

Language in Tourism

A Starter Guide to Cross-Cultural
Tourism Marketing.



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INTRODUCTION



In recent years, the tourism industry has experienced amazing growth internationally. With attention to new niches, as well as the rise of new forms of travelling and experiencing foreign cultures, this is a great climate for innovation, and it shows in the numbers.

According to the World Tourism Organization's "International Tourism Results 2018 and Outlook 2019" report, published earlier this year, in 2018, we experienced a global growth of 6% in international tourist arrivals.

This made 2018 the second best year in the decade for international tourism.

In the tourism sector, making the changes necessary to appeal to foreign markets is easier than in other industries. And it's crystal clear to all actors that the greatest potential for growth comes from an effective international outreach. And the benefits that an effective strategy can reap are numberless.



6% GLOBAL GROWTH

Success cases abound.

One of the most interesting is the government-impulsed campaign to make New Zealand a top international destination.

PURE NEW ZEALAND



PURE NEW ZEALAND HIGHLIGHTS THE COUNTRY'S NATURAL BEAUTY. IT WAS SEEN AS AN EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTALIST CAUSES, AND HAS BECOME AN EVOLVING, MULTIFACETED EFFORT.

Tourism is currently one of the highest-grossing sectors of New Zealand's economy. This is partially due to 10 years of work. We can trace its beginning to the first 100% Pure New Zealand campaign, in 2009.

But New Zealand's marketing initiatives have been diverse and innovative across platforms. The New Zealand Tourism agency runs one of the top 5 most successful travel-related Instagram accounts, being a feed of quality user-generated content. New Zealand has also capitalized on film tourism, seizing the benefits of having been the natural stage to the film adaptations of the **Lord of the Rings** saga.

So far, tourism marketing for the country has been a success, turning everything New Zealand has to offer into interest topics for outlets from all around the globe. In 2015, at an international level, 22,000 stories about New Zealand as a destination were published. In 2017, the global media coverage for New Zealand as a tourist destination was worth an estimated **\$227 million**.

Though the example of a government agency successfully kindling the interest of the international market can be inspiring, if you're from a small or medium-sized enterprise in this sector, you might be wondering which are the key steps you could take to attract foreign travellers.

In this guide, we'll explore the planning, resources and mindset necessary to market your tourism services to foreign audiences.

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THE PLANNING STAGE

The European Commission defines an international marketing plan as

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the document that defines and details the information about where you want to go with the company from an international point of view – and how you will go about doing it. It is therefore the ‘guide’ for the internationalisation process. It will be adapted to the target market and will establish the various steps that have to be developed.

”

Of course, before we start planning, we need to analyze our opportunity landscape. This first step is called a “Viability Analysis”.

VIABILITY ANALYSIS

Continuing on with the New Zealand Case: Which are the most common countries of origin for tourists visiting New Zealand? Australia, China, the USA, the UK, Germany, Japan, Korea, and India.

JULY 2018 –
JUNE 2019
**HOLIDAY
ARRIVALS**



AUSTRALIA
CHINA
USA
UK
GERMANY
JAPAN
KOREA
INDIA

What does this mean?

The main factors behind these stats might be:

- **PROXIMITY:** New Zealand receives visitors from countries close to its territory.
- **LANGUAGE:** Why are the USA and the UK on this list? New Zealand is an exotic country with a very different natural stage, but where English is also spoken, and there are cultural and recreational activities that American and British tourists might be interested in.
- **ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:** All these are high-GDP or fast-growing countries.

THE BIG PICTURE, FOR PRIVATE ENTERPRISES



Of course, when you're a small or medium-size player in the private sector, your resources and work aren't invested in the big picture.

But, take a look at the research of government agencies dedicated to fostering your country's or your area's reputation as a tourist destination.

Once you're aware of the most promising markets you could target, it's time to design a plan.



AN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING PLAN

The European Commission suggests that the minimum elements in any international marketing plan should be:

SWOT

Strength,
Weaknesses,
Opportunities,
Threats

ANALYSIS

Of market to target
and environment –
competitors,
regulations, etc.

INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGIES

Promotion, entrance, pricing, and product strategies. How are we entering the market? Through a franchise or joint venture? How will the product be priced?

OBJECTIVES, MISSION AND VISION

ECONOMIC PLAN

A business plan and
a return on
investment analysis

AN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING PLAN



All great marketing is the result of having clear goals and a solid understanding of the target demographic. Performing throughout analysis of our circumstances and those of our target audiences ensures the success of our whole venture. Especially, of the key facet that is its promotion.



