DRIVING VALUES AND VISUAL IDENTITY IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE TOURISM BRAND DESTINATION FOR DANUBE DELTA

Ana-Florina Fecioru[1]

Abstract

The process of developing a brand identity represent the first step in promoting Danube Delta like a destination dedicated to responsible tourism activities. Danube Delta is famous due its biodiversity, being also a place for adventure tourism ecotourism. The Lippova-Russians cultural pattern plays an important role in defining the story behind the brand. In Danube Delta the community lives closely to the nature respecting its cycle, being a resource for cultural tourism. In this paper the creation of this brand prototype represents the stage of a creative marketing exercise. The visual identity is expressed by: the brand name, the logo and the baseline. A powerful brand has a clear position in the mind of potential tourists; the positioning is made by the brand engagement based on the target group, key values and key differentiators, the frame of references, brand personality and the arguments. Danube Delta is a well delimited geographical unit, so it can be considered a marketable product: it has tangible and intangible attributes, and is offering a series of emotional and rational benefits to the tourists.

Keywords: biodiversity, brand, Danube Delta, indentity, tourism

1. Introduction

For this study my purpose is to develop the visual identity for the Danube Delta, having in mind the driving values of the region, that are essential for every process of branding a touristic destination.

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve has a surface of 5, 800 kmp, being divided in six regions: the Delta between Chilia, Sulina and Sfantul Gheorghe branches, the Razim-Sinoe lake complex, the maritime sector of Danube between Tulcea and Galati cities, the floodable area of Isaccea-Tulcea, the Murighiol-Plopu saltwater lakes, and the coastal region of the Black Sea between Danube Delta and Razim-Sinoe.

One of the largest deltas in all Europe, and the best preserved wetland in Romania, it was formed at the contact between Danube River and Black Sea, being in a continuous evolution. Due its natural patrimony Danube Delta was included into the International Biosphere Reserve Network, and declared Wetland of international significance, on the Ramsar Convention List and on the UNESCO List of Natural Patrimonies. Being a biosphere reserve management Danube Delta

[1] University of Bucharest

was divided into four functional areas: areas with total protection, buffer zones, economic and ecological reconstruction areas. From the areas with total protection are forests: Caraorman, Letea, lakes: Raducu, Rotundu, Potcoava.

Danube Delta is famous due the reed plants that form here the longest compact surface in the world. In fact the forests of Caraorman and Letea form the northern limit of the Mediterranean vegetation, for example the Mediterranean creeper, Periploca graeca.

Flora and fauna meets in this wetland giving birth to a diversity of ecosystems. The image of Danube Delta is consisting in the multitude of submersed aquatic plants, the white and yellow lily, and the water caltrop. On the mellower land we can find small forests of white and grey willow, and on the higher lands with sand dunes wall-climbing plants live together with shrubs, oaks and ashes. The forest are inhabited by many rare species of animals: the European mink, the otter.

A unique feature is that in Danube Delta is concentrated the biggest colonies of European Common Pelican; this space is preserving also many others species of birds like the Dalmatian Pelican, the pigmy and Large cormorant, the Red-Breasted Goose, Ibis bird, wild duck, large Egret, the spoonbill, birds of prey(the white-tailed eagle), storks, and swans.

Danube Delta offers to the potential visitors attraction different from what a wetland means: not only natural resources but also cultural ones; from the cultural heritage the most significant are the fisheries, The Church of Chilia Veche, the lighthouses from Sulina and Sfantu Gheorghe, the cemetery from Sulina, and the wind mill from C.A. Rosseti.

Lippovans houses impresses by its own architectural style, and that blue color that make it so popular. The materials used for building the traditional Lippovan House are: wood, clay and reed. Houses are small, with simple wood decoration. (Pârâu Steluța, Values of the traditional civilization within the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. Remarks on the Traditional Rural Architecture, p. 5-8). Their clothing is simple, so their traditional attire colored in white and blue.

The cultural pattern of Lipppovans in centered on religion and faiths strongly connected with the nature, beliefs that are applied in their working activities like agriculture, fishing, reed harvesting.) One example is when it is draught all the inhabitants of the village pray together with the priest, in the church and outside of it.(Pârâu Steluța, Ethnic Communities in the Danube Delta. A Cultural Dialogue p. 5-8).

