

TOWARDS A MODEL OF THE ROLES AND ACTIVITIES OF DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper represents an initial step towards a model to describe the possible activities of the destination management organization as belonging to an “external destination marketing” function or an “internal destination development” function. The external function may be seen as the typical view of these organizations. Combining the activities of this typical function with the activities of the internal destination development function results in a more complete view of the possible activities of destination management organizations. Implications for managers and researchers are discussed.

Keywords: tourism destination; destination marketing, destination management, DMO, activities of DMO

INTRODUCTION

The view of destination management organizations (DMOs) as destination *marketing* organizations has given way, in the minds of some, to the view of DMOs as destination *management* organizations. This paper examines both views and concludes with a model describing the activities involved in the “external destination marketing” (EDM) function and the “internal destination development” (IDD) function. The paper begins by portraying the wide range of views of tourism destinations, destination management, and destination management organizations. From here, conceptualizations and descriptions are offered of EDM and IDD and their respective activities. The descriptive model, based on these two primary functions, is presented. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the model for theory and practice and provides an agenda for future research.

THE TOURISM DESTINATION AND THE NEED FOR DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Several tourism researchers have attempted to clarify the nature of the tourism destination. Hu and Ritchie (1993:26) conceptualised it as “a package of tourism facilities and services, which like any other consumer product, is composed of a number of multi-dimensional attributes”. Buhalis, (2000) claims that destinations are *amalgams of tourism products*, offering an integrated experience to consumers. Based on the various models of tourism development outlined by Pearce (1992), it is sensible to define a destination as an amalgam of products and services *available in one location* that can draw visitors from beyond its spatial confines. Bieger (1998:7) specifies that “...a destination can therefore be seen as the tourist product that in certain markets competes with other products”. The Ritchie/Crouch model of destination competitiveness differentiates the destination infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, etc.) from the destination superstructure (tourist services such as hotels, restaurants, information centres, etc.) both of which are obviously important to the concept of the destination.

Others (Leiper, 1995; Martini, 2001; Pechlaner, 2000) who advocate a *demand perspective* substantially identify a destination as a set of products, services, natural and artificial attractions able to draw tourists to a specific place and thereby affirm that geographical position does not coincide with destination. In their view the geographic location is simply one of the factors that comprise a destination. Other researchers (Tamma, 2002; Brunetti, 2002) define destination as a *supply system* correlated with a specific area. Similarly, Keller (2000) remembers that people often use region, district, area and locality as synonyms together with the adjective *tourism* to mean tourism destination. While the above definitions suggest that a destination may be defined more broadly than one physical location, some destinations are artificially determined by political jurisdictions, which fail to take into consideration consumer preferences or tourism industry functions. For example, the Alps, are shared by France, Austria, Switzerland and Italy, but are often perceived and consumed as part of the same product by skiers (Buhalis, 2000).

A more holistic conceptualization would include these various viewpoints in its definition of destination. Under this conceptualization, a destination coincides with the notion of a locality seen as a set of products/experiences, influenced in a critical way by the role of companies’ attitudes and their willingness to co-operate (Fyall, Oakley, & Weiss, 2000; de Araujo & Bramwell, 2002). By implication, one must then recognize that the destination is an entity whose component parts are interdependent whereby a change in one has ramifications for all of the others.

Given this holistic definition, there is clearly a management issue in terms of co-ordinating actions among the individual entities. This realization has led to studies which have analyzed the subject of

destination performance in terms of “the locality as a whole” (Lundtorp & Wanhill, 2001; Kozak, 2002), while other studies specifically examine categories within the supply system, such as small businesses in the case of Tinsley and Lynch (2001), and others still highlight the critical role played by the actors that manage tourism destinations (Kerr, Barron, & Wood, 2001). Kaspar (1995) goes so far as to argue that the organisational structure or administrative framework of the destination may be seen to have similarities to the firm and that the service providers of the destination may be viewed as profit centres managed within a company because they come under the umbrella of a local destination management organization.

Today, owing to the peculiarities of the tourism product as a set of services, the primary task of guaranteeing a minimal internal coordination of production within the target areas is assigned to the tourism organisations. In addition, they have to provide service elements (such as awareness and promotion) with the characteristics of public goods (Bonham & Mak, 1996), which are not offered by private suppliers, as already explained above.

