

# Booklet for Creating Attractions

## Tools from the AGORA 2.0 Workshop

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## **Preface**

The purpose of this booklet is to serve as a tool for design of attractions and in relation to creation of experiences that can function both economically and in relation to creation of experiences that visitors will use.

The booklet is written in a language and with examples that should make it possible to understand without specialist knowledge. For persons who want to establish an attraction it can be seen as a guideline and a toolbox. It can be useful to go through for a team course or for discussion among persons taking part in the establishment of attraction making.

The use of this booklet is that it functions as a knowledge creating and knowledge sharing instrument. The booklet is the first publication of the EU project AGORA 2.0 on attractions, published by Center for Tourism and Culture Management, Copenhagen Business School. The second publication is a case collection on the outcome of the partners' work with attractions and is. It is a study of use of this booklet in practice. The third and last publication of this type is dealing with the learning and design of Baltic Sea attractions as types of attractions, and not Baltic Sea trans-border and identity-based and creating instruments.

The present publication is made by Centre Director Lise Lyck in close collaboration with employees at the Center for Tourism and Culture Management, Copenhagen Business School.

**Booklet for creating attractions – Tools from the AGORA 2.0 workshops**

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## 1.0 Introduction

In order to develop attractions to promote tourism and use of local nature and culture some instruments can be useful to apply to achieve a successful development, but how to do it in practice is often the question. What is presented is a *design* for development. Realization requires involvement of decision makers and of economic resources outside the AGORA 2.0 project. In other words, what can be presented are design models for decision making.

This booklet is meant to be a help in this process. It is based on the principle “learning by doing” applied to product/service ideas and concepts which the participants in the workshops have elaborated themselves. These examples have already been discussed and presented for the 22 AGORA 2.0 partners based on a draft version.

It is furthermore based on “Baltic transnational learning”, as a result of all participants coming from different Baltic countries and with a variety of ideas rooted in Baltic landscapes and traditions. The knowledge sharing has taken place in workshops in the Baltic Sea Region countries.

The work packages in AGORA 2.0 include workshops and development of a network that can connect and link Baltic developers and AGORA 2.0 partners and thereby create a vivid Baltic cultural cooperation and development.

## The workshops and the instruments

The design of the development process has been the following:

1. The participants meet and exchange ideas and learn to know each other.
2. The participants meet and have a first introduction to development of ideas and instruments.
3. Presentation of SWOT-analyses.
4. Presentation of the Experience Wheel.
5. Presentation of PESTEL analyses.
6. Presentation of the 7Ps model.
7. Development of business plans.
8. Production of a questionnaire to analyze the demand side of attraction development.

Each of the 8 steps can be separate activities or linked to other parts of the AGORA project.

Concerning the AGORA 2.0 project step 1 it began with the start of the project in February 2010. Step 2 was included in the Copenhagen meeting, June 2010. Step 3 took place in Copenhagen in September, including SWOT analyses and a first step to the Experience Wheel model developed by Lise Lyck. The steps 4-7 was scheduled at the project meetings and workshops in accordance with the AGORA lead partner. Step 8 has taken place at the meetings and workshops, but especially in a current dialogue between the single partner and Center for Tourism and Culture Management, Copenhagen Business School. This booklet relates to step 3 to 8 including the demand side in section 8.

## 2.0 SWOT-analyses

A SWOT-analysis is related to *an evaluation of a production*. Originally, it was developed as a relation to private production of goods and to a first consideration of decision making on private investments (Humphrey 1960s-1970s). However, since the first presentation of the SWOT-model it has been widely used. During the first years it was employed by private corporations in regards to private production and investment. Later the model was applied to public corporations and also to regional economics and it became a general way of thinking.

The model consists of two axes. On the horizontal axes the question of whether a condition is a helpful or harmful element in the production. The vertical axes relates to the origin of the condition and focus on the internal or external nature of the condition. These two axes create a four-tile diagram as shown below. Each of the tiles has specific characteristics and will be described in further detail below, see figure 1.

**Figure 1 – SWOT-analysis**

	Helpful factors	Harmful factors
Internal origin	<b>S</b>	<b>W</b>
External origin	<b>O</b>	<b>T</b>

The first category that is encountered in the model is the tile marked S. S stands for strengths and related to what internal strengths a specific production of goods or investment possess. The next tile encountered is W. It stands for weaknesses, i.e. what internal weaknesses are parts of a specific production or investment?

As shown in figure1 both S and W are internal in origin. By this is meant that the corporation itself can influence the S and W by own decision making and thereby impact the S and W as well as the result of the production or investment. This is why the departure for the evaluation is taken in a production function, expressing that the production result is based on input of labor, capital and land decided by a decision maker as for instance a firm, a corporation, a CEO, an investor etc. The production function can be expressed as:

$$Q = f(L, C)$$

Land is often taken as a constant factor. Q stands for output, L for labor, C for capital input. The function  $f$  expresses the production method chosen among the technological options. This choice can be different and normally will be different, as it is decided by the decision maker. It is to say that  $f$  expresses entrepreneurship and leadership.

The two tiles that are external and have influence on the production or investment are  $O$ , which refers to opportunities, and  $T$ , that refers to threat. The question that is sought to be answered through these external factors is how they have a positive or a negative impact on production or investment?

As the final step of the analyses a conclusion of the SWOT model analysis must be made. It can be a guide for management of a production or for decision making concerning the undertaking of an investment.

## **2.1 Rules for SWOT-analyses**

This wider use of the model often results in a SWOT-analysis being a brainstorm instrument. By such a use the relation to relevance is often lost.

Unfortunately, examples can easily be found where only marginal factors are placed in the model and without priorities in their listing. Also the same factors can be mentioned in more of the four categories (S-W-O-T). All of this poses a real danger of unsuccessful undertaking of projects. In order to avoid this there are rules to follow:

1. Identify the subject of the analysis. Is it a commodity, a service, an investment project, a region etc. that shall be analyzed?
2. Define the subject for the analysis as precise as possible. It requires a rather precise delimitation.
3. Consider the production function for the subject and be as precise as possible.
4. Labor, capital and leadership/management shall always be included in a SWOT-analysis.
5. If a factor in the introduction phase or in the process of making a SWOT-analysis seems to belong to more than one of the categories (S-W-O-T) then it is a sign of the factor not being sufficiently disaggregated. The factor must be split into more factors that can be placed only in one of the categories.
6. Find other relevant factors for the production/investment and place them in the analysis.
7. Prioritize the items in the SWOT analysis in each of the categories (S-W-O-T) after their importance in relation to the production/investment.
8. Conclude on the SWOT-analysis. Recommendations can be added.

