

# Promotion Strategies in Media and Tourism Development

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**Abstract – The tourism sector has gathered steam and India is poised for a big boom as foreign tourist arrivals are expected to touch the 3.5m mark in 2004. Remember that there is intense competition among the suppliers of tourism products or services and success of tourism business depends largely on the use of an appropriate promotion strategy. And it is through different communication activities that attempt to influence the target market.**

**In tourism it is not only the costumers but also retail agents, supplier, opinion makers (like journalists, travel writers, politicians) and important professional groups that need to be influenced. There are a range of promotional methods and have to identify the required method that is most suitable. This paper will define promotion along with the different elements of promotional mix. It also takes into account the aspects that are considered while deciding the promotion strategy.**

**The paper will focus on the following areas:**

- **Basic purpose of communication in tourism promotion**
- **Understand the major elements of promotion mix.**
- **Identify the various types of promotional strategy.**
- **Learn how marketers' budget for promotion.**
- **And have an understanding about promotional campaigns**

**So, tourism development is a multi-dimensional process. Institutions, schemes, finances. Human resources, technical resources, transportation services, public relations vital inputs which are needed for the growth. It also involves greater application of skills, workers; guides and the community of tourists. Tourism development is indeed a challenging task: we hope that in the light of this discussion, we would be in a position to decide appropriate strategy to promote the tourism.**

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## INTRODUCTION

The World is shrinking to form a global village. This is made possible by the process of globalization that set the pace of modern world by swinging many forces into action yielding negative and positive results. There are three major dimensions of the process-communication, business growth and cultural changes. The first i.e. communication, is instrumental in narrowing down the distances, thus enabling the people to feel physical closeness. The second dimension sees the impact of communication development on the trade and commerce that boomeranged in the form of world-wide business growth. The third dimension covers the aspect of

culture changes mainly orchestrated by new business forces influencing the life-style, values, etc.

It can undoubtedly, be contended that globalization led the spurt in business activities throughout the world and generated immense hopes and opportunities for the people to encash upon it. The expansion of the market economy mainly in the developing countries sought internationalization of the national economies and take back home its fits.

The natural outcome of the growth of the changed programmes and policies necessitated the growth of more jobs and job opportunities in the developing countries. Almost all the new sector of

economy which were opened to or exposed to the new dynamics offered plenty of jobs. But the nature of jobs required more skilled and specially trained personnel's and the people having little exposure to skill and training were unable to take much benefit of the situation.

## TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Tourism is one of the important spheres of human life and it is a process through which people visit new areas, gain new experiences, understand new things and culture and exchange ideas, experience and joys. Tourism is an instrument of promoting intercultural relations, international understanding and co-operation. Tourism development is a planned and deliberate strategy through which all opportunities are made available to various sections of society, both within and outside the nation, to visit new places, appreciate new values and many good things by seeing, understanding and experiencing.

Tourism development also includes expansion of transportation, hotel industry, sales and marketing services and allied domestic trade. It is also an organized activity which seeks to provide education and entertainment focusing on places, cultures, people, values and realities of life. In general, tourism development has social, economic, political, educational and cultural dimensions. Tourism management involves formulation of appropriate policies implementation of tourism operations and evaluation of the efficacy of tourism services.

Public relations are emerging as a prominent management function. Increasing stress is laid on 'people' and that the practice of the increasing complexities, trend and developments of modern society, are demanding greater application of public relations which is a vital instrument of image building, crisis-management and people's participation. India is a 'pluralistic' society. It is undergoing plenty of changes in its structure. A better grasp of the nature of modern Indian society, the kind of change is undergoing, and the direction in which it is moving actually demands result-oriented public relations approaches and strategies. The need for public relations in our society is inherent in it and people can hardly afford to ignore it. Indian society that is made up of heterogeneous groups of people with different interests needs the help of organized public relations.

## PROMOTION AS COMMUNICATION

There is need to create awareness and to persuade tourists to step out of their homes and visit a destination that attracts or interests them. There are many motivators which stimulate their interest in taking a trip or tour to a place of attraction. However, these motivators may remain dormant and therefore, there is always a need to arouse them. In tourism, the Promotion-Mix are the communication efforts

made by a destination or service organization to **create awareness, arouse interest, develop desire and persuade tourists** to act and take a journey to places of attractions. All segments of the tourism industry use communication to inform and persuade customers. For example, airlines or Road transport organizations inform about routes, schedules and fares; Hotels create awareness about accommodation and other related facilities available with them; Destination/attractions inform customer about leisure, pleasure and relaxation activities offered at a given place etc. Hence, every destination/principal supplier/producer of tourism product or service, to use the words of Philip Kotler, "is inevitably cast into the role of communicator and promoter." This communication is aimed at not only creating awareness about the product/service but also at persuading the customer to use and experience it. In other words, the product service promotion is carried through communication and certain tools are adopted for this:

