



Romanian Tourism Branding Model

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Abstract

Destination marketing is a complex process that involves creating a unique identity for a location, which is essential for attracting visitors and promoting the destination. This identity is created through a comprehensive branding approach beyond just creating logos. Instead, it involves a 360-degree holistic approach that considers the destination's heritage, values, and other key elements that make it stand out from other locations. Once the destination's brand has been established, it forms the foundation of all marketing activities to promote the location and attract new visitors. All content and messages should be aligned with the destination's brand identity to ensure consistency and maximum impact. The brand of a destination is crucial to its success, and this is especially true for Romanian tourism. This is why we are highly motivated to develop a comprehensive branding model that will help establish a strong brand identity for Romanian tourism. This model will be based on careful research and analysis of the unique characteristics of Romanian tourism, including its heritage, values, and other key elements that make it a popular destination for visitors.

Keywords: *tourism, branding, Romanian branding, model.*

JEL Classification: M31, M37

Introduction

Destination branding is determined by three main factors, representing a destination brand's fundamental elements: reputation, identity and perception. Reputation is the sum of beliefs or opinions about the destination; it must be built, protected, maintained, and changed, if necessary, over time. Authenticity must determine identity, the single points of destination sale, consistency, and a strong personality. Perception is formed by most immaterial experiences, even if the material experiences also matter and are subjective in the minds of consumers. Our research is fundamental in the current context when traveling is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing industries. People spend trillions of dollars annually globally. A solid marketing strategy is crucial to winning part of this market.

Branding destination is not just part of the marketing strategy; it is the basis that creates a positive image and a unique identity for each place. It also defines what will remain in the mind and in the memory of visitors, in other words, the complete performance of the destination, the journey, experience, and long-term memories.

1. The appearance and evolution of the Romanian Tourist Brand

Romania's first branding activities at the governmental level are isolated actions rather than integrated communication campaigns: albums, TV spots, and labels for Romanian products. These approaches have promoted tangible objects, such as places to visit in Romania, gastronomy and only after 2005 did integrative concepts appear to present a more complex picture of the country and to include customs, traditions, pieces of theater, documentaries, and (Kaneva & Popescu, 2014: 506-523).

In the last 15-20 years, trying to create a brand has been associated with suspicions of corruption. Looking for reasons to prove that money is spent in vain, many communication campaigns have been canceled, most of the time due to political changes in the institutions that implemented them. The tourist branding campaign "Explore the Carpathian Garden" launched in 2010 is the last attempt to create a brand for Romania, the Ministry of Tourism, together with the Assessors in Turismo and the Recreation Thief - Taylor Nelson Sofres, launched the first tourism branding campaign at the Shanghai World's Fair, with the slogan: Explore the Carpathian Garden (Andrei, 2017: 222), the main objectives being to create an image positive of Romania through the national tourist brand, increasing the attractiveness Romania abroad as a tourist destination and, indirectly, as a business opportunity.

2. The importance of the tourist brand for Romania

Country branding is important because it transmits information about what it is, and it can be a destination; it can give value to a destination, and it is the set of methods by which a destination or product communicates, symbolizes, and differentiates in front of its audience (Cojocaru, 2013: 25). For Romania, branding is also important for the following reasons:

1. Branding gets more reservations. When tourism campaigns seem legitimate, guests will be more likely to make reservations in Romanian destinations because professionalism is translated into "reliable." With a unique brand voice and a beautiful brand design, Romania stands out as the best option for a safe and unforgettable experience.

2. Branding improves recognition. Undoubtedly, Romania's brand is his image. Guests will not only remember their name but also their logo. So times of whenever they interact with participants from the Romanian tourism market, tourists will instantly recognize the destination (Bogdan et al., 2021: 58).

3. Branding makes Romania a memorable destination. A brand is an experience visual, emotional, and tangible that Romania creates for its guests. When he manages to do this correctly, guests will remember their experiences here for a long time, which can lead to loyalty from them.

4. Branding increases the value of Romania as a tourist destination. Having a well-known brand name will contribute to establishing Romanian destinations as leaders in the international tourism market, for example, and will boost subsequent promotion.