## **2.2 SWOT-analyses applied**

The participants in the AGORA 2.0 project were asked to work out a SWOT-model for their specific attraction. The process and the results of these SWOT-analyses were discussed at a meeting in

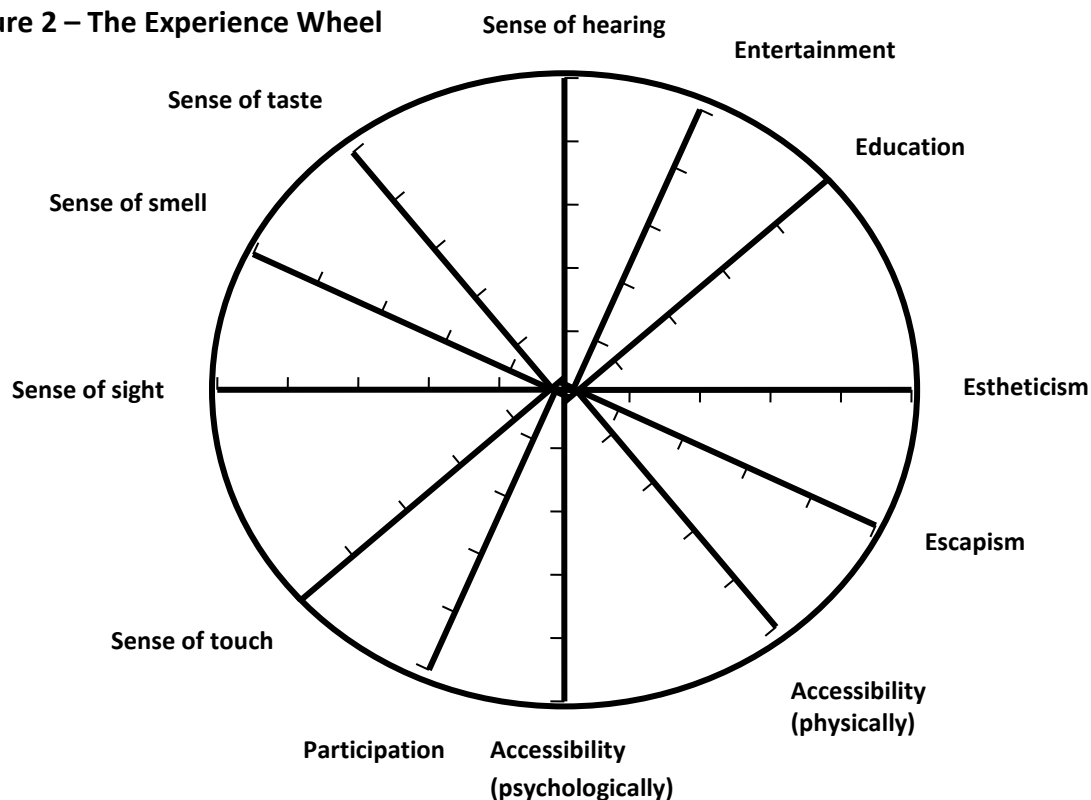


Copenhagen in September 2010 in order to enhance the understanding of this model. Furthermore this discussion also included the comparative aspect among the Baltic countries in order to develop transnational Baltic understanding on internal and external national factors. In the second publication the SWOT-analysis of each of the attraction can be seen.

### 3.0 The Experience Wheel

The development of attractions both in production and investment is today narrowly connected to creation of experiences. It is not only to create an attraction; it is to create an experience that is a decisive element in production and investment of the attractions. The Experience Wheel model is produced by Lise Lyck (Lyck 2008). In order to understand, the Experience Wheel acts as a communication tool to disseminate the experience concept and to develop and measure the experience value of product clustering, such a museum or a park. The Experience Wheel measures the relevant stakeholders' experience of the products which can be of both quantitative and qualitative nature. There are no limits to the use of the Experience Wheel. It is a universal instrument. However, it best fulfills its potential when quantifying subjective, qualitative experiences. The model is shown in figure 1.

**Figure 2 – The Experience Wheel**



Source: Lyck, L. *Service- og Oplevelsesøkonomi i Teori og Praksis, Academica 2008.*

Additionally, the wheel can act as a tool for assessment of whether there is consistency between the actual perceived experience of the recipient and the expected arranged experience, as it is established and thought of by the sender.

The Experience Wheel is developed on the basis of different theories. Pine & Gilmore (2003) have some relevant thoughts on the dimensions of an experience that is central to stimulate in a user-driven development of a company's production. Pine & Gilmore emphasize *entertainment*, *education*, *escapism* and *estheticism*, as elements of an experience that is attractive in relation to specific guest segments. In addition, the senses of *hearing*, *smell*, *taste*, *touch* and *sight* play a central role. It has been emphasized in several models within economic psychology.

The senses are essential in connection to a characterization of the quality of a subjective experience, and within an assessment of which guest segment that the experience product directs its marketing against. The senses are measured by the guest's subjective perception of the sensory appeal of the experience. A high value means a strong sensory experience and experienced sensory stimulation. Via the sensory apparatus the guest shall experience a unique combination of entertaining and educational stimulation. These can be coupled with the parameter *participation*. The value axis of participation is between passive and active participation. In a successful design this leads to an experience where the guest experiences a decoupling from the guest's everyday life. Therefore, uniqueness is a key parameter for the quality of the experience. The experience must be unique from a subjective viewpoint.

Finally, *accessibility* can be mentioned as a key parameter in relation to the value composition of the experience. Accessibility has both a physical and a psychological dimension which can be given higher priority depending on the type of experience in question. The physical dimension concerns availability of service and physical production conditions, such as money, time and geographical location. The psychological dimension contains, to a higher degree, the mental capacity of the guest and the possibility of absorbing the learning content of the experience.

All variables are connected in a balanced scorecard system. The values for each dimension are connected, and a figure occurs. The question is whether the figure is different or 'the same' for different people. Thereby, the provider can test if the intentions, on which the experience is based, are experienced as expected, and in the circumstance of differences a dialogue about the reasons for differences between the intention of the provider and the customer's (guest) experience can be established.

The model has been employed in several different ways:

- On the supply side, a number of experts have rated the experience value of different attractions with the intention of establishing an expert-based quality measurement.
- At each institution the model is employed by executives and front staff to elucidate the degree of consent on the experience value basis, which is sought to be disseminated to the visitors. With this a quality assurance can be achieved.

- To identify people's mental perception of an attraction that they have not visited or visited a long time ago. These perceptions can be very important for the type marketing that should be used.
- Applied to different segments with the intention of assessing segment differences concerning the experience value of different groups of people. Works as important management information to determine focus, quality and marketing etc.

