

Гл. ас. д-р МАРИАНА ЯНЕВА
УНСС - София

THE BROCHURE OF TOUR OPERATOR – IMPORTANT MARKETING TOOL IN TOURIST ACTIVITIES

Chief Assist.Prof. MARIANA YANEVA, PhD
UNIVERSITY OF NATIONAL AND WORLD ECONOMICS, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS OF TOURISM, SOFIA

Abstract: The brochure is one of the most important marketing instruments of the tour-operator. In general the tourist brochure is a catalog for travels and is dedicated to serve both to end customers and tourist agents as a source of detailed information, which could be actualized by the computer reservation system of the tour operator.

One of the most important decisions for each tour operator offering a variety of programs is to select whether to publish one brochure or several brochures under various trade marks.

Many investigations use generally famous people, experts, directors and customers as guaranteed advertisement. Other empiric investigations show how the advertisement efficiency changes if the leaders – tourist guides are used as guarantor for group tourist travels.

Current study accepts the **statement** regarding the **increase of the influence of the tourist guide used as guarantee in the advertisement.**

Key worlds: brochure, tour operator, tour guides, quality of service

The brochure is one of the most important marketing instruments of the tour-operator. Tomas Cook was the first one who published in 1953 brochure, prototype of the brochures, printed and published at the moment. In general the tourist brochure is a catalog for travels and is dedicated to serve both to end customers and tourist agents as a source of detailed information, which could be actualized by the computer reservation system of the tour operator.

➤ The brochure and market segmentation

One of the most important decisions for each tour operator offering a variety of programs is to select whether to publish one brochure or several brochures under various trade marks. The risks exist in the following directions⁶:

- If the tour operator is famous with its specialization in the sales of defined type of travels or offerings to the selected destination, it is not sure whether the customers will trust in

differentiating in the other type of offering in separate brochure;

- If the name of the tour operator reflects the initial specialization of the tour operator, for example in travels to certain destination, pointed in the name, obviously the customers will not consider its brochure, if they are looking for programs for travels to other destinations;
- If larger the brochure is, greater is the probability a big part of the brochure not to be of interest to the potential user with defined wishes and further the distribution will be more expensive;
- The printing of specialized thinner brochures, corresponding to the search of certain market segment along destinations, types of vacations, prices, etc. is successful, but in general these brochures reach a smaller number of potential customers. Further, if the customer obtained any of the brochures, he/she could decide that the tour operator does not offer other travels and he/she could look for another tour

⁶ Holloway J.C, R.V. Plant (1992) Marketing for Tourism, London

operator.

There is no synonymous solution whether one or several brochures should be published. After considering the positive and negative sides of each of the approaches the tour operator should select the most appropriate solution from point of view the sales. Big tour operators usually publish various brochures, considering the market segmentation under various trade marks.

➤ **Distribution and dissemination of brochures**

The brochures are distributed among the tourist agencies, which sell on behalf and for the account of different tour operators. Distribution of brochures among the agencies is performed on the grounds of the ratio of the presented brochures and realized sales by each agency for the previous periods. Most of the brochures could be given to agencies which customers in greater extent correspond to the profile of potential users of the program.⁷

After the delivery of the brochures in the agency, they are processed and on each copy a stamp or sticker with the data (name, address, telephone, number of license or registration) of the agency are placed.⁸ Most of the customers are supplied by the brochure of the tour operator by the tourist agency, where all brochures are exposed on shelf or specially prepared mantelpieces. Place for exposure is usually limited, which results in selectivity regarding the brochures, exposed in a way to be seen by potential tourists. The decision of which brochures where to be exposed depends on the specialization of the specialization of the agency, on its bounding to the channel of distribution with a given operator or the judgment based on previous experience of handling brochures and which brochures of which tour operators will yield prevailing volume of sales. Depending on the availability of space the brochures of

tour operators could be systematically exposed according to various criteria, and visible for the tourist to be the whole cove, part of it overlapping the brochures or even only the side profile. Biggest attention is drawn by these brochures which are placed at the level of the view and close to the entry of the agency.