3. Limitations of the Romanian Tourist Brand

Tourism is an economic field for Romania with an important development potential that is still insufficient and efficiently exploited and can become a source of attraction for investors and foreign tourists. Still, this achievement is hampered by strong competition from neighboring countries and the scale of related competition problems. To increase the role of tourism in industry, achieving the goal of integrating European Tourism and Compliance with Sustainable Development Requirements, the Government must continue to play an important role and initiate active policies leading to an increase in the number of tourists, tourism revenues, and the average length of stay (Gruescu et al., 2008: 694-702).

The strategies for developing the tourist field in Romania proved to be weak. As proof, there is an unjustifiably extensive list of weaknesses in the tourist field both nationally (low standards of infrastructure in tourism, poor accommodation quality and related services, underdeveloped basic infrastructure, lack of capacity for sports tourism, insufficient promotion of tourism products both nationally and international), as well as regionally (low number of tour operators, few events tourism and cultural, great emphasis on state-subsidized social tourism, within the types tourism etc.).

Also, the Romanian structures and institutions, frequently reorganized, represent another weakness of this field: discontinuity affecting the ability to promote and implement a unitary strategy for developing and promoting tourism.

4. Romania's Tourist Brand today

If it can be considered present, the last official launch of the tourist brand of Romania took place on July 29, 2010, during the Shanghai World's Fair, under the slogan "Explore the Carpathian Garden". The new brand emphasizes returning to nature and tradition, and its creation took into account the Romanian cultural heritage (Christ, 2015). There has also been controversy over the authenticity of the (image 1) logo, as if it looked strikingly like an Irish project. The slogan is in the same category as the logo, so it is no special attraction, especially since the Carpathian Mountain chain is not only found in Romania but also in the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine, and Serbia.

Figure 1.



Source: <https://www.zf.ro/eveniment/cum-arata-brandul-turistic-al-romaniei-ce-reactii-a-starnit-noul-slogan-al-turismului-romanesc-explore-the-carpathian-garden-6742510>

Any strong country brand is supported by a key image. „When you see pyramids think of Egypt. When you see a picture of the Eiffel Tower, you think of Paris. Tower Bridge is a symbol of London, and the Statue of Liberty a symbol of New York ”, says Michael

Brandtner. „How much money is willing to pay Romania to be associated with a green leaf?” (Mustache, 2013).

The brand's personality reflects the vision of Romania seen from abroad and the opinions of Romanians, both among travelers and those working in tourism. The meaning of the brand components included in the logo that defines its personality include: The term “Explore” is a gentle and welcoming imperative. It allows a segmented target to recognize and accurately reflect the reference fund of the ranking, “Carpathians.”

The Carpathian Mountains, although being also presented in other countries, it have resulted from studies of the market and of the preferences of the different parties involved in Romanian tourism as the strong element of differentiation in Romania, helps this country escape the status of unknown, an unaltered place and a wild nature. The term “Garden ” is also intended to cancel the perception of lack of safety encountered in the main markets. In contrast to the wild Carpathian Mountains, the garden indicates accessibility. A garden symbolizes care and growth, a place full of peace and health, a place to visit with family and friends, and a place to relax (Mazilu et al., 2018).

“Leaf as a symbol ” reflects the basic principle of nature that is being addressed to a soul Romanian through the folk sources of “green sheet ”; which occasionally looks like the shape of a mountain, while the blue tail represents the importance of water and the river Danube.

5. Perceptions of Foreign Tourists on the Romanian Tourist Brand

Romania's brand is one, and tourism promotion must be integrated along with the other messages that ministries send abroad and within the country. The image of Romania as a tourist destination has also been studied in European countries. In what I will follow the results of these studies conducted in different countries, which analyze the perception on the Romanian tourist offer.

Austria - Only 24% of Austrians who would like an Eastern European country as their destination tourists intend to spend their holidays in Romania. Romanians are perceived as being hospitable people (49%), the tourist offer is perceived as varied and interesting (44%), but hotels and guesthouses are not perceived as clean or of quality (42%). In Consequently, 35% of respondents do not want to spend their holidays in Romania (Popescu & Profiroiu, 2013: 147-159).

