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# Sustainable Tourism Marketing Strategies at UNESCO World Heritage Sites

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Sustainable Tourism Marketing Strategies at UNESCO World Heritage Sites

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## **PART ONE**

### **Introduction**

Designation as a United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage site has a significant impact on the tourism development and sustainability of a site, city, region or country. World Heritage sites bring a certain level of prestige and international recognition, but they also have an impact on the local communities as they impact day to day life and rituals of the residents. Several paradigms exist in evaluating the success of a UNESCO World Heritage site. This paper specifically examines how marketing strategies bolster sustainable tourism efforts.

As of December 2012, 962 sites were listed as World Heritage sites (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d.) with 745 cultural sites, 188 natural sites and 29 mixed. These sites were located throughout the world in 157 countries. Designation as a World Heritage site brings increased tourist flow generating income through ticket sales, concessions and associated tourism amenities such as restaurants and hotels. As a particular World Heritage site gains attention, positive benefits increase in the areas of publicity, government support and donations. However, simultaneously growing concerns may also arise about the impact of tourist levels on the overall sustainability of the site for future generations. Ironically the growth in tourists may adversely affect sustainability efforts. So, positive effects of designation can frequently result in a negative impact upon these treasured sites. The success of a site must balance its visitation and preservation.

Common themes in research of World Heritage sites focus on the economics surrounding these sites. Scholars have researched in detail the implication of a World Heritage site listing; tourist motivations for visiting sites; the effects of distance from population centers on the

success of a site and the financial impact on the local communities coexisting with a site. This paper examines an additional facet of UNESCO World Heritage sites by looking at the synergy between sustainable tourism and marketing plans. Current literature on marketing and sustainable tourism was reviewed in this paper to highlight this aspect of World Heritage tourism. Marketing strategies can affect both the popularity of a World Heritage site as well as create an expectation of the tourist experience. The marketing segment of this tourist field is interesting to explore from both the tourist perspective and the impact on preservation efforts.

### **Purpose**

This paper provides recommendations of sustainable tourism marketing for UNESCO World Heritage sites. Marketing recommendation will provide steps a UNESCO World Heritage site can follow to create a balance between use and sustainability.

### **Statement of Objectives**

This paper examines UNESCO World Heritage sites from a marketing perspective to:

- Illustrate the impact marketing has on supporting preservation efforts at the sites.
- Inform how marketing can lead to support sustainable tourism.
- Demonstrate examples of particular UNESCO World Heritage sites already using marketing recommendations to increase sustainability.
- Provide a review of literature pertaining to World Heritage sites.

### **Justification**

Designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site brings several immediate advantages including increased financial revenue which can be used for site improvement and maintenance and improving facilities for the increased levels of interested tourists. Marketing efforts need to address the dual need of competitiveness and sustainability. As tourist levels increase questions

must be answered as to how the sites can be preserved for future generations, and how management at the site can impact efforts to encourage sustainable tourism.

The marketing focus of this paper will be of aid to the UNESCO World Heritage community including the UNESCO organization, host countries' tourism boards and individual World Heritage sites. Recommendations and information provided may help the UNESCO develop future effective marketing plans that take into consideration increasing tourist levels and the preservation needs of the individual sites. The information provided also offers a scholarly base of information for future research examining the effects of marketing initiatives in balancing sustainable tourism needs against the financial interests of the host community. Researchers can use this body of literature with future research to examine effects over time.

The marketing segment of UNESCO World Heritage sites is still in its nascence. Previous work within UNESCO has focused on designation, preservation and management. This research focused on a unique element of UNESCO World Heritage sites by exploring marketing in relation to sustainability. An understanding of the marketing segment of these World Heritage sites can be useful to the UNESCO organization as well as the individual countries that house the heritage sites. Tourism sustainability is important to understand in order to address short term goals of competitiveness in the tourism market and achieving long term success in maintenance and preservation of the heritage sites.

### **Constraints**

Current research on marketing and sustainable tourism at UNESCO World Heritage sites is limited to a select number of countries. While UNESCO sites are located throughout the world in 157 countries, this study will be delimited a few countries' particular efforts. Gaps between researchers and the professional business community make it challenging to acquire reliable

data. It is as important to understand the historical and cultural significance of sites as it is to understand the economic and social influences at the locations. An additional constraint is related to the type of sites available; natural, cultural or mixed designation. There is a lack of information regarding UNESCO sites with a natural site designation; as a result the majority of information included in this paper focuses on cultural sites.

Marketing of UNESCO World Heritage sites is controlled by individual sites and so marketing efforts have varied. Scholarly research of World Heritage site listings is relatively limited since the first sites were only established in the 1970's. Since the span of research over time is limited, research in subsequent years will be important for a more complete understanding of the relationship between marketing and tourism sustainability.

