with Guarding of a NP Muranska planina, so if one company can not take all the customers, they recommend each other.

Insurance system

In my country every citizen has general insurance. But if somebody wants to go hiking or do some kind of extreme sport, must to have a special insurance. This special insurance is offered by local insurance agency.

The three pillar model

The enterprise Guarding of a NP Muranska planina is based on the three pillar model which is about ecological, economical and social impact.

a. Ecological impact

The aim of Guarding of a NP Muranska planina is to get the customers, especially from urban areas, a better understanding about environmental issues. It should be an achievement to “educate” not only the youngsters among us but also the older participants.

They pay attention for a several kind of protection of a nature and make a environmental activities for schools and environmental education for all ages groups.

b. Economical impact

The enterprise Guarding of a NP Muranska planina is government organization, so they don't have enough money for reconstruction of a paths or for specialists. The government gives the Guarding of a NP Muranska planina 20 000€ per year; this money is divided between equipments and employees' payment. The world financial crises didn't have a big impact for this company. But there is not to much financial sources for innovation programs and developers are buying a protected areas and built hotels.

c. Social impact

The demand on local products from the tourists site was that high that 80- 90 % of the traditional food is produced by the hotels, restaurants, inns and local stores. This company encouragement the development of vilages and development of local products.

Innovation plan

The breeding a special species of horse Hucul, and then using them for hypnotherapy is one of several innovation plans. The company use innovation strategy, they use the horses for the cultivate of specified meadows at Muranska tableland, conserve the biodivezity of a rarely meadows community and contribute to development of a tourism trade in this region. Another innovation plans are program for a conservation of a region, regulation of a growing tourism landuse and agriculture expoloatacion, to realize a project of a information center and terrain information system of a national park and to realize a project of practical management of the most endangered species and communities.

SWOT Analysis

Guarding of a NP Muranska planina strong points are they work actively on preventing polluting the nature and make co-work with schools and students. The employees are specialists and know how to protect the nature and natural sources. The employees have a good relationship with ZOO or caranteen station. That gives the customers chance to rescue the lost or hurt animal. The guard is working on a elimination of a deadly effect of a power line, they realize a project for rescue a frogs, when they doing a migration, they do a monitoring of endemits and monitoring of Lutra lutra(otter).

The weaknesses are that there is not enough co-operation with local and national responsible bodies on environmental issues. The company is government company, so they don't have enough money for their innovation plan.

Opportunities are that schools also work together with Guarding of a NP Muranska planina to increase the environmental knowledge among children. There is also a chance to get funding from the European Union which they should try to have.

Threat for the company is that they are dependent on tourism and on government money.

STRENGTHS

- ✓ Activities on waste collection and prevention
- ✓ Several kind of protection
- ✓ Realize a projekt for rescue
- ✓ Monitoring of endemits
- ✓ Working on a elimination of a deadly efect of a power line
- ✓ Specialist

WEAKNESSES

- ✓ Not enough money for their innovation plan
- ✓ not enough co-operation with local and national responsible bodies on environmental issues

OPPORTUNITIES

- ✓ Increase the environmental knowledge among children
- ✓ Get funding from the European Union
- ✓ Cooperation with schools on environmental activities

THREATS

- ✓ Dependent on tourism and on government money

Suggestions

In correspondence to the above described weaknesses we have developed for each of them the following suggestions in order to strengthen the company's position on the market.

- ✓ Better organization to attract more local and individual tourists
- ✓ Development of effective webpage
- ✓ Waste collection initiatives

In order to help the stakeholders to develop their business in a sustainable way

1. Development of effective webpage.

Nowadays the webpage is the face of the company and most often it is the place where the customer makes the first contact with the company

- ✓ All the information should be in different languages
- ✓ News for coming events
- ✓ Advertising banners for sport equipment companies, hotels, restaurants, etc. on contract basis

2. Better organization to attract more local and individual tourists

In accomplishment of this aim certain contribution would have the following initiatives:

- special event

- every saturday a different activity could be offered – rafting, cycling,tracking, climbing, horse riding
- potential customers are the students.The promotion could be done by posters at Universities, own webpage, webpage of universities, sport clubs of universities, more.
- full weekend nature experience, long trekking routes, long night with camp fire and local food, music, overnight in tents or huts

3. More activities to promote responsible attitude to the environment & Waste collection initiatives

- ✓ Summer Environmental Festival
- ✓ A musical event to promote waste collection and more responsible attitude to the environment.
- ✓ The possible sponsors could be: environmnetal fondations, other NPOs/NGOs, beer
- ✓ producers, artists willing to support the good cause, sport companies.

Tatranský Permon

Petra VACHOVÁ

Slovakia

Description of the case study

Name of the enterprise: Tatranský Permon, a.s.

Location: Podbanské ,High Tatras,

Business address: Pribylina 1486

Contact information:

Tel.: +421-52-471 01 11

Fax: +421-52-449 01 33

E-mail: hotelpermon@hotelpermon.sk, rezervacie@hotelpermon.sk

Web: www.hotelpermon.sk

Year established: 1990

Company background:

The beauty of Podbanske nature is complemented by the Hotel Permon -- with its unique architecture and assortment of available services, and total capacity of 300 beds. The hotel is one of the finest in the High Tatras, satisfying even the most demanding visitors.

Accommodation is provided in comfortably arranged rooms with balconies (single room, double room, three bedded room, possibility of extra bed). Each is equipped with TV set, radio, telephone and private facilities. Visitors can enjoy views of the beautiful High Tatras mountains.

Food services are provided in the hotel restaurant with wide assortment of Slovak cuisine meals and house specialities. A day bar and coffee bar offer a varied assortment of drinks. Our night club gives an exotic view of the hotel swimming pool.

Spacious surroundings and four meeting rooms in the hotel enable arrangement of various business gatherings and conferences.

Market and competition situation: Hotel's unique location is the biggest advantage because the centre of Štrbské pleso - centre of tourism in Tatras . Hotels like Hotel Crocus or Hotel Kempinsky. Hotel is cooperating with various partners such as Park Snow Štrbské pleso, Auto Palace Bratislava, Baby swimming, a.s., www.rodinka.sk, Alvacentre etc.

SWOT analysis

A SWOT is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective. The technique is credited to Albert Humphrey at Stanford University in the 1960s.

A SWOT analysis must first start with defining a desired end state or objective. A SWOT analysis may be incorporated into the strategic planning model.

- Strengths: attributes of the person or company that are helpful to achieving the objective(s).
- Weaknesses: attributes of the person or company that are harmful to achieving the objective(s).
- Opportunities: external conditions that are helpful to achieving the objective(s).
- Threats: external conditions which could do damage to the objective(s).

Strengths and **weaknesses** are often internal to your organization. **Opportunities** and **threats** often relate to external factors.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant prices • History • Location • No actual competitors in close surroundings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance from Štrbské pleso • Ecologically problematical areas in neighbourhood
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of surroundings • Teambuilding activities • Expand spaces and accommodation possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting ecologically problematical areas as a possibilities in surroundings even though their real state is not attractive

Strengths of Hotel Permon, we could say are the constant solid prices, which have now remained even through world economical crisis.

This Hotel has quite long history because it was built in 1990 and started as a 3 star hotel so it is well know among people around Slovakia and fact that it has gained fourth star is a sign of progress and continuing development of the hotel.

Another big strength is location. Hotel is situated close to the popular touristic destination Štrbské pleso so there is a great potential of surroundings and many possibilities for outdoor activities. Fact that there is a distance from this touristic centre can be advantage as well because it creates calm atmosphere and by this it has no competitor.

Opportunities

As already mentioned between strengths, surroundings of hotel have a great potential for outdoor activities. Complex of this hotel has wide spaces for activities of all kinds. For example spas are suitable for numerous of healing procedures and relaxing activities. There is conference room suitable for company meetings, cafeteria and common spaces for kids. Hotel is in forstar group of hotel but atmosphere there is very friendly and cozy and it feels that target group is not only for rich people or businessmen. There are possibilities for expanding the accommodation capacity.