Having applied the Experience Wheel it is important to conclude on your findings. In connection to the conclusion individual reflections may be presented. For an example of how the Experience Wheel can be applied, see Lyck et al. 2007

## 4.0 PESTEL Analyses

The PESTEL model (figure 2) is an extension of the original PEST model, as it adds E (Environmental factors) and L (Legal factors) to the already existing four factors: P (Political), E (Economic), S (Socio cultural) and T (Technological).

The purpose of the PESTEL model is to elucidate and analyze the external factors that have an influence on the organization. By applying the model the organization gets an overview of which external factors that facilitate or limit its operations.

P – Political:

How is the political environment functioning? Are political decisions influencing the environment of the organization? This is important to know for the organization, as these might create opportunities (e.g. increased amount of funding or easier access to sites via public transport) or threats (e.g. limiting the amount of funding).

E – Economic:

What is the state of the local/regional/national/global economy? Is purchasing power increasing or decreasing? This can potentially have an influence on the offering of the organization. If people have more available capital for spending the organization might consider offering ancillary services to increase revenues. On the other hand, if the economy is down the organization might reconsider its range of offerings or the consumers that it is targeting.

S – Socio cultural:

What is happening socially and culturally within the markets of operation? Are new trends replacing old ones? Is the target segment getting older and is the younger generation avoiding you? As/if the demographic factors are changing the organization has to reconsider the channels it uses to target its customers. The younger generation of customers might be less prone to the offering if it is targeted through marketing channels they deem old fashioned or obsolete. Furthermore, changing demographics might change the need or desires of the customers and potential customers. Thus, to maintain or increase the number of customers the organization has to respond to this.

T – Technological:

What kind of technological changes is the industry facing? Can the organization exploit them to its own advantage, e.g. by reaching customers through new channels? Can it present itself better visually at its physical location or online? In the past few years online communities and social networks, e.g. Facebook (Carlson 2011), have become spread across all layers of society, across cultures and across age groups reaching an astonishing amount of users. It has become a medium to reach customers efficiently and cost effectively. This is just one example of how technology can help improve operations within any kind of organization or industry.

E – Environment:

How is the climate affecting operations? Is there a general focus on environmentally friendly organizations within the area of location? Some organizations might face new challenges due to changing weather conditions. How they decide to cope with these is essential for the organizations. Furthermore, as more and more societies have an increased focus on protecting the environment either through regulations or through public pressure, the organizations will have to cope with these as well. Running the organization in an environmentally friendly way can have several advantages. Firstly, it can challenge the status quo within the organization and thereby help change the entire mindset, and thereby encouraging employees to think in new ways. Secondly, it can create new opportunities for the organization, as it might be one way of differentiating from competitors. Thirdly, it can be used in promotion material and thereby establish a positive view of the organization in the mind of the population.

L – Legal:

What types of laws, regulations or restrictions are influencing the environment of the organization? Has it become more difficult or easier to stay in business for the organization? The legal environment can have significant influence on the operations of the organization. As new laws are passed or old ones displaced the surroundings of the organization change as well. How to be prepared and thus able to react to these is important for any organization.

**Figure 3 – The PESTEL Model**



## **5.0 The 7Ps**

Originally, the 4Ps (McCarthy 1960) was developed to outline the variables concerned with marketing of a product: Product, Price, Place and Promotion. These were called the Marketing Mix. They served as a framework of how to carry out decision making in marketing processes. However, with the steadily increasing focus on services it became clear that the 4Ps alone were not sufficient.

Among others, two distinct implications are evident in services: 1) Difficulty in determining quality before purchase and 2) production and consumption takes place simultaneously. These implications make the correlation between price, place and promotion more complex. To cater for this the extended marketing mix was developed, i.e. the 7Ps. It adds People, Physical evidence and Process to the framework.

### **5.1 Product**

When developing a new product, it is vital to keep in mind that it should create value for the customer. Put in another way; it should satisfy a certain need. When this is achieved the customer will obviously be more prone to purchase it.

A product can take many forms, e.g.: A physical good, a service, a place (e.g. an amusement park), an idea, an organization or a person. The different forms should not be seen as separate entities, but rather as units that can be combined in several ways, e.g. simultaneously buying a car

and insurance (physical good combined with a service). Consider this when developing your offering(s).

## 5.2 Price

The price of an offering is essential to the success hereof. It can both attract and hinder a potential purchase by a customer depending on the perceived fairness of the price. Several dimensions have to be taken into consideration when pricing your offering:

- *Competitors*  
Should you set your price higher, lower or at the same level as competitors? This depends of how you believe that your customers will perceive your offering in relation to those of your competitors.
- *Pricing structure*  
Should you charge different groups in different ways? Group discounts, among others, can be an effective pricing method to attract high volumes of visitors/customers.  
Are you going to base your price on costs, premium or value? If your customers believe that your product is of high value, you might be able to charge more than you initially thought. This is strongly linked to promotion, as an effective advertising campaign might increase the perceived value of your offering.
- *Laws and regulations*  
Are any laws affecting your pricing structure? Could you adjust your prices in concordance with the legislation to better exploit the opportunities at hand?

## 5.3 Place

Is our product/service easily available for your customers/guests? How will you sell the product/service, e.g. at a physical market or via the internet?

Availability of a product/service is essential to meet the requirements of customers. If they cannot reach it they cannot buy it. Therefore, the choice of how to distribute and how to sell the product/service is important to have in mind.

## 5.4 Promotion

How do we best communicate our offering to customers?

Several channels exist to promote an offering in the most efficient way.

- *Advertising*  
Several forms of promotion can take place within this channel: Magazines, newspapers, radio, TV, internet etc. The advantage is that a large target population easily can be reached. However, the message is undifferentiated and thus, might be perceived irrelevant by some

people. Moreover, the competition is fierce when utilizing these kinds of promotion channel.

- *Sales promotion*

This channel is close to advertising, but is to a higher degree striving to encourage a purchase. Examples are competitions, discount coupons, free samples etc.

- *Public relations (PR)*

In comparison to the first two types of promotion channels, this one is free. PR is about publicity in various kinds of media. This way of promotion is sometimes more efficient than the other ones, as the consumer perceives the source as being reliable. It can, for example, be a review of a museum etc. that a newspaper carries out. The organization can itself invite the media to cover e.g. an event to get PR.

- *Personal sales*

The fourth type of promotion is the most direct one. It is concerned with sales or passing on of information face-to-face or via phone. It can be very efficient, as the sales person gets instant response from the potential customer and thus can tailor the arguments hereafter (McCarthy 1960:77). On the other hand, it can also be intrusive because of the personal encounter.

## **5.5 People**

How do our personnel approach our customers? How do our customers perceive our personnel?