The decision when to start the distribution of the brochure is of significant importance.⁹ The earliest publication of brochures is done by tour operators, leaders on the market (for the summer holidays – the previous autumn) which in this way determine the price levels of the impending sales. Smaller tour operators often use the created announcement and caused demand and also offer on the market their brochures. This hides risks for smaller companies, as their brochures could be fast exhausted, without been reached their potential customers – brochures could be taken only for comparison with the brochures of the big tour operators.

The high quality of preparation of a brochure requires it to contain enough information regarding organized travel and particularly guiding service, from which to great extent depends the success of each travel as well as subsequent use of the service of the agency in future.

➤ **Role of tour guides during group organized travels**

The different literature sources are used various terms for tourist guide depending on his/ hers functions, tasks and goals, type of travel and level of participation. Terms like tourist organizer, leader, group administrator, group director, tourist guide and couriers are mentioned.

The international Agency of Tourist Management (IATM) determines the **tourist organizer** as person, who:

- Manages and keeps the route on behalf of the tour operator, concerning the fact that the program e is performed

⁷ Asenova M., Vodenska M., (2006) Mediator work in tourism

⁸ Laws E. (1997) Managing Packaged Tourism

⁹ Holloway J.C., R.V. Plant (1992) Marketing for Tourism, London

in a way, which is described in the advertisement materials of tour operator and sold to the customer;

- Provides basic information for the route, covering general and specific, ethnical, geographic, historical and social – economic aspects of the visited country, as well as practical local information.¹⁰

During the last years, enhanced discussions were held regarding the definition “tour manager”, “compared to guide”. Initially the tour managers were called couriers, while in Brussels was stated that this term refers to couriers of parcels. The European Standardization Committee negotiated new definitions for the tourist services, tour operator and tour agent.

The word **leader** in the vocabulary is determined as person, who shows the way to other people during excursion or travel; and a person who guides and serves as a model for others in his career, management, etc.

The European Standardization Committee and the European Federation of Tour Guides determine the **tour guide** as person, who leads visitors in selected by them language and explains the cultural and the nature inheritance of the region, and this person could possess qualification certificate for knowledge of the peculiarities of the region. Such qualification certificates exist in the member states of the European Union. Usually they are issued and recognized by the respective authorities.

Many occupations exist: work for tour operator, travel agency, city or regional authorities; historical places; factories, open for visits; distillation, vineyards, wineries, historical houses castles, cathedrals and famous churches; organizers of conferences and accompanying events; government agencies; museums; galleries, hotels, national parks; tour operators, organizing excursions with aim riding bicycles, walks, adventures and horse riding; companies for students’, group and specialized travels; companies, schools,

important industrial zones, associations, gardens; regional and local tourism bodies and other companies and places which need guide for care for the visitors showing them the places of interests.¹¹

Many investigations among tourists were made concerning the issue of assessment of the guide. It becomes clear that the assessment of the people depends on the level of passion and only 10 % of the people questioned give their evaluation, based on rationalism.

According to them well looking and joyful person has advantage before not very well looking colleague.

➤ Personal virtues¹²

Psychological and physical loading is often extremely high and requires maximal stability in stress situations. There is no repeatability in the guidance work, except the fact that the guide always faces the unpredictability. Translated to the language of the employers this means: “Non stop we expect from you readiness for action, flexibility, security in taking decisions, talent for improvisation and activity”.

The doctors call this permanent stress. The following factors could be attributed to it: change in the climate, jet lag, danger from infections in exotic destinations, vaccines and other factors which in general change the biological rhythm and immune system of the people.