Weaknesses

This hotel does not have many weaknesses but one could be that distance from Štrbské pleso can be advantage and disadvantage in the same time. People who want to do skiing or hiking have to drive their car up the hill which does not have to be comfortable for them. The other weakness can be bad ecological state of a few close areas which are stated between possibilities of surroundings. These places are Kôprová and Tichá valley. In case customer wants to visit these places they do not have to leave the best impression.

Threats

Last stated weakness is found to be threat in the same time because in information for tourist coming to this hotel these places is described as beautiful places but thanks to the extended harvesting activities which led to partial devastation of local ecosystem tourists can be quite disappointed.

Problem definition

Main issues to solve are how to attract more costumers. Management of the company does not have any preferences when it comes to the target group.

Other suggestion can be to work on innovation for general improving of services provided in hotel and how to make it as much economically efficient and how to

Another problem is how to attract more tourists during non- season time.

Innovation plan

This innovation plan is focused on giving the most detailed responds for the requirements of the management.

First of all I would like to focus on solving the weaknesses because those area parameters which can partially solve problem with attracting more costumers.

Problem, which is on the other side advantage as well, is distance from the main tourist attractive centre Štrbské pleso. Tourists have to use their own cars to get there for trekking or skiing and this can be problem because parking here is excessively expensive. That is why I would suggest provide shuttle bus for this place. In winter would be suitable to provide bus with possibilities for carrying skiing equipment and in summer is smaller bus needed. Hours which would shuttle run can be managed according to surveys of busy hours and destination could be ski slopes in winter and in summer it would be the main points for starting treks. This would make it much easier for tourists.

Another problem is with mentioned ecologically problematic areas. Probably it is not in competence of hotel to solve this local problem but at least they should mentioned this issue in tourist guide available for costumers so people will not find it as a threat. Additionally in case of big companies coming for team building etc. And in case of interest the hotel could provide and excursion to these areas with professional guide so it can make this place more attractive if people know all details about it.

Willingness of extending accommodation capacities and attract more people can be solved by building small cottages which could be in lower price category. This could provide more costumers from younger generation coming mostly in winter for skiing. Combination with already suggested ski bus would be really attractive for young people and these cottages could be really useful for families with small children, which demand their own cusine.

Than there could be special occasions in restaurant organized. For foreign tourists coming here could be interesting to experience typical Slovak evening with traditional food and music.

Connected to this occasions could be various concerts organised and in cases of big events on Štrbské pleso Hotel Permon as a partner could provide accommodation for participants which would be good advertisement as well.

Then I suggest cooperation with foreign and domestic tourist agencies or with hotel in other region of Slovakia because usually foreign tourists travel all around. This could be start of kind of hotel group but comparing to real hotel groups in this way each hotel would keep their uniqueness and can be competitive to the chains of hotels.

References

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Aventura Parc

Bianca Alexandra BOTEZ

Romania

Abstract

The goal of the case study work is to understand the innovation processes and innovation management. In order to accomplish that, I was searching for information about the enterprise I want to make my innovating plan and to and offer innovative solutions.

The innovation is not only the introduction of new product or services, but also the improvement of them, it's possible to integrate traditional system or product with new ones, because the consumer demands are different and the solutions are more. In my final report I was trying to find some ways in which Aventura Parc can improve his activity and most of all some innovative solutions for the present economical crisis.

Description of the case study

Aventura Parc S.R.L. is a franco-romanian company created in 2005. The Lucianca park opened for business on 2006, July the 14th, becoming the first nature adventure park in Romania. They consider themselves as a family entertainment center.

The park is located 18km from Bucharest in the Lucianca Forest, Butimanu city, Dâmbovița county, national road DN1A.

The owners of the park are : Cristina Rebiere and Olivier Rebiere (husband and wife) and they have a large professional experience in different fields, they worked in France, Germany, Belgium, Brazil, Iran si Romania. Also the have eight employees.

The values of the enterprise are:

Respect

- for nature.
- for the client, provider.
- for the teammate, superior.
- for the procedures.

Client

- is our guest in the park.
- we greet him(her) with a smile and being polite.
- we owe him(her) a quality service.
- we owe him(her) our salary.

Team

- communication is at first place.
- I represent the company and its image.
- I trust my colleagues.
- I help my colleagues in need.

Commitment

- I am ready to learn and to become better.
- positive initiatives are encouraged and recognized.
- I can promote according to my performance.

The **partners** of Adventura Park are:

- The international Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions
- Prichindelul meu
- Radio Romania Actualitati
- Gradinite Bucuresti
- Fun Rom Tur
- Xtrem
- Comune.ro

Aventura Parc Luciana **Attractions** are:

1. Three tree climbing tracks (2 for adults and children above 8 and 1 for children)
2. Tarzan's Liana
3. Mini golf
4. Petanque
5. Swimming pool
6. Children road track
7. Sport track with obstacles
8. Playing complex with toboggan
9. Inflatable castles
10. Little sand boat
11. Climbing wall
12. Several free games at your disposal at the terrace (ping pong, badminton, remi, backgammon, chess)
13. Archery

Short description:

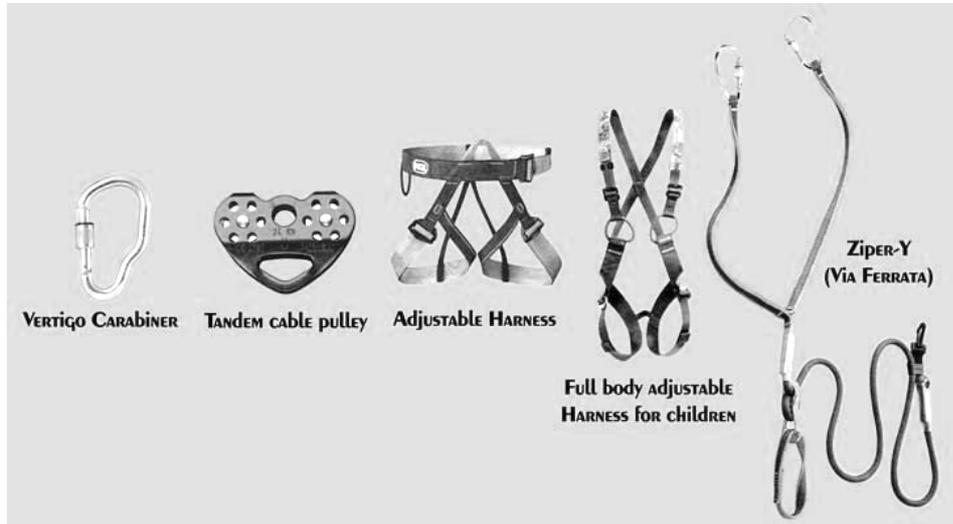
❖ **Three tree climbing tracks** (2 for adults and children above 8 and 1 for children)

Aventura Parc Lucianca was the first family entertainment center to launch tree climbing in Romania in 2006. In order to practice this extreme sport, **sportswear is compulsory**. For the time being, they have 3 tracks:

- **Green track:** This track is allowed for adults and children above 8 and min. 1m40 accompanied by an adult. After being fit out with harness, Zyper-Y, pulley, gloves, the participants must follow a compulsory training with our monitors before going on the track. „The green track” is about 4 to 5m50 high and is composed by 10 workshops: indian bridge, ascending flying fox, footbridge, net, Nepalese bridge, log, descending flying fox, see-saws, suspension bridge, flying fox landing.
- **Blue track:** This track is allowed for adults and children above 8 and min. 1m20 accompanied by an adult. After being fit out with harness, Zyper-Y, pulley, gloves, the participants must follow a compulsory training with our monitors before going on the track. „The blue track” is about 3 to 4m high and is composed by 9 workshops: climbing wall, Jungle Bridge, unstable bridge, small ladder, descending flying fox, hamac bridget, chinese bridge, suspension bridge, flying fox landing.
- **Yellow track:** "The squirrel track" is for children aged from 4 to 8 years old and below 1m40. The children are equipped by our trainer with full body harness, 2 slings with carabiners and helmet. Then, the children and the parents follow the training, read the regulations and can go on the track.