In service industries, especially, it is important how the employees handle the contact with the customers. The first impression will affect the customer to a high degree no matter if the experience is positive or negative. Thus, it is important to get it right the first time. Employees have to get proper training on how to interact with the customers in the best possible way to secure a high service quality in every single encounter.

## **5.6 Physical evidence**

How are we presenting our organization physically to our customers? Do they feel comfortable when visiting us?

As services are intangible, consumers often perceive the purchase of these as relatively risky (Palmer 2005:13). To help overcome this uncertainty, the organization can pay attention to its physical surroundings and other tangible elements which have to do with the performance or communication of its services, e.g. the interior in a sales office or the layout of a website (Booms & Bitner 1981:50).

## 5.7 Process

What procedures are you carrying out at the moment of purchase? Should you guide the customer or is he/her left on his/her own?

The process covers all the decisions that are included in the production process. For services this is extremely important, as production and consumption takes place simultaneously. The process of the production of a service models, among other things in the production. For a museum it will for example be essential to know, the behavior of the visitor and how he/she can participate, e.g. will a guide take the visitor around the museum or will the visitor be left to the guidance of signs.

**Figure 3 – The 7Ps**



Source: Lovelock & Wirtz (2011)

## 6.0 Development of Business Plans

The purpose of the business plan is to provide a blueprint of your company (in this case a tourist attraction). It serves as a guideline for employees to work towards the same goal and to elucidate all relevant aspects for potential investors/sponsors.

### Executive Summary

Summarize the key points of your business plan in a short precise text. It should not take up more space than half an A4 page. The executive summary should enable the reader to understand the essence of your entire business plan without having to read through it.



### **Company Summary**

This section describes what your company/organization looks like. How it structured and what are its main forces? Furthermore, your area of operation should be presented. Do you operate in B2C (business-to-consumer) or B2B (business-to-business) markets? Where is the attraction placed? It is also vital to state your vision (where you want to be in the future) and your mission (what are your competences and raison d'être) in a concise way.

### **Services**

Describe the products and/or services that you offer. What are the characteristics of these and how do they differentiate from these of your competitors? How do you provide your products/services? It is also important to include your plans for the future of the attraction concerning products/services. Are you going to extend or streamline your present range of offerings? What are your thoughts on future product/service design?

### **Market Analysis Summary**

Describe the different groups of segments that you are going to target or are already targeting. How are they composed family-wise and income-wise, where do they live, how often do they do business with a company/organization like this company? Furthermore, a future assessment of the segments should be included, e.g. size of growth.

The market analysis should end with an argumentation for your choice of target segments.

### **Strategy and Implementation Summary**

Summarize the organizational strategy for marketing and sales activities, and product/service development. How are you going to reach your customers? How do you consistently appeal attractive to them?

It is important that the marketing and sales strategy is focused and consistent. A sales forecast and milestones can help achieve this.

### **Management Summary**

Describe the management and personnel structure of the company, including any gaps that need to be filled. What are your educational background, prior work experience and personal skills of your employees? What are the skills needed among employees and how many does it take to secure an efficient operation?

### **Financial Plan**

Summarize the financial aspects of your business plan. How do you generate revenue – is it from visitors or are you state-funded? How do you expect to secure revenue/funding in the future (and from whom)?

Furthermore, a future forecast of revenues and costs should be included in order to find out if you will prosper or face losses due to different circumstances, and what is the timeframe for this?

## 7.0 The demand side of managing an attraction

Attractions are supposed to monitor and manage customer opinion and demand in an effort to keep customers happy. It is here argued that the purpose of a business, i.e. an attraction, is to create and maintain satisfied customers. After all, customers are attracted to an attraction and retained when their needs are met. Not only do they return to your attraction, but (maybe even more important) they also talk favourably to friends and relatives about your attraction, thereby recommending them to come to visit as well (Kotler et al., 2010). Thus, instead of considering what you as a manager see at an attraction or what you think creates profit, try the alternative management approach of putting the customer first.

One method is to use the AIDA model, in which A stands for *awareness*. The first step is to make the attraction visible for potential visitors. I stand for *interest*, and deals with how to create an interest for the attraction. D stands for *desire*, and looks into how the potential visitor should create a desire for visiting the attraction. The last A stands for action, meaning that the process should result in a visitor action, i.e. that the potential visitor becomes an active visitor at the attraction.

Unfortunately, there is often a discrepancy between what you think you offer and what the customer perceive/think of your attraction. Please keep this in mind when you are doing product developments at your attraction. Have a look at what the statistics from questionnaires filled out by visitors say or ask visitors at your attraction yourself – before you implement your ideas. Doing analysis of your customers is important because it gives each attraction a concrete picture of the visitors of that specific attraction. By doing this the managers and the staff is provided with knowledge that gives them the opportunity to either further develop this specific customer segment or to target other customer segments, which are not being targeted at the moment.

Therefore, for product development to be successful it is important to listen to your customers. Ultimately, they are the ones who visit, revisit and recommend your attraction to others.

## 7.1 Methodology of analysing the demand side

In order to identify the demand from your customers, different approaches exist. Among others, are interviews, focus groups, observations and questionnaires. The following will shortly outline the different approaches to give the reader an idea of the pros and cons of utilising each, and to determine why it was chosen to use questionnaires as the tool to determine customer demand in the AGORA 2.0 project.

## 7.2 Interviews

Interviews could basically be described as purposeful discussions between two or more people (the interviewer and the interviewee(s), where questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain

information from the interviewee(s). Ultimately, use of interviews can help to collect valuable and reliable data (Blumberg et al., 2008).

Numerous advantages with conducting interviews exist. For example, it is possible to encourage more complete, better explained responses from the respondent. The questions can be fixed or open ended. By open ended questions it is possible to obtain individual opinions. This gives the interviewer a better understanding of the interviewees' needs, wishes and expectations. It also allows respondents to describe what is meaningful or important to them using their own words. Naturally, explaining or clarifying questions increases the accuracy of the data collected. Also, interviews can be adapted to particular individuals and circumstances. In that way, interviews can yield rich data, details and new insights. On a practical note, interviews can be conducted in a variety of locations and times, which makes it a rather flexible way of obtaining data.

