

Management of Visitor Attractions

Welcome to HTM401: Management of Visitor Attractions. This presentation explores the critical role attractions play in tourism, visitor motivation theories, and sustainable management practices. Designed for undergraduate students and tourism practitioners, these insights will help you understand how to effectively develop and manage visitor attractions in today's competitive landscape.



Visitor Attractions: The Cornerstone of Tourism



Visitor Magnets

Attractions serve as primary drivers for both international and domestic tourism, often being the main reason travelers choose specific destinations.



Economic Engines

Generate significant revenue through direct spending, create employment opportunities, and stimulate broader economic development in surrounding areas.



Cultural Anchors

Strengthen local identity, preserve heritage, and provide platforms for cultural expression and exchange between hosts and visitors.

Attractions form the backbone of tourism infrastructure, contributing to destination branding and extending visitor stays. They create focal points for tourism development and often serve as catalysts for broader regional revitalization efforts.

Types of Visitor Attractions



Purpose-Built Attractions

- Theme parks (Disney, Universal)
- Museums and art galleries
- Aquariums and zoos
- Entertainment complexes

Natural Attractions

- National parks and forests
- Beaches and marine reserves
- Mountains and natural landmarks
- Wildlife habitats

Heritage Attractions

- Historic buildings and castles
- Archaeological sites
- Cultural institutions

Event-Based Attractions

- Sporting events (Olympics, World Cup)
- Cultural festivals and celebrations
- Music concerts and performances
- Exhibitions and trade shows

Events can transform ordinary locations into temporary attractions, driving significant visitor numbers during specific timeframes.



Tourism Impacts: The Double-Edged Sword

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Positive Impacts

- Job creation and economic diversification
- Infrastructure improvements (roads, airports)
- Preservation of cultural sites and traditions
- Environmental conservation funding
- Enhanced community pride and identity

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Negative Impacts

- Overcrowding and visitor congestion
- Environmental degradation and pollution
- Cultural commodification and authenticity loss
- Seasonal employment instability
- Local housing affordability challenges

Successful attraction management requires balancing these competing impacts, maximizing benefits while implementing strategies to mitigate potential negative consequences for both the destination and host communities.

Tourist Motivation Theories

Maslow's Hierarchy Applied to Tourism

Tourists seek to fulfill various needs, from basic (escape routine) to higher-order (self-actualization through transformative experiences).

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Alderfer's ERG Theory

Simplifies Maslow into three core needs: Existence (basic comforts), Relatedness (social connections), and Growth (personal development).

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Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Distinguishes between hygiene factors (prevent dissatisfaction) and motivators (create satisfaction) in tourism experiences.

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Dann's Push-Pull Framework

Internal forces "push" travelers (desire for escape, adventure) while destination attributes "pull" them (unique attractions, amenities).

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Gray's Travel Motives

Contrasts wanderlust (curiosity about different cultures) with sunlust (desire for better amenities/climate than available at home).

Understanding Visitor Typologies

Key Visitor Segments

Business Tourists

Conference attendees, corporate travelers, incentive trip participants

Leisure Tourists

Holiday-makers, sightseers, adventure seekers

VFR Tourists

Visiting friends and relatives, often using less commercial accommodation

Youth Tourists

Students, backpackers, educational travelers



Common Visitor Needs

- Escape from routine and relaxation
- Family bonding and togetherness
- Social status and prestige
- Learning and self-development
- Shopping and consumption opportunities
- Cultural immersion and authenticity

Understanding these visitor types and their distinct needs allows attraction managers to tailor experiences, marketing strategies, and service offerings accordingly.



Case Study: The London Eye

The London Eye exemplifies successful attraction management through understanding visitor motivations and delivering exceptional experiences.

Visitor Motivations



- Desire for panoramic views of London landmarks
- Seeking memorable shared experiences
- Photo opportunities for social sharing

Experience Design



- 30-minute rotation provides optimal viewing time
- Glass capsules create immersive experience
- Climate-controlled environment for year-round comfort

Business Success



- Over 3.5 million visitors annually
- Premium pricing tiers for enhanced experiences
- Complementary revenue from merchandise and photos

Attraction Development Process



Market Assessment

Analyze demand patterns, competitor offerings, and market gaps. Conduct feasibility studies to evaluate financial viability and potential ROI.



Data Collection & Analysis

Gather and interpret demographic data, visitor preferences, spending patterns, and seasonal fluctuations to inform development decisions.



Infrastructure & Systems Development

Build physical infrastructure, develop HR policies, implement administrative systems, and address potential environmental impacts (waste, pollution, landscape alterations).



Strategic Planning

Define clear objectives, scope territorial boundaries, and establish governance frameworks. Align with broader destination development goals.

Successful attraction development requires careful consideration of both market forces and destination characteristics. Developers must balance commercial objectives with community interests and environmental stewardship throughout this process.

Sustainable Attraction Management Techniques

Visitor Management Approaches

- Differentiated pricing strategies and entry fees
- Time-based ticketing and capacity controls
- Digital queue management systems
- Tourist taxes and conservation contributions
- Visitor flow design and congestion prevention

Four Phases of Visitor Journey

1. Dreaming (inspiration and awareness)
2. Choosing (decision-making and booking)
3. Experiencing (the visit itself)
4. Reviewing (reflection and sharing)



Sustainability Initiatives

- Energy efficiency and renewable power integration
- Waste reduction, recycling, and composting programs
- Water conservation and rainwater harvesting
- Biodiversity protection and habitat preservation
- Cultural heritage conservation and interpretation
- Community involvement and benefit-sharing

❏ Effective attraction management now requires balancing visitor experience quality with environmental and cultural sustainability. Attractions that neglect sustainability risk both reputational damage and regulatory challenges.

Key Takeaways & Implementation Strategies



Balance Impacts

Design attractions that maximize positive economic and social impacts while minimizing environmental and cultural costs.



Understand Motivations

Apply motivation theories to create experiences that satisfy diverse visitor needs and generate higher satisfaction.



Embed Sustainability

Integrate sustainable practices from the development phase through ongoing operations to ensure long-term viability.

Next Steps for Application

1. Conduct a visitor motivation assessment for an existing attraction
2. Develop a sustainability audit checklist for attraction managers
3. Create a visitor journey map that addresses all four phases of the visitor experience
4. Design a monitoring system to track both positive and negative impacts over time

By applying these principles, attraction managers can create compelling, profitable, and sustainable visitor experiences that benefit all stakeholders.