The human has its own role in developing a responsible tourism in Danube Delta: from the point of view of the locals, and of the tourists. A number of twenty five villages appeared to the good conditions for living in the reserve, being inhabited by the ethnical group of Romanians, Ukrainians and the Lippovans. We can avoid mass tourism in Danube Delta by offering to the potential tourists a wide range of activities and types of tourism: ecotourism, recreation tourism, and rural tourism

(based on local traditions, gastronomy, ethnography,) and cultural tourism (ruins, churches and festivals).

2. Methods

The creation of this branding elements result by searching in tourism literature, branding literature, and papers that study biodiversity and local communities from Danube Delta. I used the methods from the ,,Politici promotionale in tourism" and created by own graphics using the steps described in the Tourism Brand Manual of Romania. In my point of view is very important that each region from Romania to be branded under the umbrella of a stronger brand, in this case the National Tourism Brand Strategy. For creating the graphics and the images I used writing and editing programs like Office Word, Corel Draw and Photoshop.

3. Discussion

This study regarding Branding in Danube Delta is structured on three parts: analyzing the proposed visual identity, brand positioning, attributes and benefits and the brand structure.

In the next lines I explain step by step the creation of the visual elements that forms the Danube Delta identity, the wordmark, or the brand name, the mark or the logo, and the baseline (the slogan).

Analyzing the proposed brand identity

Destination branding is a process used to develop a unique identity and personality, different from all competitive destinations. (Cosma S. Urcan A., Bota M, p.1-2).

The five elements of the brand identity are: the brand name, the font, the logo, the colors used, and the baseline.

For this brand I choose the brand name of Danube Delta.

The font used for creating the wordmark match perfectly with the values and emotions transmitted by the logo and the baseline. Letters makes alive the mark and it can be characterized by a single word: simplicity. A logo is a symbol that best describes the brand character, name and identity.(Dumbraveanu 2008, p.266). In the process of creating the logo I choose a bulrush and the sigh of a waterflow, inspired by the fact that in Danube Delta the reed plants that form here the longest compact surface in the world.

For a correct representation of the brand identity the perfect color is blue, green and Golden Sand Medium. That's why I created two prototypes for the brand, using different color of green, and blue, but keeping the sandy color. When I choose these I have tooked advantaged of the psychological effect of the colors over the people mind. We all know that almost all the people make a choice about their

travel package, travel destination, and other products and services over the effect of the colors used in the promoting program. In my mind green means purity, nature, rural, fresh air, forests, biodiversity, while blue is connected to Danube, its branches and the multitudinous of lakes. And for expressing simplicity, which is a main feature of the brand personality, I have attached these colors, inspired by nature.



Figure 1: Brand name

In the buying process the consumers must choose a products from different options, having many attributes and meanings for each color, so they will have different attitudes and behavior regarding the travel destination. Green color is making the connection with sustainable tourism, blue with water, and golden sandy color for the coastal beaches. Using these colors I show to the potential tourists what Danube Delta is offering, so they will know if their expectations will be accomplished after arriving here.

