

# Marketing Plan for the Development of Historical, Cultural and Wine Tourism in Prahova

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## Abstract

*In the tourism product development policy of Prahova, one important aspect is organizing tours on thematic routes such as the Wine Road, Voivodes' Road, Fruit Road. To this end, this paper proposes developing a marketing plan to promote natural, ethno-cultural, historical and wine tourist sights of the localities situated on the "Wine Road". By implementing this marketing plan, it is expected to increase both the number of tourists who choose such a tourist circuit as their holiday or weekend destination and to increase its reputation.*

**Key words:** wine tourism, weekend tourists, attracting strategy, maximum exposure

**JEL Classification:** M31

## Introduction

World tourism has entered a period of very sharp international competitiveness. If in the past the competition increased especially due to the prices that had the tendency to become equalized, nowadays the conquest of a tourist market involves very heterogeneous elements such as: tourism product differentiation, advertising, marketing actions.<sup>1</sup>

According to J. Krippendorf, tourism product is a very complex structure with the main component, able to attract potential tourists, being the natural, cultural, religious, historical and human tourism resources of the area.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, it was marked the tourist route Prahova Wine Road, where the beauty of natural, historical and architectural patrimony blends harmoniously.

Starting from these premises, this paper aims to develop a marketing plan to promote natural, ethno-cultural, historical and wine attractions, on the thematic route of the Wine Road in Prahova county.

Why a marketing plan? Marketing is the key factor in creating a successful tourism business.

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<sup>1</sup> Niculescu, G., Răboanțu, I., Surupăceanu, M., *Marketing turistic*, Editura Academică Brăncuși, Târgu Jiu, 2005, p.115

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p.204

The purpose of this plan is to enhance the local tourism resources and to evaluate the impact of tourism activities on the development of the area. The plan contains these chapters: justification of the tourist product, SWOT analysis of tourism in the area, current market analysis, marketing objectives, strategies, action plan and the budget plan.

## **Justification of the Tourist Product**

Wine Road tourist route goes by the famous vineyards of Prahova County and includes stops at mansions, royal courts and monasteries. The road passes through the localities of Filipeștii de Pădure, Florești, Băicoi, Plopeni, Zamfira, Boldești, Bucov, Vărbila, Valea Calugarească, Jercălăi, Ceptura, Tohani, Mizil.

The resources in these villages, ancient churches and monasteries hundreds of years old, where the Romanian spirit is kept alive by the efforts of the local inhabitants and their pastoral habits, the ruins of palaces and other sights from the historic heritage of Prahova County, represent special sights particularly for tourists eager to become familiar with the traditions and cultural treasures of this area.

The practice of wine tourism allows tourists to taste traditional wines and to get to know better the traditional legends and historical figures who marked those places. Cellars, some of them being declared historic monuments, allow visitors to taste the riches hidden inside them, either privately or during the events.

Tourists can visit the Tohani vineyards, located on the estate of Prince Nicholas, famous for red wine made from dried grapes on Valea Calugarească Research Institute in wine, the only of its kind in the country. Tourists can see on the spot the effort accompanying the process of obtaining wine and have the opportunity to evaluate the results of this effort as well.

By promoting this tourist circuit the development of historical and cultural heritage of the localities from this route will be ensured and the sight and amenity of the wine tourism will also increase, thus making easier the promotion of vine yards all over the county and another effect will be the evolution of tourism and investors attraction. This way the area will progress, new jobs will be created, the foreign exchange earnings will grow, all those things having as long-term effect the improvement of life quality.

## **SWOT Analysis of Tourism in the Area**

SWOT analysis represents one of the most popular tools of strategic management<sup>3</sup> that identifies strengths and weaknesses of the tourist product, threats and opportunities in the external environment. The SWOT analysis provides information that is helpful in matching the tourism resources and capabilities to the competitive environment in which it operates.

Identification of SWOTs is essential because subsequent steps in the process of planning for achievement of the selected objectives may be derived from the SWOTs. The aim of any SWOT analysis is to identify the key internal and external factors that are important to achieving the objectives.

