
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Alfonso Marino is Full Professor in the Department of Economic and Business, Faculty of Engineering Second University of Naples, Italy, where he teaches service organisation. His research activities are focused on innovation technology and change management in service sector. He is in a research programme for the Italian regional and national government on business process reengineering and management control. He is the author of books and articles in international journals and conferences.

Introduction

As we enter the 21st century, major transformations are occurring in the delivery of tourism world-wide. The technologies and customer demand are changing the sector. Innovations introduced in the 1990s have already created accumulated effects that will be compounded by the continuous technological progress in the tourism sector.

The demand for tourism services is changing. Many public and private organisations have recognised a potential for adding to tourism supply in areas that were previously not considered attractive destinations for tourists. At a local level, tourism has often been seen as a means of generating economic prosperity, playing a role previously attributed to manufacturing. Additionally, tourism can enable public authorities to achieve a variety of social objectives, such as improving employment opportunities and the physical environment of an area.

As a *first step of a world-wide debate*, it may be underlined that the tourism sector is a complex sector, with both tangible and intangible factors. The physical stock of hotels, means of access, etc. reflect the tangible factors. Intangibility is reflected in the image of an area, visitor attraction.

As a *second step of a world-wide debate*, it may be underlined that the tourism sector must take into account the market mechanism. This perspective must take into account the possibility of alliances between the private and public sectors. Such alliances are particularly attractive for tourism destinations, and are also important because of the diverse social objectives of private and public sector.

This special issue is a compilation of selected papers and has four main themes:

- *Changes and transformations in society:* What will be the changes that occur in the attitude of society towards the idea of tourism? How will these changes impact on the sector? What will be the changes in behavioural patterns concerning the role of public and private organisations? What will be the changes in the needs and expressed desires of customers?

- *Applications of information technologies:* What are the uses of internet, last minute, electronic tourism network? What are the organisational and economic issues and challenges? How can the concerned sector resolve them? How will they impact on and change the shape of actual configuration?
- *Changes in organisational and normative actions:* This element involves a specification of the overall structure into which an organisation fits. Is the tourism sector enmeshed in a political and economic macrostructure which has a co-ordinating and decisive influence over the organisation (the visible hand) as opposed to the private sector which is assumed to respond to a 'rational' allocation of resources (the invisible hand)? The visible hand stresses the concepts of a policy system, and the administration of resources as a collective goal. In this context the political system views the tourism sector as a system where the different institutions can be considered as parts of a whole. In practice, the system is fragmented and there can be considerable conflict between the signals and actions emanating from the different parts. The administration of resources as a collective goal is linked to the concept of public budget. Here two aspects are highlighted. The first is a formal aspect; when the public sector dispenses a sum of money, it can then place special demands on its use. The second is an operative aspect; can a public budget be understood as organisational and normative action?
- *Applications of modern management:* How will applications of modern management techniques, continuous improvements, and organisational restructuring contribute to the efficiency of the tourism sector in the future and improve service delivery?