- Advertising
- Direct Marketing
- Sales Promotion
- Public Relations and Publicity, and
- Personal Selling

An important aspect in promotional communication is **building of brand and product awareness**. A Promotion campaign should provide necessary information of the product and should try to develop a favourable image of the product in the market. Promotion campaign has to be designed in such a way that the customer finds something special and credible in your product. In order to develop effective communications or promotion programmes, Philip Kotler has identified certain aspects that have to be accounted for stepwise. These are equally applicable in the case of tourism products.

- 1) The **target markets (customers) have to be clearly identified**. For example the destination wants to attract up-budget tourists who are high spenders or budget tourists.
- 2) Communication **objectives must be determined**. This means that the marketer must have clarity as regards to what has to be put into the tourists mind to influence the tourist's decision-making process. The objectives may vary as per the levels of the tourist's state of readiness to buy. For example:

- If the tourists are unaware of your product the objective will be to **create awareness**,
  - The tourists may be aware of the product but may not be having any further knowledge. Hence, in such a situation the objective would be to **provide knowledge**, The tourists may have the knowledge but they may not have a liking for the product. Here the objective will be to adopt such measures that may help in **developing a liking**,
  - The tourists may like the product but may not prefer it to the others available. The objective in this case may be to develop preferences amongst the customers,
  - The destination (product) may be preferred by the tourists but they may not have the conviction to go there (buy it). The objective of the communication in this case would be to build conviction.
  - Lastly there would be a situation where the tourists in spite of having a conviction, may still not make the purchase. The objective in this case would be to lead the tourists towards making the purchase.
- 3) **An effective message has to be developed** for communication keeping in view the target audience response levels. The message has to be effective in terms of **gaining attention, holding interest, arousing desire and eliciting action** (AIDA model). For this:
- the contents of the message have to be figured out,
  - the structure of the message has to be decided e.g., whether it should be
  - conclusion drawing or one which raises questions and leaves it to the
  - target audience to draw its own conclusions,
  - the message must have a strong format e.g., attractive headlines in print or voice qualities in audio etc.,
  - the message should be delivered through an attractive source, e.g. use of models, celebrities etc. by advertisers.
- 4) The communication channel has to be selected with care to deliver the message. These may be **personal i.e., direct communication with customers** which include:

- face to face communication,
- telephonic communication,
- person to audiences, or
- direct mailing

On the other hand, there are non-personal communication channels which include:

- media,
- promotional events, or
- atmospheres or packaged environments.

Besides these aspects Kotler has laid stress on managing and coordinating the total marketing communication process and measuring the promotion's results". Deciding on a promotion budget and the promotion mix to be adopted are other aspects in this regard. Each of the promotion tools mentioned earlier have their own features and in the subsequent sections we shall discuss them individually.

## ADVERTISING

Advertising is one of the most important and visible elements of a promotional strategy. Advertising is a communication that appears through non personal media to inform and persuade customers to try or buy an idea, product or service. It is paid form of

communication as against publicity which is received because of being news worthy. Advertising is always associated by an identified sponsor. Thus, according to Kotler Advertising is **"any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor. Advertising is done to inform or persuade the customers to try or buy a product/service or an idea"**.

## Advertising Process

Advertising Process like any communication involves, four elements. These are:

- Sender,
- Message,
- Channel,
- Receiver.

- 1) **Sender:** Sender is the organization or party which wants to communicate some message related to its product or service to its customers. Sender of course is

advertiser but in advertisement, the spokesperson is sender. Spokesperson can be a model, character or celebrity.

Advertising, to be effective, needs right spokesperson. There are three requirements of any sender/spoke person:

- Trust worthiness
  - Attractiveness, and
  - Expertise.
- 2) **Message:** Message in print media advertisements is copy. It involves Headline, sub-headline and copytext. The message is supported by visuals in case of print media, by audio visual in case of TV media.
- 3) **Channel:** Channel is the media that is used for transmitting the message. The channel/media used for advertising are as follows:
- Print Media - Newspaper, Magazines, Hand bills.
  - Broadcast media - TV, Radio, Cinema Slides
  - Outdoor Media - Hoarding, Bill boards, wall/Roof paintings.
  - Transit Media - Bus/Rail Panel, Sky writing, Balloons.
  - Point of Purchase (POP)-Posters, Cut-outs, dummies, shop signs, window display
- 4) **Receiver:** Receiver is target customer who is to be informed to be persuaded to buy the product service.

