

Next big Trends—Trends for Leisure Travel

Ms. Zhou

In recent years, tourism has become a highly popular global leisure activity. In 2010, worldwide international tourist arrivals grew to 940 million with leisure, recreation and holiday travel accounting for just over half of all international tourist arrivals (51% or 480 million arrivals) (UNWTO, 2011). Meanwhile, dramatic innovations in technology and the tourism industry more broadly now allow leisure travelers more freedom to pursue their own special interests, resulting in much more individualized experiences. It is important to make sense of these developing trends to better prepare for the coming next in the tourism industry for tomorrow's tourists.

Trend 1: Social Media Making Leisure Travel More Relevant

There's no doubt that social media is fast becoming an integral part of the traveler's toolbox. Market research indicates that people generally trust what their friends, colleagues and other people on social networks say about their experience. That's why Facebook is expected to have reach one billion users in 2012, whereas while Twitter is estimated to grow to one-half billion users. The results of eHotelCheck's 2011 global scan show that over the last year many more hoteliers around the world turned to social media to attract and retain customers, and started by using tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tripadvisor, to interact with their internet-savvy past and prospective guests—their (prospective) guests (Schipper, 2012). They capitalize on when a traveler has a great experience sharing their great experiences with their friends and social networks, other travelers view see this with much greater credibility as being the real experience or deal and trust this type of content much more than they do the marketing material typically aimed at the traveler. Instead of establishing every a presence on every social network, tourism operators should actively participate in these communities by growing relationships, establishing trust and engage engaging travelers. With the advantage of social media, it has been is much easier for travel professionals to build a brands that reliably meet the specific experience of tourists.

Trend 2: Smartphones Changing the Way People Travel

Before the presence of smartphones, travelers had to rely on maps, tourism magazines and guide books to plan their trips. These tools, which seem like relics in today's world, are being replaced by smartphones.

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According to the International Telecommunication Union statistics, in 2011 there were 491.4 million smartphone subscriptions in the world in the past year 2011. PhoCusWright recently reported that of the 28% of leisure travelers who conducted travel-related activities via the mobile web, 72% used some combination of mobile websites and apps in the past year 2011. What does this mean for the travel industry? That means travelers can now instantaneously find a place to stay, book an air-ticket, or reserve a restaurant with a Smartphone. That means travelers can also post real-time reviews, photos, comments, tweets and blogs with their Smartphones—they can. Smartphones now help their traveler to translate foreign languages, avoid evade traffic, and even locate the nearest toilet. That also means some Smartphone travel apps can even replace a tour guide. The travel industry and professionals will need to innovate in order to keep pace with the changing global dynamics of the hyper-connected consumer. (Baker, 2012). Naturally, tourism operators are rushing in to create their own mobile applications, allowing travelers to find the right hotels, attractions, and restaurants, and even provide providing special location-based features that can only be delivered via mobile.

Trend 3: Asia and the Pacific—first the First region Region to recover Recover

After the global financial crisis and economic recession, world tourism was has recovered strongly since the global financial crisis and economic recession. Asia and the Pacific (+13%) was the first region to recover and among the strongest growing regions in 2010. While the Americas rebounded (+6%) from the decline in 2009, Europe's (+3%) recovery was slower than in other regions (UNWTO, 2011). The most significant change was the rise of China. It has shown by far the fastest growth with regard to expenditures on international tourism in the last decade. According to UNWTO's statistics, among the top ten by international arrivals in 2010, China rose to third position for most international arrivals in 2010, ousting Spain and having overtaken both the United Kingdom and Italy during the past few in recent years. The international tourism receipts also shows, with China (US\$ 45.8 billion) moving up into fourth position, overtaking the Italy (US\$ 38.8 billion). European countries are now attempting to attract more Chinese travelers from China to help their economy recover after the global financial crisis. Furthermore, cruise shipping is the a perfect example of leisure travel. While at initial stages initially, cruising cruises remained confined to Caribbean and European cruising destinations, but with the rise of some high-profile cruising companies such as Star Cruising, the industry has now spread to include Asian destinations (like Star Cruising company). Travel and The tourism industry is becoming more important for many countries whose economies are gaining a great boost from the number of national and international tourists visiting the famous and

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Trend 2: Smartphones Changing the Way People Travel

Before the presence of smartphones, travelers had to rely on maps, tourism magazines and guide books to plan their trips. These tools seem like relics in today's world. According to International Telecommunication Union statistics, in 2011 there were 491.4 million smartphone subscriptions in the world. PhoCusWright recently reported that of the 28% of leisure travelers who conducted travel-related activities via the mobile web, 72% used some combination of mobile websites and apps. What does this mean for the travel industry? Travelers can now instantaneously find a place to stay, book an air-ticket or reserve a restaurant with a Smartphone. Travelers can also post real-

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time reviews, photos, comments, tweets and blogs with their Smartphones. Smartphones now help their traveler to translate foreign languages, avoid traffic, and even locate the nearest toilet. Some Smartphone travel apps even replace a tour guide. Travel industry professionals will need to innovate in order to keep pace with the changing dynamics of the hyper-connected consumer (Baker, 2012). Naturally, tourism operators are rushing to create their own mobile applications, allowing travelers to find the right hotels, attractions, and restaurants, even providing special location-based features that can only be delivered via mobile.