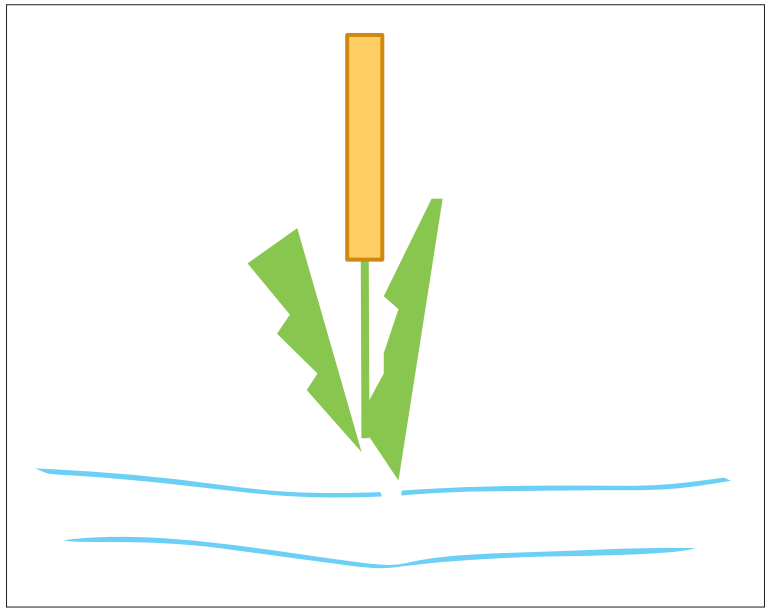


Figure 2: The logo

The baseline

I created two slogans that fit the logo and brand name; one is English for the International Market: Living with nature, and other in Romanian Language: In armonie cu natura, for the domestic market. The baseline must be choose very carefully because it is the first element that makes a straight communication to the target group; the words are part of the story and so these are making a clear position in the mind of to future tourist: Danube Delta is compatible or not with is needs and wishes regarding a travel destination. More than that a baseline has the role of describing the logo and the destination itself; so the baseline is strongly connected to the brand promises. Saying that people of Danube Delta are living harmoniously with the nature, we must be sure that during the touristic activities, the consumers will experience these kinds of emotions, express by the brand.

Brand Baseline properties. Each baseline has a number of fourteen properties that make it powerful and successful on the tourist market (Dumbraveanu, 2008, p. 281-286). The slogan does not contain the brand name, and it is not competitive because can be used in many others tourism campaigns.

Living closed to nature is a short proposition that can be easily learned and remembered after the year passes; so our baseline is memorable. It is emphasing the guarantee, working as a key quality brand; arriving in Danube Delta the tourist will see a community with special traditions that lives for centuries with and for the nature that raises them. The baseline hightslights the brand personality, saying that people are closed to the nature are living a simple and authentically life, for our modern days. Using words as nature, harmony, I'm attaching a series of positives emotions to the brand. When creating the baseline I had in mind that is must reflect the brand personality. Every brand is like an idéa materialized after the needs of the consumer. During the implementation the brand becomes also a character in its own story. The brand becomes more credible when it is human and has its own emotions and attributes. People can easily imagine a brand like a person, with a different behavior that him, and his own attitudes and unique personality. These propositions are formed by few words, easily to be learned, understand, and use, being also simple and original. Being in line with the statement, the baseline is part of the strategically plan of marketing. Living closed to the nature offers clarity to the visual identity; it is also credible due the popularity of the destination; much more is a good standing support for the brand.

Living with nature

În armonie cu natura

Figure 3: The baseline

Brand Positioning

For establishing its position in the market each brand has six core differentiators: the target group, their expectations, what is unique about Danube Delta tourism destination, and the arguments that make the brand valuable.

