

books review

Tourism book series for students and practitioners from Libertas International University, Zagreb

The publication of scientific literature and textbooks is probably one of the last stages in the development of a serious and mature university. This does not mean that universities after this phase do not continue to develop further, but rather that this phase is the completion of the internal structure. This is probably because publishing is a mature and developed academic activity associated with a necessary publishing infrastructure and completing that process for a young university requires some time.

The series of books on tourism published by the Business School Libertas, which is now part of Libertas International University, is proof of the maturity that comes to an academic institution. The fact that a university published five scientific books in a very short time is worthy of special attention, especially when the publications are in the field of tourism activities which, in Croatia, is not a particularly prolific publishing venture. These books are the outcome of Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) projects funded by the European Union. Apart from the books, a new curriculum for new occupational standards, new qualification standards for various areas of tourism management and five study catalogs and guidelines for the development of university education study programs, according to the principles of the Croatian Qualifications Framework, were also part of the projects' outputs.

The five books of this series, edited by Ksenija Keča, deal with urban tourism, communication in tourism and socially responsible management, while two books are focused on operations in tourism, specifically of hotel reception and tourist agencies. Books are published in, both, Croatian and

English editions and presented here by five different reviewers from University of Maribor, Faculty of Tourism (Slovenia).

CITIES IN TOURISM

By Boris Vukonić (Reviewed by Marko Koščak)

On about 170 pages, well-illustrated by photographs, and with a good use of graphs and recent data, this book, through its 26 chapters, deals with a variety of issues in urban tourism.



The book opens with several chapters setting the issue of urban tourism in a broader context. The first chapter gives a historical overview of towns and cities - their historical origin, civilization and general growth, followed by a chapter on issues pertaining to the geographical aspects of towns, in particular their strategic location in relation to tourism, and their relationship with surroundings and spatial and physical urban planning.

From there the book focuses specifically on tourism in urban areas. In chapter "Towns/cities and tourism

– general thoughts" there is an overview of main themes and topics of urban tourism development. Then, the next chapter is dedicated to motivation, presenting key theories and concepts. "Land's policy – town – tourism" covers the importance of the land, in regards to tourism locations and their value which, over the centuries, has undergone changes; tourism and its developmental perspectives have turned this relationship on its head, because land that, in the past, had little significance has become, in the present, suddenly highly valuable for its owners and managers. In the next chapter, "Towns and sustainable development," the author presents basic ideas of sustainability, with a focus on the challenges which are being faced by towns. The "Idea of globalization and tourism" is today an unavoidable topic and this chapter focuses on the challenges and globalization impact of the development of tourism in towns, in particular on the economic, political, civilization, social and cultural processes.

After discussing the general issues pertaining to urban tourism, next few chapters are focused on marketing and branding. They deal with an important aspect and explanation of city tourism product/s in order that marketing, which follows, is able to build on them, while part on brand and branding provides clarification of the content of brand and branding in author's mother language, Croatian. In chapter "Festivals and other events as part of a city's tourist attractions" author opens a discussion about events which, if organized in an appropriate way, can represent a new developmental dimension to the future of town tourism development strategy. In "Town identity," the author explains that this can be defined in different ways, presenting the most widely used approaches. The chapter "Historic justification of the relationship between towns and tourism" presents the historic evolution of towns in the development of tourism products, as well as the importance of tourism in towns from the past to the present. "Cities in modern tourism, or modern tourism in cities" deals with challenges and problems and offers some examples on how to deal with them (improving and reconstruction

of town infra and super structures for tourism and creation of tourism products, like shopping areas, cultural, sport and other facilities, etc.). In the chapter, "The identity of the tourist city," introduces different experiences, models and practices in the development of towns and building their tourism identity. "Historical town and tourism as its development scenario" is a chapter in which the importance of old town quarters and centers in the modern tourism offerings is discussed, followed by the chapter "Typology of tourist (active) towns," where a new concept - "tourist active town - is proposed by which each individual town is defined in the context of its tourism capacities and, generally, its economic functions. Then chapters on very specific issues of urban tourism follow - dealing with urban hotels, interpretation and cultural heritage, and tourism attractions, with the last one arguing how the common evaluation procedures of tourism attractions in towns, measured solely from the perspective of quantitative, artistic, historical and other artefacts, are exhausted and proposes new evaluation paradigms. The chapter "Towns versus destinations" addresses positioning and location of individual and specific objects and buildings in the context of tourism offerings within town borders, while the following chapter, "Global tourism space", presents important theoretical debates concerning the theory of creation of space, and uses real and realistic examples from modern life and different.