When a long lasting communication with people is needed under sophisticated circumstances, the tourist guide should not have problems with communication with people. The shy people or the people of the introvert type lose their significance for the group. Extroverts are also not suitable. It is necessary to look for the medium and this means desire for contacts, self confidence, high communication abilities, open behavior, positive emanation. Females need a double of all properties in order to withstand the group.

¹⁰ Collins, V.R. (2000) Becoming a Tour Guide

¹¹ Collins, V.R. (2000) Becoming a Tour Guide

¹² Kirstges T, Schroeder Ch (2001) Destination Reiseleitung

The worldly experience in the job is identified with the experience in communication with many people at various places under changing circumstance. The higher the knowledge of the tourist guide is the better is his / hers performance. Thus the youth is contradictory to success.

For tourist guidance of extreme importance is the **positive approach** to life which is expressed in joyful communication with people. The joy of life stimulates group and is a precondition for success, and success from its side results again in joy from life and thus the cycle is closed.

➤ **Tourist guide in the brochure of the tour operator**

Many investigations use generally famous people, experts, directors and customers as guaranteed advertisement. Other empiric investigations show how the advertisement efficiency changes if the leaders – tourist guides are used as guarantor for group tourist travels.

Current study accepts the **statement** regarding the **increase of the influence of the tourist guide used as guarantee in the advertisement.**

Results from observations and interview with tourists show that the tourist guides as guarantees in brochures for group tourist travels increase the efficiency in comparison with the traditional design in the brochures and the main executive director as a guarantee for the travel.

The importance of tourist guides in travel brochures is often used by various authors in various publications. In many Asian regions and countries like Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong, China etc., group tourist travels is one of the main ways for travel out of the country.¹³ Also in Bulgaria the group organized travels have considerable share in the total volume of the travels.

In many countries the group organized travel (GOT) is in the grounds of the international tourism. Despite of this the number of authors performing

investigations in this field with aim better knowing the influence of the quality of the travel brochure in selection by the customer of GOT is quite limited.

Group package travel is one of the main models for trans-boundary travel. According to the European Directive for package travels, recreations and excursions "package" means preliminary arranged combination of at least two of the following components – transport, accommodation and other tourist services, which are not related to the transportation and accommodation and constitute significant considerable part of the package – which is sold or offered for sale and is for minimum of one day and night.

Information materials for the package as well as conditions, related to the contract should not contain any false information. When a brochure reaches the customer in it should be clearly indicated in legible, understandable and precise way all requisites, as well as the price and the information regarding all details, related to the travel:

- End goal and the travel vehicle with which it will be performed, characteristics and category of transportation used;
- Type of accommodation – location, category and degree, basic characteristics, approval and tourist classification according to the rules of the member state, in which the travel will be performed;
- Plan for nutrition;
- Route;
- Basic information for requirement for passport and visa for for the citizens of the member states and the healthcare procedures, related to the travel and stay or monetary value and percentage of the price which have to be transferred along bank account and schedule for payments;
- Whether there is a determined minimum for the number of the participants in the travel and if there is such minimum – the pointed date when

¹³ Wang, Hsieh and Huan, 2000; Prideaux 1998; Tourism Bureau 2000; Wang and Sheldon, 1995; Nozawa, 1992; Yamamoto and Gill, 1999

the customers should be informed in case of postponing of the travel.

The Directive requires accuracy in creation of the brochure, due to this reason the tour managers and tourist guides should guarantee the keeping of the route, as shown in the brochure; the promised comfort, including ferry boat and other types of transportation; without making changes in the pointed in the brochure, except these are due to known managerial principles; tour operators are obliged to take care for the customers and their representatives (tour managers and tourist guides) should provide customers to obtain what they have paid for.¹⁴

According to the Directive when the customer has possibility to use the package he could transfer it to other potential customer, which corresponds to all conditions, determined by the organizers, as in advance, in an acceptable period before starting the travel has informed organizer for the change. If such transfer results in additional expenses for the organizer they are accepted total by the transferor and transferee of the package. The prices, placed in the package cannot be changed except if this is a provision in the contract to it. When after starting of the travel the organizer cannot offer certain service, included in the package, he/she is obliged to offer free of charge alternative variant for the customer.