### **Glossary**

For the following study these terms will be utilized.

**Cultural Tourism** - A special form of tourism where cultural heritage management is important (Lade, 2010). Cultural tourists are consumers motivated by cultural related experiences and services.

**Heritage Marketing** – Delivering what the customer wants at the same time as preserving Heritage sites against wear and tear; satisfying customer needs but not to the detriment of the sites (Misiura, 2006).

**Heritage Tourism** - A subcategory of cultural tourism centers on what we have inherited from the past and what role a building, natural location or piece of art may have played in the significance (Alvarez & Korzay, 2011).

**Sustainable Tourism** – Sustainability indicates a state of equilibrium with tourism needs of present visitors meet at the same time as protecting destinations for future generations.

Management of this type of tourism includes attention to social and economic needs as well as supporting aesthetic needs, cultural integrity, ecological processes and biological diversity (Hawkins, 1998). In addition tourism is regarded as a phenomenon of sustainable living practices. Tourism is considered a living system with unique needs at each location (Jamrozy, 2007).

**Sustainable Tourism Marketing** - A strategy whereby the objectives are to understand the interaction between the organization managing a site and surrounding natural forces, on approach to create a social, economic and environmentally balanced forum (Gilmore et al., 2007).

**Visitor Management** - Are techniques that aim to reduce the visitors' physical impact on a heritage site. Visitors impact the sites by their sheer number, length of visit and visitor behaviors such as flash photography, parking cars and walking patterns (Shackley, 1998).

**UNESCO**- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. Charged with the designation and preservation of World Heritage sites since 1972 (UNESCO, n.d.).

**World Heritage Site** – Designated site by the UNESCO Organization. Currently the UNESCO World Heritage sites list is composed of 962 sites with 745 cultural, 188 natural and 29 mixed. Sites are selected based on fulfillment of one of ten characteristics. These characteristics range from contribution to our understanding of human development across time to architectural masterpieces or wonders of nature (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d.).



## **PART TWO**

### **Introduction**

UNESCO World Heritage sites are classified in three categories: natural, cultural or mixed designation (Leask & Fyall, 2006). Sites are nominated for inclusion by fulfilling one of ten established criteria (UNESCO World Heritage Centre. n.d.). These criteria include human creativity such as with masterful architecture and planning as well as demonstrating human development throughout time. Additional factors for site selection include a contribution to mankind by symbolizing cultural traditions and exhibiting historical interactions of civilizations. Natural sites are selected based on natural beauty, development of landforms or demonstrating geological changes. Either through beauty, significance or architectural genius the UNESCO World Heritage sites symbolize value to mankind which should be protected and conserved. In addition to the standard list of sites another list of World Heritage sites in danger also classifies sites based on immediate needs of assistance (Aplin, 2002).

In addition to the criteria presented, UNESCO also takes into consideration the protection, management, authenticity and integrity of the sites. With this in mind it is important to examine the marketing efforts used by the sites to support the preservation and overall sustainable tourism of the designated sites. The World Heritage convention meets annually and is a convention for the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Shackley, 1998). Since 1972, the convention is primarily charged with the preservation of World Heritage sites.

In order to be selected as a UNESCO World Heritage site, countries must complete an online application process. Some remote locations have limited resources and lack of technology available. This puts a disadvantage on being able to adequately meet application and evaluation criteria. This has led to an unequal distribution sites worldwide. In addition, political bias is also

prevalent in the application process due to the decision to be accepted being decided by a select committee of members from various member states (countries).

### **Current Environment of World Heritage Sites**

An interdisciplinary approach to explore the issues and debates surrounding the designated World Heritage sites is provided by Rakic (2007). Her study included heritage professionals across forty five countries. She used online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to garner results. Four key themes were identified in her literature review phase: Tourism management and marketing, policy and conservation, significance of World Heritage site status and implications of World Heritage site listing for the local population.

The research (Rakic, 2007) focused on understanding the role World Heritage site listing has in global tourism. She concerned herself with understanding site distribution and revealed 45 countries' who participate in UNESCO does not even have established sites in their respective countries'. In a formal survey constructed by Rakic, questionnaires were provided to 180 professionals including highly regarded professionals in the Heritage field such as state party chairmen and cultural attachés. The responses represented seventeen different countries. One of the important findings from the research was that professionals believed the World Heritage site list status was more important in tourism marketing than conservation efforts. Heritage preservation has a tentative relationship with tourism because World Heritage sites seem to be deteriorating. Professionals were also concerned with the indefinite expansion of the World Heritage brand. This was more important to the professionals than worrying about the lack of representation in different member countries. The credibility of the listing is linked to the amount of expansion. Future debates and research seem to fall on the issue of unbalanced representation by regions.

