

Promotion and Sales in Tourism

Introduction

All tourism organisations have to promote and sell the products and services they provide to their customers. Although the organisation might be part of the voluntary or public sectors, it will still be necessary to sell products to provide income. For example, country parks are nearly all managed by local councils but may need to charge for entry and activities to generate some income.

Products and services of the tourism industries

The products of the tourism industries are very different from those provided by other industries. Many of these products cannot be physically touched, unlike a DVD or a pair of jeans, but they still have to be paid for.

The products of the tourism industries include:

- Admission to a theme park
- Paying to use a swimming pool
- Airline flights
- Hotel accommodation

Many of these products are said to be:

- **Intangible** – because they cannot be touched, such as a short break holiday.
- **Perishable** – because once they have been used once, the product has 'perished'. For example, a ticket for a flight can only be used once.

A holiday to a tropical beach is a product of the tourism industry and is intangible and perishable.



Marketing

Promotion and sales are part of the wider process of **marketing**.

Marketing can be defined as:

'The process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customers' needs profitably.'

Therefore, marketing involves:

- Identifying – finding out who the customers of the organisation are and what products and services they need.
- Anticipating – doing some research and thinking about and predicting what might happen in the future and making decisions.
- Satisfying – making sure that the customers are satisfied by collecting feedback from customers.
- Profitably – making sure that the organisation makes a profit or that the products and services are provided within a budget.

Busy days at attractions are when the organisation makes the most profit.



Another way to explain the principle of marketing is that it is about 'getting the right product to the right people at the right price at the right time'.

Marketing involves the whole of the organisation. Larger leisure and tourism organisations have specialist marketing departments whose main job is to ensure that the organisation is effective in meeting customer needs.

The principles of marketing

There are a number of principles involved in marketing. These include:

Informing customers – Letting people know what products and services the organisation offers for sale is extremely important. This can be achieved in a number of ways. It is important to keep reminding customers about the organisations' products and services, so marketing is often referred to as a continuous process.

Persuading customers – Customers need to be persuaded that they need to buy the product. How this is achieved in tourism organisations depends very much on the nature of the product. They could be persuaded to buy a holiday to a particular destination by seeing photographs in a brochure. They could also be persuaded to visit a theme park by a website which gives full information about the rides, details of prices and possibly special offers.

The bright appearance of the 'product', in this case a city tour, will help persuade customers to buy the product.



Generating sales – It is important that the marketing of products and services leads directly to increased sales. For example, the day after a special offer appears in a newspaper for a meal at a restaurant, there should be more people visiting the restaurant. If this is not the case, the money spent marketing the offer has been wasted.

This is a simple way of generating sales – letting potential customers know when the next departure of the river cruise will take place.



Promoting products – Very often tourism organisations need to promote one of their products as opposed to others. For example, an activity centre may receive lots of visits to its climbing wall, but its sailing centre may be empty at certain periods. Promotion of the facilities of the sailing centre will need to be undertaken to increase the number of customers.

Meeting customers' needs – All tourism organisations have to aim to meet the needs of their customers and they have to market the right products to the right customers. If the customers' needs are met, then the organisation is more likely to be successful.

Product development – This involves adding new things to an existing product. For example, a theme park might add a major new ride, or a hotel might provide internet access to all of the rooms. In each case the product has been developed. This can be marketed to existing customers to persuade them to visit the hotel or theme park again.

The marketing process

Marketing is seen as the continuous process by which a tourism organisation makes sure that it makes the right products and services available and meets the needs of its customers.

This involves:

- Identifying what the needs of the customers are
- Developing the correct products and services to meet the needs of the customer
- Promoting the products and services to the customer by the most effective means available
- Monitoring and checking that the correct products and services are being made available
- Developing new products and services as and when necessary

Segmenting the market

'Segmenting' literally means breaking the market into pieces, like the segments of an orange.

The markets, which are the people who might buy the products and services of the organisation, can be broken into groups in a number of ways.

By age – Many different products and services of tourism organisations are aimed at people in different age groups. Different tourism activities appeal to some age groups more than others. Nightclubs and bars in tourism destinations would be marketed more to young adults than they would be to older people. Certain leisure and tourism organisations, such as SAGA offer holidays only to people over 50 years of age.