Destination management plays a key role in addressing the many and sometimes conflicting issues that arise in contemporary tourism. Destinations present complex challenges for management and development in that they must serve a range of needs of tourists and tourism-related businesses as well as the resident community, local businesses and industries (Howie, 2003). According to Franch and Martini it is possible to define destination management as the strategic, organizational and operative decisions taken to manage the process of definition, promotion and commercialisation of the tourism product [originating from within the destination], to generate manageable flows of incoming tourists that are balanced, sustainable and sufficient to meet the economic needs of the local actors involved in the destination (2002:5).

DMO – A DESTINATION MARKETING OR MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION?

Tourism is a rapidly evolving industry that has become increasingly competitive in the global marketplace. With destinations now competing directly with others around the world, it is possible to assert that the tourism is a sector in a state of transition. For DMOs, this transition means becoming a destination management organization instead of just a destination marketing organization. In this regard, DMOs are becoming more prominent as "destination developers" by acting as catalysts and facilitators for the realization of tourism developments. Historically, DMOs have been viewed as destination marketing organizations. Indeed, many current authors (Dore & Crouch, 2003) recognize that marketing remains the principal purview of DMOs. However, increasingly, there is a shift towards recognizing that the role of the DMO goes well beyond marketing to include other activities that are important to the success of tourism in a destination from a competitive and sustainable perspective.

Gartrell, one of the earlier writers to fully describe DMOs in terms of the mandate and function, broadly defines their role as the selling of cities. More specifically, Gartrell indicates that, Bureaus are charged with the task of developing an image that will position their cities in the marketplace as a viable destination for meetings and visitors. They further must coordinate those constituent elements, which are quite independently diverse yet need to be homogenized, in order to attain that desired single image (1988:8).

The World Tourism Organization (2004) defines DMOs as the organisations responsible for the management and/or marketing of destinations and generally falling into one of the following categories:

- National Tourism Authorities or Organisations, responsible for management and marketing of tourism at a national level;
- Regional, provincial or state DMOs, responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism in a geographic region defined for that purpose, sometimes but not always an administrative or local government region such as a county, state or province; and
- Local DMOs, responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism based on a smaller geographic area or city/town.

DMO organizational structures also vary. Various authors (Franch & Martini, 2002; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003) have described various organizational structures including a government department or a division of a government department, a quasi-governmental organization (such as a crown/government corporation), a joint public/private agency, a not-for-profit membership-based organization, and private organizations.

DMO funding may be derived from several sources but is generally reflective of the organizational structure as well as the context in which the DMO operates. Examples include government allocations of public funds, specific tourism taxes or levies such as hotel/room taxes, user fees, allocations from gambling and lotteries, membership fees paid by tourism organizations, sponsorship and advertising in destination promotional activities, commissions for bookings and sales, commercial/retail sales at visitor centres, and in-kind contributions to host travel writers and meeting planners (Sheehan & Ritchie, 1997; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Franch & Martini, 2002). Las Vegas, perhaps the most well funded DMO in the world, is an excellent example of special funding circumstances where dramatic revenues are raised from hotel and gambling taxes.

An unresolved debate within the literature is between destination marketing and destination promotion (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). In this regard, Kasper (1995) suggests that a DMO, for political and structural reasons, is mainly concerned with promoting co-operation and the widest possible harmonisation of objectives within a destination. Dore and Crouch (2003) cite the activity of destination marketing as often being operationalized in practice as destination promotion, which may take the form of advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, personal selling and publicity, and public relations. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) agree that in terms of current practice, many DMOs might be more appropriately termed destination promotion organizations since many of them believe that their efforts should be solely dedicated to destination promotion.

However, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) go on to advocate the transition of the “M” in DMO to refer to “management” rather than “marketing” because the role of DMOs has strengthened and spread as destinations have attempted to play a more proactive role in fostering and managing the benefits of tourism development.

Heath and Wall (1992) argue that DMOs have acknowledged how significant their non-marketing roles are in developing, enhancing and maintaining destination competitiveness and notes that DMO tasks are the following: strategy formulation, representing the interests of stakeholders, marketing of the destination and co-ordination of some activities. Getz, Anderson and Sheehan (1998) have surveyed DMOs and found a number of roles that they fulfil in terms of product development within a destination. Similarly, Minguzzi and Presenza (2004) emphasize the importance of DMOs in enhancing perceptions of destination image and service quality.

Morrison, Bruen, and Anderson, (1998) single out five primary functions of a DMO:

- an “economic driver” generating new income, employment, and taxes contributing to a more diversified local economy;

- a “community marketer” communicating the most appropriate destination image, attractions, and facilities to selected visitor markets;
- an “industry coordinator” providing a clear focus and encouraging less industry fragmentation so as to share in the growing benefits of tourism;
- a “quasi-public representative” adding legitimacy for the industry and protection to individual and group visitors; and
- a “builder of community pride” by enhancing quality of life and acting as the chief “flag carrier” for residents and visitors alike.

