

MASTER IN MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS

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Dounia Beldjord

**THE RELEVANCE OF THE ELABORATION OF A MARKETING
PLAN FOR TOURISM DESTINATIONS**

FINAL MASTER PROJECT

Academic tutor prof. Giovanni Pietro Cavalli



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI

Vila-seca

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Abstract

This research study aims to evaluate the importance of establishing a marketing plan in tourism destinations. First, a bibliographic section was dedicated to point out scholars' opinions about the importance of the marketing plan and different concepts related to it. Second, a quantitative research was carried out with professionals in the tourism sector in order to affirm the hypothesis. Lastly, a marketing plan of Alella has been established, involving the different concepts discussed in the theoretical and practical part.

Resumen

Este estudio de investigación tiene como objetivo evaluar la importancia de establecer un plan de marketing en los destinos turísticos. Primero, se dedicó una sección bibliográfica para señalar las opiniones de los autores sobre la importancia del plan de marketing y diferentes conceptos relacionados con este tema. En segundo lugar, se realizó una investigación cuantitativa con profesionales del sector turístico con el fin de afirmar la hipótesis. Por último, se ha establecido un plan de marketing de Alella que involucra los diferentes conceptos tratados en la parte teórica y práctica.

Key words: Marketing plan, destination marketing, tourism planning, Destination Management Organizations (DMO's), Alella.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism represents an essential source of income for many countries of the world. It has been emerging within the last decades, even though the COVID 19 pandemic in 2020, impacted the global tourism demand, consequently, its expansion has been affected. (Vărzaru & Bocean, & Cazacu, 2021)

Destination marketing has the potential force of transforming destinations, reversing the crises impacts, increasing the awareness and competitiveness of destinations, and improving their image. In addition, it has the ability to create partnerships between the public and private tourism sectors (PPPs) and let travel agencies and tour operators always informed about destinations as well as potential opportunities. Moreover, destination marketing can maintain or create a public for destinations, adapt places to current trends. And, a return on investment on marketing funding can be produced. (Morrison, 2013)

The benefits of marketing in tourism destinations that are mentioned above, clearly demonstrate how crucial it is to invest on marketing actions. However, the point of interest of this study is to examine the necessity of carrying out a planning process, which will precede the implementation of marketing actions. To this end, this paper aims to analyze the relevance of elaborating a marketing plan for tourism destinations. Likewise, this study will also focus on the level of importance of the different actors involved in the marketing plan elaboration. As well as, determining the key points for its realization.

For this purpose, this study will be structured in five sections. The first section consists of a theoretical framework, in which a set of relevant concepts will be defined, according to several authors. At the meantime, a survey in relation with those concepts and the main thematic will be carried out, and shared with professionals from the tourism sector. Thus, to approve or disapprove the following hypothesis:

It is important to elaborate a marketing plan for a tourism destination.

In the second section, the methodology used for this research paper will be explained, including the way that the questionnaire were sent to the participants, the sample used, and the questions will be enumerated. With respect to the third section, or the findings section, the results of the study will be shown and illustrated into graphics. Each graphic will be commented, as well as the indicators used and measured. The fourth section will be dedicated to conclusions, related to both of the answers of the professionals contacted, and

the bibliographical analysis, to finally, see if the hypothesis is correct or not, according to this study.

For the fifth and last section, as a sample, a marketing plan will be elaborated for Alella, part of the Maresme Coast (Costa Maresme), as a tourism destination. This destination has been chosen, as well as the topic of the thesis in general, thanks to the internship I have done with Propheta SLU. It increased my interest on destination marketing management. Moreover, it gave me the opportunity to work in collaboration with professionals from the private and public sectors, for elaborating the marketing plan of Alella, and, to conduct this study efficiently.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of tourism destinations has been interpreted in different ways by scholars. It is viewed “as an amalgam of individual products and experience opportunities that combine to form a total experience of the area visited” (Murphy & Pritchard & Smith, 2000, p.44) as well as it has been defined by Ritchie (1993) as “a package of tourism facilities and services, which like any other consumer product, is composed of a number of multi-dimensional attributes”. (Murphy & Pritchard & Smith, 2000, p.44)

Moreover, a tourism destination has plenty of characteristics. It is a geographic area, which can be a city, a territory, a region, or an individual country. It must be a place where visitors find overnight accommodations as well as other facilities, such as transports, restaurants, events, and attractions, which is called being a destination mix. In addition, a destination must have a marketing strategy, a coordinating organization structure, laws and regulations and a variety of tourism stakeholders. (Morrison, 2013)

Furthermore, it is necessary to mention that each destination has its own evolution, Butler (1980) created a model named TALC model, it describes, the concept of destination Life Cycle. Butler asserts that every tourism destination goes through a cycle of evolution that he illustrated in an S-shaped curved to define the different stages that tourist areas are passing through (Image 1). There are six stages, the exploration stage, involvement stage, development stage, consolidation stage, stagnation stage, and decline or rejuvenation stage. (Martin & Uysal, 1990). While analyzing a destination, it is crucial to consider in which stage it is, to make decisions about the strategy to adopt. (Butler, 2006)

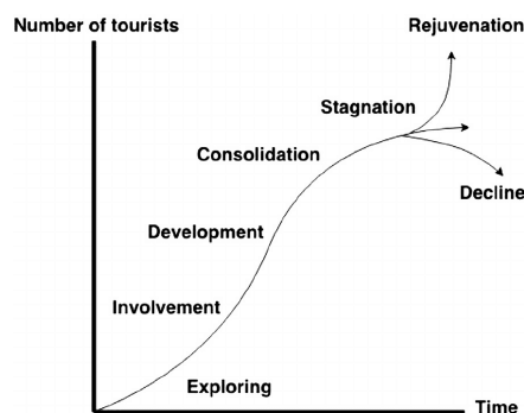


Image 1: Tourist Area Life Cycle (Butler, 1980)

The exploration stage has very few tourists because of the lack of tourist's facilities and attractions. During the involvement stage, the destination starts to create an offer and to provide facilities for its visitors. The development stage is characterized by an increase in the number of visitors, an improvement in the offer, and a market area that is well-defined. In the consolidation stage, tourism becomes a significant part of the local economy, the number of tourists continues to rise, marketing and efforts made to manage the destination will be made. As the stagnation stage is entered, the maximum number of visitors that can receive the destination is reached, the load capacity limits of the destination are exceeded, the destination is no longer considered as a fashion even if it has a well-established image. In the decline stage, the destination is no longer competitive, there is a decrease in the number of visitors, and a declining market. Finally, a rejuvenation stage can be reached, which cannot be occurred without making changes in the tourist attractions. If good decisions are taken, the destination can reposition itself, increase investments and attract tourists again. (Butler, 2006)

For the sake of success, the usage of tourism destination's resources is critical to get the maximum value. (Djurica, 2010) Marketing is crucial to boost the tourism industry. Tourism marketing can be conceptualized as the identification as well as the prediction of tourist's needs, coordinating their demand with tourism products and services and communicating the facilities available with the aim of motivating them to visit the destination. (Ebrahimzadeh & Yari, 2013)

Tourism products according to the Tourism System Gunn's model (1988), are defined "as a complex consumptive experience that results from a process where tourists use multiple travel services during the course of their visit (information, transportation, accommodation, and attraction services)" (Albayrak & Caber & Aksoy, 2010, p.140).

Additionally, from a marketing point of view, it is considered "as whatever aims to cater to tourism needs and is promoted in the marketplace" (Xu, 2010, p.608). Consequently, marketers must be aware of what are the elements of tourism products, including tangible and intangible ones. (Xu, 2010). Tangible elements are viewed as the products that a destination has to offer to its visitors. While intangible elements are considered as the services provided to tourists. (Albayrak & Caber & Aksoy, 2010)

As mentioned previously, tourism products have different characteristics, for this reason marketing has a more complex role comparing to other sectors, a destination does not have to sell only products, but also, experiences to its visitors. To inform tourists about the

products and services offered by a destination, it is undoubtedly essential to use with effectiveness tourism marketing tools. (Ebrahimzadeh & Yari, 2013)

The main professionals responsible of destination's marketing effectiveness and efficiency are called Destination Management Organizations (DMO's). The main goal of these organizations is to ensure that tourism has a positive effect on the destination, by adopting the appropriate approaches as well as the adequate marketing tools and techniques. DMO's are responsible of the coordination and the lead of the destination development process, in a competitive and sustainable perspective. DMO's are defined by the World Tourism Organization (2004) as the institutions in charge of the destination's management and/or marketing. (Morrison, 2013)

DMO's have two main functions: External Destination Marketing (EDM) and Internal Destination Development (IDD), each function consists of different activities. (Image 2), the EDM function consists of the activities that have the objective of attracting tourists to the destination. They are categorized as "external" since they are implemented to influence people's actions outside the destination. Internal Destination Development (IDD) applies to all other activities, including marketing, which DMO's oversee in order to develop the tourism destination. It is viewed as "internal" because those activities are undertaken in the destination. This function requires the involvement of the different stakeholders, one of the main roles of DMO's within this function is to coordinate these stakeholders. (Presenza & Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005)

External Destination Marketing Activities		Internal Destination Development Activities	
Web Marketing	e ₁	Visitor Management	i ₁
Events, Conferences and Festivals	e ₂	Information / Research	i ₂
Cooperative Programs	e ₃	Coordinating Tourism Stakeholders	i ₃
Direct Mail	e ₄	Crisis Management	i ₄
Direct Sales	e ₅	Human Resources Development	i ₅
Sales Blitzes	e ₆	Finance and Venture Capital	i ₆
Trade Shows	e ₇	Resource Stewardship	i ₇
Advertising	e ₈	Quality of the Visitor Experience	i ₈
Familiarization Tours	e ₉		
Publications and Brochures	e ₁₀		

Image 2: Summary of the Activities of the DMO Categorized as Either EDM or IDD (Presenza & Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005)

It is necessary to point out that the most connected and central actors in the network are DMO's. (Timur & Getz, 2008). DMO's have the role of being the tourism sector's leaders in their specific geographic area, and coordinate the contribution of each tourism stakeholder.