Coach tour holidays tend to be targeted more towards older people.

Gender – Most tourism activities are now enjoyed by both men and women. However, there are some activities that are more popular with one gender more than the other. Spa treatments would be an example of an activity marketed mainly to women.

Social group – Many tourism products are marketed to a particular class or social group. Traditionally, hotel bingo sessions would be marketed more to working class people, golf would be seen as a middle-class activity.

Similarly, some tourist destinations are marketed to different social groups. Blackpool would be seen as mainly attracting working class tourists whereas touring national parks would be seen as more middle class. Some destinations appeal to upper class people and have an 'up-market' image.

Lifestyle – Lifestyle is a combination of work patterns, income, marital status, family commitments and leisure choices. Lifestyle describes the way in which we live our lives. It is important to remember that tourism activities are about what people choose to do with their leisure time. For example, some people chose to have an *active* lifestyle and are always being involved in activities. Others enjoy being more *passive*, and are happy to watch television or play video games.

Ethnic groups – Certain tourism products and services are provided for different ethnic groups. These include, for example films for the Asian market or travel to particular destinations.

Geographical area – Some tourism organisations rely heavily on customers from the local area, and so have a local market. Other organisations have a regional, national or even international market. For example, British Airways and other major airlines have customers from all over the world. The geographical area from which an organisation's customers are drawn may well affect the type of promotional activities it undertakes. An organisation with only a local market will advertise only in local newspapers, for example.

Other ways of segmenting the market – The methods listed above is not the only ways a market can be segmented. Country parks and other organisations that have a membership list and may divide a market between members and non-members. A hotel might identify regular customers and those who have not visited before. Hotels may also divide their market between leisure and business customers

Once a market has been segmented, leisure and tourism organisations can provide different products and services to different sectors of their markets. This is known as **target marketing**.

A football club might segment its market into home and away fans, season ticket holders and so on.



Market research

Market research involves the collection of information about customers in the market and the analysis of that data. This information is then used by tourism organisations to make decisions about their products and the marketing of those products. Successful market research helps tourism organisations to decide which products to develop and promote to different groups of customers.

Successful market research involves a number of stages. These are:

- Identifying objectives – what is the aim of the market research?
- Planning market research methods – what methods will be used to collect information?
- Designing the research – who will carry out the research, where will it be carried out and what questions will be asked?
- Data collection – how will the information be collected?
- Data analysis and reporting – how will the data be analysed and who will the information be provided for?

Destinations, such as Blackpool, as well as organisations, have to undertake market research to see where their visitors are coming from and what is the major appeal of the destination.



Primary and secondary market research

Tourism organisations may choose to use primary or secondary market research to collect information about their customers. Primary research involves collecting new data, which is not available from other sources. Secondary research involves analysing data which is already available, from the organisation's own records or from another source.

There are three main types of primary market research:

- Surveys
- Observation
- Focus groups

Surveys is the most common way of collecting primary market research data. Information is collected about a group of people using one of four techniques:

- Face to face interviews – when the interviewer asks the customer a number of questions by stopping them in the street or in another location, such as within an attraction.
- Self-completed questionnaires – these are left in key places and the customer is asked to complete the answers to the questions and return the card to a particular location. Often an incentive, such as a prize draw is used to encourage customers to return the surveys.
- Telephone surveys – customers on a database are called by the interviewer and questions in the survey are answered over the telephone.
- E-mail surveys – a questionnaire is sent out to customers by e-mail and the customers are asked to return the completed form by e-mail. Again, an incentive may be used.

Each of these methods has its advantages and disadvantages, that relate to cost and the type of information that is being sought.

Observation simply involves looking at and making note of the ways customers behave such as, how long they spend at a certain attraction within a theme park.

Focus groups can be used to find more 'in-depth' information. A group of people are brought together and are asked for their opinions about a number of products offered by an organisation.

