



FINAL REPORT

Case 10
The Österöd woman
Concept development



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MARKETING CASE ANALYSIS
University of Gothenburg
Ninni Ekman

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Background

Lysekil is a Kommun in Bohuslän, known for its beautiful location by the ocean. The Kommun currently experiences a very active high season during the summer months, with visitors coming from all over the country to see the beautiful environment and eat at one of their many marine restaurants. However, the off season is currently long with low tourism throughout the rest of the year. One of the strategic objectives of Lysekil is to extend the tourist season so that the Kommun attracts visitors all year-round (Lysekil Kommun, 2023). Apart from being a coastal town with an active marine industry, Lysekil is also the discovery site of the Österöd woman, one of the oldest Mesolithic remains found in Sweden. The Österöd woman was discovered just outside of Lysekil in 1903 and her bones are dated to approximately 10 200 BC. This find is fascinating, not only due to the age of the remains but also because the Österöd woman 170 cm tall, 80 years old at her time of death and appears to have had a relatively moderate intake of marine protein despite her discovery location at the coast. Her high age and good health also lead scientists to believe that she held a relatively high status within her society. The fall 2023, SVT will release a documentary about the history of Sweden and the first episode will be dedicated to the Österöd woman. As one of the objectives in Lysekil's destination strategy for 2030 is to provide experiences based on cultural heritage and the history of the area (Lysekil Kommun, 2023), the municipality wants to use this as an opportunity to increase awareness of the Österöd woman and strengthen their destination image and attract visitors.

The main issue of this report is to explore ways to create consumer experiences, related to the Österöd woman, in order to increase tourism in Lysekil during the off season. Studies (Lee & Chang, 2017; Liu et al., 2019; Vada et al., 2019) suggest that experiences play a significant role in developing place attachment which is a crucial aspect of destination marketing and tourism. Creating satisfying consumer experiences is, therefore, of great importance for the development of the area's destination image and the promotion of tourism. Pine & Gilmore (1999) have developed a model which can be used to create satisfying experiences. This model explains satisfaction through the four elements of education, entertainment, escapism and esthetics. Educational experiences aim at providing opportunities for learning and knowledge gain through engaging activities where consumers actively participate to expand their knowledge and require new skills. Escapism refers to immersive experiences where consumers are actively engaged in either a real life or a virtual environment, providing the opportunity to temporarily escape from the mundanities of everyday life (Oh et al., 2007). Unlike the elements of education and escapism, the esthetic and entertainment experiences refer to passive participation where the consumer observes the environment and atmosphere as well as the performances of people around them. These experiences are, however, more immersive than simply seeing or listening to something under ordinary circumstances (Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011; Manthiou et al., 2014). By considering these four elements and including them in the development of a consumer experience, one can create engaging and satisfying experiences which promote a positive destination image and encourage travel intentions.

Alternative Solutions

Fictional series

Film induced tourism is a widely observed phenomenon in literature and destination marketing. The impact of movies, books and TV-series on destination image and travel intentions, have been recognized and researched by researchers such as Croy (2010), Kim & Richardson (2003), Shani et al. (2009) and Tasci (2009). These effects include increased tourism in the area, growth in local revenues and unpaid promotional features (Riley & Van Doren, 1992; Tooke & Baker, 1996; Grihault, 2003; Croy & Walker, 2003; Cousins & Anderek, 1993; Busby et al., 2003; Riley et al., 1998). Notable examples of this could be observed after the release of *Braveheart* which was followed by a 300 percent increase in visitor numbers at Wallace Monument in Scotland, In Rayburn County Georgia which hosts 20 000 film tourists every year following the release of the movie *Deliverance* as well as in the case of the TV-series *Cheers* which generates approximately seven million dollars' worth of unpaid advertisement for Boston (Hudson & Richie, 2006). While the most significant impact of film induced tourism tends to occur shortly after the release of a movie or series, it can also have an enduring effect and Riley et al. (1998) found that a 54 percent increase in tourism was still evident after five years for the 12 cases included in their study. While the upcoming documentary discussing the Österöd woman is expected to generate increased tourism in Lysekil Kommun, the potential of film induced tourism suggests that there might be an even greater unexplored opportunity for exposure. The documentary only dedicates the first episode to the Österöd woman and given the potential of this approach, Lysekil might benefit from collaborating with film-makers or developing a strategy to encourage further films centered around this woman and the area where she lived and was discovered. To reach a younger audience, comic books targeted to children might also be another option for increasing awareness of this topic.