PRIORITIES & KEY ASSETS



In *Tourism International Marketing Strategies: The Role of Quality Brand in the Valorisations Process*, Cacia & Aiello take a schematic approach to international marketing for private actors in the tourism sector.

They focus specifically on how brands are conveyed across cultures and how they exist within and relate with the touristic activities and destination.

When analyzing a hotel chain, they explain that the value provided by a certain hotel isn't just about its services and its infrastructure, but also about where it is. It's valuable as a part of the experience of being at a certain tourist destination.

When creating assets to appeal to the foreign traveler, we have an interesting challenge:

We must be informative, genuine, inviting and accommodating.

As Mohamed Zain Sulaiman exposed in *The misunderstood concept of translation into tourism promotion*:

“




“In today's environment of increasing mobility and travel, tourism is recognised as a key driver for socio-economic progress in many parts of the world. Many economies are investing heavily in tourism marketing and promotion to attract as many tourists as possible. Given the intangible nature of the tourism impulse, language –both verbal and visual– represents the most powerful driving force in persuading potential tourists and converting them into actual tourists.”

Remaining authentic while creating material clearly targeted towards foreigners is a challenge requiring intelligent planning and cross-cultural expertise.

The key assets we need to have adapted to our new demographic are:

-  **our slogans**
-  **our guides & brochures**
-  **our website's informative material, reservation and "contact us" pages**

In order to engage with foreign audiences, we should also localize:

-  **our social media posts**
-  **our advertising campaigns**
-  **our commercials & other audiovisual assets**

On the other hand, considering that language tends to be a deal breaker, and our target demographic might not speak our language, our front desk should be able to communicate with them in their native tongue.



WELCOME TO PARADISE?

The role of the translator in the tourism industry has been complicated to say the least. As Mohamed Zain Sulaiman exposed in his 2016 study, tourism promotional materials are both one of the most commonly translated texts in the world, **and the most often mistranslated.**

For instance, in Western cultures, it's very common to attract tourists by referring to a destination as "paradise on earth". **This is ineffective if we're dealing with Malay and Arab audiences, to which you can only get to paradise if you die first.** In these cultures, the idea of a secular, earthly paradise doesn't exist.

The promotional site for tourism in Australia doesn't acknowledge this difference, inviting the Malay audience to "Pedal to Paradise in the Blue Mountains". **Surveyed Malay natives found this slogan "unnatural", "awkward", and "unappealing".**

“THE SAFE HAVEN OF STRAIGHT TRANSLATION”



One of the key reasons why translations fail is that translators, in Smith and Klein-Braley's words, refuse to leave “the safe haven of straight translation”. Basically, they prefer translating words to translating functions. Thus, generating a text that is a semantic reproduction of its original, but that doesn't serve its function.

To reproduce function instead of mere semantics, cross-cultural expertise is needed.

Sulaiman suggests that, in order to produce quality tourism promotional materials in translation, projects should be in charge of professionals that meet the following criteria:



Product knowledge: A good understanding of the industry and the product being promoted



Linguistic competence: Being native speakers of the target language



Copywriting and creative writing skills



Cultural competence: A throughout understanding of the target market

**IF THAT IS WHAT YOU'RE
LOOKING FOR, YOU'RE IN THE
RIGHT PLACE.**

YOUR CROSS-CULTURAL ALLIES



How can we help you succeed?
We work with a multidisciplinary team of specialists, from mother-tongue linguists to developers and marketers. Our commitment and expertise make it possible for us to deliver the quality work your business deserves, within your deadlines. With more than 12 years in the industry, and the trust of leaders and innovators across the globe, let us be your go-to option.

We provide:



YOUR CROSS-CULTURAL ALLIES



LOCALIZATION SERVICES

We go beyond words, making sure your target audience experiences your brand just the way you want them to.

We take care of colors, imagery, wordplay, and even sounds.



TRANSLATION SERVICES

Culturally-sensitive and accurate translations that read like the originals.

We work in more than 100 languages, and rely on an international network of industry specialists.



GLOBAL MARKETING SOLUTIONS

From market research to planning and implementing PPC and social media campaigns. Our international digital marketing solutions connect you to your target audience, whoever or wherever they are.



INTERPRETING SERVICES

We offer in-person interpreters within 24 hours of request, and over-the-phone interpreters with instant availability. Conduct negotiations and solve emergencies regardless of language barriers with the help of a carefully selected and highly-trained interpreter.



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