### **Strengths**

- localities situated on the Wine Road offer an exceptional tourist potential due to the natural and extremely valuable heritages in terms of their antiquity;

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<sup>3</sup> Băcănuc, B., *Practici de management strategic: metode și studii de caz*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2006, p.131

- each vineyard from the “Wine Road” route possesses its treasure of legends and historical figures who marked those places;
- on the “Wine Road” route tourists can visit several wineries and wine tasting sparkling reputation, being initiated into the traditions of winemaking;
- the road runs through wooded hills and valleys, offering a landscape of unique beauty.

### **Weaknesses**

- the sightseeing from the “Wine Road” are little known to tourists, due to a low level of promotion and development of tourist information centers, but also because of the related services in this area of activity;
- vineyards and wineries located on this route are not known and appreciated in their true historical value;
- currently, the Wine Road doesn't benefit from online promotion;
- touristic regions lack an appropriate network of multifunctional centers specialized in tourism, allowing tourists access to information, information services and specific events.

### **Opportunities**

- the area has a climate potential conducive to practicing specific tourism throughout the year;
- Wine Road crosses many wooded areas providing a natural environment, preferred and appreciated by most tourists;
- the road is marked with signs;
- there were obtained funds for upgrading areas and included sightseeing on this route by the effort Prahova authorities;
- the authorities concern to promote the touristic potential through incisive national campaign that will help intensification of tourism competitiveness in South - Muntenia.

### **Threats**

- popular and crowded touristic routes such as the Prahova Valley, represent a strong competition to attract tourists on Wine Road;
- tourists predilections for Prahova area consist of mountain tourism and practising winter sports in Azuga, Busteni or Predeal resorts;
- there is high competition from countries known for wine tourism such as France, Italy;
- it can be observed the weak concern, especially of the young, of the knowledge of the values that marked the development of the area;
- although much improved, the infrastructure is not reflected in European standards.

### **Current Market Analysis**

The complex process of offer adaptation to market requires an effort of identifying, analyzing and quantifying the offer. While the market whose analysed products are addressed to is heterogeneous, it can achieve a segmentation according to the tourist attractions included on the

Wine Road itinerary. Segmentation is an important tool for strategic planning. The emphasis is on efficiency and customer satisfaction level of service.<sup>4</sup>

**Wine Tourism.** Practicing this type of tourism in Prahova County is encouraged by the existence of traditional varieties, unique soils and unique bouquet of wine. Vineyard “Great Hill” called “Motherland of Red Wines” in Southern Carpathians, is the Romanian wine area with climatic conditions very similar to the Bordeaux region. Vineyard centers are Boldești, Valea Calugareasca, Urlați - Ceptura, Tohani – Mizil, Cricov. In these growing areas can be practiced that form of tourism, including visiting vineyards and assisting the wine production process.

The wineries can be also a special destination, enhancing local tourism supply, such as professional wine tasting, organizing interactive contests and festivities with rustic traditional Romanian food. Here, tourists can participate in a number of specific events such as the Wine Festival from Valea Calugareasca, organized by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Prahova in collaboration with County Council.

**Weekend tourists and pilgrims in monasteries.** Some sociological studies that have been conducted in the counties of Romania have stated preferences for a significant segment of tourists visiting the monasteries and places where traditions are preserved.

The Romanian people is essentially a Christian nation - an orthodox ancient spirituality that remained alive for centuries, standing witness to ancient churches and monasteries hundreds of years. Located in a natural setting of exceptional beauty, many of them surrounded by secular trees, these objectives owned by the cultural heritage of Prahova county can serve as tourist attractions for the weekend for many inhabitants of urban jams in the county and the adjacent at the same time. In this regard, special attention should be paid to this market segment through targeted regional advertising and information campaigns.

**Miniholidays.** An important segment of customers is the group of tourists who choose to spend miniholidays organized by travel agencies and tour operators. This segment is highly competitive on the market, so the marketing strategy should be oriented towards comprehensive information of both potential tourists and travel agents and tour operators so that they form an overview of the potential of the area and include it in their holiday schedule.