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Trend 4: Tourism Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is a classifying of private or corporate customers by one or more characteristics (Wikipedia) in order to deliver services to those people most likely to be interested in the products offered. Tourism segmentation has been widely researched in recent years (UNWTO, 2007). Leisure travelers have different visions for their ideal vacation. The most common niche tourism markets include adventure travel, eco-cultural tourism, geo-tourism, heritage tourism, space tourism, and wildlife tourism. Travelers are searching more for local, point-of-interest information around a destination while planning for and during their trips. Tourism professionals

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Trend 4: Tourism market/Market segmentation/Segmentation

Market segmentation is a classifying/categorization of potential private or corporate customers by one or more characteristics (Wikipedia), in order to deliver services to those people most likely to be interested in the products offered that you offer. Tourism segmentation is a subject in its own right, has been widely researched in recent years (UNWTO, 2007). Leisure travelers have different visions/pictures of their ideal vacation. The most common niche tourism markets include: adventure travel, Ecotourism-cultural tourism, Geo-tourism, Heritage-heritage tourism, Space-space tourism, and Wildlife-Wildlife-tourism, etc. Travelers are searching more for local, point-of-interest-based information around a destination while planning for and during their trips. Tourism professionals have carried out various segmentation studies: when you look across the different phases of the travel cycle from Dreaming/dreaming-R to researching, Booking/booking, Experiencing/experiencing and finally sharing-T—the potential for innovation, particularly in the early stages of dreaming and researching, is astounding. In 2012 you will see Undoubtedly, quite a few travel start-ups will emerge every year that attempt to capitalize on this opportunity.

Trend 5: Sustainable tourism/Tourism

“Ecotourism”—2007 NY Times’ 2007 buzzword of the year, represents another developing trend in the tourism industry. —With increasing evidence of global warming, high energy prices and auto and plane travel expenses growing for leisure and business travelers alike, more tourists are seeking green or eco-friendly solutions to meet their travel needs. “Moving towards sustainable (green or eco-friendly practices), reason: increased evidence of global warming, high energy prices over the summer, automobile and plane travel expenses growing for both leisure and business travelers.” Green-friendly and sustainable travel is quickly becoming a stronger consideration for many tourists, are gaining importance—Travelers want to know more about the green practices and environmental reputation of the hotels; and travelers seek to understand whether their stay at a hotel is will be part of the problem or the solution in promoting better environmental practices. And a growing set of Many of these travelers also want to see how their tourism dollars are benefiting the local community in certain destinations. One study shows that 66% of Trip Advisor travelers believe “environmentally-friendly measures in travel are making a difference.” (Tierney, 2008). One of the fastest growing segments in the travel industry, sustainable tours operations can also

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have carried out various segmentation studies across the different phases of the travel cycle from dreaming to researching, booking, experiencing and finally sharing. The potential for innovation, particularly in the early stages of dreaming and researching, is astounding. Undoubtedly, quite a few travel start-ups will emerge every year that attempt to capitalize on this opportunity.

Trend 5: Sustainable Tourism

“Ecotourism”, NY Times’ 2007 buzzword of the year, represents another developing trend in the tourism industry. With increasing evidence of global warming, high energy prices and auto and plane travel expenses growing for leisure and business travelers alike, more tourists are seeking green or eco-friendly solutions to meet their travel needs. Sustainable travel is quickly becoming a stronger consideration for many tourists. Travelers want to know more about the green practices and environmental reputation of hotels and whether their stay at a hotel will be part of the problem or the solution in promoting better environmental practices. Many of these travelers also want to see how their tourism dollars are benefiting the local community. One study shows that 66% of Trip Advisor travelers believe “environmentally-friendly measures in travel are making a difference.” (Tierney, 2008) One of the fastest growing segments in the travel industry, sustainable tours broaden market appeal, demonstrate commitment to sustainability, and attract more responsible travelers.

References:

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- Clea Baker, March 9, 2012, *How Smartphones are Changing Travel Behavior*, published on Media Tapper, webpage link: <http://mediatapper.com/how-smartphones-are-changing-travel-behavior/>.

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broaden market appeal, demonstrate their commitment to sustainability, and make themselves more attractive/attract more to responsible travelers; one of the fastest growing segments in the travel industry.

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Hello Ms. Zhou,

You do a fine job of researching and referencing your trends. Your ability to express complicated issues is excellent and your use of vocabulary is also quite strong. If you have time to make changes or for future reference, it would be good to add a conclusion paragraph as this is standard in most essays. Perhaps most important, the essay question specifically asks what effect these trends have on the residents, or local populations, and what can tourism professionals do to address potential negative changes. It would be best if you could adjust your paragraphs to include, for example, how smaller hotels or guesthouses are not able to respond to keep up with social networking, and regional tourism officials may need information technology experts to help manage public relations for the smaller hoteliers or restaurants. Or in the paragraph about smartphones, can tour guides be retrained to communicate with visitors after the trip to ensure that their impact is helping the local community or environment in a meaningful way? If you can take time to re-read the essay topic and add more material that specifically answers the question, while maintaining the logical structure of your essay, you will have a fine essay.

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