DMO's leadership in tourism marketing is needed, it must be the cheerleaders that stakeholders will follow. They are the source of tourism marketing's programs and ideas, as well as innovators. In addition, their leadership role consists of assisting, informing

tourists and promoting agendas aiming to build a sustainable tourism development in tourism destinations. (Morrison, 2013)

Tourism destination's success depends on the efforts of different groups of stakeholders, maintaining continuous communication between them is a key point to be able to take adequate strategic decisions. There are five groups of tourism stakeholders that must be involved in destination management, including, tourists, tourism sector organizations, community, environmental groups and governments. (Image 3) (Morrison, 2013)

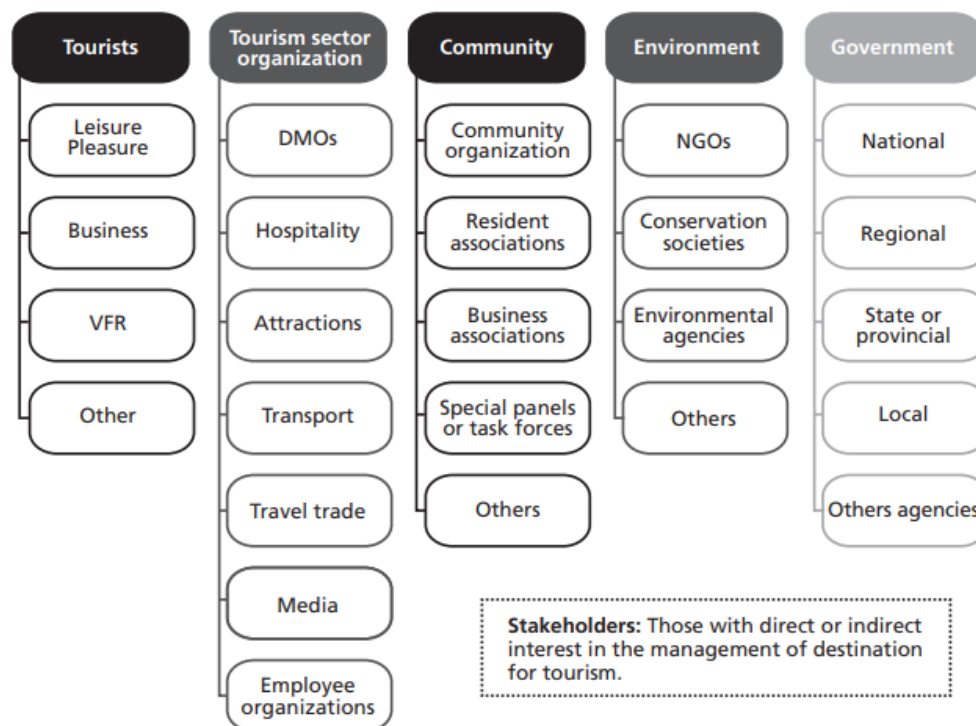


Image 3: Stakeholders in destination management. (Morrison, 2013)

Another critical characteristic for a successful destination is the participation of both public and private sectors. In fact, both parties are essentials, the public sector is resource oriented, while the private sector is market oriented. (Soteriades, 2012) Additionally, a public-private partnership (PPP) is necessary, so that DMO's can develop Destination Management Systems (DMS) with high performance. A Destination Management System is defined "as an interactively accessible set of computerized information about a destination" (Martins & Carneiro & Pacheco, 2020, p.1288). The World Tourism Organization (2010) asserted that PPP's approach is successful for DMO's. (Martins & Carneiro & Pacheco, 2020)

One of the major responsibilities of DMO's are the promotion of destinations and budgeting. (Dore & Crouch, 2003). To implement promotion tools such as sales promotion, direct

marketing, personal selling, advertising, and public relations, DMOs have first to develop a marketing plan. (Presenza & Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005)

The marketing plan has been described as “the central management tool for approaching and achieving integrated marketing planning. It outlines objectives and goals as well as every aspect of a future marketing activity”. (George, 2021, p.171)

Briggs (2001) pointed out the relevance of a marketing plan by asserting that it is a step that helps to coordinate marketing activities and aims to increase the efficiency of the whole process as well as saving money.

In addition, McCarthy (1960) stated that in the heart of a marketing plan are located the main elements of the marketing mix, which are critical to identify client’s needs. Those elements are called “the four Ps”, as each element starts with the letter “P”, as follows: Product, Price, Place and Promotion. (George, 2021) However, in the tourism industry, the four Ps have been raised to eight Ps, due to its complexity, and for obtaining a deepest knowledge of the nature of tourism products and services. The four added P’s factors are programs, packaging, partnership, and person. (Kumarasinghe & Damunupola, 2019)

Marketing’s integration in tourism planning gives a unique form of energetic relations between tourism marketing planning, and tourism destinations. It allows to build an efficient planning approach, where marketing is responsible of adjusting the changing needs of tourism regions. To this end, tourism marketing planning is not seen as a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, but as a dynamic process that aims to improve tourism planning and, accordingly, the region’s tourism performance. The authors have done a study that aims to analyze the role of marketing in tourism planning, and the empirical results confirm that marketing have a crucial role in tourism planning. (Ketter & Mansfeld & Avraham, 2016).

Tourism marketing is represented by the continuous and consistent efforts of DMO’s in developing, formulating and implementing efficient strategies, to be able to give tourists memorable experiences. (Soteriades, 2012)

To improve the effectiveness of destination marketing, scholars have proposed innovative approaches. Edgell et al. (1999), suggested an approach that aims to increase the quality of the marketing process in the tourism sector, as well as its efficiency and effectiveness. It is an approach made of six steps, to strategic marketing planning. It consists of, research and analysis, creative infusion, strategic positioning, the development of a marketing plan, also, training, implementation, evaluation and adjustment. (Soteriades, 2012).

Considering this approach, scholars have developed a conceptual framework that demonstrates the pillars of destination marketing effectiveness. (Image 4)

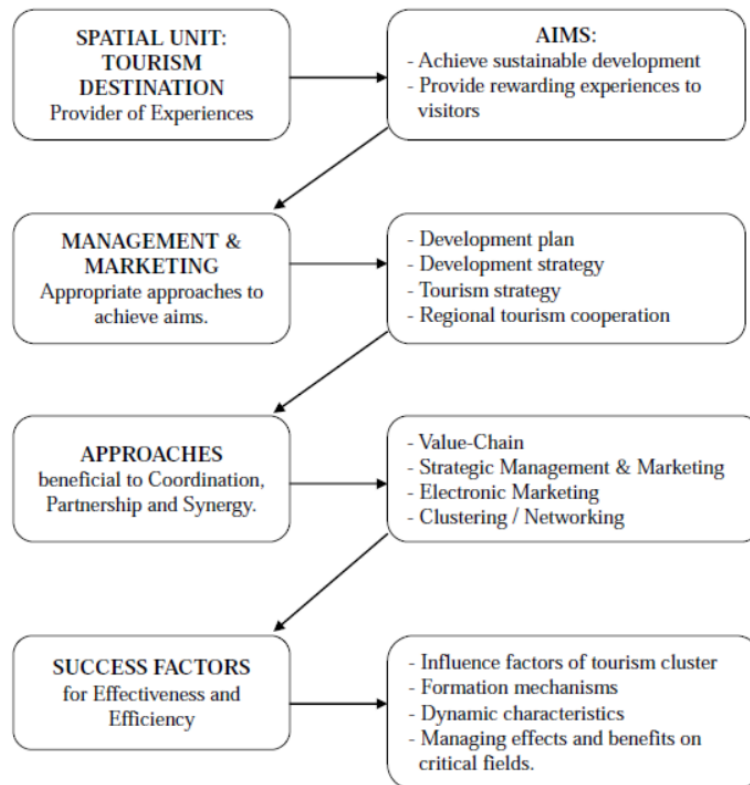


Image 4: Destination marketing effectiveness: a conceptual framework (Soteriades, 2012)

The marketing plan of tourism destinations is composed of several marketing activities, the implementation of those activities is fundamental to get an efficient marketing plan that responds to the global tourist environment's challenges. The different activities consist of the steps mentioned below. (Djurica, 2010)

- Keeping informed continuously about the marketing environment's changes of the tourism destination.
- Mission, vision, and values formulation.
- SWOT Analysis.
- Situation Analysis.
- Selection of the target market for the tourism destination.
- Market Segmentation.
- Positioning, branding and image of the tourist destination.
- Competitor's destinations.
- Action plan and strategic lines formulation.
- Control and product improvement areas.

Furthermore, an efficient and effective marketing strategy for a destination requires the three elements below. (Soteriades, 2012)

- Continuous tracking of information that are relevant and accurate.
- Adequate management support. (Such as establishing an appropriate marketing plan)
- Establishing a system of evaluation to be sure that the marketing strategy fits with the dynamic environment.

Planning allows tourism destinations to get a clear vision of its future, and to get a strategic approach that will help managers to adapt it easily to the marketing environment's changes. Analyzing the marketing environment is the key factor for a destination to respond to the needs of tourists better than its competitors. (Djurica, 2010)

Marketing environment's information can be gathered by searching on the web and or from commercial data bases. Afterwards, information can be used to analyze the marketing environment. The main objective of analyzing the environment is to discover opportunities. Consequently, a SWOT analysis is required. It consists of analyzing the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats of the tourism destination. This tool permits to define the best opportunities, which is essential to satisfy the destination's visitors. Moreover, it enables to take decisions that will develop efficiently the tourism destination. Lastly, identifying the weaknesses which means having an idea about the tourism destination's vulnerability degree, compared to its competitors. (Djurica, 2010)

In conclusion, tourism destinations and its characteristics have been described, the different stages of tourism destination's lifecycle have been highlighted, followed by defining the importance of marketing in tourism destinations, as well as the diversity and complexity of tourism products. Then, DMO's different roles and responsibilities have been analyzed. Finally, the relevance of having a marketing plan to successfully develop of a tourism destination has been supported by many scholars, therefore supporting the research objective, and affirming the hypothesis.

3. METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework has been carried out to provide a deep knowledge of all the concepts and elements related to the elaboration of the marketing plan, as well as the relevance of its implementation in tourism destinations. The different authors from the bibliographical analysis confirm that the marketing plan plays an essential role in tourism destinations' planning.

Additionally, my internship in the marketing department of Propheta SLU, allowed me to collaborate with Alella Tourism Office, as well as entities from the private sector in preparing the marketing plan for the destination. I have attended different conferences during my internship that were directly related to the topic of my thesis, the first one was organized in Mataro, it was the presentation of the marketing plan of Costa Maresme, as Alella is part of it. The objective of the second conference, in Alella Tourism Office, was to analyze the priorities of the different stakeholders and to determine an action plan.

I had the opportunity to meet the organizers and share the subject of my thesis and invite them to participate into my research. Furthermore, I carried out quantitative research by sending a survey to professionals in the private and public tourism sectors. The objective of my analysis was to acquire the opinions of tourism professionals regarding the different topics that have been discussed in the academic section, to further support the initial hypothesis.

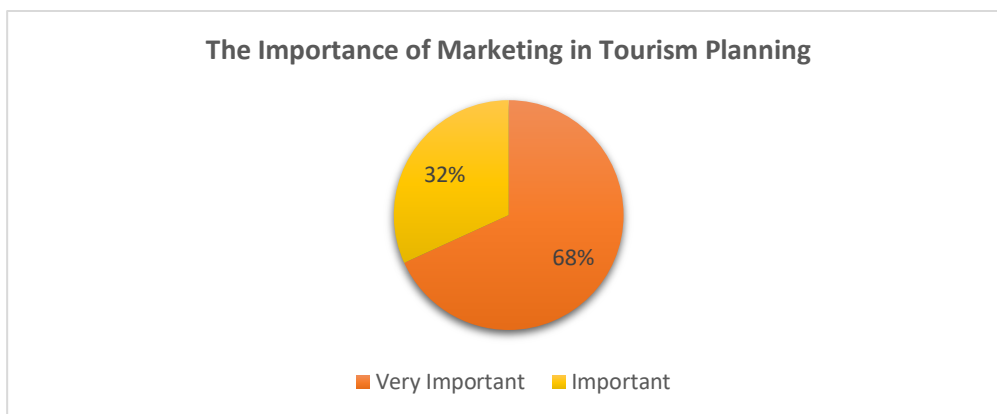
The survey has been carried out with Google Forms and has been sent via e-mails and Linked-In. The e-mails did not contain only the link to the survey, but also a clear explanation and details about the investigation. Before delivering the questionnaires, my tutor and I have done a test to see if all questions were understandable for the interviewees, we made some changes in the questionnaire wording, and calculating the time needed for answering it. The questionnaire was going to be answered between five and seven minutes, and have been distributed in both English and Spanish, for a better understanding.