The Marketing Mix

The term 'marketing mix' is used to describe the key features of an organisation's marketing strategy to meet the needs of its customers. The marketing mix is often referred to as 'the 4 p's'. These refer to:

- **Product** – the product an organisation offers to its customers must meet the needs of the customer and be of a suitable quality.
- **Price** – the product must be seen as giving value to customers and be set at a level that provides the organisation with a profit.
- **Place** – the place of a product refers to the location of the product and also includes the ways in which the product is made available to customers – i.e. from where can the customer buy the product?
- **Promotion** – this refers to the ways in which the product is 'promoted' to potential customers. There are a number of promotional techniques and materials an organisation can choose to use to promote its products.

Product

You should understand by now the special nature of the products of tourism organisations.

The main features of many of the products of the tourism industries relate to the fact that many of these products are *intangible* and *perishable*.

Another important and complicating feature is that many of the products are also related to service. A meal in a restaurant, a flight on an aircraft or any holiday is made much more enjoyable if the service provided is of a high standard.

With many of the products of the tourism industry the service provided is very much part of the product and helps to make the product more enjoyable. One of the most important features of the tourism industry is that it is about providing people with exciting, relaxing and enjoyable experiences, which they choose to do in their leisure time. These experiences are so much more enjoyable when good service is provided. That is why good customer service is so important to the tourism industry.

As well as the special nature of the products of the leisure and tourism industries, there are ideas that apply to the products of other industries which are also used in leisure and tourism marketing. These include:

- Branding
- USP
- Product life cycle

Branding

The 'brand' refers to the identity and image of an organisation or product. A good brand is instantly recognisable and reminds customers of what the product of the company offers customers. Some tourism companies, such as McDonald's, Virgin Atlantic and Disney have strong brands that are recognised throughout the world. Other organisations, such as Thorpe Park and easyJet have strong brands within the UK. Other organisations such as Oakwood, which is Wales' largest theme park, have strong brands within the region in which they operate.

USP

The Unique Selling Point of an organisation refers to the special features of a product of an organisation that no other organisation can offer. This may refer to the standard of service in a hotel or a particular theme park ride which no other theme park can offer. A good example of a USP is the London Eye – no other attraction can offer the same experience of the views over the city.

Product Life Cycle

All products go through a 'life cycle' and reach a stage when, if nothing is altered in any way, they become less attractive to customers. A good example is a theme park. If there were no additions to the rides or other facilities over a number of years, the park would begin to look tired and dated and people would stop visiting. By adding new rides and other facilities the park remains interesting and continues to attract customers. Likewise, destinations go through a life cycle. The appeal of the destination will decrease over time if new attractions and facilities are not developed.

There are 5 stages to the product life cycle:

1. **Launch** – the introduction of the product with money being spent on its promotion.
2. **Growth** – sales of the product increase and profits are made for the organisation.
3. **Maturity** – sales begin to slow down. At this point the organisation offering the product must decide what to do.

4. **Saturation** – sales of the product have reached a peak.
5. **Decline** – sales of the product begin to drop off and profits fall.

Price

One of the most difficult decisions marketing managers have to make is what price to charge for their products. A number of factors have to be considered. These include:

- Costs – the price charged must cover the costs involved in developing the product. If this is not the case, then the organisation will not make a profit on the product.
- Seasonality and time – the price of many tourism products change according to season and other times. Holidays are more expensive in the peak summer months.
- Competitors – the organisation must take note of what its competitors are charging. If they charge too much more than the competitor, there is a good chance that they will lose customers.
- Economic conditions – if people are feeling less wealthy it may be necessary to reduce the cost of a product, or devise special offers to attract customers to buy the product.
- The objectives of the organisation – some tourism organisations are non-commercial, and their objectives are not related to profit. They will offer the product to cover their costs or use any profit made for another purpose.

Pricing strategies

Tourism organisations decide on the prices of their products using a number of strategies as well as thinking about the factors listed above.

- Skimming – is when a high price is charged for a high quality or unique product. People are willing to pay a high price for 'status' reasons. An example would be a stay at a luxury hotel.
- Cost-plus pricing – is when the exact cost of providing the product is calculated and a small profit is added to this to arrive at the selling price of the product. An example would be where a restaurant works out the costs of all of the ingredients and other costs in providing a meal and then adds on a profit.
- Penetration pricing – is used when organisations enter a new market. The product is priced below what is charged by competing organisations to

persuade the customer to buy the product from the new organisation. An example would be the budget airlines offering very low fares on new routes to attract customers away from other airlines.

