

Live Entertainment

Visiting heritage and commercial attractions and participating in activities at these locations could easily be classified as entertainment. However, live entertainment opportunities fill a special need for travelers and others seeking additional leisure-time activities. The choices of live entertainment venues can run from the deafening crowds at hallmark sporting events such as the World Cup or the Super Bowl to the serene pleasures of the ballet.

Sporting Activities

As highlighted in Chapter 2, sports have drawn visitors to scheduled events from near and far for thousands of years. Over 3,500 years ago, the Greeks initiated the idea of staging athletic competitions. The most famous of these competitions were the Olympic Games held in Olympia. The competitions began as part of their religious festivals and were staged in towns throughout Greece and Italy. The original competitions in Greece were organized as contests, but the Romans expanded the idea and staged them as games for public entertainment. Although the grand athletic competitions and festivals such as the classical Olympic Games faded and disappeared under Roman rule, the

TOURISM IN ACTION

BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

A mall is a mall is a mall. Not so! Imagine a shopping and entertainment paradise that covers over 110 acres and attracts over 20 million visitors a year. Now, imagine this attraction sitting on the plains of Canada in the city of Edmonton, Alberta. If you have not visited this “shopping center,” then you have missed seeing and experiencing one of the biggest malls on Earth—West Edmonton Mall. This mammoth package of tourist services attracts people from all over the world in record numbers.

The West Edmonton Mall is not like most other malls: It is massive in size and excites the imagination. Sure, it has shops, shops, and more shops. In fact, it has more than 800 stores. But the mall has more than shops and shopping to attract visitors. Almost 40% of the mall’s space is dedicated to attractions as well as a hotel and more than 100 food outlets, and it is all under one roof. It takes over 15,000 employees to accomplish all of the administrative and operating duties to keep this giant enterprise ticking.

The Fantasyland Hotel has 355 guest rooms, but 127 of these rooms have been specially “themed” and decorated to fulfill guests’ desires for travel adventures. When it’s time to take a break from shopping there are a number of things to do and see, including Galaxyland Amusement Park, World Waterpark, Ice Palace, Europa (miniature) golf course, Deep Sea Submarine Adventure, Dolphin Lagoon and Sea Life Caverns, a full-scale casino, a bowling emporium, three cinema complexes, and a replica of one of the ships of Christopher Columbus.

Deciding what to do can be as difficult as deciding what to buy. Viewing the many animal attractions exhibiting more than 200 species of animals such as dolphins, fish, exotic birds, and a colony of breeding penguins takes you back to nature. A ride on the Mindbender roller coaster will find you dropping 14 floors at over 70 mph, while the tranquility of the submarine ride will transport you to exotic coral reefs. Or, you can splash down into the water park that covers an area the size of five NFL football fields.

The success of West Edmonton Mall and Mall of America as retailing and tourism magnets has set the stage for even bigger and better venues. Consider the South China Mall in Dongguan, China, with 7.1 million square feet; the Golden Resources Shopping Mall in Beijing, China, with 6 million square feet; and the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City, Philippines, with 4.2 million square feet; and the West Edmonton Mall begins to look small.³⁸ What marketers at each of these and other megamalls have learned is that tourists are drawn to a shopping experience where they have the option of staying overnight while enjoying themed attractions, dining, and entertainment options.

Sources: From <http://westedmall.com>; Carlisle, Tamsin. (1997, March 7). Gamble by the world’s biggest mall pays off. *Wall Street Journal*, pp. B1, B18; World’s ten largest shopping malls. (2008, January 30). *Forbes.com*.