Social, Environmental and Economic aspects

There are great economic benefits associated with this approach. As Beeton (2004) argues, film locations are usually year-round attractions which can draw tourists regardless of weather conditions, offering the potential to expand the tourist season beyond the summer months. The broad socioeconomic appeal of films and television shows also offer an opportunity to expand the demographic of the visitors (Schofield, 1996). This, along with the possibility for significant growth in local business revenues due to film-induced tourism means that this approach carries the potential to generate many benefits for the local economy. It also carries the social benefits of contributing to the preservation of sites and the opportunity to involve locals in creating their own ideas related to the fictional series. There are, however, also some risks and downsides associated with this alternative. While film induced interest might motivate the preservation of sites, there is also a risk that the intrusive form of film induced tourism may threaten the natural environment (Cohen, 2005) and vehicle traffic and pedestrian congestion (Tooke & Baker, 1996) along with disruption of the everyday life of local residents possess further social and environmental risks. Beeton (2001a) also argues that the new film induced tourism risks disenfranchising the budget holiday maker which is another economical drawback. If the image

portrayed in the film does not correspond to the actual experience, there is also a risk of loss of satisfaction due to unfulfilled expectations (Beeton, 2001b).

Games

Film induced tourism is part of a broader concept referred to as media related tourism (Dubois & Gibbs, 2017). This concept covers the impact on destination image and travel intentions attributed to exposure through a variety of media such as films, books, art, music and games. Within the medieval theme, games are a media which has had a major impact on awareness and engagement. Another alternative would, therefore, be to collaborate with game developers to spread awareness of the Österöd woman and promote interest in the stone age similarly to the interest that the medieval time epoch has received. As in the case of film induced tourism, exposure in games have also been shown to have an impact on destination image and travel intentions (Dubois & Gibbs, 2017) and a game set in the environment of Lysekil during the stone age could therefore, also increase tourism in area.

Social, Environmental and Economic aspects

One benefit of this approach is that games such as online games have the opportunity to provide players with a forum for communication. When several players, who may not have known each other previously, play the game together and communicate through this game, it has the potential to result in consumer communities which strengthen the consumer commitment and engagement. It also provides an opportunity for local businesses to benefit from these games by selling products related to the game or hosting exhibitions or events related to them. One downside of this approach, however, is that it does not offer much control over the effects on tourism in Lysekil. People may not be aware of the fact that this is where the game takes place, or they may not be interested in visiting since the area looks completely different today. Those who choose to visit may also just show up and the municipality risks having rather loose control over the time or what visitors do when they are visiting. This can lead to social and environmental drawbacks. There, thus, needs to be some form of plan for how to handle visitors who are encouraged by this approach.

Virtual reality landscape

There is an ongoing project aiming to create a simulation of the area where the Österöd woman was discovered as it looked during the time she lived. This simulation could be used to create a virtual experience giving consumers the opportunity to walk around in the stone age, allowing them to really immerse themselves in the story of this woman by experiencing her surroundings firsthand. This digital service could also allow the consumer to switch between viewing the landscape during the stone age and as it looks today. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the landscape has changed as well as showcase the beauty of Lysekil today for those who have never been there in person, possibly motivating them to visit. This service encompasses the experiential elements of education, escapism and esthetics (Pine &

Gilmore, 1999) as the consumer immerses themselves in a virtual environment, travelling to another time and place, while also learning about the stone age landscape and the changes over time as well as observing the physical attributes of the area past and present. This virtual landscape could be offered as a digital experience accessible on the official visiting website of Lysekil Kommun and could be reached through links on Lysekil's Instagram and other social media accounts, potential webpages dedicated to the Österöd woman and through links attached in YouTube promos. These links have the potential to, not only inform people about the virtual landscape service, but also drive traffic to the official visiting website of Lysekil Kommun where visitors can click their way through the website to other events and attractions of Lysekil. This would hopefully increase awareness of what the Kommun has to offer and thereby attract more visitors. Apart from this digital service, there is also the potential to use this virtual landscape as a tourist attraction by setting up an on-site location where visitors can use VR-glasses to enhance the experience and truly feel as if they were visiting the area during the stone age.

