ADVERTISING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRODUCTS: RESEARCH FINDINGS FOR HIGHER SALES

Presentation at the ITB 2013 in Berlin

Institute of Tourism ITW
Dr Roger Wehrli
Head of Research

T direct +41 41 228 42 83
roger.wehrli@hslu.ch

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Introduction

Statement from industry:

“It is difficult to communicate the sustainability to our customers.”

- Customers are often unable to identify the relevant aspects of sustainability.
- Many sustainable product characteristics cannot be tested during use
  - intangible characteristics
  - consumed remotely or in the absence of tourists
Introduction (III)

- Research questions:

  1. Which kind of sustainable tourism product communication in a brochure appeals best to customers?

  2. Should CO2-offsetting be integrated in the product?
Content

1. Research Design
2. Results
3. Implications from our Results
4. Recommendations
1. Research Design: Information Processing

**HOW A TOURIST THINKS...**

- **Central Route**: Rational & Systematic Thinking
- **Peripheral Route**: Heuristic / Emotional

**Tourist Motivation**
- Analytical Motivated
- Not analytical

**Persuasion Level Needed**
- Strong Arguments
- Simple Cues & Triggers

**Sustainable tourism brochure**

**Information processing**

**Booking**
1. Research Design: Empirical Phase

4 countries with at least 750 respondents per country

2 empirical field phases:

- Pretest experiment
  - Test of the perceived emotionality and rationality of texts and pictures
- Choice experiment
  - Page of a brochure advertising a one week all-inclusive beach holiday
  - Product for the mass market
1. Research Design: Choice Experiment

The hotel is located near the beach. Snacks can be eaten there. The hotel offers a pool area and two restaurants.

We serve you only the highest quality regional products.

Support the local artisans by buying handmade products in our souvenir shop.

Go for a walk along the beach, have a snack in a popular bar or cozy restaurant and relax at our pool.

We serve you only the highest quality regional products.

The hand-crafted souvenirs in the hotel shop are produced exclusively by local artisans.

Various ways. Thanks to this, your stay contributes 57 kg CO₂ instead of 248 kg CO₂.

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![Graph showing CO₂ emissions comparison](image)
1. Research Design: Choice Experiment

The hotel is located near the beach. Snacks can be eaten there. The hotel offers a pool area and two restaurants.

We serve you only the highest quality regional products.

Support the local artisans by buying handmade products in our souvenir shop.

The hotel reduces the CO₂ emissions of your stay in various ways. Thanks to this, your stay contributes 57 kg CO₂ instead of 248 kg CO₂.

Go for a walk along the beach, have a snack in a popular bar or cozy restaurant and relax at our pool.

We serve you only the highest quality regional products.

The hand-crafted souvenirs in the hotel shop are produced exclusively by local artisans.

I would not choose any of these products.
2. Results: Importances

E.g. Switzerland (results are similar in UK, USA and Germany):

- Graph: 38.8%
- Picture: 23.2%
- Emotional Sustainability: 15.7%
- Emotional Beach: 12.5%
- Rational Sustainability: 9.7%
2. Results

- Generally, people prefer more emotional communication of sustainability.

- But, emotionality is achieved differently in different countries.

- But, some markets prefer more rationally oriented communication.

→ For each market you have to design brochure pages differently.
2. Results: Integration of Carbon Offsetting

Would you like it if your travel product included a CO2 compensation for the flight?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Results: Integration of Carbon Offsetting

Which type of integrating CO2 compensation in a travel product do you prefer?

- If the compensation must be purchased in addition to the product (opt-in)
- If the compensation is integrated in the product, but there is an option to delete it (opt-out)
- If the compensation is integrated into the product (obligatory, no choice)
3. Implications from our Results

- We created different versions of a brochure page in order to illustrate our results.

- They were created to launch the discussion.
3. Implications from our Results

Hier können Sie nachhaltig auftanken:
Hotel Playa del Sol

Spazieren Sie dem Sandstrand entlang, blicken Sie
3. Implications from our Results
3. Implications from our Results:
No “Business” Graph

The hotel reduces the CO₂ emissions of your stay in various ways. Thanks to this, your stay contributes 57 kg CO₂ instead of 248 kg CO₂.
3. Implications from our Results

“We serve you only the highest quality regional products.” is preferred to: “Regional products are served.”
3. Implications from our Results

“Hola, em dic Francisco Javier. If you get up early, you can see me go out with my boat and what I get in my net! You can have a fresh fish on your lunch plate! By the way, my cousin will prepare it for you in your hotel’s kitchen.”
3. Implications from our Results

Our foods are sourced directly from the surrounding region. This supports local people and helps save on CO₂ emissions.