Germany—Most of the trips made in Romania combine holidays and visits to friends and relatives. Only a small percentage (20%) of these holidays are intended for the holiday in the main sense of the word. Romania is 27th in the list of external destinations chosen by German tourists (Popescu & Profiroiu, 2013: 147-159).

Italy—For Italian tourists, Romania is mainly a destination to visit relatives and friends, not a holiday destination. Romania is 18th in the list of destinations preferred by Italian tourists (Popescu & Profiroiu, 2013: 147-159).

Finland - 72% of tourists have heard of Romania, but I know very little about it as tourist destination. Romania's main weaknesses as a tourist destination are perceived as insufficient advertising (19%), poverty (9%), language (7%), low level of services (7%) and insecurity (Whine & Whim, 2019: 389-394).

Hungary - According to travel agencies, it can be said that out of the total number of tourists Hungarians (almost 80%) who travel to Romania on their own, half of them they travel to visit their friends and relatives. The rest of the persons (400,000 persons) travel

with the help of travel agencies (transport companies, various associations, etc.). Almost 90% of the total number of tourists is not found in tourist statistics by a night because black tourism is practiced. For Hungarian tourists, trips to Romania they are synonymous with a holiday in Transylvania.

Norway - Interviews with Norwegian tourism operators show that Romania is a surprising destination for most visitors, especially due to expectations modest. Tour operators consider that Norwegians have less knowledge about the possibilities that Romania can offer as a tourist destination, stating that the reports since the 1990s they are still present in the minds of Norwegians and strengthen traditional myths and negative image of former Soviet / Eastern states. Romania is perceived as last minute solution.

UK - The consumer study reported a considerable waste of time in transfer from ski resorts and airports due to the improper condition of roads, which have nothing to do with seasonal problems.

France - As a tourist destination, Romania has a very moderate country image. From 37% of those interviewed say they have a positive image of which 4% have a very good image. Both the operators and the tourists who returned from a trip to Romania acknowledged that the destination „acquires a better image after being known” (Foris et al., 2020: 1020).

Denmark - 10% of the Danes interviewed were in Romania. Less than 5% declares that they know nothing about our country. The most common words associated with Romania are „cheap”, „old-fashioned”, „captivant” (Foris et. al., 2020: 1020).

6. Model of branding tourism in Romania

The research proposes a framework to address a national branding strategy for Romania. The wording of the conceptual framework is based on empirical findings, lessons learned from national branding experiences in several countries, and on the revision of national branding models in the literature. I appreciate it, so the national branding should include the sustainability of national brands. Also, national branding requires an all-encompassing and methodical approach that focuses both on the realities of the brand and on its strategic management. Indifferent from the hypothetical and applied meaning of the national brand, the growing volume of knowledge does not pay much attention to the management of the national brand and how the branding initiative can be treated holistically but systematically.

A conceptual framework for national brand strategy suggests a matrix of relationships consisting of six general constructions, as follows: vision, evaluation of current realities, analysis and involvement of stakeholders, formulation of the brand strategy, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring and evaluation. The proposed national branding is based on veracity. To compete efficiently, a good product is needed. A good national policy is fundamental to facing challenges related to national branding. A good name cannot make a brand, but a sustained construction of some capabilities brand market leader does this. We will present the following branding model of Romania from our perspective.

6.1. National brand strategy formulation - „Romania, cultural variety”

This stage addresses the question, „Where do we want to go?”. At this stage, visionary goals and SMART objectives are set to underpin the process formulation of the

strategy. Visionary goals are general and broad intentions in the very long term, while goals are derived from purposes. Objectives are considered for each of the areas in which the national brand focuses, namely tourism, foreign direct investment, exports, nation status, and immigration. For Romania, long-term goals will be achieved by up to 5 years.

The objectives could be improving Romania's brand image, international relations, gross national income, and the quality of tourist services in the nation. Other objectives could be: insurance a peaceful atmosphere for tourists, creating one of the most investment destinations sought and a place full of resources for studies (especially for foreign researchers); obtaining international recognition in the field of sport, food promotion and local fashion in the international market and reducing the incidence of corruption among holders of public office. This stage requires the determination of the target markets, because the brands that trying to be everything for everyone often fails based on mediocrity.