To obtain responses at an international level, several destination managers were contacted by Linked-In and were sent a personalized message, pointing out all necessary information.

The questionnaire was completely anonymous and contained seven closed questions. The respondents had to rate on a five-point Likert scale from “not important at all” to “very important”. 25 surveys were sent, and 22 answers were received, below the questions asked:

4. FINDINGS

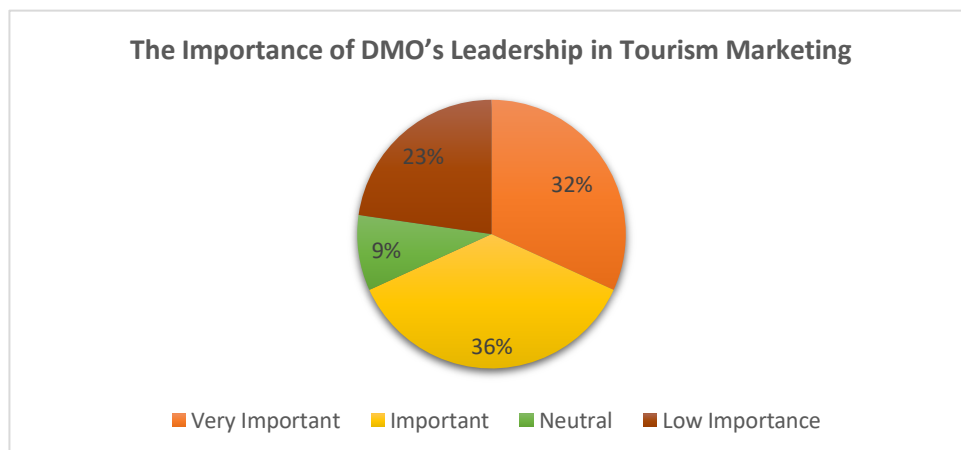
Results show that most of the participants agree on the importance of the elements that have been cited on the theoretical framework, consequently, it approves the hypothesis of this study. All of them mentioned that marketing plays an essential role in tourism planning, as it is incorporated to this latest. And the marketing plan has been recognized as a key element for tourism destinations.



Graphic 1: The Importance of Marketing in Tourism Planning.

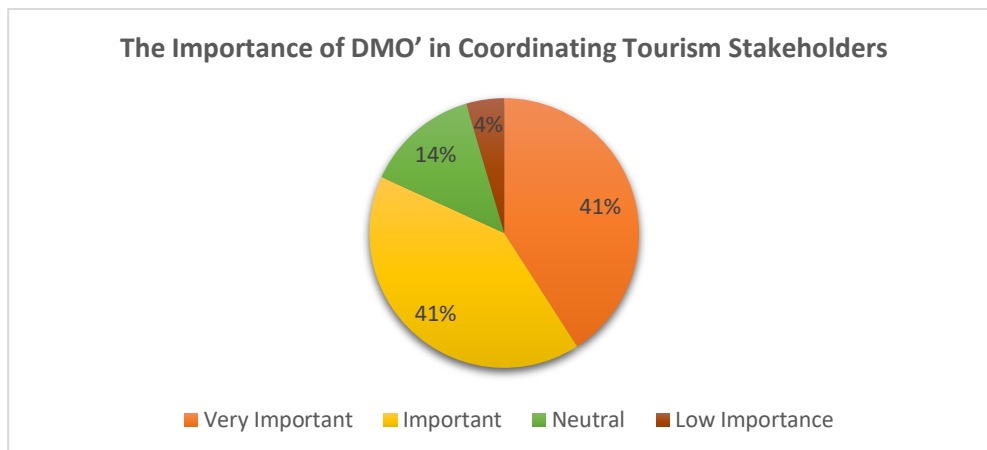
The graphic above shows that (68%) of participants, that represent exactly 15 over 22, rated the relevance of marketing in tourism planning as very important for tourism destinations. In addition, the rest, 32% or 7 participants, agreed that it is important. None of them mentioned that it was neutral, with low importance or not important at all. (Graphic 1)

The second question of the survey was dedicated to the different roles of Destination Management Organizations (DMO's), participants had to rate the importance of six roles that have been listed in the questionnaire.



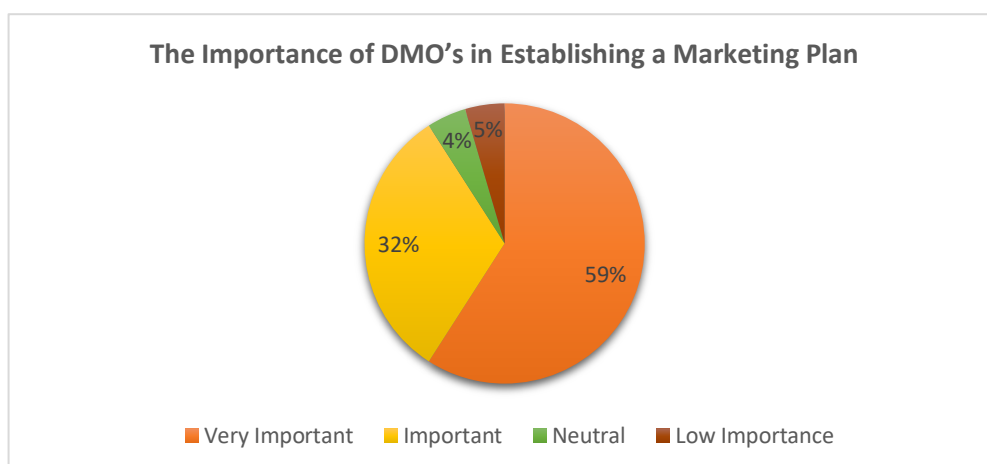
Graphic 2: The Importance of DMO's Leadership in Tourism Marketing.

The second graphic (Graphic 2) illustrates that 32% of the participants, or 7 professionals, pointed out that it is very important that DMO's play the role of leaders in tourism marketing, followed by, 36%, which is the higher percentage that represent 8 persons, asserted that it is important. However, 23% of the rest, which means 5 participants, believed that it has a low importance. And, the two last ones, 9%, asserted that it is neutral.



Graphic 3: The Importance of DMO's in Coordinating Tourism Stakeholders.

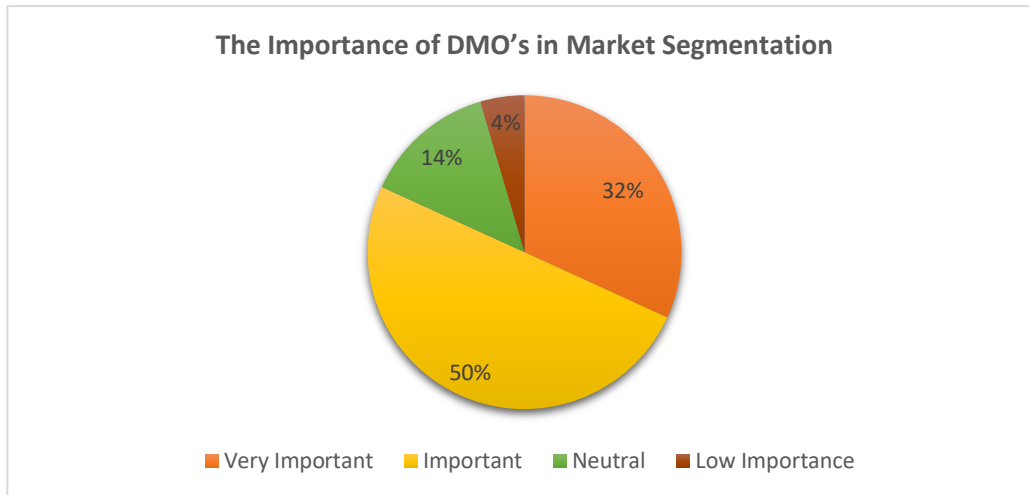
Graphic 3 above highlights that, 41% of participants, 9 out of 22, asserted that the role of DMO's in coordinating tourism stakeholders is very important. In addition, the same number of participants mentioned that it is an important role that DMOs carry out. On the other hand, 14% contended that it is neutral, and only one participant noted that it has a low importance.



Graphic 4: The Importance of DMO's in Establishing a Marketing Plan.

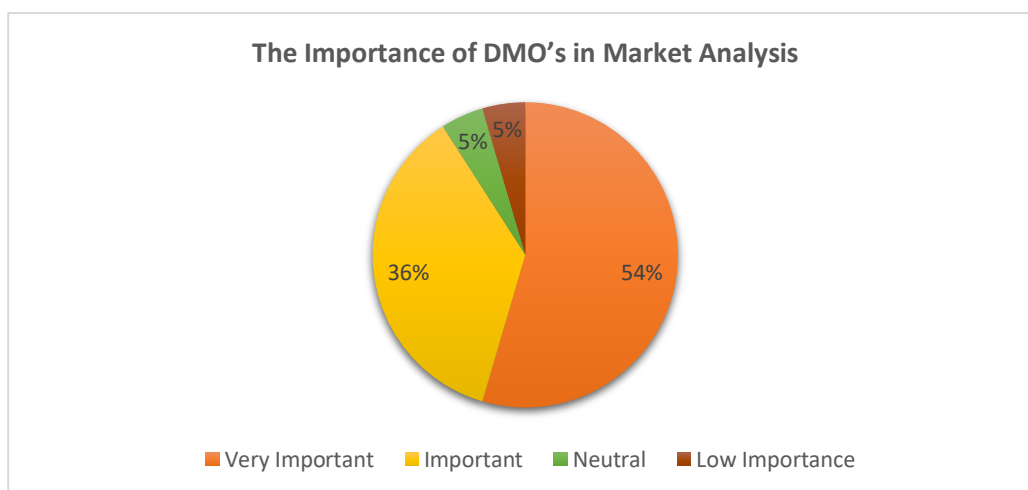
In this latest graphic (Graphic 4), it is illustrated that more than half of the participants, 59% or 13 participants, confirmed that preparing the marketing plan is a very important role of DMOs, followed by 7 participants or 32%, who stated that it is important. The two last

participants mentioned that it is neutral (5%), and that it has a low importance (5%). Those have justified their answers by saying that although the elaboration of a marketing plan is very important, this task could be in some cases the responsibility of other entities.



