

PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY OF THE ALBA IULIA FORTRESS

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ABSTRACT: The specific character of The Fortress of Alba Iulia results from its value as an element of historical and cultural patrimony. This value must be kept and brought into prominence, and for this it must be promoted with the help of cultural tourism. This paper presents some issues regarding the promotional strategy of the Alba Iulia Fortress.

Keywords: promotional strategy, cultural tourism

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The cultural tourism has as purpose the sightseeing of those places and activities which define the history and the people, both regarding the past, but also their present. This includes the cultural, historical and natural resources.

The high value of the touring potential of The Fortress of Alba Iulia is given by the great density and variety of cultural-historical symbols, by the monumental aspect with a high urban value of the Vauban fortifications (which can be developed in tourism products with a “reliving the past” flavor), but also by the great adherence of the natives to the values of the cultural tourism.

Touristic offer

Alba Iulia and The Fortress represent a touristic destination known in the country and abroad, thanks to its artificial resources but also to a relatively diverse structure of the touristic offer. As it was previously presented, the historical Fortress of Alba Iulia disposes of a rich cultural patrimony, being endowed with historical monuments and of medieval art, traces from the history of central Europe, Romania and Transylvania.

Within the national tourism market The Fortress of Alba Iulia represents an important component of the national and cultural patrimony, besides other vestiges. From this point of view it is imposed to elaborate a clear positioning strategy and implicit organizing an adequate promoting campaign.

The Fortress of Alba Iulia provides possibilities of developing its tourism potential all through the year. Developing the elements of the existing touristic offer is realized with the help of a technical-material tourism basis. The tourism structures which have a great importance are the reception structures (hotels, villas, pensions, motels), followed by the serving structures and the entertainment means.

Touristic demand

The touristic demand is made up from the ensemble of persons which show their desire to travel periodical and temporary outside their own residence for other reasons besides carrying out some activities which are remunerated at the destination place.

The touristic motivation comprises essentially, needs, impulses, intentions, specific valences and tendencies with personal character, influenced by a lot of factors, such as: the geographic environment, the attitudes towards it and towards own person, the conscious goal as a pragmatic response to the needs.

The tourist's motivation can be structured as follows:

- the social motivation (of affiliation, of adhesion, identifying with others, belonging to the group, cultural community) is identified in the need of the human to search the group, to integrate in this group;
- the cognitive motivation (of knowing, understanding, discovering) is identified in the need to know traditions, customs, trades, history, civilization;
- the repose and strengthening motivation, satisfied through a complex of conditions and means, outside the permanent residence;
- the esthetical motivation expresses the tendency towards beautiful, towards art, towards culture and civilization, towards new landscapes.

The main categories of touristic resources of Alba Iulia generate tourism forms such as:

- cultural study tourism – hint at the tourists which mainly follow their cultural formation.
- congresses and business tourism – it refers to official trips or business interest.

The largest number of tourist comes from Romania, but also from countries of Europe, North America and Asia.

The effective capacity of the tourism market of the Fortress of Alba Iulia is given by the actual number of tourists which visited the touristic objectives within it.

Among the most important touristic objectives are:

- The Union Museum;
- The Union Hall;
- The Route of the Three Fortresses.

On the whole, it can be noticed a decrease of the number of persons which visited the Union Museum in 2003 towards past years, then, being followed by an increase in 2004, 2005 and 2006. In 2006 was recorded the largest number of people which visited The Union Museum in the analyzed period.