Rakic notes in her findings that the popularity of the World Heritage site listings and the recognition Worldwide has led to research gaining momentum. Her study attempted to bridge gaps between scholars in the field and actual professionals operating in the field. Cooperation amongst scholars, professionals and the tourism sector will help to better manage, and protect the sites.

### **Increased Tourist Levels Based on UNESCO World Heritage Site Listing**

World Heritage designation has an impact as a driver of tourist levels. The designation both affects the level of tourism and protection as a cultural site of significance. While benefits occur with increased tourist levels, a strain can occur to overall site sustainability.

### **Value of Designation**

Buckley (2004) examined the effect of World Heritage Designation on the total number of tourists at sites with and without designation. Buckley looked at the Australian National Parks where a total of six out of fourteen have the World Heritage designation. Buckley noted that the study was impacted not only by tourists but also visitation levels from local residents frequenting the area for recreation as opposed to being attracted to the Heritage site. His study used a statistical design perspective looking at the tourist levels at World Heritage sites versus control sites without the designation. He tried to identify similar sites in terms of attributes to make the control analogous to the Heritage site. The findings of the study indicated that there was an increase in the number of tourists at World Heritage sites versus the attendance at other Australian National Parks. Buckley could not conclusively differentiate if this increase was due to designation as a World Heritage site or due to the location and environmental popularity of the site. Buckley noted a difference between the World Heritage sites and the control stating that more research is needed to draw strong conclusions.

## **Cultural Tourism**

Ho and McKercher (2004), considered the impact of cultural tourism development. Cultural tourism includes sites that have cultural importance to the local communities, but may not be of interest to the typical tourist. When a cultural site is designated as a World Heritage site it draws a new group of tourists that may never have visited the site prior to the designation. Ho and McKercher researched the Cultural Heritage sites as a form of tourism product; they sought to determine if heritage became a commodity. Their study indicated a difference between tourism and cultural heritage. They set out to explore Cultural Heritage as a product and marketing tool for tourism. Representatives from twelve Cultural Heritage sites in Hong Kong were interviewed to identify the way their heritage is marketed in the tourism realm. A key difference between cultural and tourist sites was identified by the marketing of the sector. Research showed there was a higher level of western tourists interested in the Cultural Heritage sector as opposed to Asian tourists. Examination of the facilities found that many sites focused on development of the sites for the local communities that could connect on a cultural level to the site as opposed to appealing as a marketing device for tourists. Gaps were found between tourism and cultural management. The majority of funding for the sites comes from local and government agencies, so their focus was not necessarily to cater to the tourism sector. In the Hong Kong study isolation occurred between cultural and tourism development.

## **Community Influences**

Community attachment has been identified with the dependence on tourism in Taiwan (Chen & Chen, 2010). This study indicated positive tourism impacts with community support. An integrated structural model was utilized to determine direct and indirect effects of tourism impacts on residents and economic dependence on tourists. The conceptual model indicated

community attachment to the positive effect of tourists. Surveys were administered to residents of Tainan city. Findings showed that any negative perceptions of tourists were outweighed by the positive impacts. The residents who were more attached to their community were also more attached to the tourism community due to the benefits ensuing from tourism. Economic dependence on tourism in turn created a support for the industry. Resident's attitudes towards heritage tourism development were favorable. Community influences can be found in many aspects of World Heritage site operations (Miller, 2005). Understanding their impact can contribute to site operations.

### **Emotional Attachment to Heritage**

The success of a Heritage site as a tourist destination can be attributed to the tourist drive to visit the site. Different motivations exist for the types of tourists who seek out the sites and the distances they are willing to travel to visit. Studies have attempted to identify the tourist paradigms of visitors to World Heritage sites as well as the differences between tourists traveling short and long distances. A study (Portia, Butler, & Airey, 2004) demonstrated the links between tourists' emotions and heritage site experiences. The study was relevant for both the management of tourism a scholarly base of information related to the subject. Two important reasons visitors were attracted to sites are education and diversion. In this study two sites were examined in Israel: The Wailing Wall which has religious significance to both Jewish and Christian populations and Massada, an historical site. The study was conducted with a questionnaire implemented in face to face interviews of international tourists departing from the airport. Data were tabulated in a matrix to understand tourists' motivations for visiting the sites. The patterns were substantially different for the two sites studied. The authors indicated links between sites attributes and tourists themselves. They created three groups of visitors: Heritage, Learning

Experience and Recreational. The overall theme showed tourists had a desire to be involved in experiences they perceived as part of their own heritage. Results indicated a better understanding of heritage tourism as it relates to emotional experiences.

