Tailor-made tourist marketing communication: the advantages of adapting to the culture of the target group

Marinel Gerritsen

Radboud University Nijmegen
www.marinelgerritsen.eu
M.Gerritsen@let.ru.nl

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Three aspects of marketing communication of a tourist area that will be dealt with

a) Content of the information
b) Communication media
c) Communication style
Outline of the paper

1. A model and a hypothesis that indicate that responding to the culture of a target group might be an important device in attracting tourists

2. Which elements of culture should be tailored to the target group: visible or invisible elements or both?

3. Applying knowledge of the culture of the target group in the marketing communication of a tourist area

4. Implications for tourist marketers
Effective communication

Communication between sender and receiver is most effective if the interpretation of the message by the receiver is similar to what the sender intended to communicate with the message.
Similarity attraction hypothesis

The more similar two individuals are, the higher the attraction between them

……... and that is precisely what a tourist area wants: attract tourists.

Ng et al (2007): Tourist marketers should take into account cultural similarities between their tourist area and the target group in their image building of a tourist area.
Similarity between which aspects of the culture of the tourist area and the culture of the target group may lead to a better image of the tourist area?
Model of culture: The floating ice berg of Edward T. Hall

Symbols, heroes, rituals, language, history

1/9 visible elements

Values

8/9 invisible elements
Similiarity in which elements?

Invisible elements, values, because tourists travel to see and experience new things, and they can especially observe the visible elements of a culture

But reckon with: Differences in attraction of visible elements, individual variation and differences in uncertainty avoidance between cultures
Why taking account of the invisible elements?

Values are learned at one’s mother knee. By the age of twelve a child has acquired values and because this learning process has taken place so early and unconsciously, a person believes that persons all over the world have the same values.
Values discussed in the literature about tourist marketing

Collectivism-Individualism

Uncertainty avoidance
16 values and the six basic values of (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck 1961)

1. Human nature

2. Underlying motives for acting
   Indulgence-Restraint (Hofstede, Schwartz)
   Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede, Schwartz)
   Masculinity-Feminity (Hofstede)

3. Human Relations
   Collectivism-Individualism (Hofstede, Trompenaars, Schwartz)
   Power distance (Hofstede, Schwartz)
   Particularism-Universalism (Trompenaars)
   Achieved-scribed status (Trompenaars)
   Neutral-Affective (Trompenaars)

4. Time
   Past, present, future (Trompenaars)
   Polychrony-monochrony (Hall)
   Confucian Dynamism (Hofstede)

5. Space
   Personal space (Hall)
   Private-Public (Hall)
   Specific-Diffuse (Trompenaars)

6. Person-Nature
Indulgence versus restraint (the 6th value of Hofstede (Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov 2010, p. 281))

**Indulgence**
A tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun

**Restraint**
A conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms
Indulgence and restraint in a number of countries

**High indulgence:** Venezuela, Mexico, Sweden, Australia, Denmark, Great Britain, Switzerland, Italy

**In between indulgence and restraint:** Malaysia, Greece, Taiwan, France, Spain

**High restraint:** Egypt, Ukraine, Bulgaria, China
## Indulgence versus restraint and attracting tourists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indulgent</th>
<th>Restraint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Aspects that are related to learn (history, geography, art)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspects that show that one can enjoy life and pamper oneself: wellness, restaurants, shops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication media</strong></td>
<td>Modest flyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossy magazine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication style</strong></td>
<td>Verbal: Restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal: Exuberant Visual: Photos of tourists enjoying themselves</td>
<td>Visual: Photos of tourists visiting monuments etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wellness

You can learn something:
Pompeii
Uncertainty avoidance

The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations

High uncertainty avoidance: “What is different is dangerous”

Low uncertainty avoidance: “What is different is interesting”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) and attracting tourists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High UAI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Package tours, all inclusive, travelling in groups,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well known hotel chains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well known destinations,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booking far in advance,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk free activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication media</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication style</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precise, transparency of information (facts and figures)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High UAI
Hotel chains
Well known destination

Low UAI:
Bed and breakfast
Masculinity versus femininity

**Masculine**
division of gender roles, achievement important, “Live to work mentality”

**Feminine**
Overlap of gender roles, quality of life important, “Work to live mentality”
## Masculinity and attracting tourists

### Masculine

**Content**
- Division of gender roles
- One can show achievement in personal life and in for example sport and financial soundness during the holiday

**Communication media**
- Media that show achievement (glossy magazines)

**Communication style**
- Verbal: Flashy
- Visual: Photos in a luxurious environment showing achievement

### Feminine

**Content**
- No division of gender roles
- One helps the population by visiting the area as a tourist (social responsibility, development assistance)
- Environment friendly, sustainable

**Communication media**
- Modest environment friendly media

**Communication style**
- Verbal: Modest
- Visual: Photos of tourists with locals, in the local environment
Masculine: Achievement

Feminine: Help the locals
Collectivism versus Individualism

Collectivism
People are from birth onward integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime, continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

Individualism
Ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family.
## Collectivism and attracting tourists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collectivism</th>
<th>Individualism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A holiday with the whole (extended) family and the possibility to travel in groups</td>
<td>Individual activities that are tailor made to individual desires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication media</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliance on family/ friends or company colleagues for travel information</td>
<td>Reliance on the internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media with a high information richness (face-to face)</td>
<td>Media with a low information richness (e-mail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication style</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High context, indirect, implicit, flowery style, metaphors, narratives</td>
<td>Verbal: Low context, direct, explicit, facts and figures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collectivism
Travel with the family

Individualism
Individual traveller
Polychrony and monochrony

In *monochronic* cultures time is sequentially ordered, one prefers to do one thing at the same time and one does not like to change schedules that are settled.

In *polychronic* cultures one likes to do several things simultaneously and schedules are not important and can be changed easily.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polychrony and monochrony and attracting tourists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polychronic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointments can be changed easily and time is flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication media</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many different media and information about an area has not to be univocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication style</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal: unstructured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual: many images, not necessarily directly related to the message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monochronic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything will be organized in the way that is announced, in time, there will be no changes in schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication media</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univocal, same information everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication style</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal: highly and logically structured, facts and figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual: Images help to structure the message and underpin the message</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Polychrone: travelling around Madagascar
Monochrone: Travelling in US

May 24th  depart Boston Massachusetts US 04.00 PM

May 25h arrival Bar Harbor, Maine US 07.00 AM, depart 03.00 PM

May 26th arrival Halifax, Nova Scotia, CA 08.00 AM, depart 05.00 PM
16 values and the six basic values of (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck 1961)

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Implications for tourist marketers

• Determine target markets

• Adapt the communication about a tourist destination to the communicative conventions of the culture of the target group regarding:
  - Content of the message
  - Communication media used to convey the message
  - Communication style

This implies market segmentation and different marketing approaches for different target groups (Reisinger and Turner 2002, Frias et al 2011)

Suggestion: web sites tailor made for each target group. Just as tourist areas have web sites in different language they could have web sites for different cultures
Consequences for education of tourist marketers

Future tourist managers should have extensive knowledge about the cultural background of their potential customers (Tsang and al 2007).
Grazie per l'attenzione

TERIMA KASIH ATAS PERHATIAN ANDA

Thank you

Danke

Xie xie

Khawp khun

Yum otic

Mahalo

Salamet

Obrigada

Gracito

Arigato