On the other hand, doing interviews also have its disadvantages. For example, it is extremely time-consuming since you need to schedule the interview, conduct the interview, and analyse the material in order to obtain useful data. Also, too much flexibility can result in inconsistencies across interviews, making this kind of qualitative analysis difficult. Therefore, it is critical to have an "analysis plan" before conducting the interviews to improve the data entry and analysis. Ultimately, however, conducting interviews are expensive in the amount of time required to train, schedule, conduct, produce and input data and analyse. Ensuring that the interviewer has knowledge of the subject matter, feels confident in his/her ability to conduct the interview, and to record responses are examples of where additional technical assistance or training can improve the overall interviewing process (Blumberg et al., 2008). As one interview has a lot of weight in the combined conclusion the interviewees need to be selected carefully. This requires that the interviewer has a thorough knowledge of the existing cliental. By doing this the interviewer can make sure that the total amount of interview data represents the opinions of the cliental. Age, nationality, wealth, education, distance to attraction and all other relevant factors needs to be included before the interviews are conducted. Due to these considerations, the time consumption and the relatively high costs of doing interviews the AGORA 2.0 project has not used this approach.

### **7.3 Focus groups**

A focus group is a qualitative research tool, and can be defined as *"small group discussions, addressing a specific topic, which usually involve 6-12 participants, either matched or varied on specific characteristics of interest to the researcher"* (Morgan & Spanish, 1984, p.255). In a focus group, participants' interactions and responses are both encouraged and controlled by a moderator to maintain focus on the desired outcome. Participants are usually chosen based on certain characteristics that they have in common in relation the product or concept that they are supposed to discuss. To identify patterns and trends, these discussions should be conducted several times with similar participants (Saunders et al., 2009).

The advantages of doing focus groups research stem from the ability of focus group members to interact with each other. When participants are stimulated to discuss, the group dynamics can generate new thinking about a topic which will result in a much more in-depth discussion. Focus group research is often useful when deciding on the development of a product. It gathers useful data as people are quite often willing to give their opinions on presented ideas. Focus group members will allow you to develop an appropriate product through pointing out what things work or do not work for users. Having the group gathered physically in front of you, can also be fruitful since you can show the group several different designs of products in order to facilitate conversation on what it is they are looking for in a tourism product.

There are, however, also disadvantages with doing focus groups. First of all, findings may not represent the views of larger segments of the population, as the small sample size means the group might not be a good representation of the larger population. Also, the collected raw data might be difficult to analyse because it is unstructured. Furthermore, possible conflict avoidance (or other unintended outcomes of the group process) needs to be addressed as part of the data analysis. In fact, focus groups tend to become influenced by one or two dominant people, which then makes the output biased. It is therefore important that the moderator plays an essential role in handling the situation. It requires good facilitation skills, including the ability to handle various roles people may play (such as the roles of “an expert”, “the quiet”, “the outsider”, “a friend”, “being hostile”, etc.). If you are running a focus group, your role is to be a moderator and a facilitator, i.e. you should keep the group within the restrictions of the discussion as well as generate interest in the topic and encourage debate (Saunders et al., 2009).

## **7.4 Observations**

One way of finding out what people like and what they do at your attraction is by observing/watching them. Essentially, this is what this approach to research contains, namely a systematic observation, description and interpretation of the behaviour of your visitors. In that way, observation research occurs when *“the researcher attempts to participate fully in the lives and activities of subjects and thus becomes a member of their group, organization or community. This enables researchers to share their experiences by not merely observing what is happening but also feeling it”* (Saunders et al., 2009, p.290)

A key advantage of observation research is that often the respondent or visitor is unaware that he is being observed, allowing their behaviour to be observed naturally. Thus, it is not necessary to rely on the willingness and ability of respondents to act and respond accurately. Also, the biasing effect of interviewers is reduced, and in that way it could be argued that observations are generally more objective. After all, what people say they do is often different from what they actually do so observations may be more valid than questionnaires or interviews.

There are, however, also disadvantages of observation research. It could be argued that the most limiting factor in the use of observation research is the inability to observe things such as attitudes, motivations, visitors' state of mind, and their buying motives. Also, the observer might observe what he expects to observe, which is referred to as 'observer bias'. This bias may mean that different observers "observe" different things. Furthermore, if participants do not know they are being observed there are ethical problems such as invasion of privacy, whereas if they do know they are being observed it may alter their behaviour to be unnatural. Lastly, costs are also a disadvantage of the observation method, since under most circumstances observational data is more expensive to obtain than other types of research data (Saunders et al., 2009).

To serve as an example, observation data could be very useful in a situation where a specific improvement has been made, for example installation of a 10 min film at an attraction. Observational data about how many customers use this new installation and how long they stay there can be very useful. However, what this method cannot tell is what people thought of the film.

## **7.5 Strategic study of consumer preferences**

An alternative approach to identifying demand is to do a strategic study of consumer preferences. This is done in order to look into overall trends for tourists and hence consumer behavior in the industry. In that way, this approach does not (necessarily) identify the demand at certain attractions but is rather looking into general trends for tourists. Importantly, identifying consumer behavior for tourists is also useful for product development to take place optimally. Therefore, during the 5<sup>th</sup> AGORA 2.0 Project Meeting in Kaliningrad, Russia, a test was undertaken in order to identify consumer preferences – within the AGORA group - and to show participants how this approach can be done.

In the study, 20 people participated, which is notably not a valid sample, but it was deemed sufficient for a pilot study and for choosing the method. In this pilot study the participants consist of people who all work with tourism within the Baltic Sea Region, i.e. persons with information on tourism. Normally the sample of people would be randomly sampled in order to get a broad picture of the general consumer's preferences. As this is a pilot study the object is to show that the method works and therefore the requirement of random sampling can be applied not to be fulfilled. The pilot study consisted of 55 pct. women and 45 pct. men, coming from seven different Baltic Sea Region countries. There was a slight overweight of Germans but otherwise the sample was rather equally spread between persons from the Baltic Sea Region.

### *Favorite and preferred places to go for vacation*

Questions posed in the strategic study concerned such elements as favorite places to go for vacation, length of vacation and reasons to go to the given place. Regarding favorite places to go for vacation, the results indicated a challenge for the Baltic Sea Region. Even though one could expect

that most people would prefer to travel within the region, results showed that this is rarely the case. In fact, the place where a large proportion of the sample would like to have their vacation was the US (25 pct.), and the place where the largest percentage of the sample had held their most recent long lasting vacation was also the US (20 pct.). Runners up were countries and capitals outside of the Baltic Sea Region. Also, regarding the place where the sample had had their best vacation a clear majority stated it was outside the Baltic Sea Region, namely in the US, Asia, Africa and other European countries. This could indicate that – within the Baltic Sea Region – there might be a tendency for people to prefer not to travel to countries within their own region. It can be a serious problem for development of tourism in the Baltic countries that many persons prefer to spend their holidays outside the Baltic Sea Region countries.

#### *Approach to tourism in the Baltic Sea Region*

The approach to tourism in the Baltic Sea Region is for the most part built upon the concept that tourism related activities is de facto taken place on *a national or a local basis*. Hence, it is very seldom seen that any country or attraction within the region is having an international approach to tourism. Therefore, it is argued that there is an absolute need for international cooperation and for furthering such activities.