### **Impact of Marketing on Levels of Tourists**

Marketing is defined as a management function that identifies, anticipates and satisfies customers in a profitable manner (Misiura, 2006). In relation to World Heritage sites, marketing is tailored to a specific tourism niche. This research discussed three contributing factors to marketing UNESCO World Heritage sites:

- Political contributions
- Visitor management
- Brand equity

#### **Political Contributions**

The political climate of a country affects tourism promotion (Ryan & Silvanto, 2010). Listing as a World Heritage site impacts political decisions on the branding and marketing of the site. Ryan and Silvanto exposed how political instability and democracy are important in the promotion of the World Heritage sites and affect the development of tourism. The study explored 54 countries and 94 sites to see how the level of democracy affected promotion. It was cited that countries with political instability experienced decreases in the level of tourist activity. The methodology first looked at the political influence of politics on World Heritage sites and second how influence compared with comparable countries. Data were collected with an independent variable of data on the number of tourists visiting each country with various other indices. The dependent variable was the extent of marketing by the countries ministries of tourism to promote their World Heritage sites. The findings of the study indicated that the level of democracy

exhibited in a county has an effect on the promotion of the World Heritage Site designation. Political instability and a lack of openness towards foreign visitors significantly impact the levels of visitation.

### **Relations between Visitor Management and Marketing**

A relationship exists between marketing and visitor management at World Heritage sites (Fullerton, McGettigan, & Stephens, 2010). This study examined if a balance can be created between visitor impacts and site maintenance. Tourism viewed as successful only on the merits of increase visitors numbers can in fact prove detrimental to the sites if increased visitor numbers puts a strain on site preservation. Data was collected at Heritage sites in Northern Ireland, where the average tourist is credited with visiting at least four Heritage sites.

Ideally marketing efforts should satisfy visitor needs at the same time as preserving the sites for future generations. The authors (Fullerton, et al., 2010) proposed demarketing, in essence discouraging a certain class of visitor from site visitation; as a means for increasing preservation. Demarketing is considered as an important branch of marketing and should not be considered the opposite of marketing (Beeton & Benfield, 2010). Three types of demarketing were identified: general, selective and ostensible (Fullerton, et al., 2010). General demarketing occurs when total demand is decreased. Selective demarketing occurs when certain market segments are discouraged. Ostensible demarketing creates a scarcity of product and therefore greater demand.

Five demarketing tools were highlighted by the authors. The first is educating potential visitors, second marketing to desirable markets, third publicizing other sites as alternatives followed by limiting sites seasonally and finally making access to fragile areas difficult. Implementing the five demarketing tools is beneficial to assisting sustainability efforts.

## **Brand Equity**

The review of literature revealed brand awareness provides an identity to the user and can evoke a sense of trust and loyalty (Misiura, 2006). Brand awareness relies on several factors based on loyalty, perceived quality, associations and awareness (Portia, Reichel, & Cohen, 2011). The World Heritage site name can be regarded as a brand. The branding of UNESCO World Heritage sites allows for a set of associations and expectations to be created. The UNESCO brand also evoked certain feelings or perceptions by customers. Brand awareness is a marketing tool for UNESCO World Heritage sites.

A study was conducted (Portia et al., 2011) which tested the value of brand equity at World Heritage sites. The research objective of the study was to compare Heritage sites with and without UNESCO branding and the study also explored how familiar people are with the UNESCO World Heritage site title and logo. Questionnaires were distributed to visitors at the World Heritage site of the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth, Israel. Half of the questionnaires had reference to the World Heritage brand while half omitted references. Results to the study indicated visitors had a familiarity with the UNESCO brand. Mixed results indicated the motivation of tourist to visit the site may have been based on brand awareness. The study accounts for moderate net brand equity with the UNESCO designation.

## **Sustainable Tourism and UNESCO Sites**

### **Sustainable Tourism Practices**

Marketing of tourism in a sustainable manner can be viewed as a paradigm shift (Jamrozy, 2007.) It was not until the mid-1980's that sustainable marketing theory and concern for green practices arose. The author argues that tourism marketing can be integrated in such a manner as to not disrupt the natural sustainability of the surroundings. Managing tourism



sustainability becomes a macro function where interactions and independent roles play into the larger tourism system. Sustainable tourism by definition addresses the needs of present visitors at the same time as preserving destinations for future generations (Hawkins, 1998).