- Competitive pricing – is when a number of organisations offer similar products they all charge about the same. This often leads to low profit margins. An example is when different tour operators all charge much the same price for the same holiday.
- Variable pricing – happens when different prices are charged according to different seasons or even the time of day. The price can be changed for different groups of customers, such as children or family groups. Prices can also be lowered for a limited period of time to increase sales.

Place

Within the marketing mix 'place' has a number of meanings. Place refers to the actual location of the product and in many cases the tourism product is only found in one place. You can buy a McDonald's from thousands of places, but there is only one place to go if you want Alton Towers! For all attractions, and other tourism products, the customer has to go to the product.

Therefore, place changes with the type of facility. Some restaurants and hotels are part of a 'chain' providing the same products at each location, but many attractions are 'one-off' providing a unique experience, which the customer has to travel to.

Place also refers to how easy a product is to get to, or its accessibility. Good accessibility can be used in the marketing of a product. For example, a hotel situated in the centre of a city near major attractions will use this in its marketing.

Promotion

Promotion is the last component of the marketing mix. Promotion is about making sure that customers are aware of the product, but it includes other things as well. These include:

- Telling customers about the features of a product and benefits of a product, such as the facilities in a hotel and how a stay at the hotel would be so relaxing.
- Providing incentives for the customer to buy the product, such as a discounted price or other offers.
- Reminding customers that a product exists to stimulate demand and sales.

Promotional Techniques and Promotional Materials used by Tourism Organisations

It is usual to divide promotion into *promotional techniques or methods* and *promotional materials*. It is important not to get the two mixed up! For example, **advertising** is one of the most common promotional *techniques or methods*.

An **advertisement**, in a newspaper, on a website or on a poster, is the *material* which is being used.

Promotional Techniques

The range of promotional techniques or methods which are used by tourism organisations include:

- Advertising
- Direct marketing
- Public relations (PR)
- Displays
- Personal selling
- Sponsorship
- Demonstrations
- Sales promotions

Advertising

Advertising is probably the most common and visible form of promotional techniques. Organisations pay, sometimes a very large amount, for their product to be advertised on the side of a bus, in a newspaper or on television. The purpose of the advertisement is simply to persuade customers to buy the product and possibly to provide additional information about the product.

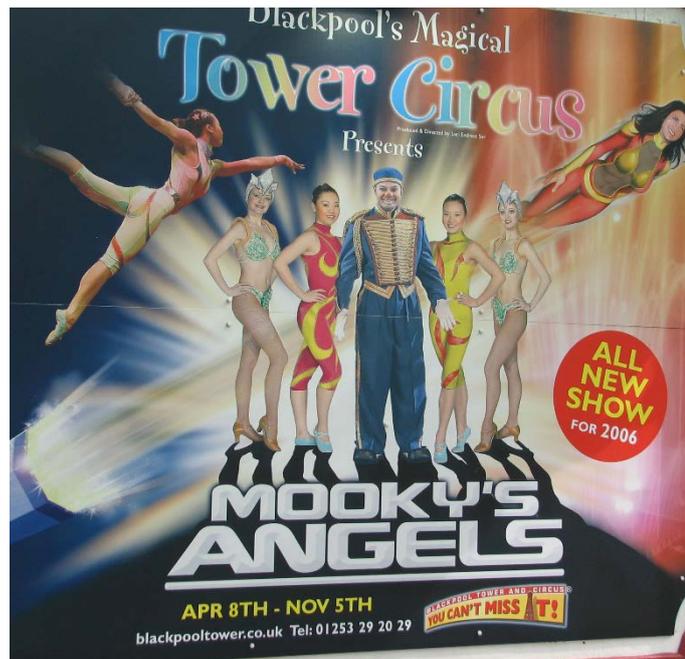
Advertising can take place:

- In newspapers and magazines
- On television
- On commercial radio
- In cinemas
- On outdoor locations

Tourism Marketing

- On transport
- On websites

Posters are a common form of advertising.



Direct marketing

Direct marketing is when promotional information is sent to known individuals whose names are on a database. This information could be sent by post or by email. The important thing is that the organisation sending the information knows who is receiving it, whereas nobody is really sure how many people will actually see and read an advertisement.