The yellow track is between 0,5 and 2 m high, composed by 7 workshops : Indian bridge, swing bridge, footbridge, log, Nepalese bridge, Big foot ladder, flying fox.

Tree climbing is an extreme sport and its practicing requires respecting the rules. They check the safety of the installations every day. Below you can see some of our individual protection equipment:



❖ **Archery:** For the curious and courageous ones who always wanted to be Robin Hood, they propose an archery initiation zone. You will follow a compulsory instruction before aiming at the target.

For the archery initiation zone you will pay an extra:

- 20 RON tax / bow, for 30 minutes
- 25 RON tax / bow (professional), for 30 minutes

❖ **Minigolf:** Whether if you are beginners or you already have some skills, no matter the age and occupation, Aventura Parc invites you to discover its 9-hole minigolf course. Also if you want to jump and have fun you are invited in two **inflatable castles**.

❖ **Children Road Track:** Children between 3 and 5 years old can enjoy the pedal carts; the other may use the scooters. Traffic signs and special markings are not missing.

Other activities that Aventura Park offers:

Aventura Parc is the perfect place for your **team building events**, located 18 km away from the Romanian capital, Bucharest. They have organized more than 250 Team building events in Romania and abroad (50 in Aventura Parc). Their goal: client's satisfaction/ professionalism.

The enterprise also offer different type of **parties** like: Adventurers ; Indian tribes; Medieval party; Murder Party; Swimming pool party

Aventura Parc also offers **sport and recreation activities** for schools like sport in nature, gardening and treasure hunt.

The park is open on Saturdays and Sundays according to the season and weather conditions; here are some prices:

Category	Low season	High season
Children under 2	Free	
Children 2-4	25 RON	
Children, retired	30 RON	35 RON
Groups (>10 pers), students	35 RON	40 RON
Adults (above 18)	42 RON	45 RON

- Low season: until 11.04.2010 + beginning with 04.10.2010

- High season: 12.04.2010 - 03.10.2010
- VAT included
- The entry ticket allows you to access all the attractions free of charge for one day ("tree climbing" zone inclusive)
- The entry ticket includes a 1% tax for the Red Cross
- Drinks and meals sold at the terrace, products sold in the shop are not included in the entry ticket

The also offer some discounts. For example if you use your previous entrance ticket and within the 30 day period from the date printed on it, the adults receive a discount on the fare, instead of 45 RON, you pay only 35 RON, and for the children, instead of 35 RON, you pay 30 RON. Party's / events' bracelets offer:

- During all parties and events organized at Aventura Parc, participants will get colored bracelets with a 5 lei-discount for an entry ticket written on it.
- In order to use this discount on the entry ticket, you have to come another day at the park with the bracelet.
- You may use maximum 2 bracelets / family.

Transportation is not provided by the enterprise but the location is connected to a public transport network. You can go there by car or by bus. By car if you start from the north railway station and then you go Calea Griviței, Bd. Bucureștii Noi, Mogoșoaia, Buftea, Crevedia and after 4 km, turn right by the yellow sign with the Squirrel. By bus Start from IDM Basarab, Towards Ploiesti or Targoviste via BUTIMANU.

The advertisement goes mostly mouth to mouth- they don't put a lot of investments in that particular sector. They have some advertisements on the national radio and the national TV channel, but they don't pay for it- they offer free accommodation and services to the advertising companies for exchange (barter). They also have posters and flyers in the schools in Romania and in other countries. They also have a web site, a Facebook page and twitter who is update daily.

Swot analysis

Strengths:

❖ *Website*

The web page is in Romanian, French and English, so it's very easy to a foreign to see what services are offered. Also the information is update and they have a Facebook page and a Twitter account.

❖ *Low Labour Costs*

In Romania the labor cost is very low comparing to other countries. The minimum salary is 600 Ron.(150 euro), comparing let's say to Spain where is 666 euro.

❖ *Family Business*

Is much easier to run the enterprise if is a family business, that way they can control all the aspects (with the help of the family members).

❖ *Hospitality.*

The Romanian's are the most polite and hospitable persons you'll ever meet.

❖ *Forest*

The forest is a huge strength because it offers a lot of possibilities. First of all, all the activities that they offer are taking place in the.

❖ *Good Prices*

I think that the prices are really good related to the services that they offer.

Weaknesses

- ❖ *Transportation* - You can go there only by car or bus. But the enterprise doesn't offer transportation, and the road represents another weakness because it is in a bad condition
- ❖ *Advertising* - The advertisement is made special in schools, fairs, radio, TV; but they don't have a constant budget for advertising, their investment in publicity is quite low.
- ❖ *Common bathroom* - It should be more bathrooms.
- ❖ *Irregular bus service at weekends*
- ❖ *Wildlife most visible in summer*
- ❖ *Busy main road through village*

Opportunities:

- ❖ *Low Land Costs*
- ❖ *Landscape*
- ❖ *Small number of high quality walks led by enthusiasts and with support from local business*
- ❖ *More visitors mean shop and pub will get increased sales*
- ❖ *Increase/boost local economy*
- ❖ *Tap into public transport network and increase services*
- ❖ *Potential to attract funding*
- ❖ *Move into different segments*
- ❖ *Proper inventory management*
- ❖ *Reduction in operating costs.*
- ❖ *Benchmarking to improve management practices.*
- ❖ *Online Websites*
- ❖ *Develop more attractions for theme park.*

Threats:

- ❖ *Infrastructure*

If the infrastructure continues to degrade there won't be any tourist to come there in conclusion the profit of the enterprise will go down.

- ❖ *Too many visitors might disturb residents and disrupt tranquility*
- ❖ *Reduction in bus services at end of peak season*
- ❖ *Health and Safety issues*
- ❖ *Insurance liability issues*
- ❖ *Employee retention*
- ❖ *Social and ethnic groups.*
- ❖ *Government policies*
- ❖ *High demanding market in terms of innovation.*
- ❖ *Increasing salaries and labor cost.*
- ❖ *Recession*
- ❖ *Maintain product differentiation.*

Problems definition

During the analyze I have found two main problems. *One of the problem* is represented by the winter months (November, December, January, February). In this time of the year the number of the clients is decreasing. The weather is too cold in this period and because all the activities are taking place outside the activity of the enterprise is dead. The *second problem* is coming from the infrastructure. The road to Aventura Parc is not so good.

Financial Crisis

The crisis influenced the enterprise in a negative way. Because of the crises the number of the clients decreased and they were forced to reduce the price for the products; they also start to give all kind of discounts.

Innovation plan

After a brief analysis about my case study “Aventura Parc” Company, I have run a brainstorming activity that collected some ideas about the future enlargement of firm supply.

Here the main ideas started for the immediate and concrete possibility the company has for developing a multiple-service based activities around the adventure park. Afterwards the brainstorming activity stepped into new ideas external from the main business as an alternative option for the company itself. The main focus was linked to the concept of local-based network and land promotion through local handicrafts or a provision of multiple-services for the local guests, in terms that the supply or company’s offer is suitable for a wider panel of stakeholders.

Some innovative ideas

1. Water recycling:

The cost of tap water is constantly increasing. The idea is to build a system for recycling grey water. The recycled water can be used in the WC, for washing cars, and for watering the grass and the flowers. They could also build a system for collecting rainwater and recycling it.

2. Solar Energy

Solar energy is stored by a transfer medium that can be either water or a solution of water with glycol. It is then stored in a heat accumulator called a solar tank that can be placed on the roof near the solar collectors or inside the building. The classic solar system is fixed on the roof together with the solar tank. Inside the solar tank, there is also an electric resistance as an aid for cold and cloudy days. The complex system is made up of the collectors that are placed on the roof, on the southern wall or in the garden, the solar tank with the circulation pump, the heat switches and the system’s automatic system, called a controller, which is placed inside the building.

