

KEY CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPED TRAVEL DESTINATIONS



New mechanism for public-private collaboration, data, and supralocal brands... Developed travel destinations looking to regain competitiveness in the 21st century must face three challenges.

The first challenge: triangular relationship

The first challenge has to do with the profound changes experienced in the tourism value chain. This chain could be seen as a line that goes from the visitor to the destination, going through consultants, tour operators, transport, accommodation, etc., with all parties working in a certain legal framework and with the support of some public infrastructure services, security, cleaning, etc.

But in that chain, a new party has appeared and its voice is even louder than ever: the inhabitants.

There is a triangular relationship coming together between public administrations (increasingly focused on management and not just promotion), the private sector, and the local community, which demands to have a voice in the design of travel destinations.

“The tourism entrepreneur can no longer work isolated from his environment,” says Ángel Díaz. It is time to assume new responsibilities, Díaz added.

Paraphrasing Kennedy’s famous speech, tourism companies should be said: Don’t ask what your destination can do for you but ask what you can do for your destination.

It’s recommended to destinations that are committed to new mechanisms and strategies promoted by administrations to facilitate the interrelation between all the parties involved.

Second Challenge: Data

In this new triangular relationship of the value chain where inhabitants have come to play a visible role, knowing their concerns and how they feel about tourism becomes strategic information when planning and designing destinations.

The data tells us that citizens, while not enthusiastic about tourism, see it as something positive. There is a general idea that it is an engine for the economy and the image of a territory/region.

However, those same citizens also start to perceive risks in tourist activities itself, even if they are not affected by them directly. In general, people surveyed complain about mass tourism and the tourists’ inappropriate or rude behavior.

Third Challenge: ‘Superbrands’

When moving through an increasingly global world, developed travel destinations will have to rely on ‘superbrands’ that allow them to reach new markets and obtain profits.

Mobility, thanks to modern public transport. Nowadays, tourists can explore a radius of 100

kilometers without feeling that they changed destinations.

An example would be how tourists who travel to megacities such as London or Paris and staying in one place can move in a 100 kilometer radius, while feeling that they are simply discovering new areas of the same destination.

In this sense, for example Barcelona as a brand has room to integrate other destinations in its surroundings, whether they are mature or less known, and each one being able to maintain its uniqueness and identity.

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