These kinds of virtual tours, utilizing environmental simulations of a destination, are commonly used by marketers as tools for communicating a destination image (Cho & Fesenmaier, 2001; Mackay, 1995). The potential of this approach is the ability to demonstrate what Nelson (1970) refers to as experiential attributes, such as the physical characteristics of a destination. The interactive experience of a virtual tour allows potential visitors to actively participate and explore an area in order to form a destination image before making a travel decision (Cho et al., 2002).

Social, Environmental and Economic aspects

One social and environmental benefit of this alternative is that it does not require people walking through populated areas in order to see the sights, connected to the Österöd woman, since the tour is virtual. One problem that the municipality is faced with is the fact that large numbers of visitors, wanting to see the area where the Österöd woman was discovered, could disturb the local residents. With this approach, it is possible to choose an appropriate location nearby, preferably with some kind of relevance to the subject such as for example the beach where the TV-series was filmed and use this as a starting point. Rather than walking around in populated areas, visitors can move around in this virtual landscape and visit the relevant locations without actually leaving the starting point. The virtual landscape online also means that some of the traffic can be met online alleviating pressure on traffic and emissions related to travel. Potential downsides of this approach are related to the visitor capacity. If too many people are using the digital service at the same time, it can cause disruptions to the quality of the service which negatively affects the consumer experience. For those who choose to visit the on-site location and use the VR-glasses, it can also be problematic since there can only be so many glasses available and there might be a shortage. One potential solution to this problem, however, could be to arrange bookings so that people can reserve a pair of glasses for a limited time when they want to visit.

Events

There is a consensus among researchers and in the literature that events can be powerful tools within destination marketing (Hosany et al., 2017; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013; Triantafyllidou & Siomkos, 2014; Xu & Zhang, 2016; Zenker & Rutter, 2014). As Faulkner (1999) argues, they both expand the portfolio of attractions at the destination as well as offer new opportunities for destination promotion. Various events also have the potential to extend the tourism season (Felsenstein & Fleischer 2003) by offering tourist attractions during the off-season. Events also promote tourism at the destination in general since Riviera et al. (2015) observed that visitors who are satisfied with their experience of the event tend to show an increased willingness to recommend the destination even in its absence. Studies (Ayob et al., 2013; Papadimitriou, 2013; Rivera et al., 2015; Semrad & Rivera, 2018) have shown that visitors who find the event pleasurable, attractive, educational and or knowledgeable are likely to recommend the destination hosting it along with the event itself. Further, it has been observed that tourists, travelling to attend festivals or culture-oriented events, on average, spend more money at the destination compared to other tourists visiting the location (Kim et al., 2007; Volgger et al, 2017). This makes events, such as exhibitions and other events dedicated to the stone age and the Österöd woman, an alternative with the potential to generate revenues for the local businesses in the area (Allen et al., 2005) as well as to promote the destination in general (Kim et al., 2008).

Social, Environmental and Economic aspects

Exhibitions at the event offer social and economic benefits through the opportunity to involve the local community. This type of historical event has also proven successful for raising interest and encouraging engagement within the medieval theme as well as at Ekehagens Forntidsby. This alternative also has the advantage of offering control over the visitor seasons since they can be open on specific dates when the municipality wants to promote tourism. This control helps to manage the potential drawbacks of the approach such as the dependence on available and appropriate locations nearby and the social, economic and environmental impact of increased tourism and emissions due to travel. The municipality, however, needs to discuss to what extent it is feasible to implement this approach and what collaborations might be required in order to make it work.