To summarize, the literature portrays a range of roles and functions for the DMO – from a marketing or promotion focus to ones that also suggest broader efforts related to the development of the destination. The authors agree with Dore and Crouch (2003:137) when they describe the DMO focus on “marketing as the principal management function”, but [that] “they may play some role in product development and operations”. The following section advances a model that explains this multiplicity of possible roles.

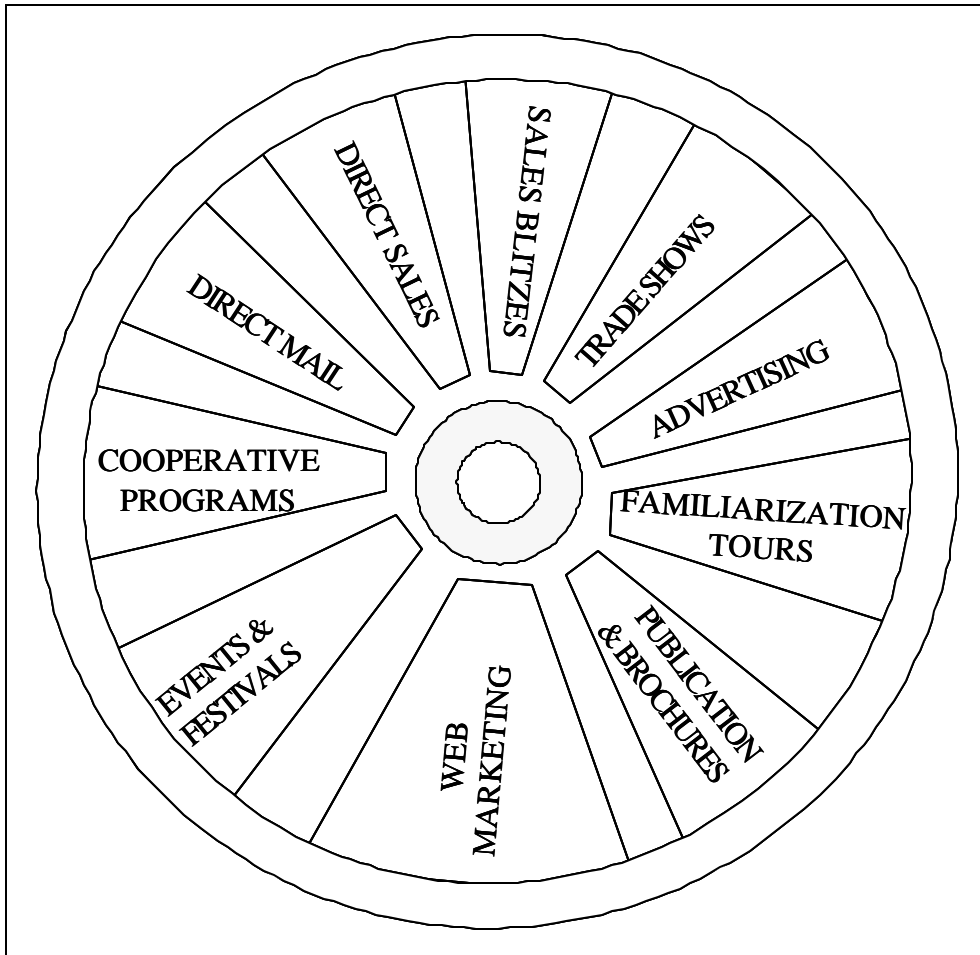
THE FUNDAMENTAL FUNCTIONS OF THE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Given the above suggestions of the role of a DMO, it is suggested that DMO activities may be organized into two significant functions: 1) External Destination Marketing; and 2) Internal Destination Development. The conceptual model described herein builds on the notions of the common and desired activities of the DMO as presented earlier but describes them as contributing to one of these two key functions. In this sense, each function may be viewed as an amalgam of specific activities.

EXTERNAL DESTINATION MARKETING (EDM)

The main operational or tactical marketing activities of the DMO are summarized with the Destination Marketing Wheel (Figure 1). These operational marketing activities which have been drawn from the tourism literature (as discussed below) are put in place after the strategic marketing activities of image definition, branding, and positioning have been completed. Operationally the EDM function is meant to include all activities aimed at attracting visitors to the destination. The specific activities were chosen to be as comprehensive and parsimonious as possible. Thus these activities have an external orientation in that their aim is to influence the actions of persons outside the destination.