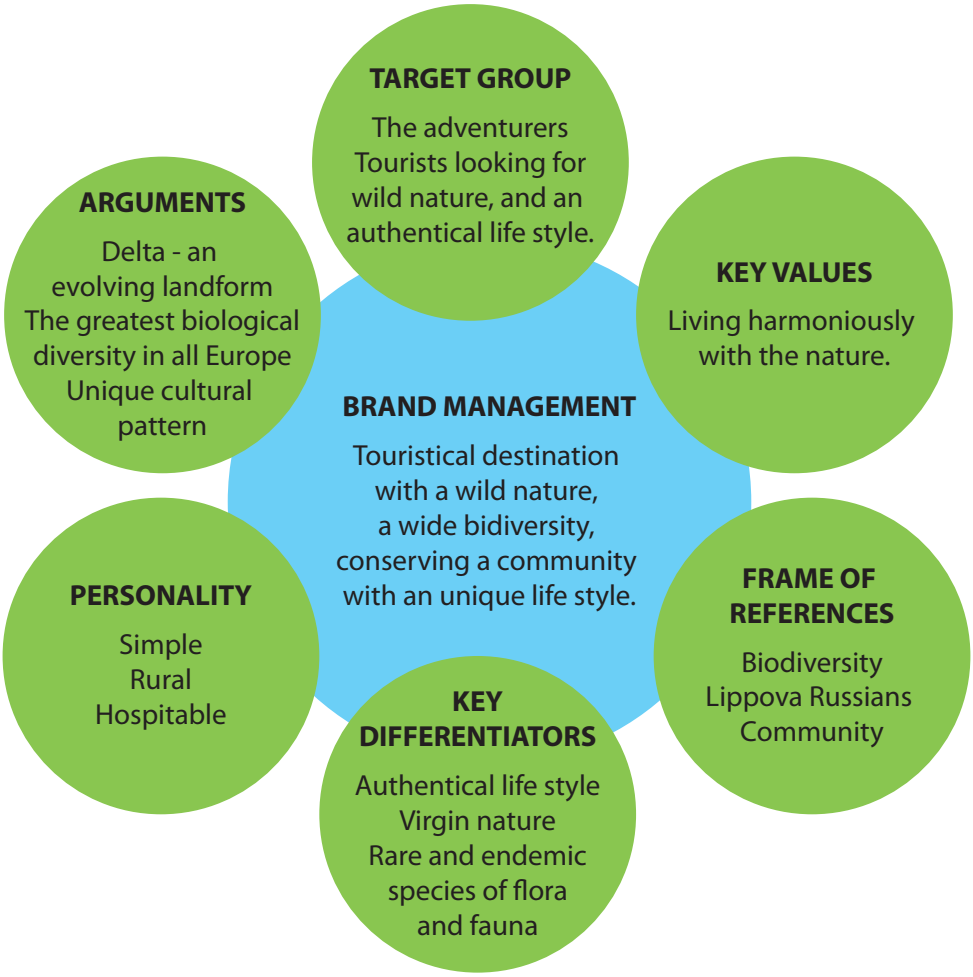


Figure 4: Brand positioning
Source: Created after the model of the Romania tourism brand destination (Romania tourism brand. Driving Values and Visual Identity.)

a. The Target group is s represented by the adventurous tourist, who is looking for different experiences, wanting to explore the wild nature, unknown places. To avoid the development of mass tourism, the brand is promoting green and responsible tourism. Simplicity becomes the essence of this brand, due the community who lives here, being for always connected to God and nature.

b. Key values. The main key value of the brand is the harmony between man and nature. The baseline used is inspired by the main value of the brand: Living harmoniously with the nature (see Figure 4).

c. Frame of references contain the answer to that question ''what benefits will obtain the tourists by visiting Danube Delta?". In this sector I present the expectations of the target group, and what the destination in study is offering for. Visiting Danube Delta the potential tourist discovers a new world, with people living in connection with the nature cycle, respecting their faith and beliefs for centuries of history. Another part of the frame is the biodiversity.

d. Key Differentiators. Danube Delta is a unique place in Europe, and all around the world.

e. Personality. Analyzing the personality of the brand, we can compare it with a person. If someone's personality is compatible with us will become friend with him, and will pay him visits more often. So this psychological law is applying in tourism brand destination. If we are searching for a simple, and hospitable place, Danube Delta will become our travel partner in vacation. The main features of our brand are: simple, rural and hospitable. The rural character of the brand is given by the lifestyle of the inhabitants: fishing, livestock breeding and agriculture.

f. Arguments are necessary to explain if the brand is credible and the statement behind the baseline can be valuable. The arguments can be divided in three parts: natural, cultural and authentically.

Attributes and benefits

Attributes and benefits represent the core differentiators of the brand, or what make the difference in the front of the competition. In our days to have a solid position on the market share is very important to have unique qualities, that makes the product(in our case the geographical entity) valuable for the potential consumers.

The differences between Danube Delta and other touristic region are made by the benefits and attributes offered to the tourist. The benefits can be classified in emotional and rational, and the attributes are intangible and tangible. Emotional benefits are relaxation, nature-knowledge and learning. The rational Benefits that can be obtained during a vacation in Danube Delta are: a rural life-style, a nature escape, observing the way of life of a unique community and tasting the local gastronomy. From the wide range of attributes which are rewarding the brand the main are authenticity, hospitality and the free spirit, part of the intangible attributes. Danube's Delta Brand tells an authentically story due the Lippovans cultural pattern: history, faith, beliefs and ethnography. The tangible attributes are: the unique landscapes, the biodiversity, the chance to explore the wild nature and to live in the middle of the Lippova-Russian community.