Organisations such as the Wales Millennium Centre will rely heavily on direct marketing to customers on a database.



Public relations and press releases

Public relations involves keeping the media and customers informed about the products and services of the organisation.

The marketing department will produce information about events and other things going on with the organisation. This is known as a *press release*. Unlike advertising, it is not paid for.

The local press may cover an event at the organisation that appears in the local paper. This is free publicity for the organisation. Part of the role of the marketing department is to keep journalists informed about what is happening within the organisation. This helps build a good image of the organisation with the public, who are the potential customers of the organisation.



Players meeting local press to display a new trophy is a form of PR.

Displays

Many tourism organisations use a display to promote their products and services. These are often used at trade shows and other events.

Personal selling

This involves a person persuading the customer to buy the product by providing information and explaining the good points of the product features. This is exactly what a travel agent does when a holiday is sold to a customer. In the same way a customer at a hotel may be sold a seat in the restaurant or a tourist is persuaded to take an excursion for a day while on holiday.



In many coastal destinations tickets for tours and excursions are sold through personal selling.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship involves a sum of money being paid to promote the products of a particular organisation. Shirt sponsorship of football and rugby clubs is one of the most common examples of sponsorship.

Demonstrations

This is simply showing potential customers how a product works. The equipment used for different sports and outdoor activities might be demonstrated by a skilled person to show how the equipment might be used.

Sales promotions

Sales promotions usually involve discounting a price of a product for a certain period of time or a 'buy one, get one free' type of promotion. The objective of sales promotions are to persuade people to buy products at less busy times to stimulate demand.

Merchandising Materials

Many organisations produce a range of materials with the name of the organisation printed on the material. These are often provided free to customers. Pens, pencils, T-shirts, and so on are examples of merchandising materials. They are used to promote the brand and name of the organisation that has produced them.



Souvenirs are a form of merchandising material because they often contain the name of the organisation from which they were bought.

Mailshots

Mailshots are a form of direct marketing. Simply a brochure, leaflet, flyer or other material is sent by post to customers on the database of an organisation.

Promotional materials

Every year the tourism industry produces millions of pieces of promotional materials.

Two examples are:

- Attractions produce leaflets that are found in hotels, motorway service areas and other areas where potential customers are likely to see them.
- Tour operators produce brochures that are made available to travel agents so that they can be given to customers to help them choose their holidays. The brochures will contain details of resorts and the range of accommodation available.

Designing promotional materials

The promotional materials designed and produced by tourism organisations have to be *effective*.

This means:

- They have to be attractive and gain the interest of the person looking at the material.
- They have to provide the correct information.
- They have to persuade the person to visit the attraction, buy the holiday or take part in the event.

Tourism organisations spend lots of money on designing, producing and distributing promotional materials.

- Designing – many tourism organisations will use a designer to create the words, pictures and other images that appear on promotional materials.
- Producing – the materials have to be printed, usually by specialist printing companies.

- Distributing – the materials need to be sent through the post (*direct marketing*) to customers or be sent to locations where they can be read by potential customers. These materials can also be sent to customers electronically by email.

One of the most common methods used to test whether a piece of material is effective is known as **AIDA**.

This stands for:

Attention

Interest

Desire

Action

Attention

A piece of promotional material designed to promote an attraction may be placed in a rack along with up to 100 other pieces. Only one third of the front of the material may be showing.

How does the material grab the attention of somebody looking at it?
How can it be made to be eye-catching?

Designers have to consider factors such as:

- The font and print style
- The colour scheme
- Photographs and images
- Titles and headlines
- Layout
- Humour
- Famous people
- Brand name
- Logos



- *Font and print style* – most tourism organisations use the same font on all their materials so that their customers become familiar with the style and associate the style with the organisation. A good example would be easyJet.
- *The colour scheme* – often the same colour is used on all materials produced by an organisation, so the materials become easier to recognise.
- *Photographs and images* - People are often attracted by the photograph or image (such as a cartoon) before they read the material. Photographs of people enjoying themselves or blue skies at a holiday destination help to get peoples' attention.
- *Titles and headlines* – these must say exactly what the material is promoting in a few words, again to attract peoples' attention.
- *Layout* – The position of the words and images need to be given careful consideration. Designers may produce a number of layouts to see which is most effective.
- *Humour* – People are often attracted by something they think is funny and cartoons are often used to make materials look effective.
- *Famous people* – A photograph of a famous person who may be associated with a product or an event is often used to attract people's attention. A photograph of a sports star could be used to promote a forthcoming match.
- *Brand name* – Many large tourism organisations have a well-known brand name that will need to be used on promotional materials.
- *Logos* – Logos are used to help draw people's attention to a piece of material because they associate the logo with the organisation and its products.