**Business Tourism.** An important segment of the market that could be explored is longer term participants in events such as business conventions, conferences, meetings, scientific sessions. Possible development of tourism business premises situated on the route “Wine Road” may be the target of a future project, because investment is needed to build conference rooms equipped with adequate facilities.

## Setting Marketing Objectives

Objectives represent what we want to achieve, and strategies show the way for achieving them. A tourism marketing objective requires establishing a balance between tourism products and their markets.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Gamble, P. et al, *Revoluția în marketing: o abordare radicală pentru o afacere de succes*, traducere, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2008, p.141, 143

<sup>5</sup>Niculescu, G., Răbonțu, I., R., Surupăceanu, M., *Marketing turistic*, Editura Academică Brâncuși, Târgu Jiu, 2005, p.484

The analysis of weaknesses and opportunities related to cultural and historical development of tourism in Prahova County leads to a clear set of objectives designed primarily to inform and attract potential tourists to the area to meet their needs and desire. In short, these are the following:

- informing and stimulating potential consumers about the tourism products existing on thematic route of the Wine Road;
- increasing visibility of tourist natural , ethno-cultural, historical and wine attraction on the Wine Road itinerary;
- determination of favorable changes in mentality and habits of potential tourists;
- assessment of the effectiveness of promotional and communicative actions.

### Strategies for Implementation of Marketing Objectives

The identified strategies (Table 1) have character of type *pull* strategies involving advertising and promotion actions for the consumer market, targeted as end-user and aimed to make it to request products from travel agencies and tour operators.

The attraction strategy is focused on application, seeking the creation or the increase of them. The goal is to provide enough information to attract consumers<sup>6</sup>.

**Table 1.** Matrix objectives and marketing strategy

Objectives	Strategies
Informing and stimulating potential consumers about the existing tourism products thematic route the Wine Road.	Making a set of publicity materials to project a positive image of tourism products.
	Establishing an initial set of criteria for placing advertising in various mediums of communication.
Visibility increasing of tourist natural, ethno-cultural, historical and wine attraction on the Wine Road route.	Electronic means to promote tourism products.
Determination of favorable changes in mentality and habits of potential tourists	Ensuring maximum exposure for touristic route the Wine Road and its tourism advantages.
Evaluate the effectiveness of promotional and communication	Implementation of marketing research using survey techniques to find out tourists' opinion.

### Action Plan for Implementing General Marketing Strategies

It is important to develop the overall marketing strategies into detailed plans and programmes. Although these detailed plans may cover each of the 7 P's, the focus will vary, depending upon specific strategies identified. These plans must therefore be: clear, quantified, focused, realistic and agreed.

The action plan for implementing marketing strategies identified is presented in Table 2.

<sup>6</sup>B a n , M., *Tehnici promoționale și specificul lor în turism*, Editura Economică, București, 2007, p.28

**Table 2** Action plan for implementing marketing strategies

Strategies	Actions
Making a set of publicity materials to project a positive image of tourism products.	Making promotional leaflets and brochures containing a brief description of natural, ethno-cultural, historical and wine attraction on thematic route of the Wine Road
	Making travel itinerary flyers containing presentation of "Wine Road" itinerary.
	Editing a monographic album of the tourist route „ Wine Road”.
	Making a tour guide in English for international communication.
	Establish a calendar of cultural events organized in localities on the route „Wine Road”.
	Mapping of the wine in which will figure the main centers of wine in Prahova County.
	Making a documentary film.
	Production of a video spot.
	Achieving a panel of information in many localities: Filipeștii de Pădure, Florești, Băicoi, Plopeni, Zamfira, Boldești, Bucov, Vărbila, Valea Călugărească, Jercălăi, Urlați, Ceptura, Tohani, Mizil located on the route "Wine Road".
Making outdoor panels mounted on the main roads of Romania.	
Establishing an initial set of criteria for placing advertising in various mediums of communication	Classification according to priority objectives of audience communication accessibility and cost.
	Establish criteria for measuring the impact of advertising
Electronic means to promote tourism products.	Creating a website of tourism itinerary „Wine Road”
	Making a DVD with interactive presentation on the circuit attractions "The Wine Road ".
	Sent by direct mail to tour operators and tourist companies of promotional materials to promote the tourism potential of localities situated on the route "Wine Road".
Ensuring maximum exposure for touristic route "Wine Road" and its tourism advantages	Participation in tourism fairs organized in Romania and other countries.
	Organizing cultural and science events to promote the touristic potential of localities on "Wine Road ".
	Organizing in Tohani, Valea Călugăreasca , Urlați and Mizil, of cultural and artistic events during grape collection.
Implementation of marketing research using techniques tourists opinion poll	Develop a questionnaire to assess the satisfaction of tourists.
	Market survey and analysis results