The strategic study of consumer preferences also indicated elements that we - as tourist experts and as citizens – could find intriguing and useful. Naturally, management at an attraction cannot do too much about the weather or location of the attraction – but the study showed that it is worthwhile to consider, essentials such as transportation opportunities, possibilities for families to have fun together and the fact that, service quality at the attraction needs to be satisfactory. Furthermore, for short vacations the study showed a preference for visiting capitols corresponding to the global trend.

95 pct. of sample stated that they are going on both long and short vacations – so the potential is great. Also, there might be other possibilities for cooperation in terms of cooperating with neighboring attractions and countries, the local town and its tourist operators etc., but it is difficult to establish due to the national structure of tourism in the Baltic Sea Region.

Overall, the intention of this booklet has been to make it clear that it is important to know visitor preferences. In fact, there is often a discrepancy between what you think you offer and what the visitor perceive/think of your attraction. This is important to keep in mind when doing product development at any attraction. Even though there might be a difference in what visitors say they want and what they actually do, it is important - for product development to be successful - to listen to your visitors. Ultimately, they are the ones who visit, revisit and recommend your attraction to others and thereby determine if your attraction is successful.

## 7.6 Questionnaires

Doing questionnaires is a tool to obtain useful information from the demand side, i.e. your visitors. Because each respondent is asked to answer the same set of questions, questionnaires provides an efficient way of collecting data from a large sample of your visitors. Even though the data processing itself is somewhat time consuming, the gathered data gives a precise and accessible overview of your general visitor profile. This ultimately makes it a beneficial tool for the analysis of your visitors, which should eventually make it easier for you to develop the products offered at the attractions. However, it should be noted that producing a questionnaire is far more difficult than it seems initially. It needs to be ensured that the questions asked will eventually get you the precise data that is required for the attraction to develop (Saunders et al., 2009).

The design of the questionnaire will affect the response rate, but just as important is the reliability and validity of the gathered data. These can be maximised by carefully designing each question and having a clear layout and explanation of the questionnaires and by not having a too long questionnaire. Also, it is a good idea to do a pilot test before the actual release of the questionnaire to see if the results are useful and that the respondents understand the questions as intended. Here, the pilot test was generally done at AGORA 2.0 meetings and specifically at CBS on the attraction of Häme in the year of 2011. It showed useful and valuable results, which is why it was decided to proceed with the same questionnaire in both 2011 and 2012. The administration naturally also needs to be wisely planned and executed (Saunders et al., 2009).

The advantages of questionnaires are quite clear. First of all, responses are gathered in a standardised way, making questionnaires more objective. It is generally also relatively quick to collect information using a questionnaire. However, in some situations it can take time not only to design but also to apply and analyse the questionnaires. Furthermore, potentially data can be collected from a large portion of a group. In that way, relatively large amounts of information can be collected from a large number of people in a short period of time and in a relatively cost effective way. Moreover, when data has been quantified, it can be used to compare and contrast other research that may be used to measure change. This has also been the case in AGORA 2.0, where the two seasons of 2011 and 2012 have been analysed in order to compare and identify changes between the two seasons.

However, there are also disadvantages with questionnaires. Like many other evaluation methods, questionnaires are done after the event, so participants may forget important issues. Also, it could be argued that the analysis of questionnaires is inadequate to identify certain forms of data, such as emotions, behaviour and feelings. Questionnaires have also been criticised for not being able to tell how truthful a respondent has been and how much effort the person has put into answering the questionnaire. In other words, respondents might answer superficially especially if the questionnaire takes a long time to complete. The common mistake of asking too many questions

should therefore be avoided. It is also important to take into consideration that respondents might read differently into each question and therefore reply based on their own interpretation of the given question. What is defined as good/satisfactory to one respondent might not be it to another, which essentially means that there is a level of subjectivity that is difficult to identify in questionnaires. As questionnaires are standardised it is not possible to explain any points in the questions that participants might misinterpret. This can be circumvented by collecting a sufficient amount of data. It can also be partially solved by piloting the questions on a small group of visitors and colleagues. Lastly, when developing a questionnaire, the developer is making his own decision and assumption as to what is and what is not important, and in that way elements that are of importance might be missed out on.

All in all, this means that the end result of a study depends on the accuracy of the questions and the number of questionnaires collected. There must be no room for misinterpretations and it must be ensured that the questionnaires contain all the relevant questions without being too long.

Furthermore, what to do with an incomplete questionnaire as well to deal on how to deal with questionnaires not answered have to be decided before the survey is initiated

## **7.7 The design of the Agora 2.0 questionnaire**

The questionnaire for the Agora 2.0 project, also called the VIPER study, was designed so that the results from the different attractions in the same partner groups, Castles, Red Brick Gothic, Forests, Shifting Sand Dunes and Stones, could reveal both similarities and differences. Through this knowledge the attractions could share their experiences and knowhow and cooperate in order to develop common products (see the VIPER study results in Agora 2.0 Attraction Analysis).

The questionnaire consisted of eleven questions and some of the attractions took advantage of the option to add a few extra questions. In the following section there will be a description of the questions and the potential use of the data generated from these questions. In the bottom of this section a copy of the questionnaire used in the Agora 2.0 project is shown.

Question A1 asked if the customer visited the attraction for the first time. If they had been there before they were asked to write how many times they had visited the place before. This question tells the attraction whether or not they are able to attract people for more than for just one visit. To know how to get the visitors to return another time is valuable as it shows something about visitor loyalty for the attraction and also about the attraction.

Question A2 asked how the customer became aware of the attraction. To raise the awareness of the attraction often demands a lot of resources. It is therefore important for the attractions to get feedback about whether or not these resources are well spent. This question also provides information about how the other attractions successfully manage to raise the awareness of their attraction.



Questions A3 asked the visitor about their means of transport to the attraction. How a visitor arrived at the attraction is important because the visitors in the different kinds of transportation have different needs. There might be no need to extend the parking facilities if most people arrive by bicycle. In that case covered parking for bicycles might be more beneficial. Neither will be a good investment if most people arrive by public transportation. Sharing knowledge about dealing with these kinds of logistical problems is very useful.

Question A4 is fifteen questions about how satisfied the visitor is with admission price, price performance ratio, options for transport to the attraction, service, opening hours, child friendliness, parking facilities, content of the attraction, information about the attraction, sanitary facilities, cleanliness, shopping facilities, catering facilities, overall impression of the attraction and general satisfaction with the guests visit. These are all rated on a scale between very good and very bad, 5 being very good and 1 being very bad. These ratings can give a good picture about the general opinion on these matters; however it cannot give any reasons for the individual ratings. This type of information can be very useful, because the management at each attraction might not be aware of the unsatisfied guests. How to deal with problem solving and create developments to meet certain customer demands can with great advantage be done by sharing experiences and knowledge. The ranking is a Likert scale. An important question to discuss is if the numbers of the rankings should be an equal or unequal number. If an unequal number of rankings is selected it must be expected that most answers will be in the middle, i.e. only extreme results will appear frequently. If the intention is that all visitors should decide if something is positive or negative an equal number should be selected.