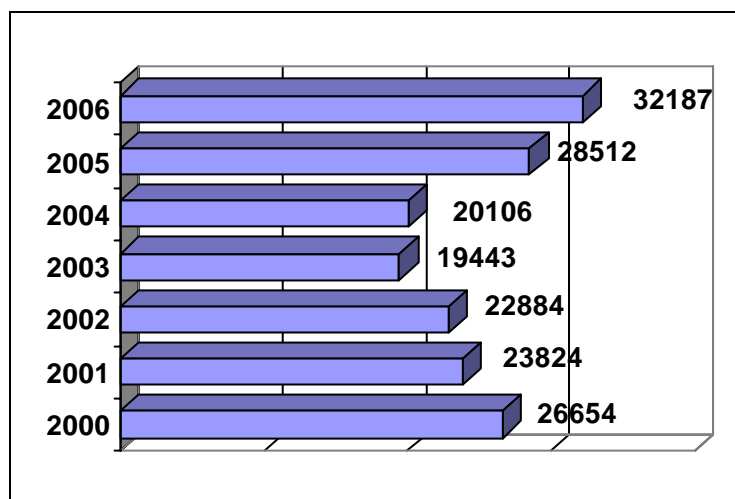


Figure no. 1 - The evolution of the number of tourists which visited The Union Museum in 2000-2006

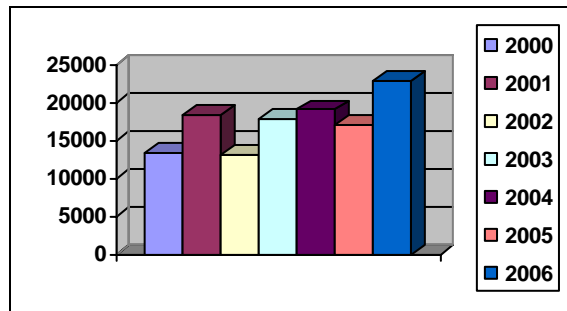


Figure no. 2 - The evolution of the number of tourists which visited The Union Hall in 2000-2006

The Union Hall, whose name is connected with the historical event which took place at December 1th, 1918, has attracted, in 2006, the largest number of tourists from the period 2000-2006 meaning over 20.000 people.

The general interest in touristic promotion of The Fortress

At the end of 2006, a survey was conducted to determine the citizens general interest in touristic promotion of the Alba Iulia Fortress. The persons who took part in the research are persons which manifest a certain degree of interest in touristic promotion of the Fortress.

The interest can reach a variability quite evident and can be developed on a large scale of options: from interest regarding who is going to promote the fortress (what institutions or associations and maybe what key competences are involved), to interest regarding the object of promotion (“what is promoted”), of real ways of promotion (“how is realized the promotion”), or interest rendered in the net profit of the city and direct profit of the person (“what gains the city from promoting the Fortress” and “what I might gain from promoting the Fortress”). Another dimension of the interest, would be expressing the desire to participate in some promotion actions (“I’m interested to participate in some promotion actions”).

In this first section we will present the intensity with which is manifested the interest in promoting, as it was surprised by the direct questions from the questionnaire (Graphic 1)

Most citizens of Alba Iulia are interested in what is promoted within those kind of campaigns, by the elements of the promoting strategy (93,6% are interested more or less).

On the second place, as a large interest object of citizens, we have the analyze of the city’s gain from promoting and turning to good the historical Fortress (88,7% are interested in this aspect). On the third place in the public interest hierarchy, we have the way in which the promotion is done (86,2% declare themselves interested). On the fourth place as interest sphere, we have the institutions and persons which carry on the promotion (76,2%).

On the last places, as public interest in the matter of promotion, comparatively with the previously domains, but also with a high average, are, the so-called, personal interests of citizens, respectively what can each gain from the promotion of the historical Fortress and respectively how much is each interested to participate in the promotion actions. Almost a third of the citizens, interested generally in promoting the fortress, declare themselves uninterested by their potential profit or by their possible involvement.