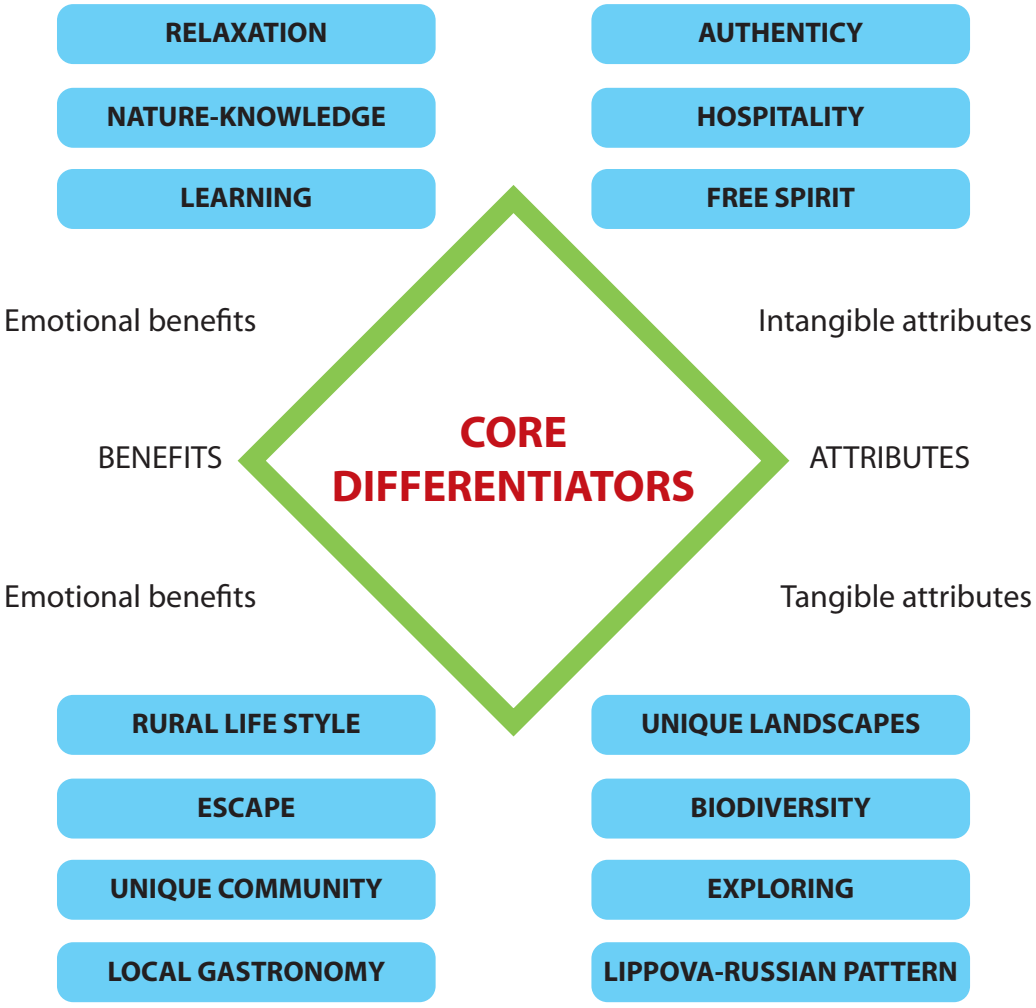


Figure 5: Atributes and benefits of the brand destination
Source: Created after the model of the Romania tourism brand destination (Romania tourism brand. Driving Values and Visual Identity.)

Brand structure

Creating the logo I choose some emblematic symbols for the life style of the inhabitants, expressing the way that Danube Delta is known all around the world. The set of elements that form the brand identity must be compatible with the intangible side of the brand like the guarantee, the mission and the purpose.

The brand structure is represented by six components: brand identity, the vision, the mission, the guarantee, the purpose and the image. (Dumbraveanu, 2008, p.248-2570). Brand identity means that set of tangible elements like brand name, logo and baseline that are sustain the story behind the brand.