Question A5 asked how much time the visitor spent at the attraction. This is a crucial piece of information. The entrance price, the transportation time and the experience achieved, must correlate with the time spent at the attraction, otherwise the visitor will feel that the trip was not worth taking. If a visitor has given a negative score on the price performance ratio question from A4 and indicate that they didn't spent a lot of time at the attraction, the attraction must address this problem. Sharing popular products and developing new products together is a very valuable resource.

Question A6 is an optional spot for the individual attractions to add an extra question. The optional questions are mostly useful if the attraction has a specific need of knowledge of non-general character.

Question B1 asked to the reason for the individual visit. The reason for the visit is important because it gives the attraction knowledge about if the visitors are coming from their home or are on holiday, business visit or on a tour, in other words whether they are local visitors or foreign visitors. Information about where the guests are coming from can tell the attraction many things. Are

the investments in marketing abroad paying off? Is there a strong local market? Is the attraction especially popular in certain countries? Knowing this can help the attraction target popular groups or expand to other customer groups. In any case, sharing experiences on product development for certain customer groups with each other will be very cost efficient.

Question B2 asked to the motivation for traveling. This information gives the attraction information about what kind of products the existing visitors are in demand for and in addition what kind of products they would like to purchase. This information gives the attraction knowledge about how to make product development. As mentioned above, cooperating about product development is beneficial for all partners, because of the advantages of knowledge and experience sharing.

Question B3 asked those visitors who were traveling on holiday, business or a tour and not those who came from their home residence, what the motivation for their holiday and trip was. It is important to know the customers motivation for traveling in order to meet these expectations. If these expectations are not met, the visitor will be disappointed and will not return to the attraction or recommend it to others. Having a certain customer segment focus is also a common challenge that can be overcome by cooperation because the attractions in the different attraction groups have the same cliental.

Question B4 asked those traveling on holiday or business how they got to their destination. Answers to this question give an idea about the accessibility of the region. It also informs the attraction about what type of tourists they are attracting. This can reveal information about certain customer segments having difficulties about arriving at the attraction.

Question B5 asked if the guest was traveling alone or with company. This is important knowledge because information about whether a single person or families visits the attraction shows if the attraction has a product suitable for groups as for instance tourists travelling on bus tours.

Question B6 asked about the age, gender and home land of the visitor. Both question B5 and B6 contribute to provide a profile of the visitors at the attractions. The more accurate a profile the attractions can build of their cliental the better they will be able to meet the demands of this customer segment. Attractions in the same category typically have the same type of cliental and therefore cooperation about what products that work and doesn't work is a valuable resource for everyone in the cooperation.

When the questionnaires have been filled out and the data has been typed in, it will be possible to cross reference the questions and identify correlations if they exist. An example could be a correlation between the amount of time spent at the attraction and the satisfaction level with the price performance ratio.

The questionnaire can be used by many attractions and is therefore relevant and useful to attractions outside the AGORA 2.0 project. Concerning the attractions in the AGORA 2.0 project; they have the possibility to continue using the questionnaire and thereby follow the demand over time. The questionnaire itself is shown on the following pages.

*<Name, address and logo of the organisation / attraction>*

**Dear Guest,**

We are pleased to welcome you in ... (Name of organisation/attraction).

In order to optimise our offer according to your wishes, we would like to know more about your opinions and yourself as our visitor.

We therefore kindly ask you to fill in this questionnaire after your visit.

This is an **anonymous survey** so that your answers cannot be traced back to you personally.

Thank you very much for your support!

<b>A1</b>	<b>Are you visiting this attraction the first time?</b>		
	01 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	02 <input type="checkbox"/> No, I've already been here ____ times	
<b>A2</b>	<b>How did you become aware of this attraction? (More than one answer possible!)</b>		
	01 <input type="checkbox"/> References on the Internet	06 <input type="checkbox"/> Information in travel guide/brochure	11 <input type="checkbox"/> By chance / passing by
	02 <input type="checkbox"/> Rekommandation by relatives / friends	07 <input type="checkbox"/> Information at other attractions	12 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation by the landlord
	03 <input type="checkbox"/> Television show	08 <input type="checkbox"/> Flyer	13 <input type="checkbox"/> Report on radio
	04 <input type="checkbox"/> Avertissement in News Paper/magazine	09 <input type="checkbox"/> Report in News Paper/magazine	14 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): .....
	05 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation by the tourist information	10 <input type="checkbox"/> Poster	
<b>A3</b>	<b>How did you get here?</b>		

	<sup>01</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> By public transport	<sup>03</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> By car / caravan	<sup>05</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Walking
	<sup>02</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> By excursion, booked tour (motor coach, bus)	<sup>04</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> By bicycle	<sup>06</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify!): .....

**A4** *How satisfied are you with the following aspects at this attraction?*  
Please rate the aspects on a scale from “very satisfied” to “not satisfied at all”. Please make only one cross per aspect!

	very satisfied	satisfied	neither... nor	not satisfied	not satisfied at all	Can't rate/ not applicable
<sup>01</sup> Admission price	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>02</sup> Price performance ratio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>03</sup> Options for transport to the attraction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>04</sup> Service / assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>05</sup> Opening hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>06</sup> Child friendliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>07</sup> Parking facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>08</sup> Content of attraction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>09</sup> Information about the attraction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>10</sup> Sanitary facilities (toilet, washbasin,...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>11</sup> Cleanliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>12</sup> Shopping facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>13</sup> Catering facilities (cafe, restaurant,...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>14</sup> Overall impression of this attraction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<sup>15</sup> General satisfaction with your visit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**A5** *How much time did you spend on your visit to this attraction? (Please, only one answer!)*

<sup>01</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 30 minutes	<sup>03</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> One hour or more, but less than two hours	<sup>05</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> More than half a day
<sup>02</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> 30 minutes or more, but less than one hour	<sup>04</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Two hours or more, but less than half a day	<sup>06</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> The whole day