After general topics on urban tourism, the focus then shifts on "Urban tourism in Croatia" illustrating Croatia's good potential for the development of this segment in tourism offerings, particularly in coastal towns. Two last chapters, then, deal again with a broad issues of urban tourism. The "Healthy town" is concerned with the position of societies in towns and their focus on the concept of three components, which are mutually integrated and linked: learning, action and changes while in the closing chapter "How to look on the future development of town and its future role in tourism," development opportunities offered by tourism and challenges faced by developers and planners are

presented in a short discussion on the dilemmas of towns in third millennium.

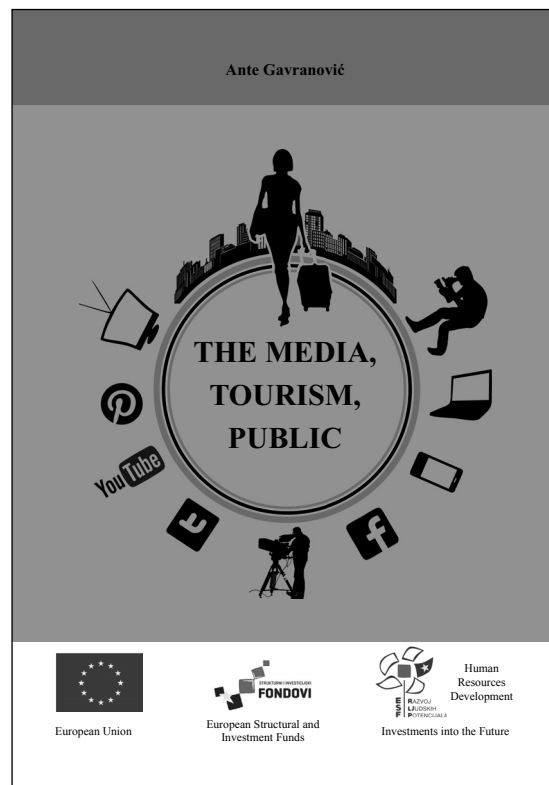
Overall, this book is particularly timely and valuable for the entire area of the Eastern Balkans. In this region there is not much literature available which discusses these issues in a scholarly and professional way. The content is enriched by many years of the author's personal experience and practical work, as well as research, he has been involved in. This book will certainly be valuable source of information for research and an important inclusion for bookstores and development institutions involved in town tourism planning. The book presents basic expertise and fresh new research achievements from the sector of tourism with a focus on towns and the urban life.

THE MEDIA, TOURISM, PUBLIC

By Ante Gavranović (Reviewed by Marjetka Rangus)

This book, written by a well-known Croatian journalist and publicist, is divided in two parts. The first part, comprising of 14 chapters, deals with the direct role of media in creating tourism destinations and tourism products and the second part, divided in 16 chapters, discusses different elements which bring better business results and realization of human values in tourism.

In the first part of the book, the author presents us with some statistical data on tourist movements in the last 35 years. We are presented with the continuing growth of tourism, which has now exceeded one billion international tourist visits throughout the world (UN WTO data). The UN WTO forecast anticipates that the numbers will grow to 1,8 billion in 2030. These great numbers and the phenomenon of tourism is a cause for optimism and opens questions on the role of different media and state institutions in the struggle for a bigger share of tourism. In the following chapters, the author expresses his strong beliefs that the quality of services, be they tourist services or journalist reports, should be of utmost quality. He argues that the media should be engaged in the common



effort of state institutions and public and private organizations to promote sustainable and socially responsible tourism. The author states that the news media should act responsibly and carefully monitor how they present certain data or interpret statements, since the media creates the image of the world and also the image of the destination. He quotes Vivian Reading, former European Commissionaire, who says that the media not only "decides on what we will see but also how we will see it" (p. 37). Another important message from the first part of the book is that all media should respect the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism in the context of the world's biggest media owners and their monopoly in creating the image of the news.

In the second part of the book, which consists of 16 chapters, the author deals with several topics that we would not expect to see in a book with the title Media, Tourism, Public. First, he analyses the Croatian strategy for tourism development and challenges for the near future. In the following chapters, the author discusses several opportunities

for tourism development and assesses the importance of some tourism products. He discusses the importance of big events, such as the Olympic Games and international fairs and opens some debate on the opportunities for Croatia to develop its tourism in a more sustainable way. In the last five chapters the author discusses new challenges for tourism development, such as changes in understanding society and free time (p. 112-116), climate change (p. 117) and the global economic situation and political constellations (p. 121-131). Ideas for new tourism products and development are discussed and presented, such as gastronomy and enology and, above all, the importance of Croatia's national cultural heritage to future tourism development.