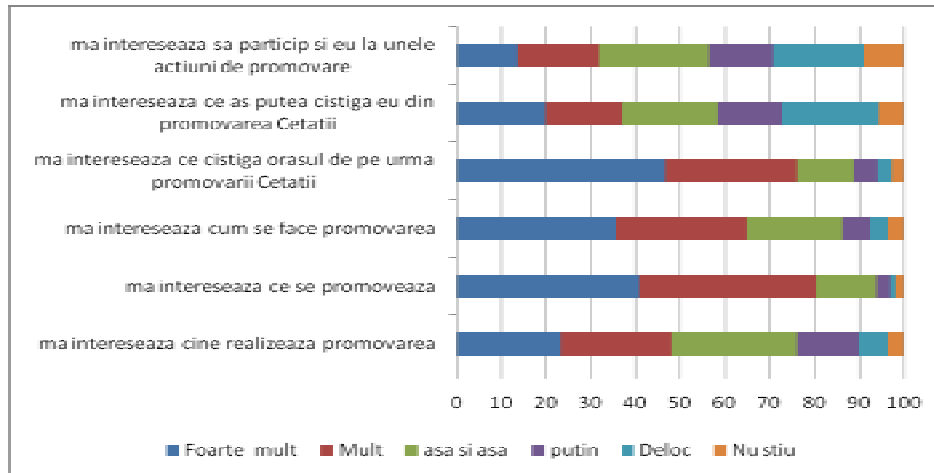


Figure no. 3 Interest degrees for promoting the historical Fortress

The interest has socio-economical determinants, of attitude (leaning towards developing a certain touristic product, developing the artistic product in the detriment of the commercial ones etc.) or of experience (with what touring experiences is the person used to, which are his habits of consuming the cultural product, if he is or is not an opinion leader in the touristic domain within his circle of acquaintances etc.).

The marketing objectives and the elaboration of the marketing strategies for accomplishing those are under the influence of a bunch of variables which change in time. For this reason, these objectives are formulated on short or medium term (2-5 years).

Marketing strategies

For The Alba Iulia Fortress were defined the following objectives of touristic marketing:

1. increasing the visibility The Fortress of Alba Iulia in Romania and on international level;
2. increasing the degree of information of the potential tourists from Romania and abroad concerning The Fortress of Alba Iulia;
3. increasing the satisfaction level of the tourists which visit The Fortress of Alba Iulia;
4. increasing the number of tourists which visit The Fortress of Alba Iulia and stimulating the touristic circulation in this area;
5. developing different tourism forms, especially business tourism, cultural tourism – academic, historical, religious;
6. creating, developing and promoting a brand of The Fortress of Alba Iulia.

Formulating the touristic marketing strategies express the most important decisions which will be made for accomplishing the marketing objectives mentioned above. In order to elaborate those strategies, first it must be defined the touristic image of The Fortress of Alba Iulia.

Starting from the conclusions formulated within the study regarding touristic promotion options of the historical Fortress from Alba Iulia, for the Alba Iulia natives and, as well from the touristic potential offered by the Fortress, this image can be expressed as follows:

- The Fortress of Alba Iulia – Cultural and historical value
- The Fortress of Alba Iulia – Medieval Fortress of the fortresses and fortress of the Great Union
- The Fortress of Alba Iulia – The ideal place for walking due to its “green space” and “natural landscape”
- The Fortress of Alba Iulia – The ideal place for organizing some events.

A fundamental aspect of the touristic marketing strategies is defining the target markets. For this, at first, it should be taken into consideration the diversity of tourists giving markets, namely:

- the local market – represented by the total number of persons from Alba Iulia which could and would be willing to visit The Fortress either in recreation purpose (walking, promenade), either in cognizance purpose (organized groups of pupils from the learning institutions of the city);
- the national market - represented by the total number of people which could visit The Fortress of Alba Iulia, practicing tourism forms such as: business tourism, cultural tourism, week-end tourism or just transiting the city. This public category might be, as well, classified in:
 - national visitors interested in cultural tourism, history and patrimony (groups of specialists in art, history, architecture, patrimony etc.);
 - “business” tourists, taking part in fairs, conferences, training programs – groups of children or students which come for history or art lessons or for special events;
 - national tourists which want to spend a short vacation in an interesting environment.
 - the international market – consists of the main tourist given countries at a global level (Germany, England, Japan, Sweden, Denmark, Italy, France, Spain, Switzerland), as well as from countries which most tourists which visited the country in the last years belong to (Italy, Hungary, Austria, Germany, France, Poland, United Kingdom etc.). This public category consists of:
 - foreign visitors interested in cultural tourism, history and patrimony;
 - foreign tourists which visit Romania and which make a break in Alba Iulia and surroundings.