According to Jamrozy (2007), similarities can be drawn between sustainable marketing and green marketing. Green marketing considers the environment, green relations and quality of life. Juxtaposed is economical marketing which considers consumption and economic growth. The sustainable marketing model takes into consideration three categories: Society, the environment and the economy; combining green and economical marketing as well as considering the societal influences. Three factors comprised the sustainable tourism marketing. First an understanding that tourism is a phenomenon of sustainable living practices. Second connecting stakeholders to the tourism system. Third, and last, achieving sustainable marketing goals through both profit and non-profit institutions. Sustainable tourism is considered a living system therefore marketing sustainable tourism requires an understanding of the unique attributes of each site.

### **Challenges to Sustainability**

Russo (2001) explains the sustainability challenges that the city of Venice experiences as a city with the World Heritage site designation for the whole city. Russo argues that the concept of a Heritage city can end up being unsustainable due to lack of resources to properly maintain the city's infrastructure. Venice has experienced a "vicious circle" in which the very nature of the tourism industry that is supposed to support the city ends up being its source for hurting the city.

Venice as a World Heritage city has attracted many "false excursionists" or free riders (Russo, 2001.) Tourists who are attracted to the center of the city and being around the buzz of

action yet abstaining from contributing to the city in the form of money paid for amenities or attractions. Many of these tourists stay at hotels outside the city and eat at outlying areas, therefore contributing to the rural communities as opposed to the city itself. This trend threatens the sustainability of the city.

Signs of oversaturation include strains on resources such as roads, buildings and parking areas. In addition the annual viability of attractions is affected because tourist patterns are unpredictable based on day trippers (Russo, 2001.) In fact only one out of four tourists visiting Venice had a particular site in mind to visit. The core of the World Heritage city of Venice may turn stagnant and lead to decline if sustainability issues are not addressed.

### **Sustainable Tourism Plan**

The Giant Causeway World Heritage site in Northern Ireland is used to understand the marketing strategy for development of a sustainable tourism plan at the site. This study (Gilmore, Carson & Ascencao, 2007) acknowledged the challenges that an increased number of visitors present to environmental sustainability of a site. The World Heritage name has become a top brand for tourism. The growth in tourists leads to the importance of developing a sustainable marketing strategy. Sustainable tourism marketing addresses the dichotomy between social and economic needs and the environmental perspective. For the World Heritage site to be viable it should incorporate a well-managed plan to account for financial needs of sustaining the site and environmental needs of doing no harm for future site existence.

World Heritage sites are supported by tourism entities such as transportation, accommodations, facilities and other managed attractions. The study (Gilmore et al., 2007) argued that World Heritage sites are products driven by service. Therefore, the amount of service provided is directly linked to the site sustainability. Three perspectives evolved: focus on

conservation, focus on increasing tourist levels and focus on developing visitor facilities. The study indicated the need for the implementation of a plan for strategic sustainable tourism marketing management taking into consideration the needs of each of the three perspectives. Collaboration between local and government entities as well as a stronger marketing plan could contribute to improved sustainability.

### **Admission Prices as a Strategy for Sustainability**

Fyall and Garrod (1998) identified that while the tourism sector is one of the world's largest industries, it has failed to effectively incorporate sustainable practices to any meaningful degree. Pricing and admissions rates were both illustrated as means for achieving sustainable tourism. A challenge facing many World Heritage sites is a lack of funding to keep up with conservation and restoration needs. As a result many sites have introduced aggressive marketing strategies to increase visitation thereby increasing revenue from admission prices. This strategy puts a strain on the sites because overcrowding can cause faster deterioration to the sites. Increasing fees provides for an increase in revenue at the same time as placing a value on the visitation process. Increased fees can discourage casual tourists who may contribute to damaging the site. In addition the increased fees can be used to better educate visitors about conservation needs.

Westminster Abbey in London, England is an example of a World Heritage site that increased admission rates (Fyall & Garrod, 1998.) The Abbey has seen a positive outcome from this strategy, balancing the need for sustainability with the curiosity of the visitors. Increased rates provided funds for continued protection of the Abbey at the same time as discouraging an over population of tourists to frequent the site. Ultimately increasing admission prices gives value to visitors because it contributes to preservation of sites for future generations.

## **Conclusion**

A review of related literature pertinent to World Heritage sites indicated several factors that are important to managing for sustainable tourism. Designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site has a significant impact on the global community. The implications of designation are still being understood, but a few recognized features are: Protection of important cultural and natural sites, international recognition and development of cultural and heritage tourism into a major segment of the tourism field. Increased tourist interest and travel to remote areas has come about due to the Global recognition of the UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Balancing marketing needs with sustainable tourism practices can prove to be a challenge to UNESCO World Heritage sites that already face threats from deterioration and other conservation challenges. The current climate of World Heritage sites addresses the value of designation and community attachment to preserving sites for future generations. The marketing strategy of World Heritage sites has a substantial contribution to the sustainable practices of the sites.