6.2. Target market

The target group's representatives are tourists eager to explore and learn about different cultures, ports, and streams, especially those seeking to travel to Romania, a destination loaded with authenticity. We will focus on a certain type of tourist because we think it is more likely that the target segment will appreciate the area's specifics more than the others. These tourists are known as „discerning travelers”, those who are looking for a place that does not look like any other. It targets distant and courageous tourists with a higher level of education and travel experience abroad, whose dream is to explore wildlife and sink into authentic local culture in Romania.

This category of tourists comes mainly from metropolitan areas in various countries and long for landscapes, a natural and healthy lifestyle and whose interest in cultural life and historical sites are above average.

6.3. Brand Personality

The brand has a personality that has been outlined based on in-depth studies and mirrors the image that Romania has at the international level and the opinions of citizens, both visitors and those working in the field of tourism. Thus, the brand chosen for the tourist destination is characterized as:

- fair and clean- Romania still keeps its local traditions, its clothing traditional in some areas (for example, in Maramureş), food and drink, music, dances, and stories in rural areas;

- helpful and courageous – the inhabitants of Romania have a developed sense of humor and always put on „falcons” with Romanian sayings and proverbs in abundance. Tourists can discover and experience the amazing warmth and hospitality the locals show. Although not all tourist receptions offer luxury or exclusive services, they can be compensated with a sincere smile, the warmth of the soul, and a friendly attitude, where a tourist can feel at home in the family, being able to be spontaneously invited as a guest at a local wedding;

- respectfully - the Romanian is open to the new, to the variety;
- ingenious – „makes dry stone money”.

6.4. Duties and benefits of the brand „Romania, cultural variety”

When creating the brand image of the tourist destination, Romania took into account the following attributes :

- tourist areas in Romania are authentic areas in terms of the natural frame. For example, Brasov, surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains, is an area that keeps an intact nature and an unparalleled landscape;
- some tourist areas are surrounded by mystery and spirituality – objectives and tourist monuments present on the territory of Brasov or Timisoara envelop the city in a mysterious air, and tourists are tempted to decipher the mysteries that they hide behind those thousands of years old vestiges;
- the attitude of the locals towards tourists transforms Romania into a tourist area with authentic hospitality.

6.5. The logo of the proposed tourist brand

To promote the brand “Romania, cultural variety”, we proposed a logo a whose representation is found in image 2.

Figure 2.

The logo of the proposed brand



Source: author

The logo is made in the representative colors of the Romanian flag, and the message is in English, thus aiming at promoting the tourist brand, especially among foreign tourists. Our country is thus represented in the form of a map in the middle of a green field, thinking of returning to its origins, to nature. The heart represented behind the map suggests the Romanian people's love for the country. Yellow drops on the edge of the logo can make the sunflower petals think of a representative plant for our country's economy, Romania being a great producer in this regard. We call Romania, „The land of variety” as it is a prosperous country in culture and heritage is rather a confluence of cultures. Today we host many communities around the world. Romania is a land of linguistic diversity and a realm of multiculturalism - each region has its own gastronomy, for example. In Romania, we encounter different forms of art. Each region has its own art form. Also, Romania has different forms of relief; we have some of the most fertile lands in the world, but also arid lands and snow-covered peaks.

6.6. Brand sources and dimensions „Romania, cultural variety”

Inborn resources

Iconography and symbolism

- Dracula, medieval Transylvanian castles, rural/outdoor experiences authentic, Danube Delta, monasteries in Maramureş and Bucovina - untapped appropriate in the current campaign;
- Cultural symbols (the sculptor Constantin Brâncuşi, the poet Mihai Eminescu- May known in French-speaking countries);
- The flag, the national day - December 1 celebrated in the traditional style by the communities Romanian;
- Sports symbols, some of them supporting the (Simona Halep, Hagi, Nadia Comaneci, David Popovici).

Culture

- Distinctive heritage (ancient origins, mixture of civilizations, traditional folklore, food/drinks, rich artistic /literary life) - counterbalanced by stereotypes
- Contemporary culture revives the positive values of the past (for example, Romanians again wins prestigious awards in the film industry) - efforts are not properly marked and replaced with artificial ones.

Landscape

- One of the great equalizers of the national branding, the virgin landscape, still unpolluted developed infrastructure and technology, the infrastructure being here a sword with two edges.