**A6** *Optional: one or two questions regarding the local attraction added by the responsible person of the survey*


<b>B1</b>	<b>For what reason are you here today? (Please, only one answer!)</b>		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> I'm on a daytrip from my holiday / business destination at.....  </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> I'm on a daytrip from my home residence at .....  </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> I'm on a touring (excursion)  </div> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">→ go to question no. B5</p>			
<b>2</b>	<b>What is the main reason / motivation of your trip? (More than one answer possible!)</b>		
<div style="display: grid; grid-template-columns: 1fr 1fr 1fr; gap: 10px;"> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Holiday to relax</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Cultural holidays</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Natural holidays</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> City trip</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Wellness/health holidays</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Visiting friends or relatives</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Shopping trip</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Activity holidays</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Business trip / meeting, conference</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):</div> </div>			
<b>B3</b>	<b>In what kind of accommodation are you staying? (Please, only one answer!)</b>		
<div style="display: grid; grid-template-columns: 1fr 1fr 1fr; gap: 10px;"> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Hotel</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Private room</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Private, with friends or relatives</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Guesthouse/B&amp;B</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Holiday apartment</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Camping site / caravan</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Youth hostel</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Holiday home</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify!): .....</div> </div>			
<b>B4</b>	<b>How did you get to your holiday / business destination? (Please, only one answer!)</b>		
<div style="display: grid; grid-template-columns: 1fr 1fr 1fr; gap: 10px;"> <div><input type="checkbox"/> By plane</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> By car, caravan</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> By bicycle</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> By train/bus (public transport)</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> By bus (excursion, touring)</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify!): .....</div> </div>			
<b>B5</b>	<b>Are you travelling alone or are you accompanied by somebody?</b>		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> I am travelling alone         </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> I am accompanied by           <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">             _____ adults (please fill out the number)           </div> <div style="text-align: center;">             (18 years and older including yourself)           </div> <div style="text-align: center;">             _____ children (please fill out the number)           </div> <div style="text-align: center;">             (under 18 years)           </div> </div> </div> </div>			
<b>B6</b>	<b>Please provide the following information for ONE PERSON ONLY!</b>		
Your age: _____ years      Your gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female			
In which country do you live? .....			

	Please give the postal code of your home address: .....
--	---

*Thank you again for your support!*

## **7.8 Composition of a questionnaire**

When composing a questionnaire it is paramount to focus both on the layout as well as the content. The following section will stress some of the general points in composing a questionnaire.

When composing a questionnaire the writer must remember that contrary to an interview the respondent has no help in understanding or interpreting the questions posed. Therefore it is important that the respondent is able to understand the instructions given in the beginning of the questionnaire as well as all the questions throughout the questionnaire by themselves. As a consequence the instructions for filling out the questionnaire and the questions throughout the questionnaire have to be simple and precise enough for people to understand them while at the same time provide adequate answers to the researcher's question. This is a balancing act that requires quite a bit of judgement from the composer of the questionnaire. One way of making sure that the right considerations have been taken is by performing a pilot study where a small sample of respondents is given the questionnaire in order to identify potential pitfalls (Bryman, 2008: 217) as mentioned earlier.

An example that illustrates the importance of sufficient as well as precise information is in the number of answers a respondent is allowed to give in a particular question. For many questions there might be more than one of the possible answers that the respondent find true. However, for many questions the researcher is only interested in one answer to a question. If the instructions do not clearly state that only one mark is allowed in this question the participant might give two or more answers which leads to the exclusion of the question all together by the researcher. Therefore the imprecise information can easily lead to the loss of information and as information is hard to come by this exclusion is often something that cannot be afforded.

The layout of the questionnaire is also important as it is a determining factor when a respondent decide whether to fill out the questionnaire or not. Due to the low level of response often encountered in research some researchers have a tendency to squeeze the questionnaire onto as little space as possible in an attempt to make it look as short as possible. In most incidences this is a mistake and a better result is most often achieved by making the layout attractive with adequate space between the questions. This of course does not mean that there is no limit in the length of the questionnaire. One should try to find the middle ground between the crammed questionnaire and the questionnaire that appears bulky (Bryman, 2008: 221-222).

## **7.9 Requirements when using questionnaires**

When using questionnaires, a number of requirements need to be met. In case of questionnaires the main requirements is concerning sampling, the number of participant and the distribution of questionnaires. In the following section a short introduction and explanation on these two subjects are given.

One of the questions posed when performing a survey is what the external validity of the survey is. The external validity is whether you are able to generalise your findings from the specific sample to the general population. The question of external validity is closely related to the sampling. In order to secure the external validity it is important that the sample is chosen representatively. This means that the sample should be chosen in a way that makes sure that it represents the entire population. There are many ways to ensure this representativeness and which is most suited for a specific survey has to be judged in the specific situation (Bryman, 2008: 33). If this requirement is not met, the results of a data collection will be useless.

Another requirement is the number of respondents a sample needs in order to be representative. What may surprise many is that the sample that needs to be collected does not relate to the relative size of the sample compared to the population but on the absolute size of the sample. This means that it does not matter whether you wish to examine a population of 100,000 or 10,000,000 people you still have to collect the same sample size. As a general rule a sample of 1,000 respondents need to be obtained in order to be able to generalise ones findings to the population. When choosing a sample the notion is that the larger the size of the sample the smaller the sampling errors will be. This means that when one increases a sample from 100 to 200 people the sampling errors will diminish. As the sample size grows the increments of precision declines and when a level of 1,000 is reached the precision is at a level where the sample is assessed as being representative for the entire population (Bryman, 2008: 179-181).

The researcher also needs to decide on how to distribute the questionnaires. Without going into great details there are generally two way of distributing questionnaires. One is where the questionnaires are send by mail to the respondents that after completion send it back to the researcher. The drawback of this is that it is costing money in postage and severely reduces the response rate as a large proportion of the respondents tend not to answer. The second method, the one employed in this study, is where the questionnaire is handed out and collected physically (Bryman, 2008: 216-219). The main reason for choosing this method is that it often results in a greater response rate but for this study this method was also chosen as it is hard to determine the population in other ways than those physically showing up at the sight. When collecting data it is also important to be aware of the collection timeframe. The collection of questionnaires has to be spread over a sufficient timeframe to ensure the representativeness of the collected data.

### **7.10 Processing data**

To most people, quantitative data in raw form, i.e. before it has been processed and analysed, makes very little sense. Data therefore needs to be processed in order to become useful (Saunders et al., 2009). Quantitative techniques such as graphs, charts and statistics facilitate this process.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

As it is shown in this methodological chapter there is a number of different ways to gain different kinds of information. Each of these methods has different pros and cons and none is superior to the others. The method of collecting data through the use of questionnaires was selected due to the wish of being able to track developments over time and to have the opportunity of comparing the individual attractions with each other. Furthermore, from a resource perspective it would have been unrealistic to conduct enough interviews of a certain quality to get useful data, if not supplemented with local resources.



## 9.0 References

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