The advantages of using the solar installation:

- » It does not require any fuel, and it is not influenced by price increases of classical fuels and of energy
- » Easy to set up
- » Cheap to exploit, minimal maintenance
- » Long life of functioning; over 20 years
- » Safe in its exploitation; no danger of fire, explosion etc.
- » Combined with a heat pump, ensures the existence of warm water all year round, thus reducing the energy costs by approximately 90 %
- » The solar system is non-polluting

3. Eco school

The classes consist of an introduction to the ecosystem, the importance of wildlife and the role it plays in the environment; a discussion of pollution, habitat damage and urbanization; and a question and answer session where the children get to ask their own questions and voice their own ideas.

4. Farm education

I thought that the training of the new generations could be a key solution for waste reduction in the surrounding area. Through the farm and the farm know-how the company may lead an internal soft-policy that could be a driven force or a symbol for the other farmers or stakeholders. So using this simple tool you may imprint an image in the young guys about how it is possible to have less waste just using a different ways of behave.

5. Art in forest

The use of the forest next to the enterprise could be improved by a permanent or casual local art exhibition in order to attract more people to the area. Basically, it is made up of path where you can wander around without getting lost and watching the pieces of art. The total investment should be considered almost zero!

6. Camping area

The last proposal regards a camping area. This facility is based on providing a space next to forest or in a place where you may host hundreds of people in tents or campers, caravan parking place. The main idea was to provide a facility for families offering those also cycling, hiking paths or horse riding. The investments could be something like 60.000 euro consisting bathrooms and parking place in two hectares of land both forest and agriculture.

Best Western Bucovina

Leonard BURTEA

Romania

Description of the case study

Casa de Bucovina - Club de Munte S.A , a trading company, was founded in March 1998 as a joint stock company with private capital, with six founding shareholders, Romanian legal entities. When the company was founded, the shareholders pursue the following objectives:

- identification of new partners interested in developing such a project;
- further promote and manage tourism complex

In 2002 it has been decided the affiliation to the hotel chain Best Western International. The affiliation agreement was signed in April that year.

Currently, the activities developed by the company is related to the operation of hotel Best Western Bucovina - Club de Munte Gura Humorului resort. Best Western Bucovina - Club de Munte is located in the vicinity of the famous painted monasteries of Bukovina, Humor Monastery 5 km and 6 km to Voronet Monastery. The hotel is also the best starting point for the so-called "tour of the monasteries" - with many tourist attractions: the church of salt from Cacica Catholic Cathedral, Marginea (the famous black pottery) , Putna Sucevita Moldovita Monastery Humor Monastery Voronet. Moreover, the hotel is located in an area filled with history and tradition and the specific landscape Bucovina add benefits to the tourist may have when choosing the Best Western Bucovina - Club de Munte.

As owner and operator of the Hotel Best Western Bucovina - Club de Munte, services with the highest share in the company's revenues are accommodation and catering.

❖ **Accommodation:** 130 rooms

24 double bedded rooms

60 twin rooms

38 single rooms

4 Junior Suites

Executive floor: 2 apartments, 2 VIP double twin

All rooms are equipped with minibar, cable TV, radio, telephone.

❖ **Food & Beverage Services**

Restaurant Casa de Bucovina - 180 seats

Porch House Restaurant - 70 seats

Terrace - 40 seats

Lobby Bar - 60 seats

❖ **Other services**

7 conference rooms with a total capacity of 550 seats

Spa area (sauna, Jacuzzi, Hamam) and fitness

Billiards

Parking for cars - 60 seats

Parking for coaches

Given that the hotel has the facilities, the company is able to offer clients a diverse package of services. Besides the accommodation and catering, the hotel offers:

I) services on the activities carried out in the hotel (indoors)

For individual customers: package mise-en-form: whirlpool, sauna, hammed, massage, fitness and spa area for corporate clients: the organization of events (conferences, trainings, seminars, symposia) in the July conference.

II) services for activities conducted outside the hotel (outdoors)

At the request of customers, the company can undertake the task of organizing a large number of cultural and sporting activities, such as visits to monasteries, visits to craft workshops of Bukovina, with fiddlers rustic tables, campfire, ram / calves on skewer, lamb to pot, etc. , trips to "green grass", paragliding, mountain climbing, mountain biking, river rafting, climbing, free ride skiing, horse riding, tennis, football, handball, basketball ...

Hotel Best Western Bucovina reach a wide public: itinerant groups, under the "circuit monasteries, individual tourists - Romanian and foreign - are on holiday and corporate clients. Customer structure of nationality, calculated from the entry into the hotel (August 10, 2002) and by mid-2006 indicates that 70% of hotel guests were foreign nationals. Customer structure by country of origin in 2004 is as follows:

- 30% Romanian
- 70% of the foreigners: Italy 18% Germany 11%, Austria 8%, France 3%, UK 6% USA 3%, Switzerland 3% Spain 4%, Portugal 1% Japan 3%, other countries 13 %.

Customer structure by country of origin in 2005 is as follows:

- Romanian 46.8%
- 53.2% of the foreigners: Italy 11%, Germany 8%, Austria 6%, France 4%, 3% UK, U.S. 3%, Switzerland 2% Spain 2%, Portugal 1% Japan 1%.

Investments for the company for high quality corporate services segment led to structural changes on the source of customers. If in 2004 the largest share of the customers came from working with travel agencies and corporate clients share was located only at 10% (of total nights), in 2006, corporate customers have grown to a weight over one third, while increasing their share and come on their own (which were presented to the hotel reception, without resorting to a travel agency). The situation is evidence of increasing recognition of the hotel in the region. For 2007, arrivals were presented as follows:

- Romanian 49.7%;
- 50.3% foreign.

At this point share of foreign tourists is on 50%.

Description of the case process

Gathering information was done in several ways using several sources. First there was a process of identifying and choosing these methods.

After this process were identified as follows:

Written-sources: private (specialized magazines) or public (printed by various government organizations in the field).

- Consulted newspapers and magazines;
- Contacting different associations, which includes hotel;
- Market research;
- Spot-on analysis;
- Meeting with employees or with a leadership position, etc.

I think the most important step in gathering information was made to interview employees and one in hotel management. In this way was made as detailed analysis of the issues that interested

us and that we have not found written in magazines and other sources. The interview mainly focused on the problems they have and if they have a strategy for the future.

SWOT Analysis

❖ Strengths

- Location: only 4 star hotel located in the historical area, the intersection of roads linking Moldova - Transylvania - Maramures;
- The only hotel in the area to ensure a high quality standard, the international customer and business requirements;
- Affiliated with an international chain, which gives potential customers confidence on the quality standard of facilities and services;
- warm and friendly staff;
- Modern Facilities.

❖ Weaknesses

- remoteness from major cities, the source of customers;
- eccentric placement is not an advantage for the organization of meetings at which participants from different parts of the country;
- relatively poor rail and air access from major cities (one direct train from night flights operate only during the season at high rates (in Suceava airport facility is not operating in winter);
- Location in a small town without attractions, events, devoid of modern recreational opportunities;
- Location in an economically underdeveloped area that does not provide a source of local customers;
- Shortage of qualified staff in hotels;
- The small number of third part providers for related services.

❖ Opportunities:

- cultural and spiritual richness given the existence of numerous monasteries;
- The beauty of the natural environment;
- Wealth and authentic traditions, the specific area;
- Bukovina - destination included the major tour operator agencies in tourism circuits promoted;
- Desire for new original tourist destinations;
- Local supply of services for conference segment is poorly represented (number and quality);
- Affiliation to the Best Western hotel chain to bring its contribution to customers.

