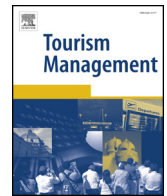




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Book Review

S. Pike. (Ed.), *Tourism Marketing for Small Businesses*, Goodfellow Publishers Ltd, Oxford (2018). vi + 242pp., (Hbk.), £85, ISBN: 9781911396352, (Pbk.), £34.99 ISBN: 9781911396345

The tourism sector is dominated by small and medium tourism businesses (SMEs) which require substantial attention and support to break through challenges and constraints, from starting up through to staying competitive and relevant in a dynamic industry. *Tourism Marketing for Small Businesses* provides an essential contribution to support the strategic development of tourism SMEs from the marketing perspective.

The book presents a range of chapters that cover critical marketing concepts and essential practices. The chapters are organised to reflect the steps in marketing processes. The book can be broadly divided into six areas of practice. The first three chapters focus on the characteristics and behaviours of the supply and demand side of the tourism sector. Chapter 1 provides an overview of tourism services and the marketing challenges and establishes the need for marketing applications among small tourism businesses to stay competitive. Chapter 2 focuses on the role of a destination marketing organisation (DMO) and its importance to link the supply side of the tourism sector, specifically to the small businesses. On the demand side, Chapter 3 displays the five key stages of the consumer behaviour model and discusses the key internal influences (e.g. motivation, perceptions and personality) on consumer's buying behaviour. The external influences were outlined as key points but were not explored much.

As a second area of interest, Chapters 4 and 5 focus on capturing marketing insights. Chapter 4 focuses on the situation analysis, which eventually leads to the establishment of SWOT analysis, while Chapter 5 presents the six-step marketing research process. Pike proposes the use of mixed methods research design in tourism businesses, so to obtain richer and in-depth information for better strategy setting. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the tourism marketing planning process, which emphasises the need for marketing objectives formation, tactics development, and performance monitoring system.

The next part of the book provides knowledge on shaping branding and tourism services with chapters on product strategy, branding strategy, and pricing strategy. As tourism is a service-oriented product, Chapter 6 highlights the importance of value creation as part of product development. Small tourism business owners need to be aware that they are in the experience economy and are exposed to the disruptive business environment. Pike proposes service-dominant logic and creative thinking in guiding small businesses to create value. The concept of co-creation and innovative experience plays an essential role in connecting with customers, thus leading to the three elements (i.e. brand identity, brand positioning and brand image) of tourism branding in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 presents the function of pricing and discusses the key internal and external factors influencing the service provider's

pricing decisions. The author stresses the adoption of dynamic pricing strategy for small businesses for better yield management.

The fourth area of the book is about communicating values through traditional and digital communication channels. Chapter 9 describes the six-step marketing communication process and the promotional approaches commonly used to communicate with the customers in tourism services. While Chapter 9 mainly focuses on traditional communication platforms, Chapter 10 shows the use of digital and social media in the tourism sector. This chapter is particularly useful for readers as it provides good insights into the common roles of digital and social media users, how they use it, and the platforms small tourism businesses can leverage the best outcomes. Chapter 11 covers Public Relations (PR) and publicity. Networking as the ultimate outcome of PR and publicity is important yet cost effective for the budget-constraint small business owners. The ability to connect with the media, crafting a good story angle, and work with the DMOs enhances the businesses' competitiveness at an affordable cost.

The book then turns to establishing long term growth through customer relationship management (CRM) strategy and proper distribution strategy. Chapter 12 highlights the key essence of CRM and loyalty programmes. While customer satisfaction may lead to loyalty, it may not always be the case so Pike provides some analysis and proposes several approaches to building customer loyalty. Chapter 13 looks into the distribution channel options and commission in the tourism sector. To complete the marketing processes, the final area focuses on performance measurement approaches. Chapter 14 proposes performance indicators that can be measured quantitatively and/or qualitatively. Performance measurements include advertising evaluation, digital and social media evaluation, customer satisfaction, branding performance, importance-performance analysis (IPA) and gap analysis. The book provides a practical and relevant overview of performance measurement to tourism businesses.

Overall, the book is highly recommended for both academics and practitioners as it connects marketing theories and concepts with practical applications, and where most textbooks are lacking. This book provides a useful reference for small business owners too. Most of the content and industry cases cover key areas of modern marketing. The critical points and industry insights provide useful references to not just small tourism businesses but any small and medium size organisations in the service industry. One area that could have featured is emotional marketing, where businesses establish a meaningful connection with customers. In this instance, small tourism businesses might have an edge over larger establishments as they are more flexible and closer to individual customers. Perhaps, a chapter on emotional marketing to assist the small tourism businesses in stabling its unique value proposition would further enhance the practical contribution of the book.

Brian Kee Mun Wong,
School of Business, KDU University College, 40150 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
 E-mail address: keemunw@gmail.com.

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