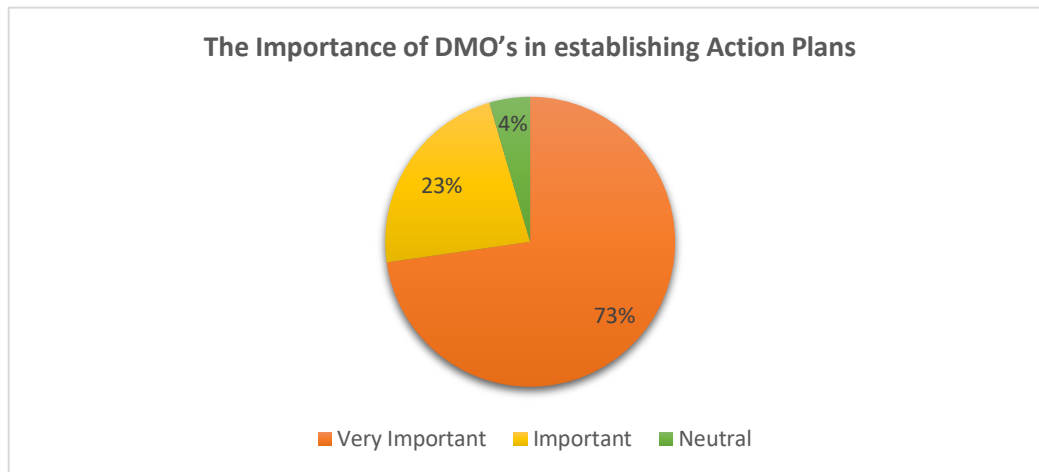
Graphic 5: The Importance of DMO's in Market Segmentation.

The responses illustrated in the graphic above (Graphic 5), indicate that 32% of professionals, or 7 of them, pointed out that market segmentation is very important as a role of DMOs. 50% or 11 participants asserted that it is important. 14% or 3 out of the total believed that it is neutral and the rest, or only one participant pointed out that it has a low importance.



Graphic 6: The Importance of DMO's in Market Analysis.

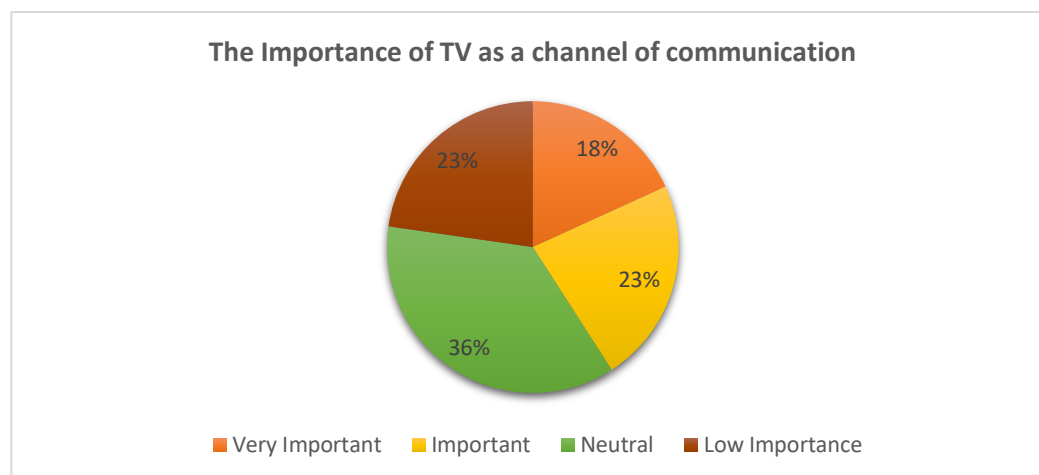
The illustration above (Graphic 6) shows that most participants or 55% (12 out of 22) revealed that market analysis is a very important role of DMOs. After that, it can be noticed that 36% or 8 of them mentioned that it is an important role. Besides that, one of them chose that it is neutral and another asserted that it has a low importance.



Graphic 7: The Importance of DMO's in establishing Action Plans.

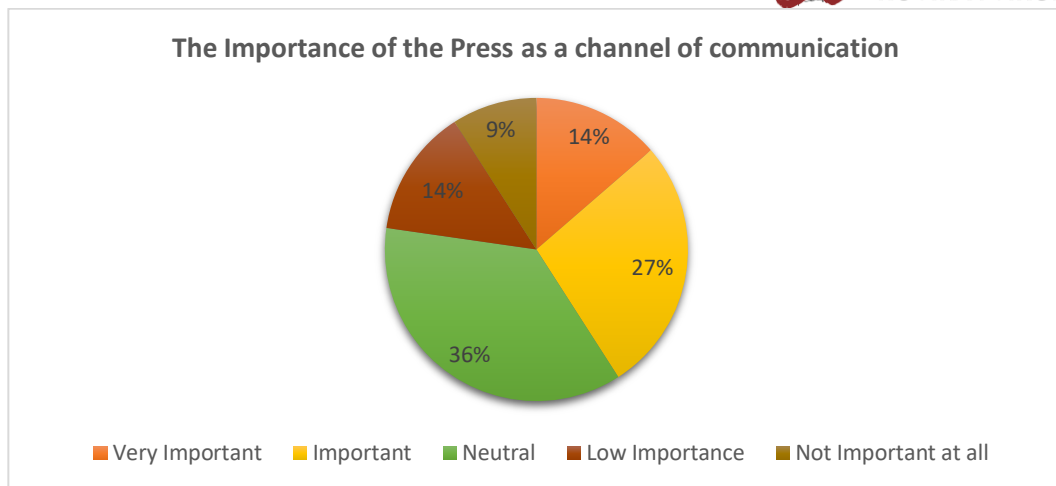
Establishing action plans is the last role of DMOs listed in the second question of the survey. As highlighted above (Graphic 7), 73% or 16 participants pointed out that it is a very important role while 23% or 5 of the professionals involved in this research claimed that it is an important role. One participant that represents 5% of the sample mentioned that it is neutral.

The third question of the survey aims to analyze the level of importance of six different channels of communications, which are, TV, Press, Radio, Web, Social Medias and PR. Following this order, the results will be shown below.



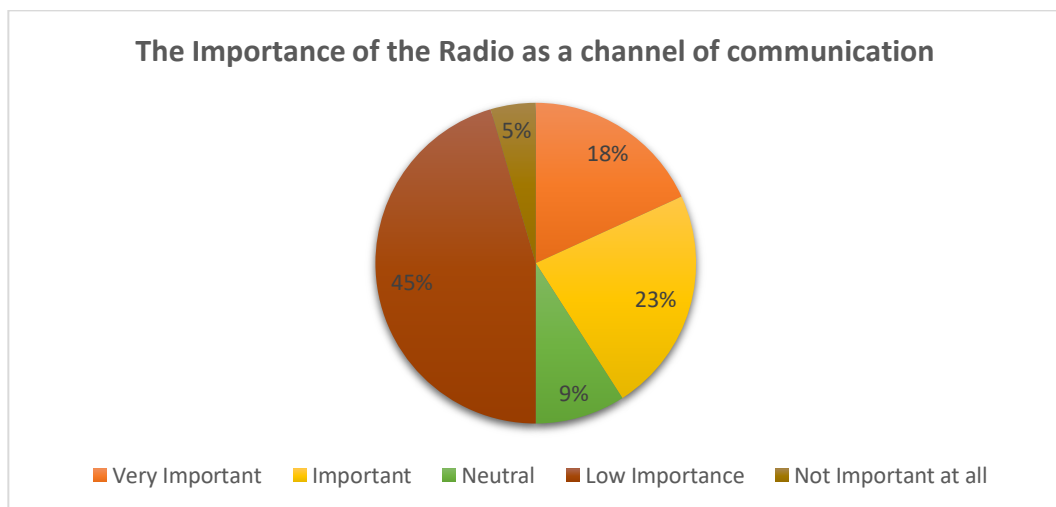
Graphic 8: The Importance of TV as a channel of communication.

It can be seen from the illustration above (Graphic 8) that 36% of the participants, or 8 of them, found the importance of TV neutral. 18% replied that it is very important. 23% think that TV is important. In contrast, another 23%, or 5 of the participants, asserted that it has a low importance as a channel of communication.



Graphic 9: The Importance of Press as a channel of communication.

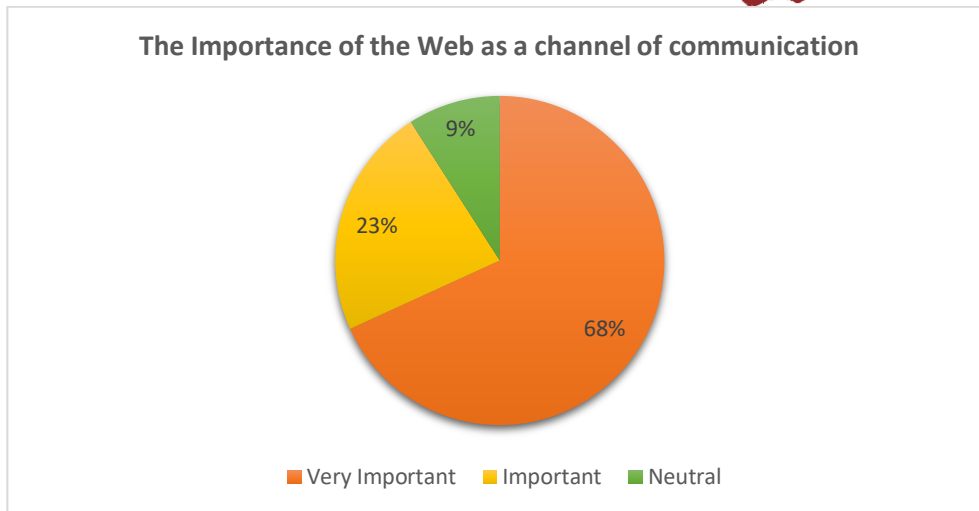
The illustration above (Graphic 9) shows that 36% of the participants, 8 in terms of number, believed that the importance of the press as a channel of communication is neutral. In addition, 27% of them, six out of 22, noted that it is important, and 14% stated that it is very important, while the others 14% mentioned that it has a low importance. Finally, 9% thought that this channel is not important at all.



Graphic 10: The Importance of the Radio as a channel of communication.

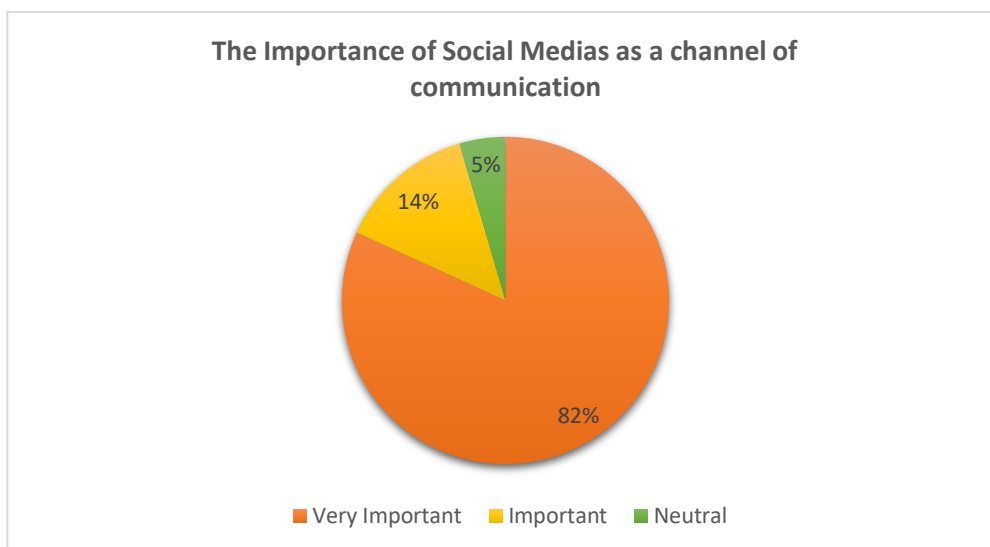
The importance of the radio as a channel of communication has been rated differently from participants (Graphic 10).