❖ Threats

- Instability of economic, political and the social;
- depreciation and currency exchange rate fluctuations;
- financial blockage in the economy;
- Restructuring difficult to predict macroeconomic effects on the internal market.

Problem definition

The main problem is the competition in this area. Of course there are advantages over competitors, for example:

- only 4 star hotel in the area of large capacity;
- modern facilities, conference facilities;
- service quality;

- good location to the historical in the area;
- membership in an international chain hotel.

Unfortunately, these benefits do not outweigh the fact that fares are higher, sometimes much higher than the competition, even if the quality is superior. Many tourists during this time of crisis rather pay less than pay more for higher quality. Also there are travel agents for which this element is essential in choosing the hotel and not necessarily seek quality.

Financial crisis

The crisis has affected the whole tourism in Bucovina, hostels and even some hotels had to end or reduce their activity. After analysis we see how the crisis affected the hotel. First, it reduced the number of customers, the lower social classes in particular.

Secondly present customers are not willing to spend as much as they did before the crisis.

Innovation plan

Following the SWOT analysis we could see which are the main problems.

From here we can see how to solve these problems and even improved resulting in innovation. The main innovation brought to the hotel is extending its Arinișul (construction of a 3-star hotel on the river Moldova, investment value amounting to EUR 1.5 million, building a high capacity restaurant (approx. 300 persons) Arinișul Park area, raising the investment value is EUR 420 000).

Of course, there are a multitude of other innovations that are not as important or essential. All these innovations help the hotel to be more attractive and therefore have more clients. Still should be introduced any new or old should be improved. For example to have a price policy. Not everyone can be accommodated at the same prices. Also prices should be compared with the services and prices offered by competitors.

Another innovative element appears to be a loyal customer club hotel.

Solar panels for the environment and not only (reduced cost of energy). Organizing a festival or specific area of winter sports competitions would be an attraction for tourists;

In terms of personnel, there must be team-building period. Also, all employees should participate in courses and specialization.

We all know that tourists want to taste as many types of dishes of the region. Introducing a wide variety of cuisine would be a key element for attracting tourists.

Popas Turistic Bucovina

Leonard BURTEA

Romania

Description of the case study

Name of the enterprise: SC POPAS TURISTIC BUCOVINA S.R.L.

Location: Sucevita, Suceava County

Business address: 727 510 Sucevita no. 330, Suceava County - Romania

Contact information: Tel, fax +40 (0) 230 417 000, info@popas.ro, web www.popas.ro

Year established: 1991

Company background: 20 years ago two partners start an ambitious business in tourism. Now, quality and professionalism of the entire staff can ensure for everyone a comfortable place in the heart of Bucovina. "It's a family business, wasn't easy but what make us special is our heart!" (Marketing manager)

Number of employees: 42

Legal form of enterprise: SRL (Romania)

Persons engaged in managing the enterprise (chief executive manager): The entrepreneur is the proprietor of this business. The management of this business is assured of the family, because Popas Turistic Bucovina is a family business.

Annual turnover: Annual turnover was 1811230 lei - 452807 E in 2008 and the profit was a little bit past 4200 E.

Market and competition situation: Popas Turistic Bucovina is a Touristic complex of 3*** and 4**** that offers:

- Holiday village
- Camping caravans
- Restaurant with 400 seats
- Open terraces
- 2 conference rooms (projection screen, flipchart, video, Wireless Internet access).

Also they can offer:

- Memorable trip with vintage train
- Hunting and fishing
- Rafting and river raft
- Riding horses, bike rides
- Playing tennis
- Ski slope (300 m)
- Live music

In that area we can find a couple of pensions and similar accommodation places. The services are similar. Sucevita is known as a touristic place because of the Sucevita Monastery and the beauty of the place.

About the competition we can say that in that area there are more that 15 pensions and 5 hotels, and we can mention Memory Pension, Casa Rares, Poiana de Vis, Sophia or other ones.

Partners: Travel agencies, local mass-media, tourism magazines. Popas Turistic Bucovina is member of Bucovina Tourism Association. Some of the most important partner are the Betty Ice Company, the Carpatica Bank and Credit Europe Bank. Popas Turistic Bucovina has important collaborations with travel agencies from Bucharest, Cluj or Timisoara.

Description of the case process

“Rural Development Tourism/Services” was the main theme of my study because Popas Turistic Bucovina is located in a rural touristic area and the steps for completing my final report were:

- a. First of all I met the entrepreneur and I collect some general things about the business. I used, also, the internet, my experience of being client there and some others articles from mass-media.
- b. After participating of this IP Course were I found a lot of new and interesting things about rural development, about innovation and touristic business I completed this final report.

The main method used was the SWOT analyses, defining the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats observed after the inspection of the place and the interview with the stakeholder.

SWOT analysis

A SWOT is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective. The technique is credited to Albert Humphrey at Stanford University in the 1960s.

A SWOT analysis must first start with defining a desired end state or objective. A SWOT analysis may be incorporated into the strategic planning model.

- Strengths: attributes of the person or company that are helpful to achieving the objective(s).
- Weaknesses: attributes of the person or company that are harmful to achieving the objective(s).
- Opportunities: external conditions that are helpful to achieving the objective(s).
- Threats: external conditions which could do damage to the objective(s).

Strengths and **weaknesses** are often internal to your organization. **Opportunities** and **threats** often relate to external factors.

STRENGHT	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant prices (for 3 years) • Space potential (area) • Potential of surroundings • Activities • Ski slope (the only one from Sucevita) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition • Advertisement • Transportation • cooperation
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of surroundings • Sport area • Surroundings • Cooperation • Teambuilding activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal approach to guests • Old information on the web site

Problem definition

The manager of the business told me about a single problem, the infrastructure of the area. The road from Campung Moldovenesc to Radauti is broken because of the trucks that transport wood from that area to Radauti. Near Radauti is one of the biggest wood processing factory from Europe, Egger. In that way the access from Campung Moldovenesc to Sucevita is difficult for

tourists and they chose another way and, of course, another place for accommodation. Also, if you go in that area you can see the negative impact of the factory for the environment (foto taken from a local newspaper Monitorul de Suceava – www.monitorulsv.ro)



Present economical world crisis and the enterprise

The current economic crisis has resulted in decreased number of tourists throughout the country, Romania was the last in Europe in terms of occupancy in hotels. However, economic crisis has led Romanian choose Romania as a tourist destination in the detriment of other countries and this thing was a positive one for the hotels from Bucovina.

The present economical crisis has a positive influence for Popas Turistic Bucovina. Below (Fig. 1) it’s presented the evolution of the annual turnover and the net profit between 2006 and 2008 (the company did not published the financial report for 2009 yet):

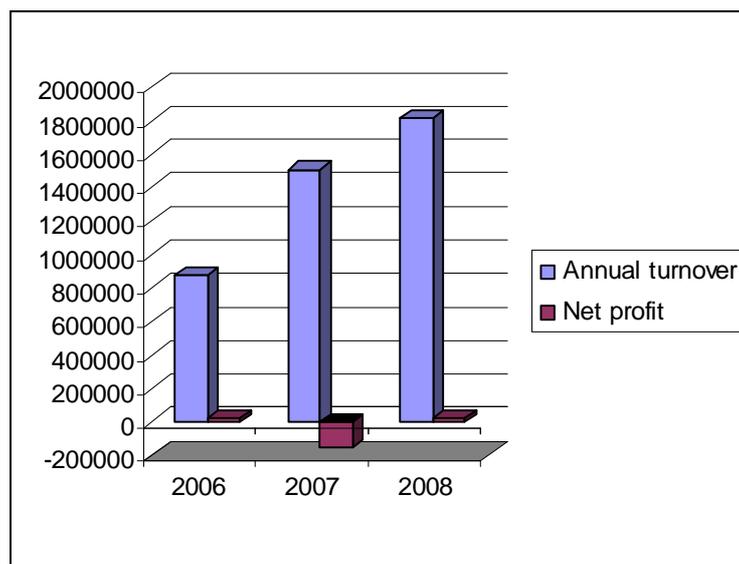


Figure: The evolution of the annual turnover and the net profit (RON)

From the above diagram can be seen an evolution of the turnover and, also, we can see that 2007 wasn't such a good year for the business because they had a 151564 lei lost.