Advertisements are classified on various basis. Some of the classifications are given below.

**Brand Advertisement:** Advertisement focused on product/brand.

**Corporate Advertisement:** Advertisement focused on building image of the company and not any specific product/brand.

**Social Service:** Advertisement focused on Advertisement creating awareness about social cause like anti-smoking. Cancer care, safe driving etc.

**The advertising manager has to take certain decisions:**

- **Objective/s** of advertising are decided. These can be creating awareness, increase

in sales by given percent, to combat competitors, information about a new service, etc.

- **Appropriation i.e.,** how much money shall be allocated for advertising budget
- What is the **message** for communication?
- **Media Mix:** What medium / media to be used. The timing or scheduling of advertisement is also to be decided, Besides the reach, frequency and impact of the medium is to be considered,
- **Creative Strategy:** What appeal to be used, Rational Appeal or Emotional Appeal.
- **Evaluation Technique:** Whether to use one of the pretesting and / or post testing methods to find ad effectiveness.

In small organizations advertising is looked after by sales or marketing people whereas big organizations have their own advertising departments. Today there are professional advertising agencies who offer their services for a price.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public Relations (PR) is a broader (Publicity) concept which includes publicity. Earlier marketers were using the term publicity which is now being replaced by Public Relations. We can define **Public Relations as deliberate, plans and sustained activities of an organization to develop and maintain good relations with publics of the Organisation.**

Every organization has various internal and external groups which have an actual or potential interest in the organization. These groups are known as publics. It is necessary to develop good relation with these public. We give below examples of the publics of two segments of the tourism industry:

### 1) Publics of Travel Agency

**Internal:** Employees, Share Holders, Managers, Trade Union

**External:** Airline, Tour operators Corporate Clients, Individual Customers, Destination/Events Managers, Transporters, Government (DOT)Media, Hoteliers etc.

### 2) Publics of Airlines

**Internal:** Air Crews, Ground Crews, Managers, Shareholders

Externals: Travel Agencies, Tour Operators, Suppliers (Fuel, Food etc.), Government Media, Competitors, Hoteliers, Destination Organisations Corporate Clients, individual Customers etc.

The public Relations include:

1. Research(R)
2. Action(A)
3. Communication(C)
4. Evaluation (E)

This process we explain through a case example of

- 1) **Research:** A research was conducted among Indian Airlines travellers to find out their opinion about its service quality. One of the important findings of this research was related to opinion of travellers regarding "Empty Seats". They felt that even though there are empty seats Airlines does not offer seats.
- 2) **Action:** The opinion was developed because of lack of understanding about operations of an airline particularly related to flight requirements. The total load an aircraft can take depends upon various conditions like type of aircraft, length of runway, air density, temperature, etc. Therefore, at times because of these factors load to be carried by aircraft is to be limited. This makes it compulsory to keep few seats vacant to reduce load. Lack of this technical information made people to believe that airlines is inefficient regarding filling the empty seats.
- 3) **Communication:** Indian Air Lines designed an Advertising Campaign to make public aware about this critical information. Even every issue of Swagat (In-flight magazine of Indian Airlines) carries the message explaining why the seats may be empty.
- 4) **Evaluation:** A research was conducted to find out the opinion of travellers. It proved that the opinion of travellers has become favourable and their perception has changed. Public relations are important not only in obtaining editorial converge but also in suppressing bad converge.

A typical opportunistic use of PR can be illustrated by the following example. Let us think that you are planning to open a holiday resort in Andaman. In the inauguration you should try to invite a leading personality, either politician or who matters to the press.

At the opening ceremony, journalists and other guests would typically be invited to a reception and information booklets would be given to them. Press releases with major highlight of the resort would be available for the busy journalists. All the details of the opening should be pre planned with precision using every opportunity to secure good media coverage.

## PERSONAL SELLING

Personal selling is one to one/group presentation of service or product for the purpose of making sales. Travel agents. Our operators may explain clients about various destinations, packages, choices of hostels, cost, etc. so as to make a sale of travel/tour.

Personal selling becomes an art in this service industry as what is sold is a dream or a future performance

There are **Three Cs** for good Personal Selling:

- Know you Costumer's need/desire
- Know your Company and its Services, and
- Know your Companions

The tourists are either vaguely aware about their needs or they may not be able to verbalise them. It is very important for tourism professional to understand the needs/wants and limitations of their customers. Similarly, they should have complete knowledge about the destination, accommodation, transportation choice, cost, time and also, facilities available. The procedure involved in performing the services should be clearly known and communicated to the clients. This becomes more important for international outbound tourists. The clients have to be told about the Visa, passport, health, currency regulations, social and legal practices, etc. finally, the sales force should be aware about the competitors and their offerings. For example, an airline sale executive should know what are the services and costs of these services that are being offered by its competitors. To make Personal selling be effective. There should be coordination between the efforts of suppliers and customers.