Cultivated resources

Internal acceptance

- It would be better for a nation to try to reflect people and culture, instead of them requires its citizens to live the brand;
- „Land of choice ” was the most contested and criticized branding campaign in 1990 here;
- Due to the quality-priced ratio and the worsening of living conditions, Romanians he prefers to escape from the country and spend his holidays abroad.

Loyalty

- Loyalty is something that Romania has enjoyed, but which, unfortunately, it has lost and needs to be rebuilt, especially from its citizens;
- With the rise of neighboring countries, especially Bulgaria, as competitive destinations, many tour operators and tourists left, dissatisfied with the declining quality, by poor conditions of tourism and opportunistic behavior.

Art support

- Campaigns to enrich cultural life: Sibiu and Timisoara, cultural capitals European, Sighişoara Festival, Bucharest Holidays Week, Museum Night.

Implementing the strategy

After analyzing and determining the strategic initiatives to be taken, the next stage is implementing or developing the adopted strategy. Key issues in the implementation of the strategy include the management of the brand, the design of a support structure adequate, knowledge management, confrontation with change, activation of all sub-brands and

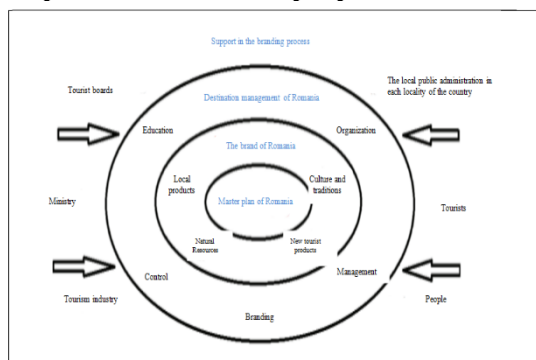
stakeholders, management of internal relations and national sentiment, developing unified messages and involving the media.

6.7. The development model of the proposed brand of Romania

Given Romania's proposal as a tourist destination throughout the year, it is important to organize and promote its tourist offer throughout this period. Therefore, a proposal for a model of the country's brand strategy is presented, detailed in image 3.

Figure 3.

The development model of the proposed brand of Romania



Source: author

First of all, it is necessary to bring together all local governments in the country to establish a specific destination management organization. The purpose and responsibility of this organization should be managing the brand at the strategic level, based on a general plan. Romania's tourist destination management should also be responsible for drawing up the general plan and performing all the functions of management. The country's master plan will accurately analyze Romania's current tourism situation, detect problems in tourism development, and define specific measures for tourism development in the short and long term.

6.8. Strategic control and evaluation

Romanian brand management can use strategic control tools to monitor the ongoing activities of the nation and its sub-brands, assess whether the activities are carried out efficiently and effectively, and influence the performance decision-making process. This framework suggests a holistic approach to monitoring and controlling performance. For the Romanian brand, the standards of performance could be established in the following areas: the quality of products made in a nation, number of tourists, level of foreign direct investment, number of graduates of foreign and expatriate universities, hosting and participating in international events, export earnings, tourism revenues, rankings such as competitiveness indices global and risk of the World Economic Forum and the national brand index (NBI).

6.9. Recommended marketing communication plan

Before setting the objectives of the new marketing communication plan, a context analysis must be performed to understand the key market and the communication factors that may influence the achievement of the mark's long-term objectives. From this analysis of the context, the marketing and communication marketing objectives will be derived.

Context of communication

To create a thorough marketing communication plan, it is essential to gain a deep understanding of the specific market dynamics and communication factors that influence Romania's national brand. This involves conducting detailed research and analysis to identify the key elements that shape the perception and representation of the country's brand on a national and international level.

Environmental context

The most important environmental factors that influence the tourist destination industry are:

- Recession - tourists have become more selective, choosing only destinations with a report superior quality, competitive offers, and genuine proposals;
- Generalized adoption of online technology for multiple purposes: online reservations, social media for online interactions and feedback

Stakeholder context

Because nation stores have a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, the power-interest matrix was used to better understand the attitude of each party compared to Romania as a tourist destination. It can be seen that the most important parts interesting are:

- Government / tourism bodies;
- Service / accommodation providers, airlines, etc.- the new ambassadors of brand;
- Foreign press and television presenters - although they are not very interested in Romania, can influence consumer opinions through stereotypes;
- Romanian citizens plus foreign tourists - great collective power, especially with social media proliferation.