## Budget Plan

The budget working-out is based on the evaluation of outgoings specific to activities from the action plan. This includes expenses for participation in fairs and exhibitions travel, expenses for organizing cultural events, publicity and advertising expenditure (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Estimating budget expenditure

<b>Nr. crt</b>	<b>Specific expenditure categories</b>	<b>Estimated value (lei)</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Expenses for participation in tourism exhibitions</b>	<b>120.000</b>
1.1.	Develop project execution stand	30,000
1.2.	Rental, construction and spatial planning exhibition	17,000
1.3.	Services for organizing participation in trade fairs	23,000
1.4.	Advertising expenses related events	15,000
1.5.	Studies	10,000
1.6.	Specific marketing activities	25,000
<b>2.</b>	<b>Expenses for organization of scientific, cultural and artistic events</b>	<b>53000</b>
2.1.	Advertising expenses related events	12,000
2.2.	Specific marketing activities	18,000
2.3.	Services on organizing events	23,000
<b>3.</b>	<b>Expenditure on general advertising and advertising activities</b>	<b>82,330</b>
3.1.	Advertising material	72,000
3.2.	Outdoor Panels	1750
3.3.	Information panels	1400
3.4.	Spot	2500
3.5.	Website	1680
3.6.	Documentary film	2000
3.7.	DVD	1000
<b>4.</b>	<b>Expenses for transport, accommodation and meals</b>	<b>62,500</b>
<b>Total cost marketing plan (1+2+3+4)</b>		<b>317,830</b>

The final stage of any marketing planning process is to establish targets (or standards) so that progress can be monitored. Accordingly, it is important to put both quantities and timescales into the marketing objectives and into the corresponding strategies.

## Conclusion

The main recommendations of this marketing plan are to promote natural, ethno-cultural, and historical attraction on thematic route the Wine Road in Prahova county, through advertising materials, development of electronic means of promotion, organization of scientific, cultural, participation in fairs and exhibitions. By implementing this marketing plan, tourism development in Prahova county is expected. Once attracting foreign and Romanian tourists, the expectations are the following:

- increasing the awareness of tourism on the Wine Road itinerary, at the national level;
- increased communication share at least 10%;
- increasing the number of tourists at least 10% during one year.

Stipulated results will be observed by surveys concerning the degree of tourists' satisfaction and an analysis of specific market segments of tourists.

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## Plan de marketing privind dezvoltarea turismului cultural-istoric și vitivinicol în zona Prahova

### Rezumat

*În cadrul politicilor de dezvoltare a produsului turistic din zona Prahova, un aspect important îl are organizarea de circuite turistice pe trasee tematice cum ar fi: Drumul Vinului, Drumul Voievozilor, Drumul Fructelor. În acest scop, articolul de față își propune elaborarea unui plan de marketing care vizează promovarea obiectivelor turistice naturale, etnoculturale, istorice și vitivinicole ale localităților situate pe traseul "Drumul Vinului". Prin aplicarea acestui plan de marketing se așteaptă atât o creștere a numărului de turiști care aleg ca destinație de vacanță sau de week-end un astfel de circuit turistic, cât și o creștere a notorietății acestuia.*