Recommended solution

Due to the previous success of similar approaches, time horizon and feasibility considerations and the relative control offered to the municipality compared to the other alternatives, events have been chosen, in correspondence with a representative of the municipality, as the recommended solution. Events centered around the stone age in general and the Österöd woman in particular can initially be hosted during limited periods and depending on the success and popularity of these events, the municipality can later discuss the possibility of a more permanent solution similar to that of Ekehagens Forntidsby.

Ekehagens Forntidsby

A prominent example of a similar approach can be found in Falköping where Ekehagens Forntidsby is located. This village was established in 1983 and has hosted many visitors and school trips. Here visitors can walk through different time epochs such as the hunter and gatherer stone age, the bronze age and the iron age and experience how the villages looked as well as how people lived during these epochs. Several reconstructions have been made in order to provide an immersive and authentic experience. The site offers guided tours where tour guides are dressed in period clothing and visitors are allowed to try different techniques and learn practical skills from the different epochs. They get to try archery and paddling, learn old cooking techniques, such as cooking in a hole in the ground, how to set traps, how to make arrows out of flint stone and how to sew their own leather bags. The site also offers cooking classes, scavenger hunts and pentathlons, where contestants can compete in sports and games such as, for example, axe throwing, archery, horseshoe throwing, decoding runic scriptures and identifying herbs. The village also offers archaeological knowledge and visitors can learn about archaeological findings, such as where and how they were discovered as well as their significance to our knowledge of these time epochs, along with different archeological methods for uncovering, preserving, analyzing, reconstructing and dating different finds. Children can also try to find and dig up archaeological finds of their own where plastic finds have been buried by the organizers. These activities provide inspiration and examples of potential activities which have proved popular and might be appropriate to incorporate in this project.

Motivations and factors influencing visitor satisfaction

Tkaczynski & Toh (2014) identified four main categories covering the motivation of consumers to attend culturally themed events. These categories are multiculturalism, escape, people and enjoyment. These include motivations such as learning something new, experiencing culture and history, visiting exhibitions, exploring heritage, escaping the boredom of everyday life, seeking adventure, family bonding, socializing with new people and having fun. A focus on learning, escaping mundanities, spending time with family and participating in fun activities is, therefore, recommended in the promotional efforts marketing the event.

Wan & Chan (2013) identified eight factors which affect visitor satisfaction towards an event. These are location and accessibility, food, venue facility, environment/ambiance, service, size, entertainment and timing. It is worth noting, however, that their study was focused on a food festival and may, therefore, put more emphasis on food than might be observed at other events. These findings also seem to be supported by previous research. The authors further argue that the factor of timing implies that an event might benefit from being hosted during a season with good weather conditions and that visitors prefer that it be held in conjunction with other events as they often would like to have the opportunity to attend several events during their stay. Apart from timing, location has also proved to be important to visitors, who seem to prefer events located near city centers or close to beautiful scenery, architecture or other landmarks. Accessibility was, further, emphasized as a vital criterion for visitor satisfaction as well as

intention to attend the event. Services such as simple and inexpensive transportation and adequate parking are stressed as important issues to take into consideration when organizing an event. Özdemir & Culha (2009) also observed that program related content and the quality and cleanliness of the facilities were the most important attributes in terms of visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Further, Cole & Chancellor (2009) argued that features, such as signage, gifts, children's activities, art and crafts exhibitions and printed programs and schedules, along with amenity features, such as food and beverages, resting places, restrooms and cleanliness, as well as live entertainment were aspects which were highly valued by attendants. Jin & Weber (2016), further, found comprised exhibition destination attractiveness, from a visitor perspective to the five dimensions of accessibility, venue facilities, destination leisure environment, destination economic environment and cluster effect, where accessibility was found to be the most significant followed by venue facilities and leisure environment. These factors should, therefore, be considered throughout the development of the project.