First, the majority, 45% or 10 participants, agreed on the fact that it has a low importance. Most of them commented that it is not a channel that is used nowadays. Then, 23% selected that it is important, 18% asserted that it is very important, followed by 9% that claimed that it is a neutral channel, finally 5% which represent only one participant, selected that it is not important at all.



Graphic 11: The Importance of the Web as a channel of communication.

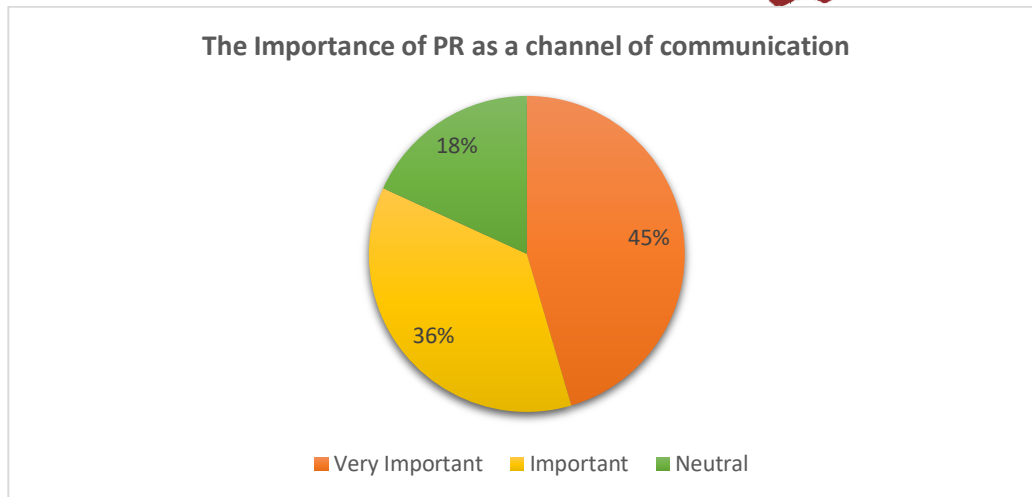
The graphic above (Graphic 11) highlights that 68%, or 15 participants, asserted that the web plays a very important role as a channel of communication. In addition, 23% confirmed that it is important, and the rest, or 9%, revealed from their point of views, that its importance is neutral.



Graphic 12: The Importance of Social Medias as a channel of communication.

Social media's importance as a channel of communication, from the opinions of the participants, is illustrated above. (Graphic 12)

82% of participants, which represent the majority, pointed out that it is a very important channel of communication. It is followed by 14% that believed that it is important, and 5%, or one participant, mentioned that it is neutral.

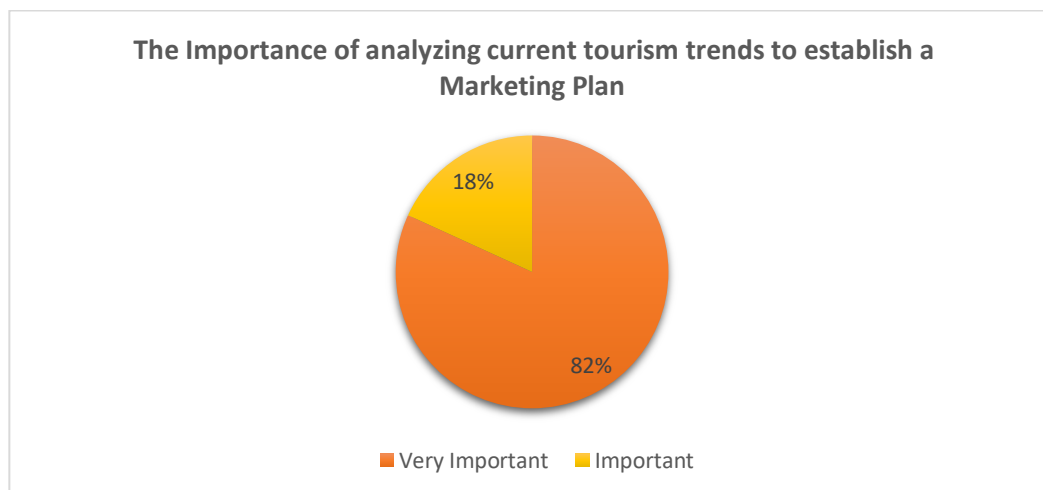


Graphic 13: The Importance of Public Relations as a channel of communication.

The last channel listed in the third question of the survey is Public Relations (PR), and it is illustrated above. (Graphic 13)

Concerning the importance of PR, 45% of professionals believed that it is very important, they represent 10 persons. Then, it is highlighted that 36% pointed out that it is an important channel, while 18% considered it as neutral.

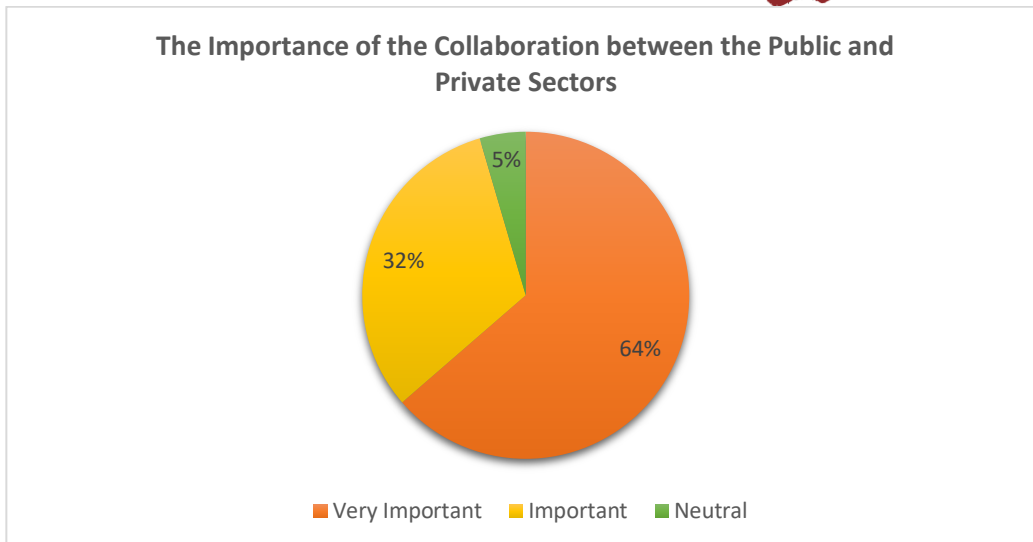
Results of the fourth question will be shown below. It measures how important is the analysis of the current tourism trends before establishing a marketing plan. (Graphic 14)



Graphic 14: The Importance of analyzing current tourism trends to establish a Marketing Plan.

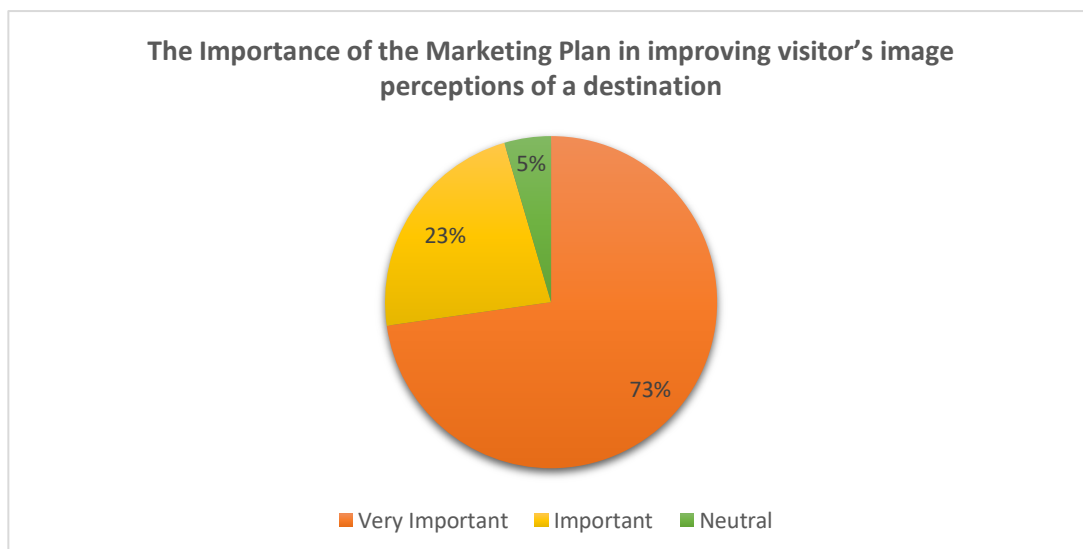
It is highlighted in the graphic above that analyzing current tourism trends is very important according to 82%, 18 participants, and it is important according to 18%.

The next graphic that is illustrated below (Graphic 15), represents results of the fifth question, related to the importance of the collaboration between the public and private sectors in tourism destinations.



Graphic 15: The Importance of the Collaboration between the Public and Private Sectors.

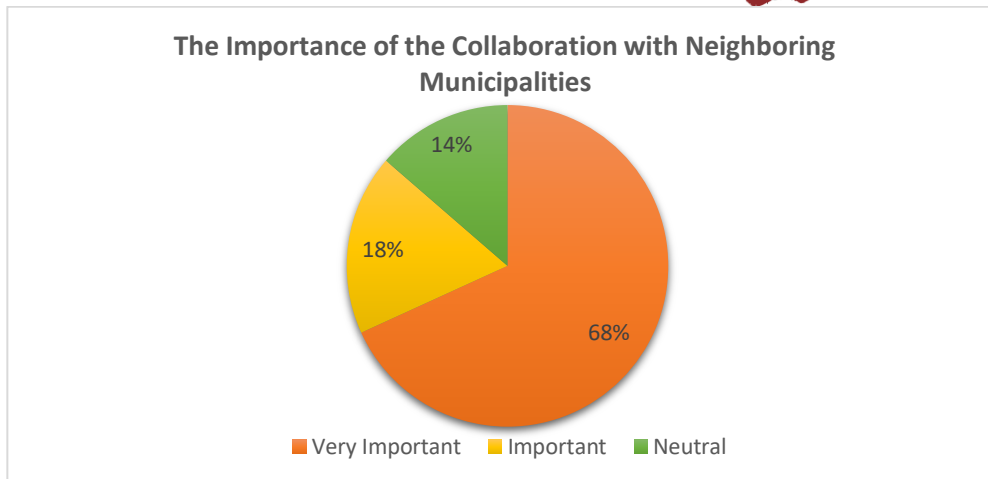
Within this illustration above, it is noticeable that 64% of interviewees opined that it is very important, while 32% claimed that it is important, and 5% contended that it is neutral.