Promotional strategy

The key element of the promotional strategy is represented by the elaboration of the communicational message. From a technical point of view, the message consists of three components: the decalogue, the permanent message and the brand.

The decalogue is represented by that ensemble of motivational factors and values which determine the potential tourist’s decision to visit the Alba Iulia Fortress and represents the central element of the global message.

In the case of the Alba Iulia Fortress the proposed decalogue may be the following:

- Alba Iulia Fortress – Fortress of the Great Union, because here was realized the Great Union of 1 December 1918.
- Alba Iulia Fortress – Medieval Fortress, of Vauban type, one of the best preserved from Romania and Europe, until now.

The permanent message – represents the “motto” which synthesizes the motivational factors and the specific values of Alba Iulia Fortress as a touristic attraction place and might be formulated as follows: The Alba Iulia Fortress – “Breathe the Air of History”.

The brand – represents a graphic element which ensures the identity and differentiation on the market. It must be presented within all promotion actions. In the design of the brand there must be taken into consideration the following elements:

- The characters used – there can be used Latin, medieval characters or “book antiqua fonts”.
- The colors – brown, ochre shades which will induce the feeling of old, medieval; green, blue shades which will induce the fact that is a peaceful place, ideal for walking, resting or spending free time.
- The symbol – the hexagonal shape of The Fortress.

The promotional techniques of The Alba Iulia Fortress, proposed to be used, are:

- (a) Advertising on:
 - Internet – developing a web site of the Fortress on which one can find the entire tourism offer that is to the disposal of tourist ;
 - Outdoor publicity – 2 advertising banners placed at the two entries of the city with the purpose of attracting tourists which transit the city;
 - TV – conceiving and broadcasting a TV spot which will be broadcasted at national level (it can be taken into account the spot’s broadcast on the informative and cultural channels such as Discovery, History Channel, Travel and Living);
 - Publicity by brochures, advertising materials which will be spread in tourism agencies, tour-operators and in touristic information centers.
 - (b) Taking part in fairs and exhibits
 - Projecting and building a stand which will be used at tourism fairs (The National Tourism Fair organized biannual in Bucharest, The International Tourism Fair from Berlin).
 - (c) Public relations
 - Organizing some events with a medieval specific or which shall recreate the atmosphere of The Great Union from 1 December 1918.
 - (d) Including the Fortress of Alba Iulia within some international networks of touristic promotion
 - Promotion with the help of tour-operators and of tourism agencies on the European and international tourism market;
 - Including The Fortress of Alba Iulia within some European and international touristic routes (Cultural Itinerary – project developed by the European Council; Culture 2000 – project initiated by the European Union).
- All of these elements must prove the historical and cultural value of the Fortress.

Expected results

After implementing the actions from the marketing plan there are expected to be obtained the following results:

A: Increasing the number of tourists which visit The Fortress of Alba Iulia and increasing the length of the touristic sojourn by improving and diversifying the touristic offer and promotion modalities;

B: Increasing the visibility of The Fortress of Alba Iulia in Romania and abroad;

C: Increasing the notoriety of the brand of The Fortress of Alba Iulia;

D: Improving the image of the city in Romania and abroad;

E: The economical development of the entire Alba County (by positioning the city as a socio-economical developing pole of the county and as factor of demographical attraction) by developing the touristic industry and increasing the living standard of the citizens.

F: Creating jobs in tourism and horizontal and vertical industries at the level of a large territorial area which, for the first three years will comprise the area of Alba county and Centre Region and, in the next 10 years will comprise interregional territorial areas.

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