The challenges and opportunities that the UNESCO World Heritage sites present are vast. One important benchmark for sites is how the marketing plans reflect the need for continued sustainable tourism. Following are strategies for implementation on a strategic marketing plan based on current research and practice.

## **PART THREE**

### **Introduction**

The UNESCO World Heritage Organization was originally created to save the city of Venice (Russo, 2001.) Since that time, the popularity of World Heritage sites has increased and the number of listings has substantially expanded. World Heritage sites are selected based on their unique contribution to mankind's development, to signify a particular period in time or to showcase particularly exquisite buildings and the like. In contrast to the original immediate efforts to save a city there are now concerns about the long-term sustainability of World Heritage sites based on increased levels of tourists.

Marketing strategies can address the dual need for promotion of World Heritage sites in conjunction with preservation of the sites. A balance is necessary between sustainability and visitor demand. A marketing plan that takes into consideration sustainability efforts can be beneficial for World Heritage site preservation.

### **Marketing Recommendations**

Based on review of literature the following are recommended strategies for sustainable tourism marketing:

- Demarketing.
- Promotion.
- Developing Brand Awareness.
- Agency Collaboration.
- Cooperation between Benefiting Parties.
- Price Strategy.
- Marketing Sustainability.

- List of World Heritage Sites in Danger.

By implementing one or more of these strategies UNESCO World Heritage sites can simultaneously contribute to the short term success and increase long term sustainability of their sites.

### **Demarketing**

Demarketing is an effective mechanism for controlling the number and quality of visitors at World Heritage sites. Demarketing, discourages a certain class of visitor from site visitation. Demarketing by definition is not the opposite of marketing which deals with an ever expanding market with an unlimited supply of product; instead demarketing is an intrinsic aspect of marketing management (Beeton & Benfield, 2010). Three types of demarketing have already been defined: general, selective and ostensible (Fullerton, McGettigan, & Stephen, 2010). In addition five strategies are recommended to utilize demarketing.

General demarketing occurs when total demand is decreased. From a marketing perspective this can occur when advertising costs are decreased; leading to a reduction in promotion and distribution of information. In addition messages can be created within existing brochures to discourage tourists from visiting or not to visit during certain peak times (Leask & Fyall, 2006).

Selective demarketing occurs when certain market segments are discouraged. By selectively decreasing the number of tourists the site can be more easily preserved for future generations. Cyprus has used selective demarketing to discourage young, rowdy tourists from visiting its historic countries sites (Beeton & Benfield, 2010). Promotion was the first step by marketing to certain types of tourists. Next marketing focused on deliberate sites and experiences

and did not promote nightclubs, shopping or other amenities which attract younger crowds. In addition pricing became a factor with wholesalers being discouraged to discount prices.

Ostensible demarketing refers to creating a scarcity of product and therefore promotes greater demand. Ostensible demarketing offers the appearance of asking for a reduction in demand at the same time stimulating a greater desire for the product (Fullerton et al., 2010). This method of demarketing can allow an alternate site to promote itself while allowing the primary site a reduction in tourist impacts. By tourists visiting an alternate but comparable site they can satisfy their needs for a cultural experience while allowing the primary site a period of rest from tourist demands.

Five strategies are recommended to utilize demarketing (Fullerton, McGettigan, & Stephen, 2010). The first is educating potential visitors; this can be done through educational material, or by experiences, or through specific instructions at the site entrance. Educating visitors allows for information about the sites preservation needs to be passed on as well as reinforcing sustainable practices. Second, marketing to desirable markets, this strategy allows sites to attract conscientious visitors. The goal of demarketing is not always to discourage and decrease the number of tourists, but to increase the number of conscientious tourists treating the site with respect. The third demarketing method is to publicize other sites as alternative destinations; this would spread the number of tourists over a broader area decreasing environmental impact on one particular site. This method requires cooperation with other World Heritage sites, and is particularly effective in condensed areas such as in England or France where several sites are found in close proximity. The fourth initiative is to utilize a seasonal schedule for access. This allows tourists to visit during certain parts of the year, while also allowing the site “off season” time for preservation efforts to take place. Fifth, and last, sites can

choose to make access to fragile areas difficult or restricted. Caple (2000) informed of specific preservation needs based on site specific locations. For example, a castle may have certain areas that are well maintained and capable of supporting heavy traffic, while others may be fragile and will have limited access to decrease risk.