Figure 1. The Destination Marketing Wheel



Recognising that marketing entails much more than just “selling” or “advertising”, destination *promotion* is normally the DMOs’ major activity and budget item (Dore & Crouch, 2003). To this end, after developing a marketing plan, DMOs can use different promotion tools such as personal selling, direct marketing, advertising, sales promotion, publicity and public relations.

Even though the selling of the tourism products and services of a destination may be primarily done by the individual firms offering them and the travel trade for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness, the DMO can still be viewed as “managing” the selling of a destination as a whole in the broader sense. Common activities include attending trade shows, exhibitions and events, familiarisation tours for meeting and incentive planners and travel writers, telephone call centres and tourist information kiosks.

Advertising, one of the important tools of promotion, employs various media. Consumer advertising utilizes print, television, radio, outdoor and now Internet media, while trade advertising occurs in specific travel trade magazines and newspapers. It appears that the use of direct marketing methods has increased as destinations have turned to the direct mail of destination brochures or visitor guides/magazines, as well as the use of global distribution systems and destination web pages to facilitate direct communication and bookings (Dore & Crouch, 2003). Additionally important but hard to influence as a DMO is “word of mouth” advertising that is spontaneously generated by previous visitors to the destination.

The main publicity techniques are special events, speeches, news, and written materials. They involve information from an outside source used by the news media based on its news value. In contrast, public relations is a much broader concept as it encompasses a greater range of activities for building relationships with the organization's various stakeholders by obtaining favourable publicity, building up a good "corporate image", and handling or heading off unfavourable rumours, stories and events.

Sales blitzes at travel industry tradeshows can be very effective in building relationships between the DMO and the different suppliers of tourism products and services in the destination. These efforts engender pride in the destination among the participants and also allow for the mutual sharing of sales expertise. Cooperative programs go a long way in blending the DMO and the hospitality community into a unified marketing presence. They develop mutual respect and appreciation regarding the needs of each, maximizing membership participation and destination exposure. Web-marketing is shown as the largest component of the destination marketing wheel because of its growing importance as an effective and efficient way of communicating marketing and other messages to stakeholders. Table 1 summarizes the eight main functions of a DMO website. The development of electronic commerce has led to great changes in the way tourists relate to the tourism industry. Similarly, there has been a creation of new, virtual marketplaces, with the advent of the Internet extending beyond the traditional physical tourism market places (O'Brien, 2001).

Table 1. The Eight Main Functions of a DMO Website (adapted from Lu & Lu, 2002:8)

General Publicity: Provide a basic Web presence, interaction and supporting information.	Advertising Product/Services: Publish the local tourism products or services without prices.	Advertising Product/Service with Price Information: Provide price information for the local tourism products and services.	E-mail Enquiry: Provide e-mail addresses to allow customers to make enquiries about the web-page, products, services, and so on.
E-mail Booking: Allow customers to make online bookings but the payment is still carried out using conventional method.	On-line Payment: Provide online shopping (selling) with credit card payment.	Registration with ID: Provide their customers with an account identity for direct purchase.	Others: (call for information, tourism guide services, etc.).

Increasingly, tourism organizations are providing products and services online, resulting in more customers getting destination information and booking accommodation via the Internet. Based on an extended model of E-commerce adoption, three stages in developing commercial websites may be identified: 1) promotion, 2) provision and processing, and 3) moving from simple static promotion to full fledged E-commerce applications. While a more detailed discussion of EDM activities is certainly possible, it is avoided here since there is already considerable literature devoted to the subject. This enables the following more focused exposition of the Internal Destination Development role and

