

## Summary

Bringing together all of the components provided by tourism suppliers into one location creates the potential for a tourist destination. Destinations are the final stopping points of trips where tourists seek to “escape” their daily routines and enjoy rest, relaxation, recreation, and entertainment. These destinations can be found anywhere in the world and range all the way from quiet and secluded guest retreats to those floating resorts we call cruise ships. No matter where they are located or how attractive the destinations might be, tourists will not come unless the facilities and activities they desire are provided.

Spas were the original destination “resorts” built by the Romans, but the types of destinations from which travelers can choose today are numerous. Although each destination has its own unique appeal to tourists, destinations often share many similarities based on seasonal demand and the level of commercial development needed to meet guests’ needs. These shared similarities allow us to classify destinations into the following strategic groups: Far from the Maddening Crowd, Links to the Past, Seasonal Delights, Spotlight on Sporting

Activities, Year-Round Playgrounds, and Bright Lights and City Sights.

Destinations that are grouped in each of these categories face similar marketing, management, and financial opportunities and challenges. Some destinations face dramatic seasonal shifts in demand, but others experience more consistent demand throughout the year. Shifting patterns in demand can affect a variety of decisions, including marketing plans, staffing patterns, cash flow projections, and capital expenditure plans. Steps are therefore being taken at most tourist destinations to attract additional visitors during less popular time periods.

Tourist destinations continue to grow in popularity and so do the choices travelers face when selecting their perfect destination. It can be a fishing lodge, a snow holiday resort, a seaside resort, a golf resort, a spa resort, a cruise ship, an urban tourist mecca, or (you fill in the blank). As the choices grow and the opportunities for leisure travel increase, tourist destinations must focus on meeting a variety of guest needs while continuing to improve service offerings for future success.

## You Decide

Cruises are one of the best buys in vacationing today. Prices have remained fairly constant, and the amenities onboard have improved year after year. And the service is second to none. Passengers are pampered by employees at every turn: by the pool, in the many dining rooms, in the casino, and in their cabins, with a steward on call 24 hours a day.

How can cruise ships afford to provide so much personal attention and service? One way is by controlling labor costs. Nonprofessional cruise employees work 70 hours a week for an average starting pay of \$2,000 a month. The vast majority of their earnings come from tips, which can add from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per month to their income. Cruise workers not only work long hours but are also generally at sea on five- to eight-month contracts, receiving two days off per month. They do spend six weeks onshore between contracts. Employees, of course, receive room and board, medical care, and airfare to and from home between contracts in addition to their pay and tips; and benefits are generous by international standards.

Most cruise-line employees come from Third World or former Soviet-bloc nations. Although many are college educated, they are unable to find well-paying employment in their home countries. Cruise-line personnel agencies are virtually flooded with applicants from around the globe, from Honduras to Romania. The demand for cruise ship jobs is high because wages in most nonindustrialized countries are so low.

Cruise lines can decide how much to pay employees because they are not subject to the employment regulations of industrialized countries such as minimum wages, maximum working hours, and overtime pay. They are able to avoid these regulations by registering their ships abroad in countries such as Panama and Liberia. Should cruise lines be pressured to comply with employment laws in developed countries?

*Sources:* Based on Allerton, H E. (2003). Crewse. T + D, 57(4), 87–88; Keedle, J. (2008). Wish. you were here. *Career World*, 36(5), 21–23.

## Net Tour

To get you started on exploring Internet links for this chapter, please see

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