Graphic 16: The Importance of the Marketing Plan in improving visitor's image perceptions of a destination.

The figure above (Graphic 16) demonstrates the results of the sixth question of the survey. Results show that 73% of the participants claimed that the marketing plan is very important to improve visitor's image perception of a tourism destination. Moreover, it highlights that 23% of the respondents mentioned that it is important, and 5% asserted that it is neutral.

The last graphic of the findings (Graphic 17) represents the results of the seventh and last question of the questionnaire. It aims to measure the relevance of the collaboration of a destination with neighboring municipalities, to diversify its offer. Results are represented below.



Graphic 17: The Importance of the Collaboration with Neighboring Municipalities.

As highlighted in the latest graphic, 68% of participants, or 15 out of 22, contended that it is very important to collaborate with the neighboring municipalities to diversify the offer of the destination. Furthermore, 18% or 4 persons claimed that it is important. Finally, 14% or 3 participants pointed out that its relevance is at a neutral level.

Moreover, results of the descriptive indicators calculated, or, the mean, median, mode, standard deviation and especially the statistical difference (variance), are listed in the table below. (Table 1)

Questions Numbers	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Variance
Q1	22	4,7	5	5	0,5	0,2
Q2-1	22	3,8	4	4	1,2	1,3
Q2-2	22	4,2	4	4	0,9	0,7
Q2-3	22	4,5	5	5	0,8	0,6
Q2-4	22	4,1	4	4	0,8	0,7
Q2-5	22	4,4	5	5	0,8	0,6
Q2-6	22	4,7	5	5	0,6	0,3
Q3-1	22	3,4	3	3	1	1,1
Q3-2	22	3,2	3	3	1,2	1,3
Q3-3	22	3	2,5	2	1,3	1,7
Q3-4	22	4,6	5	5	0,7	0,4
Q3-5	22	4,8	5	5	0,5	0,3
Q3-6	22	4,3	4	5	0,8	0,6
Q4	22	4,8	5	5	0,4	0,2
Q5	22	4,6	5	5	0,6	0,3
Q6	22	4,7	5	5	0,6	0,3
Q7	22	4,5	5	5	0,7	0,5

Table 5: Descriptive Indicators.

The most noticeable disagreements are highlighted in red color, the role of DMO's as leaders in tourism marketing, as well as the importance of TV, press and radio as channels. There is a substantial statistical difference in the answers to these latest questions as the variance exceeds 1.

In the following section, conclusions will be carried out, considering the different responses that have been shown previously, and the additional comments that participants attached to the survey.

5. CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis of the questionnaire's answers, it can firstly be concluded that marketing clearly plays a crucial role in tourism planning, as all the participants consider it as important and very important. Moreover, participants confirmed that establishing a marketing plan is necessary for the development of any destination.

Then, according to the participants, the most important roles of DMO's are the elaboration of marketing plans and action plans followed by performing market analysis. But overall, each role has a certain relevance.

Channels of communication such as radio, press and TV remain the ones that have less importance comparing to the Web, PR, and Social Medias. These latest have the most important impact according to participants. One of the participants has commented that media channels' importance can vary by source markets, depending on the evolution of the destination in terms of technology. Some are more technologically advanced while others rely more on traditional channels.

The relevance of analyzing tourism trends for establishing a marketing plan cannot be contested, as it was mentioned by professionals that it is very important, or at least important.

Also, the collaboration between the public and private sectors, is an essential factor according to them, as it avoids having a low-quality tourism. Moreover, a participant added a comment, stating that, establishing the marketing plan is mostly the institutional coordination of the various public entities involved, which in the end is always the most difficult, in terms of efforts but also economically.

Participants agreed with the fact that the improvement of visitor's image perspective of a destination, depends on the marketing plan. It remained a fundamental factor, although it is not the only benefit of preparing a marketing plan for a destination.

Collaborating with neighboring municipalities has been an essential point too, as it builds a synergy in supply chain. But still, few participants have some doubts about this fact, as they believe that municipalities should first be willing to collaborate with each other.

Most of professionals that answered this questionnaire are from Costa Maresme, and although the sampling of the questionnaire is small, the results and conclusions based on the different point of views of participants, have been reaffirming the hypothesis stated above, including what have been stated by scholars. Thus, in the next section, the marketing plan of Alella will be carried out.

6. Marketing Plan

In this section, a marketing plan will be implemented to a tourism destination. The aim of this section is to involve the concepts studied in the theoretical framework, and to take advantage of the work done during the internship with Propheta SLU, as well as the collaboration with Alella Tourism Office. Thus, Alella is the destination chosen, with the aim of exploring how tourism can be improved within that region, as well as increasing its awareness and competitiveness. To this end, a presentation of the destination will be established, as well as, the objectives of the marketing plan, a SWOT and situation analysis to know in what stage is the destination according to Butler's model (1980). Moreover, the positioning and branding of the destination will be elaborated, its competitors, an action plan and finally, the product improvement areas.

6.1. INTRODUCTION

To begin with, Alella is a municipality from the territory of the Maresme Coast (Costa Maresme). It belongs to the Province of Barcelona, in the community of Catalonia, Spain. Costa Maresme covers a total of sixteen municipalities from Montgat to the mouth of the Tordera. It is bordered by the Costa Brava on the north, and by the coast of Barcelona, on the south. The image below shows the location of Alella, as a municipality of Costa Maresme. (Image 5)



Image 5: Map of Costa Maresme.

In addition, between Barcelona and Alella, there are 15.57 km of distance, and 21 km by road. It is shown in the illustration below. (Image 6)



Image 6: Location of Alella in the Province of Barcelona.

Alella has a mountainous location, but it is also very close to the sea. It is surrounded by nature, and it is a quiet area. Its architecture is both modern and historical. Landscapes and vineyards are the most popular tourism products that has to offer the municipality. It is a protected area in Catalonia, qualified as Denomination of Origin Alella, or, DO Alella.

In addition to wine tours and activities related to wine tourism, Alella has the potential to extend its tourism products, and this will be developed within this section.

The main objectives of the marketing plan are the following:

- Promote Alella as a destination, and increase its awareness at an international level.
- Diversifying tourism products in Alella, including green tourism, sport tourism, beach tourism, and gastronomic tourism and so on.
- Increase the number of tourist arrivals and overnights stays in Alella.

It was noticed by the tourism office of the municipality that Alella is most of the time a day-trip destination. And this is due to its proximity to Barcelona. Tourists go directly to the wineries and do not have the opportunity to explore the rest. However, there are more attractions to promote within that region, and this marketing plan will be the roadmap to take advantage of these opportunities.

6.2 MISSION VISION AND VALUES

The mission of this marketing plan is to diversify the tourism products offer in Alella, and make it known at a national and international level. Thanks to the use of the natural resources, as well as its location that is close to everything that tourists would be looking for to spend their holidays. In addition, enforcing its wine tourism promotion would be beneficial to increase its awareness.

The vision of this strategic plan is that in five years, the number of tourists will increase in that region to over ten thousands national and international tourists over the year. Moreover, Alella will be positioned as one of the favorite destination for families in the Maresme Coast. Alella will offer a diverse tourism offer, several products proposal of quality. It will add value to its existing products, offering unforgettable experiences to its visitors as well as a sustainable and innovative tourism.

The values that are needed in order to achieve the mission are the following:

- *Collaboration*: This value is a key point to achieve the objectives. The public sector, such as the council of Alella and the tourism office, have to communicate efficiently, to collaborate and cooperate with the private sector such as, the accommodation and restoration sectors of Alella, and all the private entities related to the tourism sector. Furthermore, a collaboration between the municipalities nearby would be an advantage for the destination.
- *Innovation and technological tools*: As mentioned in the missions and vision, this plan aims to increase the number of tourists visiting Alella. Thus, the use of an intelligent tourist system to create a database is crucial. Moreover, being innovative and creative are values that will be implemented to satisfy tourists' needs, and to make the destination more attractive.
- *Diversity*: This value will also be implemented, this means that the destination will provide a range of different products to its visitors.
- *Tranquility*: Alella is a destination where people can rest and find serenity, as it is surrounded by nature, and its neighborhoods are very quiet.
- *Sustainability*: Alella's community encourage a sustainable tourism development, the public and private agents of the municipality participated in the Biosphere project.

6.3 SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths:

- **Location:** Its proximity to Barcelona and to other municipalities are strengths. As Barcelona is very well-known and other municipalities are coastal areas, so it is also very close to the beach.
- **Accessibility:** It is very well connected to the other municipalities, the Maresme Coast, the C-32 and with the Co-marcal BP-5002 with the Vallès. There is a central bus station that connects with other nearby towns, including Barcelona directly. Moreover, there is also an internal accessibility, such as an urban bus that goes to the different points of the municipality. Moreover, there are also parking lots for visitors who come by car, in different places of the municipality.
- **Natural landscapes:** It is surrounded by a forest mass, vineyards cultivation and urban settlement with a unique view of the sea from its mountains. Its natural environment facilitates the practice of different open air activities.
- **Its positioning and image:** Although the destination is not known enough, it is positioned as a municipality that offers a high quality of life, and that has a pleasant environment.
- **MICE and wine tourism:** The municipality hosts MICE events, and it has the capacity to develop its MICE products. It also has wine tourism resources, with plenty of varieties. It has been one of the first DO's of Catalonia.

Weaknesses:

- **Accommodation:** There is a lack of accommodation in the municipality, there is only one hotel. There are other types of tourist housing, such as house rentals, but it still represent one of the biggest weaknesses.
- **Absence of databases:** There is an absence of data in order to recognize the profiles of the tourists that come to the destination, there are no information about the segments of tourists that come to Alella. Thus, there are no indicators neither.
- **Commercialization and Promotion:** There is a lack of commercialization, in terms of the products that are offered. The tourism department of the municipality even has partnerships with companies based in Barcelona to organize events in Alella, but these information are not reaching the public, most of the participants to those events are locals. Moreover, there is no strategy to reach the international audience.

- **Collaboration between the municipalities:** There is no collaboration between the municipalities nearby, although it can represent an opportunity to create new tourism products and increase Alella's awareness.

Opportunities:

- **Consortium for Tourism Promotion of the Maresme Coast:** In this new project that aims to promote tourism products in Costa Maresme, collaborations with DO Alella will increase its promotion. In addition, other types of tourism will be promoted such as sports tourism, including activities the municipality, like hiking in its natural parks.
- **Maresme Film Commission:** This is also a service created thanks to the Consortium established by El Maresme. It aims to promote and facilitate filming in the territory. This is an opportunity to increase the awareness of the municipality and its visibility.
- **Maresme Events:** It facilitates the promotion of Alella's spaces where events can be organized. Additionally, it is an opportunity to facilitate the research for those who are interested to contact each establishment that can host MICE events, as all the details and contacts information are included in the official website. It could also be an opportunity to promote more kind of events, such as music festivals in Alella.
- **Maresme Waves:** Aquatic sports and activities are organized and promoted, although Alella has a mountainous location, it is very close to the beach, collaborating with Maresme Waves is a great opportunity to diversify its tourism products.
- **The municipality is part of the Province of Barcelona:** This is an opportunity that cannot be missed, to do marketing at a provincial level, to increase collaborations with institutions such as Diputacio de Barcelona and Barcelona Convention Bureau which could support the municipality. Moreover, its proximity to the city of Barcelona is also an opportunity to capture its public.
- **Collaboration with neighboring municipalities:** This is an opportunity to get complementary products such as, Vallromanes-golf tourism, Masnou beach tourism, Badalona cultural tourism, Mataro shopping tourism, la Roca Village for commerce as well, and Isla Fantasia Aqua Park, in Vilassar de Dalt.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** In this case, it represents an opportunity for the destination due to the restrictions in airline transports. Tourists from Europe, as France, mostly

travel by their own vehicles and they pass through Alella before arriving to Barcelona.