The book *Media, Tourism and Public* reads like a collection of different essays which have one common identifier – tourism. This is a work from an experienced newspaper writer.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSABILITY

By Mirjana Matešić, Damir Pavlović and Dino Bartoluci (reviewed by Mitja Gorenak)

The concept of socially responsible business is a widely debated topic among many authors, but the main question that we have to pose to ourselves is how can we make a socially responsible business a value, not just a desired state of operation that we strive to achieve? This is the central topic of the book. At the beginning, in the introductory part of the book, the authors give us an overview of the concept of a socially responsible business through a link to sustainable development and a document issued by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development entitled, "Our common future".

The first chapter of the book carries the same title as the book, "Socially responsible business". In this chapter, the authors first give us a more comprehensive overview of how socially responsible businesses have evolved. The authors also give us a



view of development phases of socially responsible businesses through time with a very much needed critique of the subject at hand. It is important to know and understand that socially responsible business is not always as good a concept as it may seem at first glance. The second major chapter, "Areas of socially responsible business" is written in a way that presents a clear understanding of all the major areas of socially responsible business to the reader. The authors have decided to present the areas of socially responsible business by following the most commonly used divisions that have been addressed by other authors before and are widely accepted: economic sustainability, social responsibility and environmental sustainability. The main point of socially responsible business is not just to say that "we" as a company are practicing socially responsible business, but that many measures need to be put into place in order for the true meaning of socially responsible business to be brought to life.

The next chapter of the book is entitled "Croatia". At first glance, the title of the chapter does not seem

to relate to the title of the book, but the chapter itself gives us an overview of all aspects of practices of socially responsible business in Croatia. Some might argue that this chapter could be divided into subchapters and included at the very end of other chapters as a practical example of how certain areas are dealt with in Croatia. But, on the other hand, this structure gives us a very comprehensive look and a necessary understanding of how socially responsible business is being practiced in Croatia.

The last relatively short chapter of the book deals with regulations and trends. It is entitled simply "Regulations and trends". The authors talk about the institutionalization of socially responsible businesses from the international perspective, legal documents on an international level concerning socially responsible businesses and European Union policies that indicate trends of socially responsible businesses.

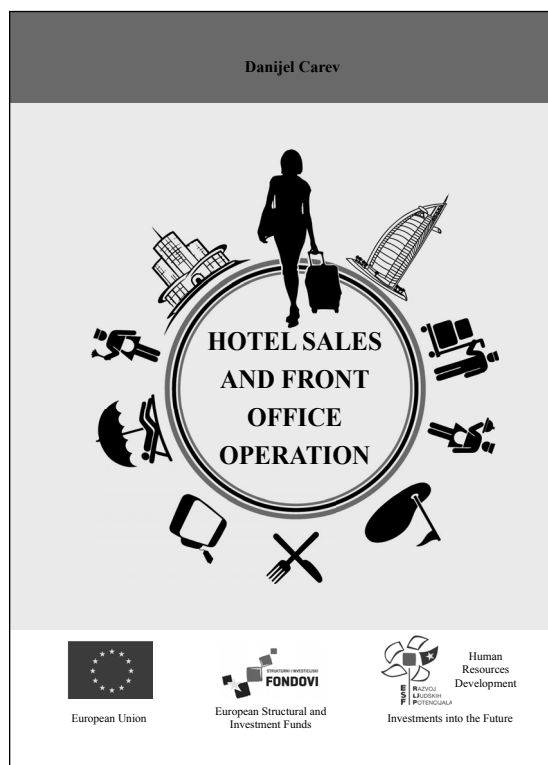
This book provides suitable study material for undergraduate students. The second part that focuses on practices of socially responsible business in Croatia is, on the other hand, more useful for potential foreign investors in Croatia. The selection of references is relatively narrow, but the authors give a clear presentation of the content in the first part and also a quite complex overview of the situation regarding socially responsible business in Croatia.

HOTEL SALES AND FRONT OFFICE OPERATION

By Danijel Carev (reviewed by Borut Vojinović)

On 200 pages, illustrated with photographs and actual data tables, topics of reception and sales operations are organized in six chapters. After introduction, "Marketing in tourism and the hotel industry" is the first chapter of the book, describes characteristics of services in the field of marketing of tourism and the hotel industry which define the nature of services in the tourism and hotel industry.