Storytelling

Scandinavia was the most culturally diverse region in Europe during the time period when the Österöd woman lived. She is believed to have carried an approximately half and half combination of eastern and western genes which is symbolic of her place in the middle of this cultural and genetical diversity. In a society which, currently is very focused on celebrating diversity and where many different cultures meet, a perspective that might engage people with this woman's story could be to focus on this aspect of her life and society and relate it to the Scandinavian identity. Modern Scandinavia was formed by different cultures meeting and mixing and learning from each other in order to drive progress and society forward. The Österöd woman is representative of that. Kent (2015) argue that identification is one of the basic concepts of successful storytelling. In order to develop engaging stories storytellers can use identification by unawareness (Kent, 2015) which utilizes imagery, symbols, people, ideas and concepts which resonates with the audience. The idea of a multicultural society where different cultural groups meet and exchange ideas and practices, with all its benefits and challenges, is a concept which might resonate with a large audience in today's cultural and political climate. The heritage of the Österöd woman might also engage people through identification by antithesis which invokes references to shared characteristics and life experiences, allowing the audience to connect with and identify with the main protagonist of the story. As Kent (2015) argues *"Identification is a fundamental technique in storytelling. All stories that resonate with audiences draw upon heroes, villains, places, ideas, and other concepts that an audience identifies with. If a story does not resonate, or has no fidelity to use Fisher's terminology, the story falls short"* (Kent 2015, p. 483). In this case, it might be difficult for consumers to truly connect with the Österöd woman and engage themselves in her story due to the major changes that society has gone through over the long time that has passed since the time that she lived. It is, therefore, important to focus on these aspects of her story which consumers can recognize and relate to.

Practical considerations

There are a number of practical considerations to consider when organizing this type of event. The first important aspect is to decide where the event can be held without causing too much disturbance to the local residents in the area. The location of the event needs to be accessible and allow for parking and potential lodging nearby, as this has been shown to be one of the main factors influencing visitor satisfaction and attendance intentions (Wan & Chan, 2013; Jin & Weber, 2016). It would also be preferable if the event could be held near some of the places of significance to the story surrounding the event such as the area where the Österöd woman was found or the beach where the documentary was filmed. Visitors also seem to prefer attending events close to the city center or to architectural or natural sights so that they can experience these aspects of the destination in connection with the event (Wan & Chan, 2013). The timing is also an important aspect to consider. The nature of the event suggests that it would mainly be held outside, which stresses the importance of good and comfortable weather. Since one of the goals of the event is to extend the tourist season at Lysekil, it may not be optimal to host the event during the summer months since this is the most active tourist season. However, since (Wan & Chan 2013) found that good weather conditions had a significant impact on visitor satisfaction, the event might benefit from being hosted during the early autumn or during the spring months when it is a little warmer than during the winter months.

Another practical consideration is the collaboration with museums in order to obtain material for the event. While the actual remains of the Österöd woman are too fragile to move from their current location at the Gothenburg museum, there is currently an ongoing project aiming to create replicas of these remains. These replicas, along with other material from the stone age would be interesting to include in exhibitions during the event. Event organizers, thus, need to reach out to museums and request loaning relevant material which can be used to provide engaging content for the event attendees. The ongoing project working on a simulation of the area, where the Österöd woman was discovered, during the stone age could also be of interest. If event organizers could be allowed access to this simulation, it could help provide further immersive experiences for the visitors. Further, it might be a good idea to contact Bohusläns Guider, which is an organization providing authorized tour guides within Bohuslän, and establish a collaboration in order to provide guided tours.

Target audience and Involving stakeholders

From literature on the segmentation of event attendants, it can be argued that the average visitor is relatively well educated (Kim et al., 2007; Volgger et al, 2017), that the majority of the visitors will attend the events with their families and that events with cultural orientation can be expected to have a higher degree of women than men attending (Tkaczynski & Toh 2014). Based on the example of Ekehagens Forntidsby, this alternative can also be expected to be of interest to schools, organizing field trips which connects to the strategic objectives of Lysekil municipality to attract a younger target group. The potential target audience should be kept in mind when developing activities at the event. They should also try to include visitors and

potential visitors in the process from an early stage both to encourage engagement and to obtain their input on what they would like to get out of the experience.