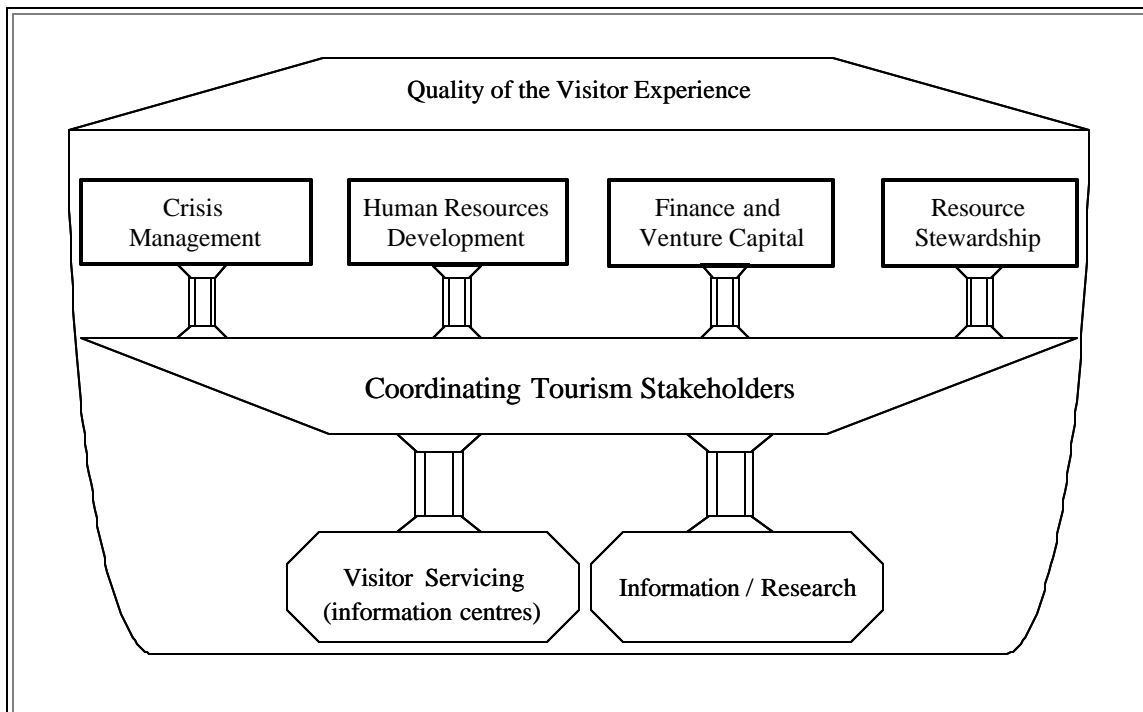
activities which are less accepted as DMO activities (from both a descriptive and prescriptive perspective).

INTERNAL DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT (IDD)

Internal Destination Development (IDD) may be viewed as encompassing all other forms of activity (apart from marketing) undertaken by the DMO to develop and maintain tourism in the destination. The function of destination development is internal in that the activities are aimed at initiatives internal to the destination. Many of the activities require the action and resources of other destination stakeholders. In these areas, the DMO primarily helps to coordinate the deployment of resources rather than actually deploying their own resources.

The most important aspects of IDD are illustrated in Figure 2 and described below as being effectively achieved through the DMO's critical competency of coordinating tourism stakeholders. In this sense, it is suggested that ultimately, the ability to perform the destination management role will be determined by the DMO's ability to coordinate these stakeholders. However, this main competency of stakeholder coordination must effectively mobilize and deploy resources to achieve positive outcomes in six areas (shown as pillars in Figure 2). To begin, the coordination of tourism stakeholders is elaborated and followed with a brief discussion of each of the pillars in the model.

Figure 2. The Internal Destination Development Activities (adapted from Ritchie & Crouch, 2003:63)



Coordinating Tourism Stakeholders

The work of Sheehan and Ritchie (2005) has shown DMOs to have a wide range of stakeholders that have a high potential for cooperation but also some potential to threaten the ability of the DMO to achieve its objectives. This information is critical in helping understand DMOs as conveners that unite a much more diverse set of interests. While a total of 32 tourism stakeholders were identified (by Sheehan and Ritchie), the most important ones according to DMO executives were: hotels, government (at different levels), attractions, board of directors (of the DMO), convention centre, DMO members, residents, restaurants, universities and colleges, local chamber of commerce, and sponsors. For the purposes of this paper, a tourism stakeholder is defined as any entity that is influenced by, or that may influence, the achievement of the destination management activities as performed by the DMO.

Coordinating tourism stakeholders appears at the centre of the model because it is considered to be the core competency performed by the DMO in achieving success in the various dimensions of IDD. It is only through securing the cooperation of various stakeholders that the DMO can mobilise the resources necessary to be effective. Therefore, an important assessment of the DMO ability to foster IDD will be directly related to the number and quality of relationships with tourism destination stakeholders. In this regard, network analyses might be applied to determine the strength of the DMO's position (*centrality*) in the network vis-à-vis the *density of the network*.

Based on a sound core competency of stakeholder coordination, the DMO must establish a foundation for its IDD efforts by providing sound visitor management and information/research. This foundation is something that can be built primarily around the initiative and resources of the DMO. From this foundation it is possible to develop the other dimensions of IDD (Quality of the Visitor Experience, Human Resources Development, Finance and Venture Capital, Resource Stewardship, and Crisis Management) that may be implemented by other stakeholders rather than the DMO directly. Next is a discussion of the two dimensions of the foundation – visitor management and information/research.