Business context

According to the World Tourism Organization, tourism is one of the largest economic sectors and has the fastest growth. Academics explain this by reviving a "new tourism "on the life cycle grid of tourism, in which technology and niche products that respond to new social trends thrive. However, with the pandemic, global tourism demand fell by 8%, and the tourism industry was seriously restructured. The European tourism market is expected to benefit from trends in short holidays and intra-regional travel, but some regions/countries continue to be seriously affected (-11% Central Europe/East, -17% Romania and Poland), while others even have a positive increase (5% Serbia, 2% Croatia). New destinations (Europe Eastern) will be subject to fierce competition from mature destinations in progress reinvention (Western Europe/South).

Customer context

The new campaign should focus on acquiring and retaining a new target audience (groups of friends between 20 and 50 years old, multicultural students/active families), who

are open to new cultural experiences, who experiment with ethnic brands, appreciate authenticity and enjoy outdoor experiences and coherent strategies for involving Romanian citizens in promoting the brand, so that the risks perceived by foreign tourists to be diminished.

The organizational context

The organizational context Romania is a developing country and therefore the budget for tourism is quite small (100 million euros in 2019, only 0.06% of gross domestic product), but is growing (10 times in 2019/2018, with the help of EU funds), because the government considers tourism and agriculture as top priorities for revitalizing the country.

6.10. Promotional objectives

The next section aims to set promotional objectives for the new plan of marketing communication according to SMART criteria, as indicated by the results of communication, brand, and contextual analysis. Because it's a campaign of repositioning/rebranding at the national level, with a multitude of stakeholders, the plan is set for a 3-year campaign (the market is so dynamic that a longer-term strategy would become unquestionably obsolete).

Corporate objectives (national):

- Increasing the contribution of tourism to gross domestic product by 2% every year;
- Increasing the tourism budget to 1% of GDP by 2025;
- Repositioning Romania as a quality brand destination throughout the year, focused on niche tourist products (rural tourism/eco/adventure/winter/cultural tourism and short breaks);
- Increasing branded exports: wines, cheeses, brandy, etc. by 2% by 2025.

Marketing objectives

- Increasing the arrivals of foreign tourists by 50% every semester in order to ensure year-round visits (justified by the current low number of foreign tourists and recent trends);
- Increasing the number of Romanian tourists by 10% per year;
- Enter a positive demand trend by 2024 and reach a 5% increase in the number of foreign tourists until 2025;
- To become one of the top 4 destinations in Central and South-Eastern Europe preferred by foreign tourists;
- Dedication of 80% of the tourism budget of the product/person elements of the mix marketing;
- Building a fully interactive campaign and e-commerce website to host 30% of current offline bookings and 20% through partner electronic tourism operators.

Marketing communication objectives:

- Repositioning the Romanian destination brand, with emphasis on tourist products of niche and on the image of „cultural variety”;
- Promoting Romanian sub-brands in a coherent connection with the umbrella brand (increase in the recognition of sub-brands);
- Increasing the degree of recognition of the Romanian tourist potential to 60% by 2025;
- Building positive attitudes towards the brand by minimizing stereotypes and correlation with brand values and quality brand exports (online content generated by satisfied tourists);

- Increasing the proportion of profile communications to improve collaborations with tour operators (online) and airlines (for example: regaining routes EasyJet/Ryanair United Kingdom-Romania).

6.11. Repositioning

Currently, Romania is perceived as a low quality destination (mainly due to the fact that tourists know only the spas - underinvested - and generalized stereotypes in the press); Consequently, the proposed plan cannot yet hope to turn Romania into a Greece in its region, but the goal is to reposition it.

The strategy proposes a new slogan focused on the idea of “cultural variety” because this message minimizes internal stereotypes and deficiencies in a positive way (cultural variety is an extensive concept, but it is still a rare and precious stone for country development), while occupying a significant and distinct competitive position in the mind of the target consumer who recognizes the true brand identity of Romania (as this inadvertence was the most important trigger for controversy and citizens' grievances).