Innovation plan

It is difficult for me to find a solution for that two problems: infrastructure and pollution because the management of Popas Turistic Bucovina can't do anything for that. It is a local and county problem and, as we know, a country generality.

In spite of all that thing I think that advertisement is a solution and in that way they can attract much tourists. They can use the experience and the name of the business and all the history from that area. Also they had important guests that really liked that place and they can use they manes for advertisement. I tried to do this thins in the poster for the IP course (annex no. 1)

References

- IP Course
- www.popas.ro
- www.monitorulsv.ro
- www.egger.ro

Alpinexpress

Andra Iuliana GHEORGHIU

Romania

Foreword

The goal of the case study work is to understand the innovation processes and innovation management.

Description of the organization and the innovation

History and Foundation

It all started in 2000 as a bold idea of 3 enthusiastic young men far too stubborn to commit to a 9 to 5 kind of life .

Alpinexpress was born in a small mountain town in Bucovina right at the border with Transilvania and the whole point was to live by “the old ways”, as free and wild as possible.

Team

The team consists of PAUL CONSTANTIN TARANU (24 years old) with 8 years of experience in trekking, hiking, rock/ice climbing, ski, ski-tour, 4 years of experience in caving, mountain bike, canyoning and orienteering, and CATALIN NEGRU (26 years old), resident pediatrician, passionate about photography, caving and mountains.

Paul Constantin TATARU

Activities:

- professional guide
- Mountain Rescue Volunteer-4 years
- masters degree in Geography and Tourism
- Member of the expedition Caucaz2004 - Elbrus peak-5642 m (18510 ft)
- 2 years experience as a DJ- Radio Orion-Vatra Dornei
- 2 years- Industrial Alpinism
- RED CROSS-First aid license
- RED CROSS volunteer
- BASE LIFE SUPPORT license
- SURVIVAL SCHOOL graduated
- Image promoter-American Experience
- Assistant manager-SC Ecolution SRL (www.ecolution.com)



Catalin NEGRU

Activities:

- Mountain trekking and hiking in Gutai Mountains: Creasta Cocosului, Ignis, Pietrosu Rodnei, Apuseni, Padis
- Member of 3 MASH(Medical Adventure School Holiday) editions
- Member of 1 BSMA (Black Sea Medical Adventure) edition
- Member of The Red Cross Arad (2000-2006).
- 4 Basic Life Support certificates.

Equipment and activities

Alpinexpress has its own equipment: two boats with 10 seats, one boat with 6 seats and one boat with four seats for routes with high or low difficulty of 45,90 or 180 minutes on Bistrița, Someș or Criș River. They own equipment and have trained staff for a big range of activities like:

- 🏔️ Guided Mountain tours: Trekking & picture hunting in Cheile Turzii, Cheile Aiudului, Vadu Crisului, Platoul Padis, Vatra Dornei, Pietrele Doamnei in RARAU, Cheile Galbene, Cetatile Ponorului, Rosia Montana, Retezat, Parang, Fagaras
 - 🏔️ Alpinism: “Alpinexpress” is open to personalize the itineraries so they best fit anyone’s willing
 - 🏔️ Survival Camps: sheltering, finding food and water techniques, Base Life Support course, orienteering.
- Your "get out of trouble" course
- 🏔️ Boat fishing Trips: Fishing on lakes or Black Sea



- 🏔️ Kayaking & Canoeing: Bistrița river, Someș river, Criș river
- 🏔️ Mountain Climbing
- 🏔️ Picture Hunting
- 🏔️ City Walking/historical Tours
- 🏔️ Paragliding: clients get one flight up to 2 hours in the air, assisted by professional paragliding instructors
- 🏔️ River Rafting & Tubing
- 🏔️ Winery Tours and Wine Tasting
- 🏔️ Skiing & Snowboarding
- 🏔️ Horseback Riding
- 🏔️ Mountain Biking

Team building

Alpinexpress organizes activities based on active tourism for individual persons (tourists) or team-building activities for firms. All activities are developed in nature, and the firm utilizes only equipments that don't endanger the environment.

Alpinexpress utilizes the "nature gifts" that the Bazinul Dornelor beneficiates: the water for rafting or the boats ride on Bistrița, mountain ranges for nature observation, cliffs for rappel or climbing (nature based resources).

Services offered

All programs offered by the Alpinexpress pursue besides offering additional options for spending time for tourists, specific objectives of human resources:

- achieving team cohesion,
- improving communication among team members and between team and external environment,
- increasing responsibility,
- develop self-esteem,
- conflict resolution in the team, by the team,
- discovering and developing leadership qualities.

Alpinexpress, within its programs, offers something unique in the area, and also offers additional options for spending time for tourists (both to tourists as to big companies).

Marketing and Competition situation

Alpinexpress makes advertisement and promotion on their own internet web page, offering information on the wide range of activities they have, the equipment, the experience of the staff possible routes and the prices for each activity. Also they promote through other sites (sites used by young people: one of them being Twitter) where they have put the contact details and short presentation of Alpinexpress.

There are a lot of other companies and a lot of independent persons that are working in the same branch but there is a very good co-operation between them so they can satisfy the client.

Insurance system for the client

Unfortunately Romania (referring to the private companies and banking system) hasn't yet implemented an insurance program for adventure activities. Consequently Alpinexpress can't offer insurance for its customers, so each of them should have their own insurance. The companies that come for team building activities must have own insurance for their employees. Prior to the activities, each client signs the regulation of the company, so in case of an accident, the company is not held responsible.

Opportunities

Considering the fact that Romania has something for everyone (from the natural wilderness of the Danube Delta to the bustle of Bucharest, the cultural gems of Transylvania, or the soaring peaks of the Carpathians) Alpinexpress can take advantage of these opportunities and expand.

Regarding the opportunities that the enterprise has, there is the possibility to collaborate with the private and public environment, and also there is the possibility to implement projects with external funding.

