



R.2 Market Needs for the e-Tourism field Report

(Identification of knowledge, skills and competences, needed by organizations in the field of e-Tourism, as a result of a qualitative study with e-Tourism organizations/companies)

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1 Introduction

The present document belongs to WP1 of the e-TF project, "Analysis: State of the art", and has as main objective to describe the situation of the market needs in the field of e-Tourism regarding competences, skills and knowledge. This analysis has been carried out in the countries involved in this Project: *Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Austria and France*. The e-TF consortium has analysed the Needs with a field research conducted in order to investigate the following aspects:

Requirements needed for occupying job positions in the e-Tourism field. For that, Representatives of the industry were interviewed both by phone calls and in personal meetings.

An important appointment in this phase was represented by the project's event held in Lavagna (Genova) on the 19th of March 2013. During this occasion partners could discuss about the needs of this market's sector with professionals of the field. The discussion mainly covered the topics related to new distribution channels and soft skills.

The consolidated information presented in this report will be basis for the definition of the e-Tourism Job Profiles to be developed during WP2.

2 e -Tourism Market Needs

The skill sets of employees needed by tourism enterprises to master the challenges and changes associated with the e-Tourism development are recognizable in 5 main areas as follows:

Basic IT literacy such as analytical skills, search skills; filtering techniques to separate relevant from irrelevant information; information processing skills; time-management skills; computer literacy, use of social web tools (social networks, social media). Good approach in online distribution. Knowledge in OTAs policies, GDS and CRS systems are also needed.

Communication competences: in written language (reading and writing at advanced level). Professionals need to be able to write and to speak correctly in their own language, and in one or several foreign languages. English is more and more a must and additional foreign languages is an added value.

Marketing principles: - understanding of basic marketing principles (objectives, strategy, and tactics). Good knowledge of Hotel pricing policy, efficiency in using Revenue management methods daily analysis of the revenue.

Management: project management

Soft Skills: social and inter-cultural awareness. Professionals have to understand foreign cultures, not to know all foreign cultures but be able to understand that values and habits can vary from one culture to another, and to act accordingly. This was also well summarized in this sentence: "ability to see and recognise an overall picture of how the world around them is changing"

Other soft skills required are: Vision, open-mindedness, flexibility, customer focus, service mindset, and sense of personal responsibility, self-motivation, and ability to recognize and apply innovation, cooperation across disciplines, social competence, and interpersonal skills. Entrepreneurial thinking, proof of concept approach, interdisciplinary thinking capacities, strong communicational skills (multi-language, especially written) are required.

- E-tourism is a growing component of many jobs in the tourism industry; it is a part of the role of professionals, or adaptation to e-tourism for some other jobs.

The interviewees found that e-Tourism need specific job roles that should be included or improved at Vocational level.

More precisely: Search experts; Social Media Content Managers; Content Brokers; Opinion Mining Experts; Multimedia planner. It will help an organization to implement new concepts and to develop them inside the organization. Assist other departments to plan marketing activities. E-Tourism marketing specialist: Planning online marketing measures (Google adword, banners etc.) e-Content Manager. Handle the e-content of touristic organisations. Implement them on different platforms Social Media Manager: Handle the interactions on different platforms as FB, Twitter, and Blogs etc. E- Marketing Manager Revenue Manager Social Media & Reputation Manager Reservation & Revenue Manager.

Interesting comments:

"The qualifier "e" in tourism or "online" vs. "offline" is becoming or should have already become redundant. There is no longer a dividing line in tourism and travel between the online and offline world. If there is, it will rapidly disappear. It is essential to take a holistic view of the market based on the principle of being customer centric. Customer focus is no longer enough, it implies "inside out" thinking. This needs to be reversed to "outside in" thinking which has to define the core of any business activity. The past few years of customer empowerment caused mainly by the transparency of the social web have made old thinking models of "message control" ineffective. This fundamental shift will impact job descriptions and responsibilities. Employee training has to reflect this. Products and services will be shaped by the customer/consumer not the employee/manager."

Major gaps between market needs of the industry in e-Tourism and training offers of vocational education and training (VET) providers have been described by interviewees on the following areas:

- strategic thinking; acting within tight budget frames; stakeholder management; communication management; Design, Strategically planning and Evaluation of an Online Communication project/ activity; - Online destination/hotel/restaurant branding.
- Organisations have to assure themselves their own needs.
- SEO - Technical web Skills - Usability Skills.
- Mobile usability, location based services, online promotion, management, hotel front office technologies, corporate communication, and use of technologies for crisis management.
- Appliance of theoretical knowledge in practical environment, ROI point of view concerning the in numerous tools and possibilities, keeping up-to-date with the extremely dynamic market development.
- Multidisciplinary: connecting the different fields of expertise for practical usage, basic knowledge of Online Marketing & Distribution Tools & Strategies; basics of strategic management, with adaptation to tourism sector.
- E- Marketing Practise; online marketing e-platform knowledge e-booking technologies

Interesting comments:

"What I do want to emphasize is the need for close cooperation between the academic/education/training segment of the tourism industry and the commercial business sector. Theory and practice should not be separated but mutually reinforcing. The training provided has to be relevant and empower the trainee to successfully compete in the marketplace."

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