National tourism organizations’
online training offers and travel
agents’ perception

Role of eLearning
Applications within the
tourism and hospitality
sector

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- new concept of training

- growing interest by tourism practitioners (ABTA, 2012; Tnooz, 2011; Travel Market Report, 2011)

- limited attention from eLearning and eTourism scholars (e.g.: Braun & Hollick, 2006; Haven & Botterill, 2003; Baum & Sigala, 2001; AACE, 2009).

- no empirical research on HRM of travel trade and eLearning use for knowledge upgrade among travel agents
1. Understand eLearning (eL) offer about national tourism destinations for travel agents

2. Recognise travel agents reaction on such offers and their motivations on attending eL courses
Destination Management Organizations’ eLearning offers and Travel Agents’ perceptions and motivations
Phase 1. Benchmarking study
DMO needs

• coordinate all the partners/industries involved in the production/delivery of the tourist product
• spread clear, up to-date, appropriate and catchy messages
• add additional channels to impact the market
• save on training costs

Travel Agents need

• overcome competition from OTAs
• satisfy the needs of a new consumer
• constant upgrade of knowledge and skills
• get certification
• can’t leave their main business (SMEs, geographical location)

Destinalional eLearning courses
Phase 1. Benchmarking study

Goal: Understand the issue statement and map eLearning offers by NTOs
When: Fall 2009 and 2012

How: content and functionalities analysis
http://www.elearning4tourism.com/elearning-programs/

Model used: triangular model of eLearning courses evaluation (Cantoni, et. al, 2007)

Limitation:
• Only English versions of courses were analysed
• Only courses provided by NTOs were taken into consideration

Preliminary benchmarking – autumn 2009

Benchmarking study – autumn 2012


Phase 1. Benchmarking study

- **Main public:** Travel Agents/Travel consultants

- **Contents:** info about Destination (Geographical position, Demographics, Languages Spoken, etc.); History and Culture, Accommodation and Transportation; Formalities; Itinerary Planning; Selling tips

- **Methods and strategies:** text, video, glossary, suggested websites, interactive map

- **Time frame:** from 40’ Mauritius Training Course to 25 -30 hours Explore New Zealand (average: 4-5 hours)

- **Costs:** Free of charge for travel agents, sponsored by a DMO
Phase 2. Case studies
**Goal:** Identify and present best practices in the field

**When:** February 2012 and 2013

**How:**
- semi structured interviews
- analysis of the usages
- available internal reports and historical data

**Model used:** ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation)

**Results:** interviews with the representatives of Swiss National Tourism Office and New Zealand Tourism
History
First idea – 2004
First implementation – 2006.

International version +
USA & Canada, China, Germany, India, UK/Ireland, Korea, Australia, Russia, Spain

Usages
German version - 3000 registered TAs since 2006
Indian version - 1347 registered since June 2011, 131 certified
Korean version - 60 registered in 2011, 0 certified
Chinese platform has certified 20 TAs in 2011
US/Canada platform - 38 certified
GCC - 10 certified travel agents

Registration: is needed
8 training modules
Time: Each seminar 2-4 h.

History
First idea – 2003

International version +
India, Singapore/Malaysia & Indonesia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, UK & Europe, North America, China

Usages
Accounts - 28,383
Travel sellers in the database - 20,982
Certified agents - around 5000
Kiwi Specialists - 378

Registration: is needed to pass the tests
10 mandatory modules and 6 optional
Time: Each seminar 2-3 h.
Evaluation:
▪ Final exam consist of 30 multiple choice questions (database of 500/600 questions)
▪ 3 chances to pass

Certificate: valid forever

Evaluation:
▪ 20 questions per training module. Need to get 100% to pass
▪ unlimited tries to pass

Certificate: valid for 2 years

To become **Kiwi Specialist an agent needs to**:
▪ complete 10 mandatory modules every 2 years
▪ make a trip to New Zealand
▪ attend another training activity (a market training or a webinar)
Phase 4. Phone interviews
Phase 4. Phone interviews

When: Oct 2012 – Feb 2013

How: Simple random sampling of officially registered travel agents in the UK, India and NZ

Respondents: 1093 phone calls → 627 interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of calls done</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of interviews done</td>
<td>190 (55%)</td>
<td>272 (75%)</td>
<td>165 (42%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

103 (54.2%)

72 (26.5%)

55 (33.3%)

57 (65.5%)

73 (36.5%)

76 (69.1%)

Rates of participation in destinational eL courses

Rates of awareness about destinational eL courses
Full Factorial Model of the Univariate ANOVA showed that participation in eL courses - depends on travel agents' origin (p=.000), gender (p=.006) and type of the agency (p=.042) they work for - doesn’t depend on the age (p=.236) and educational level (p=.314)

Full Factorial Model of the Univariate ANOVA confirmed that awareness about the existence of eL courses - depends on the country of origin (p=.000) - doesn’t depend on the age (p=.470), gender (p=.071), type of the agency (p=.086) and educational level (p=.790)
**Academic community**
- First empirical research in the field of HRM for travel trade and eLearning usages within on-the-job training in tourism industry;

**Industrial community**
Better understanding of the eL offer by DMOs through the analysis of both:
- the supply side: evaluation of the existent eL practices
- the demand side: evaluation of the travel agents participations
Thank you

www.elearning4tourism.com

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