Supporting Pillars: Visitor Management and Information/ Research

The IDD activities that represent the supporting pillars of the model are visitor management and Information/Research. This is because visitor management represents the ability to communicate effectively to the visitor upon arrival in the destination. Information/Research is necessary to support the decisions and actions taken within all of the other IDD activities (including visitor management). The importance of these pillars is perhaps best illustrated if one considers that the primary role of the DMO is to act as an interface between market (consumer) demand and destination (industry) supply.

As one of the main (and typical) activities of IDD, visitor management (visitor servicing) is important in communicating the supply of tourism products and services in the destination to visitors. Traditionally, this has translated into responding to remote visitor information inquiries by telephone (by offering toll free call centres) and to the development and staffing of visitor information centres to assist tourists in the destination. While still of primary importance, the conceptual nature of this component of IDD has evolved to include systems that fairly regulate visitor access to important places of interest so as not to impair the experience due to overcrowding and environmental degradation (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

The other main activity of IDD, Information/Research, supports all activities of the DMO and specifically fulfils an intelligence function that allows the DMO to understand market demands, current industry supply, and the gaps that need to be addressed through planning and development. Ritchie & Crouch (2003) indicate that a DMO must be concerned with two different flows of

information/research: inflows (or intelligence) that provide useful inputs to the DMO management function; and outflows whereby the DMO provides information to destination stakeholders.

Upper-Level IDD Activities

Next, the upper level activities of the IDD model are considered. These activities are best achieved and become increasingly important once the foundation has been built. Human resources development, specifically having well trained employees in all visitor facilities, is key to achieving a high quality and consistent visitor experience. While it is rare that a DMO would have any direct control over the provision of education and training services, it may certainly exert political influence through its stakeholder network to ensure the provision of such services and perhaps the quality (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). In this regard, the DMO may play a role in having a well developed human resource development strategy for the destination that addresses education and training at all levels within tourism organizations (from front line service providers to senior executives) and for all demographic groups (from school children to career changers).

Resource stewardship is critical to managing the destination in a sustainable manner. It begins with achieving an understanding of the bio-physical limitations (or carrying capacities) of the destination. It progresses to develop a programme to ensure that the broad range of potential impacts caused by tourism are identified and understood in terms of how they affect the bio-physical environment. It culminates in the implementation of management practices and development plans (also related to visitor management) that are designed to control tourism development and activity so as to ensure the bio-physical limitations are not exceeded. The primary purpose of a stewardship management activity is to turn the idea of sustainable tourism within a destination into reality (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

Finance and venture capital are important to the development of destination superstructure. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) have suggested that the DMO play a role in assisting destination stakeholders with financial assistance and access to venture capital. Efforts in this regard may include making the financial community aware of the nature of the tourism industry and the business and community development opportunities that it may provide. More specifically, the DMO may provide valuable insight to the future growth of tourism demand in the destination and the specific tourism product and superstructure needs. This would give lenders and providers of capital in general more confidence on which to base investment decisions. More generally, the DMO can be a venture capital broker, helping venture capitalists to identify potential investments while also helping operators and developers access sources of capital.

Perhaps the ultimate sign of IDD is the ability to react swiftly and effectively in times of crisis. This ability requires strong stakeholder coordination abilities but also a crisis response plan. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) emphasize the importance of developing a capability to anticipate and address a broad range of crises. Crises may range from local issues related to violent criminal acts or marketing/image problems in the destination, to broader issues such as terrorism, political strife (civil war in the extreme) or natural disasters (such as tsunamis). Faulkner (2001) has advanced a disaster management framework which identifies elements of disaster management responses and strategies according to the phase in the disaster process.