**Table 1**

*Examples of strategies of demarketing in action at UNESCO World Heritage sites*

Strategy	Site	Description
Educating potential visitors	Kakadu National Park, Australia	Legislation requires National Parks to promote visitation at the same time as promoting preservation and how to conserve parks without overuse
Marketing to desirable Markets	Gros Morne National Park, Canada	Marketing focused to attract target audiences with messages focused on ecological integrity.
Publicize alternative sites	Historic city of Venice	Increased number of tourists has put a strain on the city and its resources. Marketing provides alternate sites and cities to visit
Seasonal schedule	Blenheim Palace, England	Restricted schedule open certain times during months February-November. Restricted days in example closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.
Restrict areas	Stonehenge, England	Areas roped off to control tourist flow. Visitors allowed in the inner circle only during planned special events with tour operators.



Table 1 provides examples of the five strategies of demarketing and lists particular UNESCO World Heritage sites that have utilized the strategies (Buckley, 2004 & Portia, Butler & Airey, 2004). As shown by Table 1 the locations are spread across the world with demarketing tactics popular in a variety of locations. The table is separated by each of the five demarketing strategies with a site currently implementing the strategy and a description of how the strategy has been implemented.

### **Promotion**

Promotion is typically used to increase demand, but it is also a tool to control accessibility (Beeton & Benfield, 2010). Accessibility in this case means the delivery of information surrounding a site such as advertising material and media promotions. Promotional materials can be used to not only inform and advertise, but also to persuade the tourist population. Persuasion can use the tactics of demarketing before mentioned to discourage tourists from certain areas or to encourage visitation in the off season. Selective messages can be used as a marketing tool for UNESCO World Heritage sites to promote their sites in certain manners. The city of Venice has used promotion to inform tourists of the overcrowding of the city and speaks to the denigration of the city by a rampant tourist population. While this strategy may not be effective in keeping tourists away, it may distract some visitors or encourage more conscientious tourists.

### **Develop Brand Awareness**

Brand awareness relies on several factors based on loyalty, perceived quality, associations and awareness (Portia, Reichel, & Cohen, 2011). The UNESCO World Heritage site title and logo bring a certain level of prestige to sites. A marketing strategy to encourage sustainability can be supported simply through promotion of the UNESCO World Heritage brand. Displaying the logo demonstrates the particular site is concerned with the principles of

conservation and preservation that the UNESCO Organization put forth. In order for sites to use this strategy they should prominently display the UNESCO logo in addition to providing specific education about the goals of the organization. This strategy will be reinforced if all UNESCO World Heritage sites follow the same promotion thereby increasing brand power, awareness and association.

### **Agency Collaboration**

Another important recommendation for UNESCO World Heritage sites looking to increase their sustainability through their marketing plan is to work in tandem with tourism and government agencies (Fullerton, McGettigan, & Stephens, 2010). Often UNESCO sites may share affiliation with both local and national entities; for example the Grand Canyon belongs to the World Heritage list, but is also part of the National Park Service and is promoted through the State of Arizona and other Southwestern tourist agencies. Internationally many countries have tourism boards that have more resources to put towards sustainable practices. Examples include the English Heritage Board, the French Heritage Society and “Tourism Australia.” These agencies can work in conjunction with the UNESCO site for everyone’s benefit. If multiple organizations pool their resources and marketing efforts they can better educate visitors and provide an experience which maximizes sustainability efforts.

### **Cooperation between Benefiting Parties**

In a similar regard to governing agencies working together, various tourist amenities can work together to encourage sustainability; cooperation from benefiting parties can contribute to overall sustainable tourism initiatives (Chen, & Chen, 2010). UNESCO World Heritage sites are not sustained solely by their establishment. Their continued success relies on ancillary services such as transportation, accommodations, food and beverage and retail services. When these various tourist amenities work together to market their products and services, they can promote mutually beneficial practices and will support the overall efforts of the sites.

## **Price Strategy**

Increasing admission prices can have a double benefit by increasing revenue for preservation efforts and discouraging casual tourist traffic that might put a strain on the site and increase the rate of deterioration (Fyall & Garrod, 1998). Increasing fees provides for an increase in revenue at the same time as placing a higher value on the visitation process. Ultimately increasing admission prices increases value to visitors because it contributes to preservation of sites for future generations.

Regulation and permits are two formal ways to control tourist impacts at UNESCO World Heritage sites (Beeton & Banfield, 2010). Regulation allows sites to manage their locations more responsibly by assuming management of their land space. When sites move to self-regulation as opposed to control from local or national government entities they can more easily control the land use and marketing of the space. Permits are a form of regulation that provides restrictions or limitations to guests. For example there may be a limited number of permits distributed per season thereby allowing sites to anticipate needs based on a controlled number of tourists. Permits may be used for the purpose of restricting certain activities such as the amount of hunting or fishing allowed in an area. The use of permits and reservation systems has become successful in Italy and England where they have been used as a tourism management tool. Yosemite National Park in California utilizes a system of restricted space to decrease the number of tourists in flooded areas. This has allowed for restricted areas to regenerate at the same time as creating publicity for areas that are accessible by tourists.