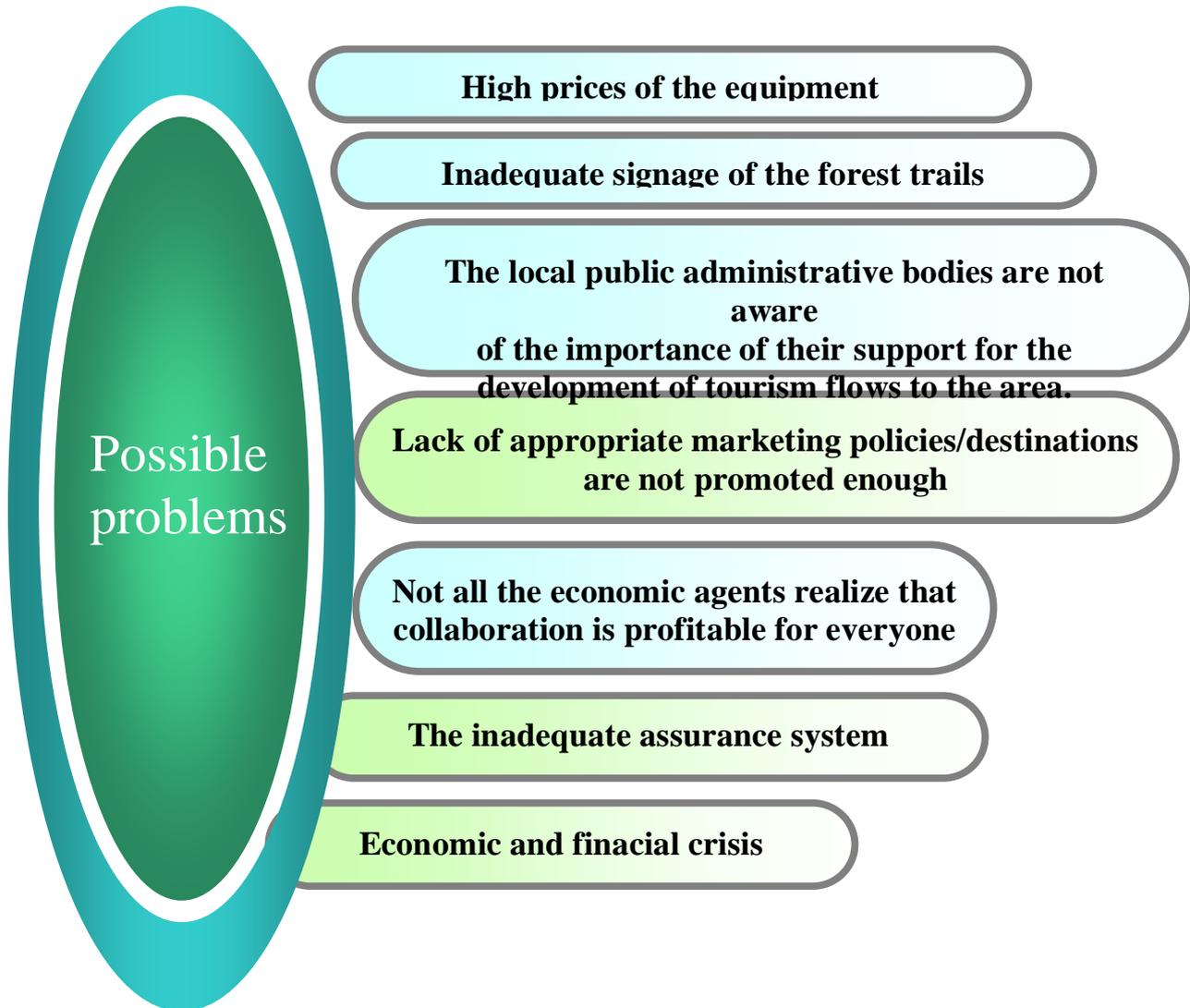
This is a growing business because:

- of the growing number of people seeking for a rush of adrenaline

- of all the opportunities that nature offers

Possible problems

The enterprise confronts with the existing rivers pollution that destroys the beauty of the place. Another problem would be that not all the economic agents realize that collaboration is profitable for everyone. Also, the equipment prices are very high and concerning that some equipments must be replaced periodically, the total costs are quite high.



The enterprise also confronts with the inadequate assurance system (both tourists and firms), situation caused with the Rumanian assurance system. The problems also come from the rigorously collaboration with the public administration.

When the financial crisis started, they lost many of these customers. Also the customers for long stay were gone. If nothing is done to the pollution in the river and nature around it, it will not attract people to visit there and use

The financial crisis caused a big client loss. The client doesn't have any more the financial resources to invest in trips and entertainment for their own benefit, so the type of activity that Alpinexpress offers becomes a "luxury product". The have to implement an innovation plan for the business.

Innovation categories

Alpinexpress has to innovate at the product and process level offering better quality products and services. The innovation should be at the organizational and the technological level also, improving the structure of the company for a better management.

At the product level, the company tries every year to improve and diversify the range of products so they can keep the old clients entertained all the time and willing to come back, also rewarding their loyalty with very good prices and great offers (bring other 5 friends, and you come for free; 25% off, for groups larger than 10 persons; 10% off, for family groups).

With time, they have tried to introduce new services (new itineraries and routes).

SWOT Analysis

The strong points of Alpinexpress are that they offer discount packages to clients that bring friends, to large groups of people and to clients that bring their families along. They also have a big advantage because they own the equipment that they use and they don't have to pay rent every month for it. Also the wide range of activities and the trained staff enables them to attract new clients every day and to their work safe.

Among the weaknesses we mention the fact that they don't use UE funds to take full advantage of the market opportunities and they don't cooperate enough with local and national responsible bodies on environmental issues. Also they don't invest enough money for local and regional publicity.

There are a lot of opportunities on the market for the company, and between them is the cooperation with the other companies from the same field to meet consumer needs.

A great threat is the economical and financial crisis for the company because a big number of clients can be lost. Also the pollution is a big threat because the clients could change his choice of destination.

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Discount packages for more people and longer stays (bring other 5 friends, and you come for free; 25% off, for groups larger than 10 persons; 10% off, for family groups). ✓ Owned equipment (two boats with 10 seats, one boat with 6 seats and one boat with four seats) ✓ Trained staff ✓ Wide range of activities 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Web page is not updated ✓ They don't make enough publicity at a local level (on TV, radio and mass-media), and they don't explore all market opportunities ✓ Not enough cooperation with local and national responsible bodies on environmental issues ✓ They don't use UE funding
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cooperation with tourist agencies ✓ Implement projects with external funding ✓ Cooperation with the other companies from the field 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pollution ✓ Economical and financial crisis

Conclusions and recommendations

To sustain the innovative idea for the area and durable development of the project, it is very important to co-operate with the interest groups from all levels.

In the innovational process it is important the role of the public policies and actors because it assures sustainability to the ideas of the Alpinexpress partners. It is important to attract them, by involving the public sector (the Municipality) in this project.



The West Hotel

Paul IVAN

Romania

Abstract

This case study aims to find the best solutions in terms of tourism management unit. Also using the principles of innovation in tourism management approach, we tried to define guidelines for strategies of the studied unit.

Regarding tourism in Suceava (and Romania), we talk about tourism potential huge unexploited. From tourist point of view, Romania has remained from neighboring states such as Hungary or Bulgaria. However, prospects are encouraging, with Romanian tourism likely to become competitive.

Case study description

The West hotel it's a two stars hotel that started in 1993 with offering accommodation and meals in a restaurant. The business started with the first floor, then continued with the second level and today the hotel counts 18 rooms structured as:

- 12 twin
- 2 matrimonial
- 4 apartments

Now, the restaurant is used only for private parties which offers only breakfast for the clients and the hotel profile is defined in recent years as a hotel for business.

The company is located on Humorului Street, no.58, Suceava, Romania which is very near to the center of Suceava city. The West Hotel have also a webpage on the WestTourism travel agency's website at www.westtourism.ro/cazare.php.

The services offered by this hotel are:

- Housing
- Bar and lounge
- Pool and games
- Conference room and business meetings
- Birthday parties

The prices are:

- Twin room: 80 RON per day
- Apartment: 100 RON per day
- Breakfast: 10 RON per person

The major business partners are represented by the major suppliers and travel agency that is part of parent company. The hotel has a total of three competitors, according to the manager, not using the most ethical practices. The advertisement goes mostly mouth to mouth - they don't put a lot of investments in that particular sector.

The annual turnover (2009): 160.000 lei (40.000 Euro)

Target: Business people and companies

Occupation:

- 2008-2009: 80%
- 2009-2010: 50%

How did influence the present economical world crisis the enterprise

The crises influenced the enterprise in a negative way. Because of the crises the number of the clients decreased and they were forced to reduce the price for the products; they also start to give all kind of discounts for to attract customers.

SWOT analysis of the enterprise

Strengths:

- Good Prices – The prices are really good related to the services that they offer.
- Hospitality – The Romanian's are the most polite and hospitable persons you'll ever meet and our hospitality it's well know everywhere.
- Business tradition.
- Manager's experience in tourism services.
- High touristic potential of the zone with a lot of touristic attractions.
- Family Business – It's much easier to run the enterprise if is a family business, that way they can control all the aspects (with the help of the family members).