Many organisations use logos to attract customers' attention.

Interest

Having attracted the attention of a person, a piece of promotional material must then encourage them to read more – i.e. it must keep their interest.

It is important to design the material so that the person is interested to read all of the important information.

This will include providing key information about details such as:

- Prices
- Times
- Dates
- Contact information
- Location

Desire

It is important that the material makes the potential customer want to buy the product – that is the main purpose of the material. Desire can be created through the words used (exciting, thrilling, bloodcurdling, etc.) or the images used.

The potential customer must say to themselves 'I want to buy this product, go to this place, attend this event, watch this film', and so on... Put another way:

the promotional material must show how the product meets the needs and expectations of the customer.



Some promotional materials can be very simple, but still be effective.

Action!

The final stage is making the customer do something about buying the product – action!!

It is important that the material gives clear instructions to the potential customer about what they have to do next.

The customer may have questions such as:

- Where can I buy tickets?
- Where do I have to go?
- What time does it start?
- Who do I have to contact?

The material must provide answers to these questions. If the questions are not answered, the material will not be effective.

Types of promotional materials

Advertisements

Advertisements are the most commonly used form of promotional material used by tourism organisations. (Remember advertisements are the *material*, advertising is the *technique*.)

Advertisements do not have to be *printed*, but many are.

Advertisements can be found:

- On television and radio
- In newspapers and magazines
- In cinemas
- On posters and billboard sites
- On the internet

In most cases, people see or listen to advertisements while they are doing something else and they may not be focusing on the message of the advertisement. This is why the AIDA principle is so important.

- People may be driving when they see posters on billboard sites near a road
- People may be doing other things during the advertisements on television or radio
- People will be reading the news and articles in a newspaper or magazine

Brochures, leaflets and flyers

Flyers – are single sheets of paper.

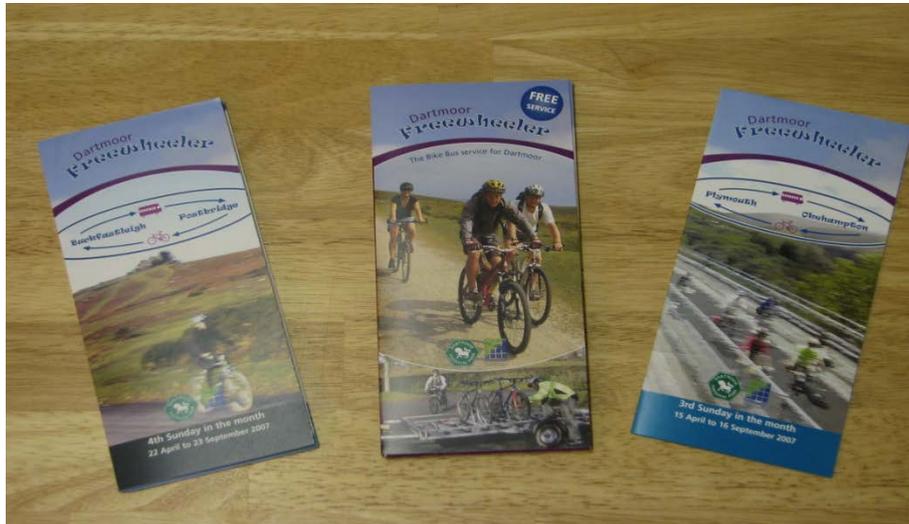
Leaflets – are single sheets of paper which are folded.

Brochures – are made up of a number of sheets of paper stuck together in some way.