The vision that stays back of the visual identity is known also as the long term willing, or in marketing terminology, the strategically plan. In this study case the vision is to promote Danube Delta. The Mission or the tactical marketing plan represents the objectives of the brand, and is promoting the benefits and the driving values. The Guarantee (or the Statement) expresses what our brand is promising to the target market; in this case the guarantee is synonymous with the brand engagement and is delivering what the visual identity says. The Purpose is the same thing with those values which are driving the tourist activities promoted in Danube Delta; it is offering meaningful emotions and an aim to the brand creation. After all these components are implemented the final one makes the most of it; the image is the perception of the potential tourist regarding the destination.

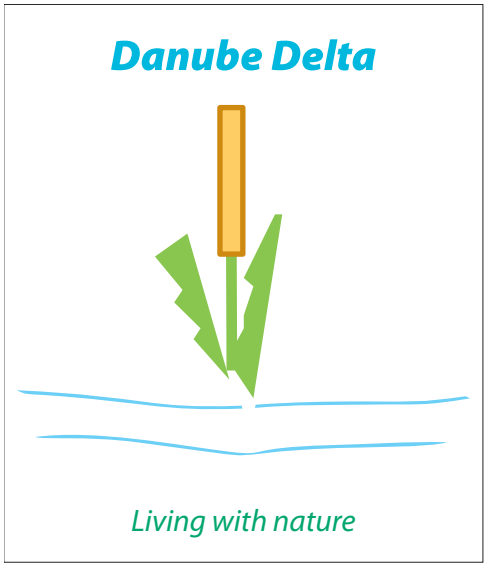




Figure 6: Brand identity - Prototype 1

Figure 7: Brand identity - Prototype 2

4. Conclusions

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve represents a unique landform for Romania and all Europe. For protecting this wetland together with the wide range of biodiversity, things in tourism must be changed. One step is to promote Danube Delta in the mind of the potential tourists like a destination for responsible and durable tourism. The local communities play an important role in the story. The created brand makes the connection between land, nature and the human activity. Brand Identity is important for a clearer image on the market. Blue and green are perfectly working with the idéa of delta. In fact the two baselines complete the story. Living harmoniously with the nature is the starting point for a new type of making tourism in Danube Delta: a travel closed to the nature, and responsible for Danube and its community.

References

Dumbrăveanu Daniela, *Politici promoționale în turism*, Editura Universitară, Bucureşti, 2008; p. 248-257; p. 265-266; p. 281-286

Cosma S. Urcan A., Bota M, S*tudy about brand identity for Romania as a tourist destination*, Business Departament, Faculty of Business, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

C. Michael Hall, Wine, *Food an Tourism Marketing*, The Haworth Hospitality, New York, 2003

Steven D Pike, *Destination brand positioning slogans – towards the development of a set of accountability criteria* . Acta Turistica 16(2):pp. 102-124., 2004; Accessed from http://eprints.qut.edu.au

Steven D Pike, *Destination Marketing, An integrated marketing approach*, 2008; accesed from: http://www.nubkk.nu.ac.th/picnews/s_1260182004.Destination%20Marketing.pdf

Parau Steluta, *Ethnic Communities in the Danube Delta. A Cultural Dialogue, Journal of Danubian Studies and Research*, Dunarea de Jos University, Galati; Avaible at http:// journals.univ-danubius.ro/index

Parau Steluta, *Values of the traditional civilization within the Danube Delta Bioshere Reserve.Remarks on the Traditional Rural Architecture*. Avaible at http://www.geoecomar.ro/website/publicatii/Nr.1-1996/11.pdf

Turtureanu Anca Gabriela, *Ecotourism In The Biosphere Reservation Of Danube Delta*, "Danubius" University of Galati, Romania;

Destinatii Judetene, Tulcea, Force Tourism, Busines&Tourism Magazine, p. 78-84

Danube Delta: a natural gateway to Europe Ecology and Economy in Harmony, Vision summary document, 28 January 2007, WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme

Manualul de brand al României. Valori de referință şi identitate vizuală, elaborat de Ministerul Turismului şi Dezvoltării Regionale, Ianuarie, 2011

Romania tourism brand. Driving Values and Visual Identity; The Ministry of Tourism and Regional Development, January 2011

The Future of Luxury Travel, Horwath HTL, A Global Trends Report First Findings for ILTM Asia, June 2011

http://www.deltadunarii.ro

http://guraportitei.ro