- **Accommodation:** There are some projects in construction, such as a five star hotel projected with a hydrotherapy offer, which can bring new segments and new markets to the destination.

Threats:

- **Competition:** In terms of wine tourism, such as DO Penedès, DO Pla de Bages. Also, there is a competition between the municipalities, even though it would be more advantageous to collaborate, each municipality promote its products. Consequently, as they are considered as competitors. Cultural programs offered by other municipalities are considered as threats, music festivals, and all the activities that are organized out of the municipality.
- **Its dimension:** Alella as a municipality might not have a relevant dimension to be a tourism destination. Its size can represent a threat, the scale build space for tourism has to be studied.
- **Local community:** Tourism in Alella must be sustainable in all the dimensions, including the social and ecological ones. The population of Alella support its development as a sustainable tourism destination, but it can be a threat if tourists do not respect the environment.

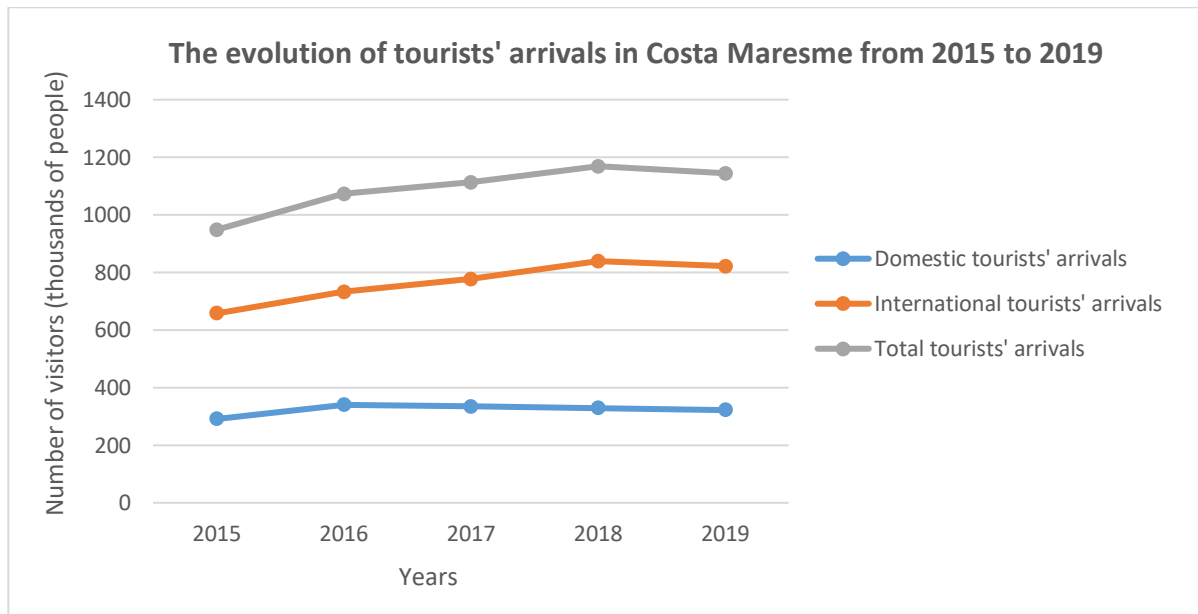
6.4 SITUATION ANALYSIS AND LIFECYCLE

In this part of the marketing plan, a situation analysis of the destination will be done, in order to determine in which phase of the Butler life cycle model Alella is. First, the evolution of the tourist arrivals to the Maresme Coast will be analyzed, from 2015 to 2019, as in 2020 there were no data found, because of the COVID 19 pandemic. As well, a comparison between 2019 and 2021 will be done. Second, a situation analysis of Alella and its visitors will be elaborated.

6.4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS COSTA MARESME

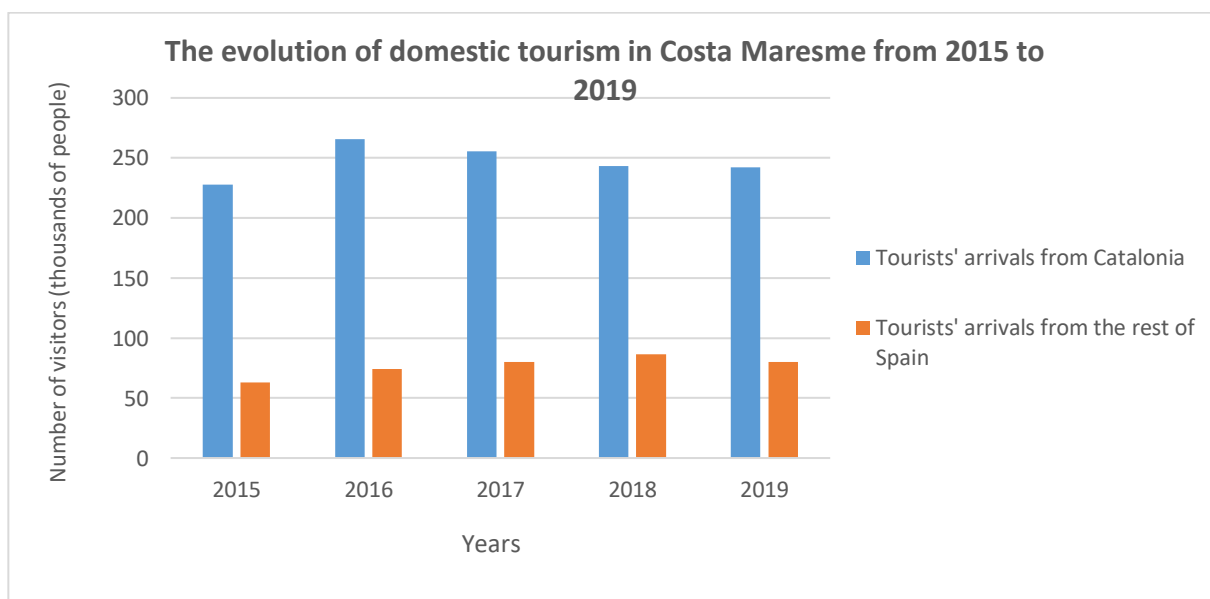
In the graphic below (Graphic 18), it can be noticed that the total number of visitors is increasing from 2015 to 2019, although there is a decrease in the number of domestic

tourists from 2016 to 2019, but it seems like it is not significant. Also, it can be seen that the number of international visitors exceed the number of domestic visitors, from 2015 to 2019.



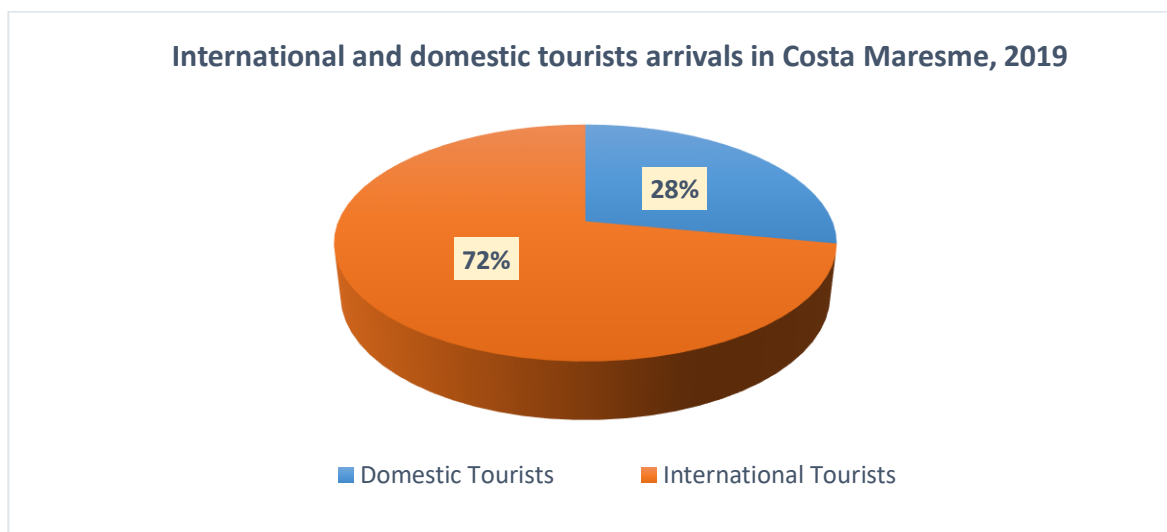
Graphic 18: The evolution of tourists' arrivals from 2015 to 2019.

Furthermore, domestic tourists are divided to two segments, tourists that come from Catalonia, and the arrivals of tourists from the rest of the country. Graphic 19 shows the evolution of both, from 2015 to 2019. It is noticeable that the majority of domestic tourism to the Maresme Coast is from Catalonia, only few people come from the other parts of the country.

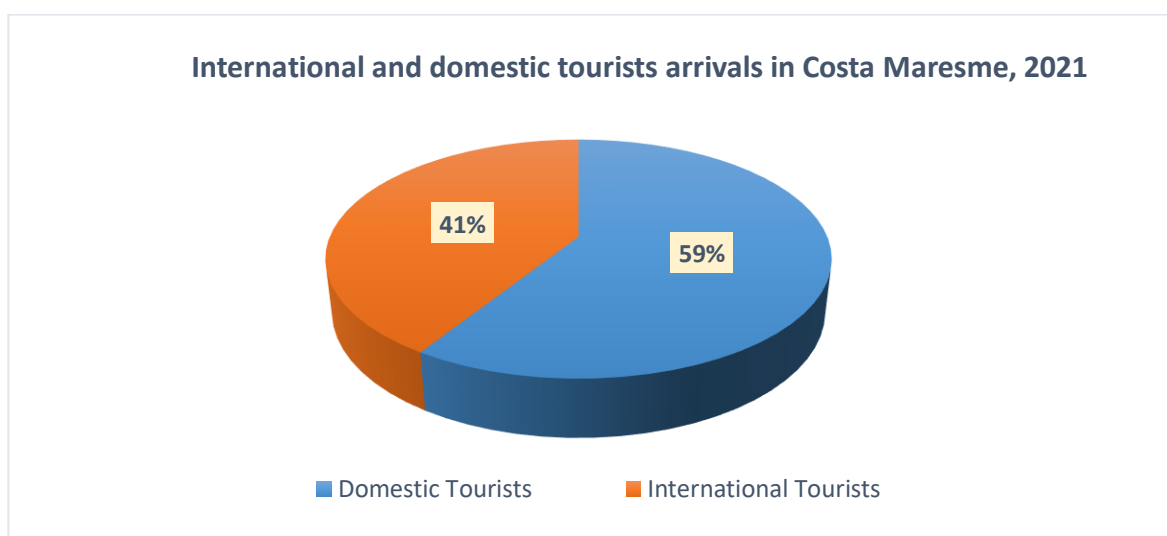


Graphic 19: The evolution of domestic tourism from 2015 to 2019.