These materials are used to promote a range of leisure and tourism products including:

- Details of a tourist attraction
- A range of package holidays

- The programme of films at a cinema
- The facilities available at a sports centre



Leaflets promoting different cycle routes in a national park are more effective because they follow a similar style.

Unlike most advertisements, flyers, leaflets and brochures are read by potential customers when they choose to read them.

It is important that, as well as attracting customers to the event or product, the material gives as much basic information as possible. It is vitally important that all of the essential information is included. Brochures and leaflets often contain booking forms which can be filled in so that the product can be bought straightaway.

Posters

What's the difference between a poster and a flyer? Generally, posters are bigger than A4 size and flyers, leaflets and brochures are smaller than A4.

A poster is stuck on to a surface of something, a flyer is handed out or distributed by some means. A poster may not have detailed information but needs to give a clear image of what is being promoted.

Posters are often placed:

- On buildings
- On buses and underground trains
- At sports stadiums
- At bus shelters and telephone boxes
- In tourist information centres
- On hoardings (billboards) which are specially placed for posters to be displayed



Billboard advertising is often found around the perimeter of sports stadiums. Not all the organisations involved are part of the leisure and tourism industries, but the club benefits from the income received.

Merchandising materials

These are printed materials which are sold or given away which promote a leisure and tourism organisation's main products and services. Usually, only a limited amount of information is contained on the merchandising materials such as a web address or telephone number.

Merchandising materials include:

- Pens and pencils
- Balloons
- T-shirts

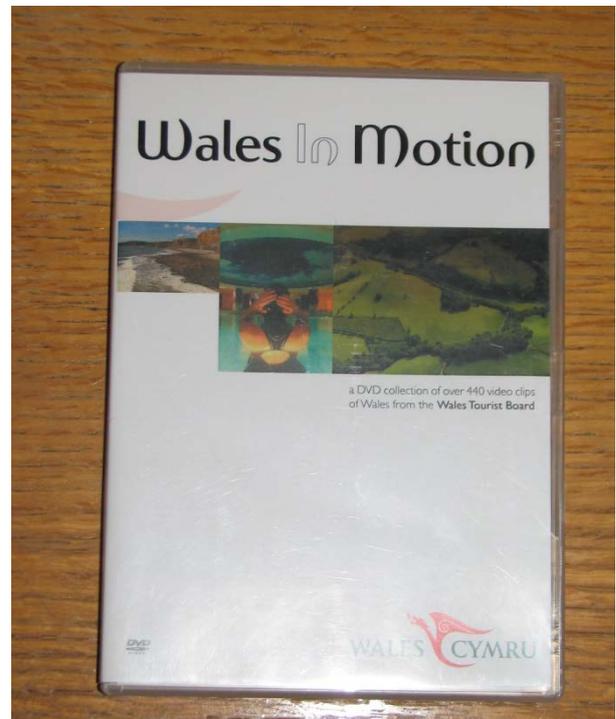
- Stickers
- Mouse mats

DVD's

On some occasions, large organisations produce a DVD which promotes the products and services available and this may be distributed free to potential customers. Often the customer may not only be an individual but an organisation. For example, a seaside destination might produce a promotional video and send it to coach operators to persuade them to bring groups to the destination. In the past, Disney have produced DVD's encouraging families to visit their theme parks and resorts.

The advantage of videos is that they can create a good image of a destination or organisation as well as providing a lot of information, but they are expensive to produce.

Wales in Motion is a promotional DVD produced by the Wales Tourist Board which consist of short video clips of attractions and landscapes in Wales.



Websites

All tourism organisations have some form of website. For online organisations such as easyJet and Expedia, this is the main way in which they sell their products. For other organisations, such as attractions, websites give important information such as opening times and ticket prices.

It is now possible to purchase a ticket for many events and attractions online. More people are using the Internet to buy tickets for trains and flights, so companies have to advertise the products on their web sites. More holiday companies are using online brochures rather than printing information about resorts and hotels when the information goes out of date so quickly.