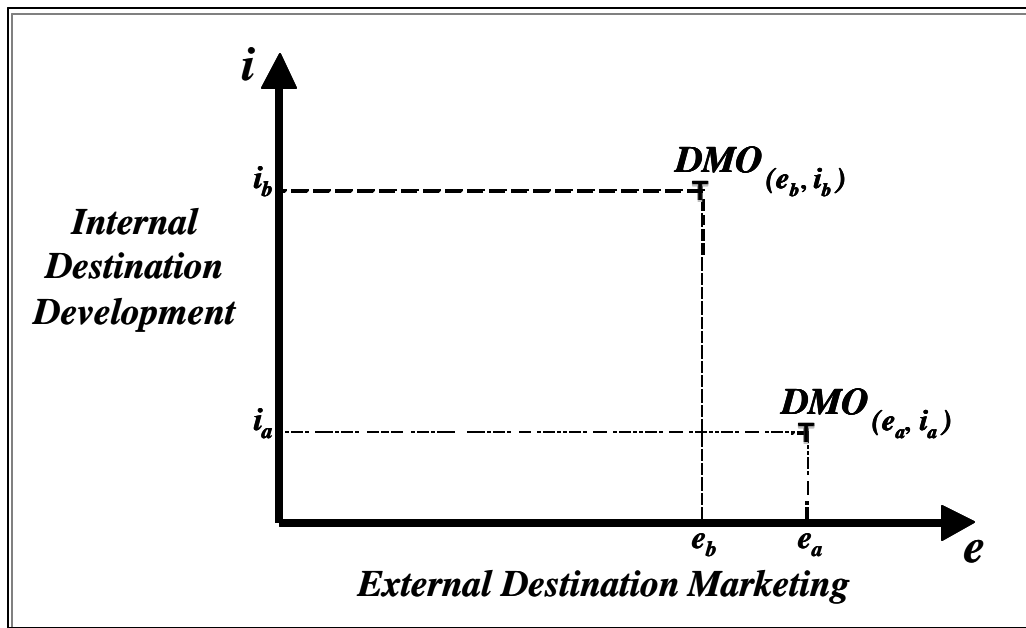
Quality of the Visitor Experience

The simple provision of visitor services, while critical, is clearly insufficient to ensuring tourist satisfaction. Recognizing this (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003) describe the importance of ensuring a quality visitor experience. The overall visitor experience will be reflective of all of the separate visitor experiences within the travel experience chain. For this reason, the quality of the visitor experience is shown (in the model) to be an outcome of all the DMOs efforts in IDD – something to be measured rather than managed directly. An audit of the quality of the destination experience along with visitor satisfaction surveys would be examples of initiatives that would support this activity.

TOWARDS A DESCRIPTIVE MODEL OF DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Based on the above analyses and categorization of possible DMO activities as being either oriented towards External Destination Marketing (EDM) or Internal Destination Development (IDD), a descriptive model is proposed which captures both dimensions to reflect overall destination management effort. In this regard, a two-dimensional graph is produced with the vertical axis representing the DMO efforts in IDD and the horizontal axis denoting the DMO efforts in EDM.

Figure 3. A Descriptive Model of Destination Management in Terms of DMO Efforts in Internal Destination Development and External Destination Marketing



The position of the DMO in the model is therefore the combined result of the interaction of its efforts on these two dimensions and therefore reflective of its effort in managing the destination. Greater efforts on either dimension will lead to an enlargement of the DMO's total efforts to comprehensively manage the destination. The assumption is that the DMO may be able to increase its resources to allow it to increase its efforts on one function. It is also possible that the DMO might not increase total effort but rather redistribute effort from one function to another to achieve more of a balanced approach to managing the destination. Therefore it is suggested that destination management is a function of IDD and EDM as follows:

$$\text{Destination Management} = f(e, ?) \quad (1)$$

Where,

e = External Destination Marketing efforts

$?$ = Internal Destination Development efforts

Both EDM and IDD are multidimensional and therefore are the sum of efforts of the multiple activities described earlier. The activities of EDM and IDD are summarized in Table 2 along with their respective symbols.

Table 2. Summary of the Activities of the DMO Categorized as Either EDM or IDD

External Destination Marketing Activities		Internal Destination Development Activities	
Web Marketing	e_1	Visitor Management	i_1
Events, Conferences and Festivals	e_2	Information / Research	i_2
Cooperative Programs	e_3	Coordinating Tourism Stakeholders	i_3
Direct Mail	e_4	Crisis Management	i_4
Direct Sales	e_5	Human Resources Development	i_5
Sales Blitzes	e_6	Finance and Venture Capital	i_6
Trade Shows	e_7	Resource Stewardship	i_7
Advertising	e_8	Quality of the Visitor Experience	i_8
Familiarization Tours	e_9		
Publications and Brochures	e_{10}		

Additionally, each of the above activities must be standardized and then weighted according to its overall importance in the destination management function. It is now possible to more specifically rewrite the expression of e and i as:

$$e = w_{e1}e_1 + w_{e2}e_2 + w_{e3}e_3 + w_{e4}e_4 + w_{e5}e_5 + w_{e6}e_6 + w_{e7}e_7 + w_{e8}e_8 + w_{e9}e_9 + w_{e10}e_{10} \quad (2)$$

or alternatively,

$$e = \sum_{n=1}^{10} w_{en}e_n$$

where,

w_{en} is the weighting assigned specifically to activity n on the EDM axis.