Another important aspect of destination marketing in general and events in particular is the challenge to engage the locals. Jago et al. (2003) argue that involving local residents and businesses in an event is crucial for creating a positive experience for visitors and promoting the event and the destination. Houghton & Stevens (2011) also emphasized the importance of engaging the locals and argued that inadequate attempts to do so is one of the main reasons behind unsuccessful destination marketing strategies. The interactions between visitors and local residents are the most effective methods of providing unique and authentic experiences for people attending an event as well as for tourists who are visiting the destination for other reasons (Mikkonen & Lahovuuo 2020). Several studies (Hankinson, 2004; Kavartzis, 2012; Sartori et al., 2012). emphasize the need for involving different stakeholders in the destination marketing and establishing participation-oriented practices where key stakeholder such as local residents, local businesses and potential visitors cooperate to create engaging content. The potential of various forms of user-generated content has been recognized by researchers such as Lim et al. (2012), Munar (2011) and Oliveira & Panyik (2015) and should be considered in all stages of the process from event planning and promotion to evaluation and feedback. Event organizers, therefore, recommend using forums, such as official websites or social media, to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote cooperation between stakeholders (Mikkonen & Lahovuuo 2020). Another method discussed is the use of contests and campaigns in order to engage consumers and businesses and encourage them to get involved in the project. This is also in line with the strategic objectives of Lysekil municipality which aims to include different actors in their projects and stimulate networking and active local participation in destination development (Lysekil Kommun, 2023). The municipality also calls for an open idea archive similar to the suggestion of Mikkonen & Lahovuuo (2020).

Activities

Initial ideas for activities include quiz walks, guided tours, games similar to those at Ekehagens Forntidsby, crafts and simulation walks. Quiz walks and guided tours both provide learning opportunities and might be a more engaging alternative to lectures. This relates to the findings of Ayob et al. (2013), Papadimitriou (2013), Rivera et al. (2015) and Semrad & Rivera (2018) that visitors are more likely to recommend an event and the host destination when they perceive the event as educational and knowledgeable. It also relates to the findings of Allan (2016) that when knowledge gain is an important element to tourism, tourists exhibit stronger place attachment, as well as those of Pine & Gilmore (1999) that satisfaction is determined by the four elements of experience: education, entertainment, escapism and esthetics. Further, visitors can also be taught practical skills which provide greater opportunities to engage with the material. Games and crafts are also fun and entertaining ways to create memorable experiences. This can also be enhanced by memorabilia such as trophies, pictures or the crafts the visitors created themselves. These can also contribute to a sense of pride which results in positive associations. Finally, the virtual simulation, which was one of the alternative solutions, could

be another fun activity offered at the event. This provides an opportunity for visitors to really immerse themselves in the story by experiencing the landscape where it took place. It also relates to the esthetics and escapism dimensions of experience, providing a short escape from this time and place to walk through a landscape as it looked ten thousand years ago.

Digital

The physical event might also be complemented with digital services in the form of tutorials, recorded guided tours and lectures combined with quizzes. This is similar to the digital package offered at Ekehagens Forntidsby and provides educational and fun-filled activities which encourages active participation. This digital package could be of interest to families and individuals as well as offered as an alternative for school classes for whom it is not feasible to visit the physical event. The digital service of the virtual landscape proposed as an alternative solution might also be another option which might add value without requiring physical attendance.

Evaluation

There are various goals related to this project and these goals and the impact of the project need to be evaluated. The main goals of the project are to promote tourism in Lysekil, increase awareness of the destination and the Österöd woman as well as to strengthen a positive destination image. Different methods of evaluating these aspects include measuring event participation through on-site estimates and bookings along with revenues associated with the event. It is also possible to track online traffic numbers at the official website of Lysekil municipality and social media pages related to Lysekil, the event and the Österöd woman as well as engagement from stakeholders in contests and forums. It is also important to relate the impact to the cost of the event and the promotional efforts. Further, feedback and suggestions from stakeholders involved in the forums as well as from consumers on social media platforms and possibly respondents to surveys, electronic or on-site, should be taken into consideration when evaluating the event and planning future events.

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