The trans-boundary travels could be classified as 2 types: GOT and non organized (individual) travels (NOT). There are two main differences between GOT and NOT. The first difference is in the process of purchase. In case of GOT the customer could purchase the products via third parties for example friends, relatives, companies, schools, churches and through tourist agencies. In the case of NOT is the opposite – usually the customers realize contact directly with the agencies personally with aim obtaining information and advices. Second: the relation between customer and GOT is almost always mediated by

¹⁴ Collins, V.R. (2000) *Becoming a Tour Guide*

employee – moderator. This means that in case of GOT the tourist agency appoints a tourist guide who accompanies the tourists. In some countries or cities like Singapore, Malaysia Thailand, Korea, Paris, Vienna, London, etc. a local tourist guide is provided who accompanies the tourists, but in cases of NOT this is not mandatory. *The service sector depends to great extent on the mediators, which play great influence on the quality of the services.* Further more, the function of the tourist guide in the group is considered by the tourists itself as absolutely necessary, and the **quality of service of the tourist guide** could have substantial influence – his hers performance could improve or worsen the travel. The diverse roles and responsibilities of the tourist guide include: provision of security and protection, information, encouragement, of interactions in the group, to pay the role of a parent, to find ways, to be a manager, leader and moderator and to assure entertainment. Most probably the main contact of the customers with the agency is performed via the tourist guide. Most often he / she is the only relation and if so his behavior is the **dominant factor which will influence the customers' acceptance of the quality of service during the travel of the customers.**¹⁵

Most typical for the group tourist travels is the availability of a guide as accompanying person and organizer of the trip itself, as a person providing detailed information during the whole travel. The function of the tourist guide in the frames of the group is accepted by tourists themselves as inseparable part and not as addition, the quality of the tour guiding service has extreme importance, from his or hers performance depends establishment or failure of the trip itself.¹⁶

¹⁵ Yaneva, M. Et al., (2005). *Competitive strategies in tourism. Investigation of the quality of the tour guide product*, Trakiya M., p. 285.

¹⁶ Schmidh, C. J. (1979). *The guided tour: Insulated adventure*. *Urban Life*, 7(4), 441-467

The investigations approve¹⁷, that the leading **tourist guide is important for tourist acceptance of the travel, a professional tour guide is of prime convenience in the case of group travels**¹⁸

Other investigations¹⁹ for one day trips confirm and show that the multi-functionality²⁰ and importance²¹ of the tourist guide and the responsibilities comprise: provision of safety and protection, information, enhancement of interactions inside the group, substitution of the parent, pioneer and supervisor, leader and moderator, and last but not least creation of entertainments.

Regarding the **importance of the travel's brochure**²² it is pointed that the most important source of information for planning of tourist complex travels is the brochure.

Additionally other investigators²³ demonstrate, that many advertisements and available methods, the travel brochure is the most important and most widely used.

Further it is pointed²⁴ that the potential customers compare the brochure for a certain destination or supplier with competitor's brochures and most probably this supplier with the competitor's brochure and most probably the supplier with the best brochure gets the order.

Other investigation²⁵ showed that the travel brochure is evaluated by the travelers higher and with higher significance than video tape, photos audio recordings, etc.

Despite the fact that the tourists are often with negative attitude to brochures, they rely on them while selecting vacation destination²⁶.

Potential tourists are committed by reading and are susceptible to travel brochures.²⁷

Other researchers²⁸ also found that brochure is an attractive source of information for customers making their selection for vacation.

