



The future of the world's largest industry is in all of our hands. Victoria/Fotolia

Introduction

Peering into the future of travel and tourism is similar to looking into a cloudy crystal ball. We may not be able to bring the future into a clearly focused picture for you, but the bright light of a growing industry is glowing from the center of our crystal ball. The knowledge you have gained through studying the information in this textbook has given you a sound foundation for thinking about the future. Based on this knowledge, you can begin to see some of the challenges and opportunities the tourism industry will face. As you look to the future, can you see yourself becoming a professional member of this industry?

In this chapter, we gaze into the future by considering some of the emerging trends in the tourism industry. These trends may shift and new ones may emerge, but thinking about the future allows you to plan for it. As you read about each of the trends, think about the changes you see happening around you and imagine what the world of tourism might be like 5, 10, or even 20 years from now. No matter how much uncertainty the future holds, there is good news. There will always be the need for talented professionals to tackle the management, marketing, and financial challenges of this growing industry.

The Shape of Coming Tourism Markets

You read about many of the important tourism market segments of today in Chapter 2. Will these segments still be as important in the future? There is no question that tourism markets will change, but what will these markets look like? Two possible scenarios are beginning to unfold. One scenario points to mass markets and a “one-size-fits-all” approach to delivering tourism services; the other points to highly focused services that are targeted toward meeting the needs of specific market niches.

In countries growing in economic strength, such as Poland, India, Russia, China, Panama, Vietnam, and Brazil, many tourism services will be developed to meet the needs of mass markets. We will see this type of development as levels of disposable income, leisure time, and infrastructure improvements in these countries encourage tourism growth.