$$i = w_{i1}i_1 + w_{i2}i_2 + w_{i3}i_3 + w_{i4}i_4 + w_{i5}i_5 + w_{i6}i_6 + w_{i7}i_7 + w_{i8}i_8 \quad (3)$$

or alternatively,

$$i = \sum_{n=1}^8 w_{in}i_n$$

where,

w_{in} is the weighting assigned specifically to activity n on the IDD axis.

The determination of weighting, while beyond the scope of this paper, is potentially problematic and certainly will be the subject of debate and future research by academics and practitioners. A simplistic approach would be to assume that all activities are equally important and should therefore be equally weighted. However, critics might argue that all activities are not of equal importance in

fulfilling the role (of EDM or IDD) and thus criticize the validity of the results. Another approach would be to assume that all activities are not necessarily of equal importance and therefore assign different weights. Here again, critics may argue that the activities are equally important or that the weightings are wrong. Critics may further argue that weighting should be dynamic and/or situationally (context) dependent in that weighting should differ for each destination to reflect each destination's socio-political, economic, and bio-physical environment. Suffice to say, for purposes of this paper, that justification is required for either equal or differential weighting.

DISCUSSION

The model as proposed can be used for two primary purposes. First, it can be used to analyze a single DMO and its activities over time. In a practical way, this allows destination marketers or managers to compare the possible scope of DMO roles and activities (as outlined in the model) to their own present situation in terms of the roles and activities they currently perform. This comparison may reveal gaps in the DMOs activities that could form the basis for an amended strategic plan for the organization. The comparison might also make the DMO more aware of potential areas of concern from key stakeholders who expect certain of these activities to be undertaken. Additionally, the model may be used by destination marketers or managers to perform a destination audit, whereby the DMO compares the activities outlined in the model to what they currently do and search for other organizations throughout the community that may partially or fully perform (or potentially perform) other activities. In this way the DMO is better equipped to understand what it takes to truly make the destination successful, including which stakeholders need to be engaged and where efforts of multiple stakeholders need to be coordinated in order to maximize destination competitiveness and sustainability.

Second, the model may also be used to compare and contrast the activities of different DMOs. Thus the model can be used as tool to benchmark a DMO's activities against the activities of other DMOs. Eventually, with further discussion and development of the model with DMOs on a case-by-case basis, best practices may be developed for each activity.

In both situations, the model will position the DMO so as to illustrate its focus on EDM versus IDD in both relative and absolute terms. More specifically, the model allows for the tracking of the activities comprising each function and therefore might be used in conjunction with the efforts of others, such as the International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (IACVB, 2004), to assess the performance of DMOs. However, this is clearly a separate topic for future study.

It is important to recognize that the model is descriptive in nature and suggests a range of possible different DMO activities. Therefore, it does not suggest that all DMOs should pursue the activities of both the EDM and IDD functions - indeed, each DMO must assess its environment and select the most appropriate set of activities relative to its primary purpose and resources. Additionally, the activities suggested to comprise EDM and IDD should not be considered to be necessarily complete but more of a starting point for discussion. Certainly, these should not be considered static as the destination management functions of EDM and IDD must adapt to the changing nature of tourism and the socio-political environment.

CONCLUSION

There is a variety of destination management organization types. In this regard, some are exclusively marketing-oriented while others assume additional activities. Some are very small, in terms of

resources (financial and human), while others are very large and employ staff specializing in many different areas of activity. It is hoped that the EDM-IDD model is, or will eventually become, reflective of the breadth of destination management activities and DMOs. Therefore, discussion of the model from both academic and practitioner perspectives is expected and encouraged.

More significant work is needed to discuss the utility of the model and to operationalize it. In addition to a critical evaluation of the model and its component activities, future research is required to determine the appropriate weightings and measures for each activity comprising the IDD and EDM functions. The difficulty in this exercise is the high level of subjectivity involved and it will likely require an empirically-based process of gathering expert opinion.

Finally, it may be useful to link the EDM-IDD model of destination management to the overall assessment of destination competitiveness. In this regard, perhaps the positioning of a destination in the model will be shown to relate to its competitiveness in an important way.

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Submitted April 25, 2005-10-12

First revision received August 27, 2005

Second revision received September 29

Accepted October 12, 2005