The abovementioned investigations, as well s observations and interviews with tourists prove clearly that **the tourist guide and the travel brochures are two important variables in the relationship between the tourists and tour operators.**

It is often asked the question whether the tourist is well-disposed to the travel's brochure if it contains photo of the tourist guide and a brief summary with personal information of what is the effect of these characteristics of the **design of the travel brochure on the intent for purchase of the tourists.**

From point of view the advertisement theory, the tourist guide could be considered as a guarantee. If this is so, the analyses for the role of the tourist guide could be connected with literature, dedicated to the efficiency of advertisement, grounded on the guarantee basis.

The inclination of the travelers to select travels with common goal to certain degree depends on the risks which they take with every travel and from the financial

¹⁷ Mossberg, L. L. (1995). Tout leader and their importance in charter tours. *Tourism Management*, 16(6), 437-445.

¹⁸ Agrusa, J. (1994). Group tours in Hawaii. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21(1), 146-147

¹⁹ Holloway, J. C. (1981). The guided tour: a sociological approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 8(3), 377-402.

²⁰ Cohen, E. (1985). The tourist guide the origins, structure and dynamics of a role. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 12(1), 5-29

²¹ Schuchat, M. G. (1983). Comforts of group tours. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 10(4), 465-477.

²² Yamamoto, D., & Gill, A. M. (1999). Emerging trends in Japanese package tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 38(2), 134-143.

²³ Holloway, J. C., & Plant, R. V. (1988). *Marketing for tourism*. London: Pitman

²⁴ Coltman, M. M. (1989). *Tourism marketing*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold

²⁵ Gladwell, N. J., & Wolff, R. M. (1989). An assessment of the effectiveness of press kits as a tourism promotion tool. *Journal of Travel Research*, 27(4), 49-51

²⁶ McCullough, G. (1977). *Tourist holiday images with specific reference to tropical destinations*. Unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation, University of Surrey, UK

²⁷ Moeran, B. (1983). The language of Japanese tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 10(1), 93-108.

²⁸ Wicks, B. E., & Schuett, M. A. (1991). Examining the role of tourism promotion through the use of brochures. *Tourism Management*, 12(4), 301-312

considerations.²⁹ The basic literature for marketing surveys in tourist service further shows that there is a trend for increase of searching of information for taking of decision for travel increase of risk,³⁰ and provision of information results in additional change in behavior³¹. **Results of analyses show, that** distinguishing the personal information and photo (picture) of the tourist leader in the travels' brochures with a total price has greater effect than traditional brochures, which design usually does not comprise these characteristics. From this finding a conclusion could be drawn that in brochures with non-traditional, experimental design the significant information is distinguished, connected with travels and

this information causes changes in the attitude and behavior of the travelers towards brochures with total price.

This result also reflects the fact that **travels with total price are actually non-touchable product and the tour guide is its most important variable**³². The customers cannot "investigate" the products unless the travel has started. Thus a new brochure for the travels with a total price, prepared in such way to contain more information for the tour guide can reduce the view of the customers for potential risk, and this reduction could result finally in change of attitude and behavior towards the advertisement

²⁹Sheldon, P. J., & Mak, J. (1987). The demand for package tours: A mode choice model. *Journal of Travel Research*, 24(3), 13-17

Roehl, W. S., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (1992). Risk perceptions and pleasure travel: An exploratory analysis. *Journal of Travel Research*, 30(4), 17-26

Tsaur, S. H., Tzeng, G. H., & Wang, K. C. (1997). Evaluation tourist risks from fuzzy perspectives. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(4), 796-812

³⁰Murray, K. B. (1991). A test of services marketing theory: Consumer information acquisition activities. *Journal of Marketing*, 55 (1), 10-25

³¹Uzzell, D. (1984). An alternative structuralist approach to the psychology of tourism marketing. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 11(2), 79-99

³²Quiroga, I. (1990). Characteristics of package tours in Europe. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 17(2), 185-207

Schmidh, C. J. (1979). The guided tour: Insulated adventure. *Urban Life*, 7(4), 441-467