Unsere Lebensmittel beziehen wir aus der unmittelbaren Umgebung. Das spart nicht nur CO₂, davon profitiert auch die lokale Bevölkerung.

Hier können Sie nachhaltig auftanken:

Hotel Playa del Sol****

Spazieren Sie dem Sandstrand entlang, blicken Sie bei einem Snack in unser offenes Restaurant aufs Meer hinaus und erhölen Sie sich an unserem Pool. Wenn Sie es etwas schneller mögen, können Sie auch mit einem unserer Elektrofahrzeuge ins Restaurant reisen.

Unsere Lebensmittel beziehen wir aus der unmittelbaren Umgebung. Das spart nicht nur CO₂, davon profitiert auch die lokale Bevölkerung.

3. Integrated Findings from the Literature

- Stronger connections to the destination
  - include elements of local food and associated culture
  - Authenticity

- Design communication messages positively

- Use original and authentic photos
3. Implications from our Results

Tourists who have already booked a sustainable tourism product

- Germany: 13.3%
- Switzerland: 16.4%
- UK: 6.9%
- USA: 7.7%
- Total: 11.1%
We recycle more than 50% of our garbage.

Wir rezyclieren mehr als 50% unserer Abfälle.
3. Implications for “Sustainable” Tourists in Germany

“Room cleaning with ecological products, which naturally decompose in a short time.”
is preferred to:
“Room cleaning especially with ecological and environmentally-friendly products.”
3. Implications for “Sustainable” Tourists in Germany

**UNSER EINSATZ FÜR DIE UMWELT:**

**Playa del Sol**
- 37% weniger Strom/Gast
- 77% weniger Abfall
- 50% weniger Wasser/Gast

**Durchschnittliches Hotel**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Energie</th>
<th>Wasserverbrauch</th>
<th>Abfall</th>
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<tr>
<td>180 kW/m²</td>
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**Implications for “Sustainable” Tourists in Germany**

**Menorca**

**Nachhaltig auftanken:**
**Hotel Playa del Sol****

Der lange, flach abfallende Sandstrand liegt in 100 m Entfernung vom Hotel. In den nahegelegenen Ortschaften Son Bou und San Jaime (ca. 400m) befinden sich diverse Restaurants, Bars und Einkaufsmöglichkeiten.

Ihre Unterkunft:

Appartements:
Geräumige, umweltfreundlich klimatisierte Appartements mit Doppelschlafzimmer, Wohnzimmer mit Beltaco, Kütchenette

- Energie: 180 kW/m²
- Wasser verbrauch: 100 L/Nacht
- Abfall: 8 kg/Nacht

**Verpflegung:**
Am Morgen können Sie sich ein Frühstückbuffet bedienen. Das Mittagessen wird à la carte, das Abendessen à la carte oder beim Buffet zusammengestellt. Wir tischen Ihnen qualitativ hochstehende Produkte aus der Region auf. Das spart nicht nur CO₂, es profitiert auch die lokale Bevölkerung.

**UNSER EINSATZ FÜR DIE UMWELT:**

**Hotel Playa del Sol**
- 37% weniger Strom/Gast
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Dr. Roger Wehrli
3. Integrated Findings from the Literature

- Raise awareness, inform tourists about their impact at the destination
3. Implications: Country-Specific Results

- USA: You can be more direct / educative.
  
  - Europe:
    - Requests related to sustainability leads to fewer emotions
    - Rather negative emotions.
  
  - USA:
    - Requests related to sustainability leads to a higher emotional level.
    - Rather positive emotions.
  
  - Example: “Support the local artisans by buying handmade products in our souvenir shop.”
4. Recommendations

- Emotional communication of the sustainability of a product
  - Narratives
  - Direct address
  - Formulate actively.
  - Adjectives / highly valued words
  - Absolute formulations

- Special case USA:
  - Requests affect the emotions positively

- Rational communication as a supplement
  - Deliver additional explanations
  - Provide objective information
  - Use nouns

- No graphs, except for already sustainable tourists.

- Special case “sustainable tourists” in Germany

- Inclusion of carbon offsetting with opt-out.
Effective Communication of sustainable tourism products

An executive brief will be published in the ITB library in April 2013:

www.itb-library.de

Thank you very much for your attention!