In the second chapter of the book, numbered II, the author addresses the development of market opportunities and strategies in tourism and the



hotel industry. The author deals with marketing and its environment and, afterwards, with market research of consumption, segmentation, target marketing and positioning of services. In this chapter, the author devotes the most attention to marketing research.

The third chapter, "Developing the marketing mix in the tourism and hospitality," is divided into six sub-sections. They deal with tourism and hotel guests, internal marketing, pricing and distribution channel strategies and integrated marketing communications, as well as pure communication and the World Wide Web.

"Management of marketing in tourism and in the hotel industry" is the fourth chapter. The author divided this chapter into two parts and paid the most attention to electronic marketing, but also went into depth regarding tourist destination marketing. The fifth chapter, "The sales management of the hotel industry" mainly deal with the various aspects of sales. In this chapter, the author devotes particular attention to the marketing plan

of a hotel and to the direct sales activities of the hotel personnel. A part of this chapter is directed toward the tasks of marketing plans and carrying out controls in marketing. Another interesting sub-chapter presents a section entitled "Hotels reservation services," which describes the author's finding of an interesting angle for analyzing contemporary hotel information systems.

"Management of the reception section of the hotel – operations of the reception desk" is the last chapter in the book. In this chapter, the author deals with various aspects of reception operations and focuses on the analysis of the development of new technologies in this field within the six sub-chapters. The main focus of this chapter is to analyses, in depth, the services focused on receiving guests and the aspect of services focused on hotel guests' accommodation.

This book is a welcome addition for a whole range of professionals in the tourism sector, which has very much expanded in Croatia. In academic circles, the book will surely be accepted as a refreshing extension of marketing analysis in tourism. It is a useful textbook for various courses, especially those in the field of economics, marketing and tourism.

THE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES OF TRAVEL AGENCIES

*By Boris Vukonić, Ksenija Keča and Ivan Pukšar
(reviewed by Mitja Gorenak)*

Over almost 200 pages, this book gives an overview of how tourist agencies operate. Following a brief introduction, the book starts with a chapter "The beginning" where the authors provide a historical overview of how tourism evolved, in present Croatia and around the world as a foundation for understanding the role that tourist agencies play in tourism today. The chapter "Theory of transmission (in tourism)" is the most comprehensive chapter of this book. Throughout the chapter, the authors give us a comprehensive look into various aspects of work within tourist agencies. This chapter is, in a way, an overview that helps us to understand the



role of tourist agencies in tourism. Explanations of certain areas are given based on theoretical background and also the authors' knowledge of the actual operation of tourist agencies. Although, many times, tourism relies a lot on improvisation, due to the fact that circumstances can change at any moment (roads closed, flights canceled, etc.) we can understand, through this chapter, that tourism operations would not be possible without the rigorous organization of the work of tourist agencies behind the scenes. The following chapter, "Business processes in tourist agencies" is focused on economy. The authors take a step back, in some sense, compared to the previous chapters, since here their text is indeed more theoretically based than in any other part of the book. In this chapter, the authors are very direct, writing that there is no "romance" about this part of the subject. It is presented clearly and concisely, thus giving us the knowledge of what is needed in order for a tourist agency to operate properly and to its full capability.

"Marketing concepts and the policies of tourist agencies" that follows is the second most extensive chapter. It explains the different types of products that tourist agencies create and discusses the politics of pricing, marketing and sales. When reading this chapter, someone might think that working in a tourist agency is always interesting and fairly easy, but the reality is that work in a tourist agency is often defined by long working hours, time pressures and also high volumes of data that need to be processed with care so that everything goes according to plan.

The final chapter "Organization of work in tourist agencies" is deals with organizational aspects, as opposed to the previous chapter focused on economics. The authors have managed to explain the

roles of certain parts of tourist agency in a way that is completely comprehensible to the reader, even if he or she has never worked in a tourist agency. This is what makes this chapter interesting to read.

Overall, this book is an interesting read. Certainly, it would be helpful to people who are thinking about opening their own tourist agencies. It is also suitable study material for undergraduate students. There is a slight critique to be made about the bibliography; the sources selected are in some cases relatively old and outdated and there is also the relative narrow selection of the sources themselves. But, on the other hand, the authors have managed to put into the text many of their own experiences that outweigh the lack of newer literature.