Marketing communication strategy. From the perspective of the nation-brand, although attraction strategies are important for reputation and for the most favorable and distinct positioning of the country, push-type strategies and especially profile strategies ensure the presence of a country as a top destination in all sources of interest for travel. In addition, because the largest part of Romania's tourism budget (which is quite limited anyway) should be reserved for tourist infrastructure, a large proportion for shooting communication is unrealistic at this stage of the campaign. An important percentage of these budgets should be reserved for a fully interactive website to satisfy tourists' desire to find tourism solutions themselves.

Promotional programming and budget. A significant percentage of these budgets should be reserved for a website that is completely interactive and responds to tourists' desire to find tourist solutions on their own. Every year, 10% of the tourism budget will be dedicated to marketing communication (which, correlated with the expected increase in the budget, given that GDP is constant, EUR 10 million in 2010, EUR 13 million in 2011 and EUR 16 million in 2012).

Given that some activities are global, some are also for Romania (internal marketing), and some are for the UK only, and many activities are based on online communication, no large investment is needed for other countries. In this meaning, the document recommends 65% of the marketing communication budget (because North America is also an important market and therefore needs a reserve budget). The study shows that Romania must be proactive in terms of branding nationally. Although it is necessary that all the inhabitants of Romania, government institutions, sector private and civil society to be collectively involved in the creation of the national brand, it is necessary by an institution that plays a coordinating role. Formulating the brand strategy must be supported by a sincere and complete assessment of current realities. There are strong arguments for the institution to be independent and authoritative, as opposed to delegating responsibility to a fully controlled state-owned enterprise. Additionally, political, socio-cultural, and macroeconomic environments, as well as the rule of law and political factors, have a major influence on the perception of the Romanian brand and should therefore be harmonized.

Research shows that the implementation of the national brand strategy should or supported by a solid and controlled monitoring environment. The country should invest no

only in the development and implementation of the national brand strategy, but also in the monitoring strategy performance in relation to established performance parameters.

Conclusion

A tourist destination is a special geographical entity in which visitors enjoy a special tourist experience. Therefore, the destination's tourist offer must be integrated and cover all the necessary facilities for a comfortable stay. It is a way to get away from mass tourism, which is still present in many European destinations. Strong competition in a global tourism market generates the need to be properly positioned and differentiated in this environment. The market position of destination tourism will be improved through efforts to develop the destination brand. Following the analysis of the tourist destination and the testing of the impact of the brand image of it has resulted on tourists that the image they perceive on Romania is not frames in the brand image created by specialists.

Therefore, we should pay more attention to tourists' visions of Romania and create a brand image that attracts their attention and sends a unique and decipherable message. We recommend that market research be carried out for several categories of public of different ages and levels of education, categories that do not form just one component of the public. Carrying out research on a single market segment leads to negative effects on the created brand image.

We also conclude that the people involved in creating the brand image of Romania have to build a new tourist brand and choose a new slogan which reflects much better the tourist potential of the area. Another negative aspect observed during the research carried out is that following the presentation of the new tourist brand “Romania, cultural variety”, it did not benefit from more complex means of promotion in the Romanian press. The lack of information materials and the promotional ones helped us to conclude that the image of the Romanian brand can be done internationally at the International Tourism Fair and very little at the national level.

Following the research, I propose the following :

- Adopting a new brand image of Romania that emphasizes the potential tourist;
- Creating an authentic image that is superior to competition;
- Much more intense promotion of the brand image both nationally and internationally;
- Using more diverse promotional means. Also, in the process of brand development, it is necessary to have in view and following:
 - Adapting the brand identity to the original identity of the country, but also with the specifics of the country's target market groups;
 - Control of brand development and management costs;
 - Monitoring the brand activities of competing destinations in the wider environment.

To create the destination brand, it is necessary to know what is different from Romania and other destinations, its comparative advantages, main associations, who are the bearers of the tourist offer, etc. Also, an efficient branding process requires coordination of all tourism offer carriers together with the national institutions.

The destination brand increases accommodation use, extends the tourist season, and increases average tourist consumption. The branding process should also be based on Romania's identity through relevant resources and the development of tourist facilities and attractions.

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