## SALES PROMOTION

Sales Promotion is short term incentive provided by any organization to costumers so as to make them decide in favour of the organization. Stress given in sales promotion is short term an on incentives. One-night free stay for three days booking, children under 12 no charges or a free ticket on every in scats sold are examples of sales promotion schemes.



There are three types of sales promotion:

Costumer Sales Promotion (Incentives are offered to costumers)

Trade Promotion (Incentives are offered to middlemen):

Sales Force Promotion (Incentives are offered to sales people)

### SOME EXAMPLES OF SALES PROMOTION IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY ARE

- Frequent Flyers Programmes of Airlines.
- Incentive scheme for group travel by Airlines.
- Welcome Group Hotel and Indian Airlines have jointly started a scheme "We fly your spouse to you for week-end" for business executives.
- Incentive tours to Singapore/Hongkong to travel agents and tour operators for achieving a given targeted business., etc.

### PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY

The broader goal of promotion is to communicate between organization and costumer. Generally, communication is meant to create a favourable impression of a company, to raise consciousness for an idea or to influence legislation that may favourably affect an industry. Whatever be objective the promotion should be planned. Plan involves setting goals and then designing strategies to achieve those goals. Strategies used by marketer to promote

- Push Strategy
- Pull Strategy

**Push strategy** is whereby a supplier promotes a product to marketing intermediaries with the aim of pushing the product through the channel of distribution. For example, airlines give special incentives to travel agents for promoting their product (seats).

**Pull strategy** is whereby a supplier promotes a product to the ultimate costumer with the aim of creating demand and thus pulling the product through the channel of distribution. For instance, special discount coupons given by some hotels for promoting product.

Costumers are most familiar with pull strategy.

Effective marketing plans generally make use of both push and pull strategy. The choice of strategy is generally determined by:

- type of product,
- costumer's type, and
- the strategy of competitors.

### PROMOTIONAL BUDGET

At the time of developing a workable strategy for the promotion of a product, due consideration should be given to budgeting. Whatever the amount an organisation can afford for promotional campaign by careful budgeting and selection of appropriate methods, media and schedule, one can effectively transmit the desired message. Various methods have been suggested for setting promotional budget. These are as follows:

#### 1. The Objective and Task Method

Under the objective and task method, the budget is based on an estimate of the amount needed to accomplish established objectives. Consider a promotion for a fast-food restaurant. Assume that your objective is to establish its brand image through advertising within a year. The tasks to accomplish this and their costs may be like this:

Advertising through television Rs. 2,00,000/-

Advertisement in Newspapers and Magazines Rs. 1,00,000/-

Publicity Rs. 1,00,000/-

Sales Promotion Rs. 1,00,000/-

Total Rs. 5,00,000/-

#### 2. Percent of Sales Approach

In this approach, the amount to be spent for promotion is fixed as a standard percentage of sales. Thus, if a hotel desires to spend 5 percent of sales revenues on promotion and it expects to sell 100 crores, it will allocate 5 crores for promotion.

#### 3. The Competitive Comparison Method

Under this method, the amount is fixed based on what the competitors spend.

#### 4. The fixed-Sum-Per-Unit Method

A specific amount is fixed for the promotional purpose. These are some of the standard approaches to decide a promotion budget. However, by having proper market information about your product and reading the market position carefully, you can device your own method of fixing the budget for promotion.

## KEY ASPECTS OF PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS

So far, we have discussed various elements of promotional mix and its budgeting mechanism. In this Section, we will explain how to develop promotional campaign. Promotional campaign is a part of a company's promotional mix. Promotional campaign includes services or activities to achieve the desired objective. Different products need different approaches to convey messages to the costumers. A new product may require a promotional campaign which is entirely different from an established product. The four major approaches, suggested by market experts, to develop a promotional campaign are as follows:

1. **Image Building:** Under this approach, emphasis is given to communicate an image and generate costumer preference for a particular brand or company.
2. **Product Differentiation:** In this promotional approach, the marketer stresses those aspects of a product or brand that set it apart from its competitors.
3. **Positioning:** A positioning approach promotes a brand in relation to other competitive brands in the market.
4. **Direct Response Campaign:** It expects a direct measurable response from the market. Personal selling activity falls in this category.

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