## **Marketing Sustainability**

Marketing sustainability can also be achieved by looking at traditional conservation practices. Conservation efforts extend beyond UNESCO World Heritage sites to protect many historical artifacts and locations. A look at some of the traditional methods of conservation provides additional ways for sites to integrate sustainable practices into their conservation plans. One example of preventative conservation is the storage of artifacts for preservation (Caple, 2000). By correctly storing artifacts they

can be visited at the same time as preserved for future visitors such as with the items buried in the Egyptian pyramids. Understanding environmental effects on artifacts and sites can contribute to attaining long term conservation practices. One such example is the effect of oxygen on the natural deterioration of sites. By understanding the effects of oxidation, the natural settings can be better preserved.

Other traditional methods stem from awareness and education (Aplin, 2002). Public awareness through items such as brochures, websites and media coverage can support conservation needs and increase sustainable practices. General education provided to tourists can increase the appreciation for conservation needs and lead to a rewarding experience. Simple marketing strategies can involve increasing awareness of the visiting public. Natural sites can also implement education about conserving the eco systems. Wetlands for example absorb pollutants; by providing education about this fact visitors can be mindful of their actions at the site.

### **Lists of World Heritage sites in Danger**

A final recommendation for World Heritage sites struggling with their sustainable practices is to apply to be on the list of World Heritage sites in danger (Aplin, 2002). Entering this list attracts international attention which generates an increase of financial and technical support. The four reasons for inclusion on the World Heritage sites in danger list are: environmental threats such as from natural phenomenon, human threats such as road development and deforesting, war or civil unrest and lack of management and conservation plans. A natural example of a site that has benefitted from listing is the Everglades in Florida. The site received World Heritage listing in 1979 and entered the danger list in 1993 due to threats from urban growth affecting water levels and wildlife poisoning. A cultural example is the Old city of Jerusalem which entered the UNESCO World Heritage site registry in 1981 and the danger list in 1982 due to political instability in the region and lack of maintenance. When a site cannot provide adequate sustainable measures it may need intervention and placement on the World Heritage sites in danger list.

## **Summary of Recommendations**

UNESCO faces a challenge to promote sustainable tourism practices in order to maintain World Heritage sites for future generations. This study provided some strategies, implementing marketing practices to support the sustainable tourism needs. Strategies include demarketing, promotion, developing brand awareness, collaboration between agencies, cooperation between benefiting parties, pricing strategies and entering the list of World Heritage sites in danger. Each of these recommendations can be implemented on an individual or collective basis at sites.

The marketing recommendations provided serve as a recommendation for UNESCO World Heritage sites. In order to balance the conservation and preservation needs of the sites, the recommendations should be incorporated into the marketing plan. A unique relationship exists between promoting World Heritage sites for financial gain and promoting sites for sustainability needs. By considering the spectrum of needs, sites can be respectfully visited in the present and protected for future generations.

## **Recommendation for Future Research**

Future research should measure the success of sustainable marketing efforts to be able to understand the impact of sustainable tourism marketing initiatives. By looking at the effect of measures such as demarketing over time at a particular UNESCO World Heritage site, it can be assessed for application at other sites. Understanding how single efforts such as increasing brand awareness or raising admission prices will be integral to continued integration of these strategies.

Future research is needed to understand the impact of sustainable marketing strategy on visitors' satisfaction. Given that many of the marketing strategies proposed decrease the number of visitations or limit the areas available for visitation, it is important to receive visitor feedback. Additional research is also needed to understand the interaction between marketing plans and the need for preservation.

This research focused on a majority of cultural World Heritage sites due to a lack of information surrounding natural and mixed designated UNESCO sites. As research moves forward a focus on information related to natural sites is important to understanding the full implications of UNESCO World Heritage site listings.

### **Conclusion**

Designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site brings global attention and accolades to host countries'. UNESCO sites are grouped based on cultural, natural or mixed attributes. They are a global collection of information about human civilization and geological development through time. Along with the positive benefits of site designation is a responsibility to balance sustainable tourism practices to increase long term preservations. Sites are located in 157 countries' making the challenge of sustainability a global challenge.

The marketing perspective provides one way to view sites and inform of measures to support sustainable tourism. Recommendations provided in this research are universal and can be applied singularly or with a combination of many recommendations. Increasing tourism sustainability will increase global preservation of mankind's development across time.

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