COMING SOON

- [MORE](#) [Strictly Come Dancing - The Professionals](#)
- [MORE](#) [Chicago the Musical](#) - Donald Gordon Theatre
- [MORE](#) [The 7 Fingers: Traces](#) - Donald Gordon Theatre
- [Hairspray](#)
- [TICKETS](#) [30 Mar 10 - 24 Apr 10](#)
- [MORE](#) [Enjoy free performances](#) - on the Glanfa Stage
- [MORE](#) [ffresh](#) - lounge bar and restaurant

The website of the Wales Millennium Centre is a very important piece of promotional material, which not only provides customers of with a great deal of information but also gives them the opportunity to buy tickets online.

SWOT Analysis and Selling Skills

A SWOT analysis is commonly used by tourism organisations to see 'where they are', to see what aspects of the marketing is working well for the organisation and where improvements could be made.

SWOT stands for:

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

The strengths and weaknesses components of the analysis are within the control of the organisation. Opportunities and threats are outside the organisation's control.

A SWOT analysis can be related to the marketing mix of the organisation. For example, the strengths of an organisation might be that:

- the products and services are well known and meet the needs of the customers
- the organisation is well located and easy to get to
- the prices charged are competitive and allow the organisation to make a profit
- the organisation has a good range of promotional techniques and materials which are effective.

Free entry is one of the strengths of Big Pit and other sites within National Museum Wales.



As well as recognising strengths, leisure and tourism organisations must always be able to identify their weaknesses and work to eliminate them, although this will be extremely difficult – every organisation has some weaknesses.

Opportunities are outside the direct control of the organisation, but can be used to the organisations advantage. Opportunities may arise for many reasons, such as large-scale events, new transport routes, famous people visiting the area, and so on.

Threats are also outside the control of the organisation. Bad weather or poor economic conditions will have an impact on the success of many leisure and tourism organisations.



Poor weather is often seen as a threat for many tourism organisations.

A SWOT analysis is normally produced as a series of bullet points with statements. Good SWOT's explain each of the points made.

Selling Skills and Situations

There is no point in tourism organisations developing a good range of products and services if employees do not have the skills to sell the products effectively. Sales of products are vital to the success of the organisation.

There are many situations where selling of products takes place in tourism organisations. A few of these situations include:

- Travel agencies selling holidays and other travel products. Sales staff will be encouraged to offer extra services, such as insurance, excursions and car hire. These 'extras' will generate more profit for the organisation.
- Tour 'reps' in resorts will be encouraged to sell excursions to attractions and entertainment events which are not included in the original holiday price.
- Hotel reception staff will offer to book meals in restaurants, so 'selling' extra products. They may also offer upgrades of rooms for an additional price.
- At entrances to theme parks, additional products and services, such as extended passes, may be offered for sale.



- In a restaurant, a waiter will encourage customers to have an additional drink or to choose from the dessert menu.
- At home, when ordering takeaway food, additional items may be offered by the person taking the order.

- Not every sale takes place in a 'face to face' situation, as shown above. A great deal of sales occurs using the telephone, and internet sales are increasingly important.

It is important to understand that to make sales successfully, a range of skills are required. It is important that the person selling the product builds a *rappor*t with the customer and engages with them. First impressions are very important. Customer service skills such as a smiley face and *good body language* are also important.

Also, the sales person must work out what the needs and expectations of the customer are. In the longer term, it is not worth selling the customer something they do not really want!

One of the most important skills is about *product knowledge*, which involves knowing the details of the product which is being sold. A customer will not be confident if the salesperson does not know basic information about the product they are trying to sell.



A person selling cruise ship holidays will need to know about the features and facilities on different ships.

Another important selling skill is about *closing the sale* – making sure that the customer actually buys one or more products. Time spent talking to customers who do not buy anything could be said to be time wasted.

In many selling situations, paper documents have to be completed or an electronic payment system used. There is no point in a sale being made if the salesperson cannot complete the form correctly or take a credit card payment!

Organisations have to ensure that their staff are entirely confident when completing documents and taking payments.

After sales service is another component of the sales process. Because of the nature of many of the products of the leisure and tourism industries, many products cannot be taken back after they have been used. It is not possible for customers to return a holiday or a visit to a cinema! However, tourism organisations can check to see if their customers did enjoy their holiday, etc. Some of the products of the tourism industry, such as meals in a restaurant, can be returned if they are not up to standard.



A holiday cannot be returned, but the travel company can check with the customer to see if the holiday met their expectations.