Weaknesses:

- Advertising – They don't have a constant budget for advertising, their investment in publicity is quite low.
- The website – They have a very small webpage with less information about the company
- One-way street closure (2,6 km) – The clients from Suceava city have to make a huge detour for arriving at the hotel

Opportunities:

- Developing the city landscape
- Increase/boost local economy
- Potential to attract funding
- Move into different segments
- More visitors mean increased sales
- Reduction in operating costs
- Benchmarking to improve management practices
- Online Websites

Threats:

- Recession
- Decrease local economy
- The competitors
- Employee retention
- Government policies
- Health and Safety issues
- High demanding market in terms of innovation
- Increasing salaries and labor cost

Conclusions

During the analyze I have found three main challenges: reduction of economic activities, one-way street closure (2,6 km), 3 competitors. After a brief analysis about my case study I have run a brainstorming activity that collected some ideas about the future enlargement of firm. My recommendations are:

- Developing a much better website
- Increase the advertising of the company and her services
- A contract with a catering company to provide lunch and dinner in restaurant
- Organizing an annual event to become hotel logo (a festival or a big party)
- Development of targeted customer groups

Sources of information

- The company manager
- The company website

Casa Elena

Andrei RUDEANU

Romania

Description of the case study

General information about Casa Elena

Casa Elena was founded in 1999 from a idea that came from a family who wanted something else for those who will come and visit the area .

So at the beginning they started with only one villa with six rooms and a small breakfast restaurant.

After three years in 2002 other three villas appear on the plan of the stakeholder; customers started to come more and more ,and the accommodation space wasn't enough, and no restaurant for lunch and dinner.

So that later in the same year the restaurant was built and the name was proper for the area "Casa Taraneasca", that had 140 seats and where you could eat every traditional food that your heart desired.

In 2007 the final construction was finished, a hotel with 14 rooms that where at the highest standards of a 4* resort.

Regarding the restaurant, other 200 places where distributed as 3 therases and a restaurant for groups and weddings.

In 2009 the conference room was built with a total number of seats of 150.

Goal of the case study

The goal of the Casa Elena was to offer services higher than any guest house around with prices that could be afforded by more than 50% of the visitors.

Description of the case process

After one and half years in which I found out about Casa Elena more than I could want, and a long discussion with the stakeholder, I realized that despise the good commercial that Casa Elena had in the country and not only ,there where still problems that are not yet resolved.

I am trying to give some solutions for the stakeholder and I think that I can make some of the ideas applicable.

SWOT analysis on the case study

SWOT analysis on the area

Strengths	Weakness
Landscape (natural and cultural)	Public transportation (lack of international airport
Natural and cultural heritage	Image of Romania
Fresh air and water	Infrastructure
Accessibility by car	Garbage
Food	Dust
	Lack of funding from Municipality

	Distance from the capital
Opportunities	Threats
Better infrastructure	Transilvania
Tourism	Environmental problems
Nature keeps natural	Government
Different activities, common offers	

SWOT analysis on the resort

Strengths	Weakness
Landscape	Not enough parking area
Biggest in the area	Image of Romania
Fresh air and water	Infrastructure
Accessibility by car	Garbage
Food	Dust
Close to the monasteries and park	Not efficient playground for children
Opportunities	Threats
Better infrastructure and parking area	Transilvania
Collaboration with competition	Other guest house are built by same project
Hire a manager that	Prices remain high regarding the crisis
Talk to customers often	Weather

Promoting area for families

More attractions for families(water park, alternative zoo)	Other region competition
Friendly pets	Competition between stakeholders
Create more playgrounds for children	Bad treatment for the animals
Landscape and nature	Lack of rounds
Fresh air, clean water, opportunity to fish and barbeque	Big distance
Quiet	No public transportation
Opportunities	Threats
Promotional packages for families	Focus on limited target groups
New image of Bucovina area(international promotion of Bucovina as area keeps friendly)	Stakeholder can't accept this idea
Focus on all target groups	Invest without considering the risk

Problem definition

- Not enough space to park
- Competition is rising
- Loss of customers
- Loss of employees
- High prices
- Same food

How did the present economical crises influence the resort?

In 2 years the income of the resort is so low that the stakeholder is borrowing money from the bank, this had never happened before ,in 2007-2008 the income was around 600.000\$ and in 2010 the total income so far is around 100.000\$.

They are now considering selling the resort because they are close to bankrupted.

The Innovation Plan

It is better to have lower prices with same quality:

Strength	Weakness
More will come	Same expense and less money
Affordability	More investment in expenses
Eliminate the competition	Pride of the stakeholder
Customers will stay longer	
Opportunities	Threats
Customers will stay more than a weekend	Loss of stars
The month income will be higher	Stakeholder can't accept this idea
Focus on all target groups	Loss of high place customers
Students will come more often	Other competition
	Competition between stakeholders
	Bad treatment for customers

Sources of information

- Interview with the stakeholder
- www.cazare.ro
- Brochures

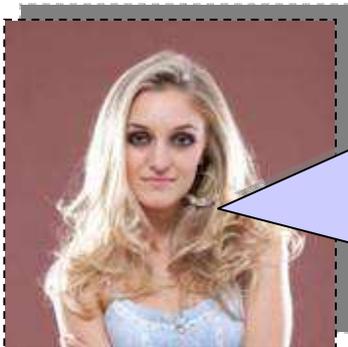
TESTIMONIALS OF THE PARTICIPANTS



We would have missed a lot if we haven't joined this course! It was on all the bases, like: social, scientific approach/strategies and in general a productive time with lots of new experiences which we're definitely sure it will be helpful for our future. -> Especially seen on the new contacts and friends we have made. Thank you very much for organizing!
(Katharina and Matthias from Austria)



I had a great time in Suceava! Everything was perfect - the organization, the team, the lecturers, the excursions etc. The most important is that I had the chance to learn new interesting things and to enrich my knowledge in the field of tourism. Everything was assured, so I didn't miss anything during my stay. The hosts were very hospitable and polite and made us feel like home! Thank you for everything and keep in touch!
(Eliza from Bulgaria)



The INNNO NATOUR IP Course In Suceava was a really pleasant and useful way to spend two weeks. First, I learned more about Romania, about its traditions, culture, economic situation etc. Second, I was very pleasantly surprised by the city of Suceava, which was very nice and offered us different ways for cultural and entertainment experiences. The University was really nice, we had all the necessary conditions for pleasant and useful work. The organization of the whole event was at a very high level, so our program was full every day with interesting lectures, team work, excursions etc. I really appreciated all the lectures and learned a lot from them. The tutors of our team were very friendly and helpful. During the two weeks I improved my English speaking skills, practiced my presentation skills and met some interesting people from all over Europe. That's why I learned about culture and life in countries, other than Romania. I enriched my knowledge about tourism and especially innovations – which were very helpful, so I am sure I'll soon put it into practice in Bulgaria. I enjoyed Bucovina area too, the nature was great and I tried rafting for the first time, which was a lot of fun. Writing of the report and the final presentation really made me realize the true meaning of innovation. I don't regret taking the IP course. I was my first IP course and I am really glad so I think I will go to some other similar courses in the future if I have a chance.
(Teodora from Bulgaria)



My participation as a tutor in the Inno Natour IP course was great and truly a never-to-be-forgotten experience. I had a chance to meet great, professional and always ready to help local organizers from the University. Last but not least I think of students from different corners of Europe who contributed greatly to the success of the whole event through their commitment, motivation and creativity.

Taken together my experience will always make me to return.

Again I have to thank Carmen and Alina ☺

(Magdalena from Slovakia)



I remember with warm feelings the time spent in Suceava. It was a great combination of creative environment, motivated students and international team spirit. I think the course brought all participants essential knowledge and experience while at the same time it was a chance to meet interesting people and enjoy Romanian traditions. I would like to express my acknowledgments to the local organizers for always being helpful, for the hospitality I felt every day, for giving me the chance to be part of all that. I wish them many more such successful courses!

(Tsvetelina from Bulgaria)

This brochure contains the results of the Erasmus IP Project INNO NATOUR - Innovation in Nature Based Tourism Services, 09-EIP-RO SUCEAVA01, developed at Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, 2009-2010