According to the data published in the official website of the Maresme Coast, the number of tourists' arrivals decreased from 1 144 thousands in 2019 to 387 thousands in 2021, which is comprehensible due to the sanitary crisis. Moreover, the comparison between the two years has shown that the percentage of domestic tourists was higher than the percentage of the international ones in 2021, in contrast to the year 2019. In 2019, there were 72% of international tourists' arrivals while in 2021 the percentage decreased to 41%. Domestic tourists' arrivals in 2019 represented only 28% of the total visitors while in 2021, it exceeded the half of the total visitors with a percentage of 59%. It is illustrated in the graphics 20 and 21 below.



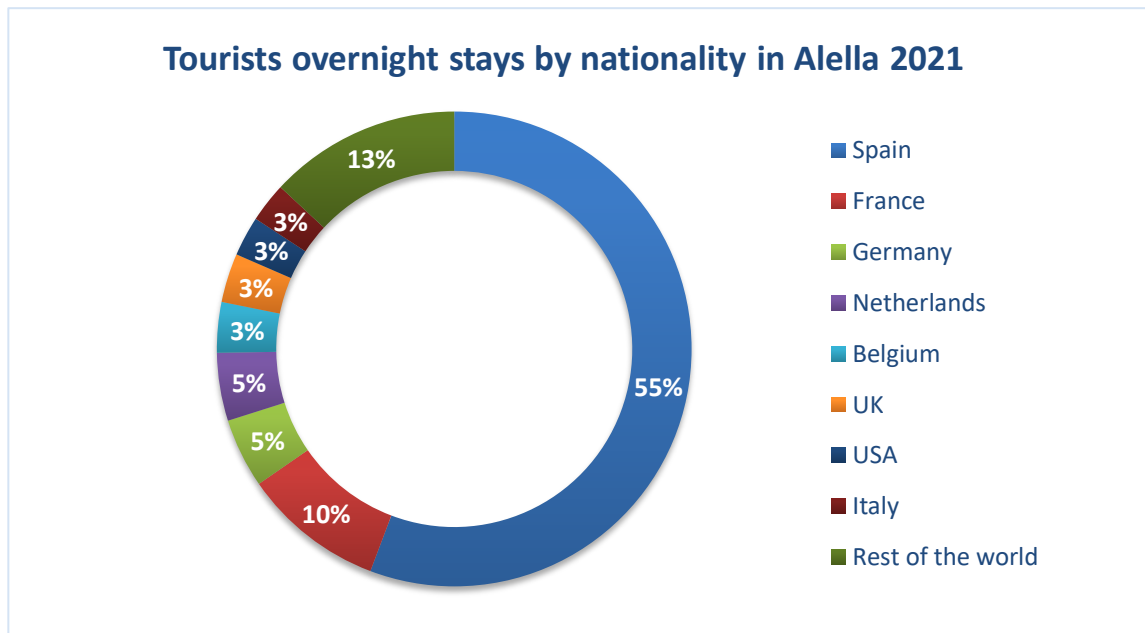
Graphic 20: International and domestic tourists arrivals in 2019.



Graphic 21: International and domestic tourists arrivals in 2021.

6.4.2 SITUATION ANALYSIS ALELLA

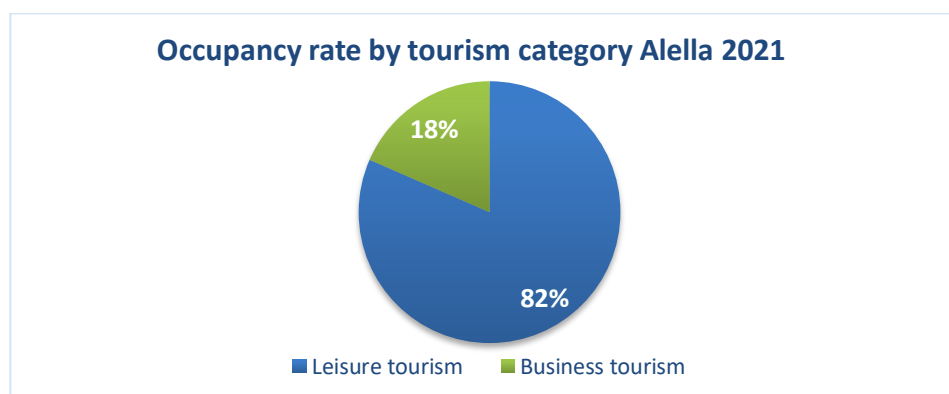
Thanks to the data collected from the system of Hotel Arrey Alella, some indicators have been calculated to analyze the current situation of the destination. The graphic below show tourists' overnights stays in Alella in 2021, by nationality. (Graphic 22)



Graphic 22: Tourists overnights stays by nationality in Alella 2021.

It is demonstrated in the graphic above that the dominant market is the national one, with 55% of overnight stays in 2021. However, the international demand is also high as it represented 45% in total. The international market is mostly European, France is having the largest share in the set, followed by Germany and the Netherlands.

The graphic below (graphic 23) shows the main motivation to visit Alella, which is leisure with 82% of the occupancy rate of the hotel sector, against 18% of visitors that came for business in 2021.



Graphic 23: Occupancy rate by tourism category Alella 2021

All in all, according to Butler's lifecycle model, Alella can be considered as a destination at the stage of exploration. First, due to its lack of accommodation, as well as tourists' facilities and attractions. It is a stage where the number of visitors is very small and limited, the investments on tourist facilities are very poor, and consequently, tourists are not attracted by its landscape, natural and cultural features.

6.5 MARKET SEGMENTATION

The target markets for this plan are at a national level, Catalonia and the rest of Spain. As well, the European market especially France which is considered as the main target market with a high growth potential, due its proximity and easy accessibility to the destination by car.

Tourism products in Alella are listed below.

- **Wine tourism:** Cellers de la DO Alella, Alella Vinicola, Alta Alella Mirgin, Bouquet d'Alella, Celler de les Aus, Quim Batlle, Raventos d'Alella I Masia, Can Roda çSta Maria de Martorelles).
- **Cultural tourism:** Can Magarola, Can Manye, Can Leonart, Centre Enoturístic I Arqueològic de Vallmora (Teia), Espai d'Arts Escèniques, Casal d'Alella, Music festivals (Festival d'Estiu d'Alella, festa de la Verema, Cicle de músiques de món d'Alella)
- **MICE tourism:** Can Magarola, the Hotel Arrey Alella and certain wineries host MICE events, such as meetings and congresses.
- **Rural tourism/ Nature and Landscapes:** Parc Serralada Del Litoral, vineyards.
- **Sport tourism:** Cyclotourism and hiking activities.
- **Coastal tourism:** Alella is very close to El Masnou beach and Ocata beach, only 2.5km.
- **Gastronomy:** Variety of restaurants that propose local gastronomy.
- **Shopping:** La Roca Village.
- **Wellness:** Alella Organic Spa.

The plan aims to segment Alella as a destination for families, and couples interested in sports and open air activities, who are looking for tranquility but at the same time can be close to Barcelona. In addition, MICE tourism is also a priority as it can be extended in collaboration with Maresme Events and several entities in Barcelona.

6.6 POSITIONING, BRANDING AND IMAGE

The “Ajuntament d’Alella” is the city council, the tourism office of Alella is part of it. It is a public entity that is responsible of all the tourism planning, as well as the marketing strategy of the municipality. Alella is positioned as a destination delivering wine tourism products to its visitors mostly. Moreover, its natural landscapes, cultural heritage and local gastronomy are promoted.

The branding of the destination represents the wineries although wine tourism is promoted separately from the other tourism products. There are two separate pages in the Web, as well as in Social Medias. In other words, there is one for the DO Alella “Enoturisme”, and another one for other different activities promoted, “Turisme Alella”.



Regarding the image of Alella, it can be seen on TripAdvisor and Booking that the majority of its visitors are staying in Barcelona, and come to Alella for a day trip in order to visit the vineyards, with a full package included. Thus, most of the comments showed very good level of tourists’ satisfaction and high-rated the vineyards, as well as some of the restaurants in Alella. However, some comments mentioned that the price of the bottles of wine were too expensive even though the tours were amazing.

These are some examples of the comments on TripAdvisor:



Picnic in the vineyard

Friends

I had a wonderful time at Bouquet D'Alella today. We first took a tour with the lovely, friendly and extremely knowledgeable sommelier, Cristina. Then, we had a picnic in the vineyard. It is a beautiful winery with views of the Mediterranean and the town of Alella. I definitely recommend this experience, especially since it is only about 30 minutes by taxi from the center of Barcelona.

Image 6: Comment about Bouquet d'Alella, TripAdvisor, 2021.



Really nice wine tour

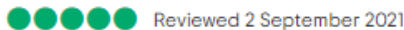
Friends

We went on a wine tour with a French guide, who was very good. It was extremely exciting to hear about the process for making cava. And to see all the bottles. After the tour we tasted 6 different wines ... all very nice.

One thing though: We bought some bottle of cava and red wine. But but but ... we could have bought the same cava and wines in the city for a lot less :-)



Image 7: Comment about Alta Alella, TripAdvisor 2021



Reviewed 2 September 2021

Outstanding

First time I eat in this restaurant and I have to say that a ten, both the treatment, the food the normal atmosphere in the area they are, I have been very very happy, I recommend the chicken cannelloni rustido, brutal, thank you family for making the difficult easy, I recommend one hundred percent

Image 8: Comment about Els Garrofers Restaurant Alella, TripAdvisor, 2021

Furthermore, comments have been reviewed on Wikiloc, and visitors seem to have a high satisfaction level about hiking routes in Alella. Some of them are families, others are couples, and most of the comments mention that the views are very nice. Comments are showed below.



Nice route and quite easy if you take care of the pebbles on the descents. Nice views of Alella and the sea.

Image 9: Comment about hiking in Alella.



I have followed this trail Verified [View more](#)

Very easy and very interesting route. Thank you.

Image 10: Comment about the route of the Serralada de Litoral.



I have followed this trail [View more](#)

Very good, to go with children and that they can discover nature. There is even some small variant by trails between trees very interesting.

Image 11: Review of a family hiking in Alella.

6.7 DESTINATIONS COMPETITORS

Alella's competitors destinations will be categorized and analyzed depending on different characteristics. These destinations have approximately the same tourism products offer, in this case wine tourism destinations would be the first competitors, at a national and international level. Moreover, these destinations will be analyzed in terms of culture, heritage, nature, festivities, commerce, as well as, the accessibility and proximity to Barcelona concerning the neighboring regions that compete with Alella.

The statistics below show the ranking of the leading vineyards in the world by country in 2021 (Image 12). Spain has the 6th position in the international ranking, and the 3rd place as a european country.

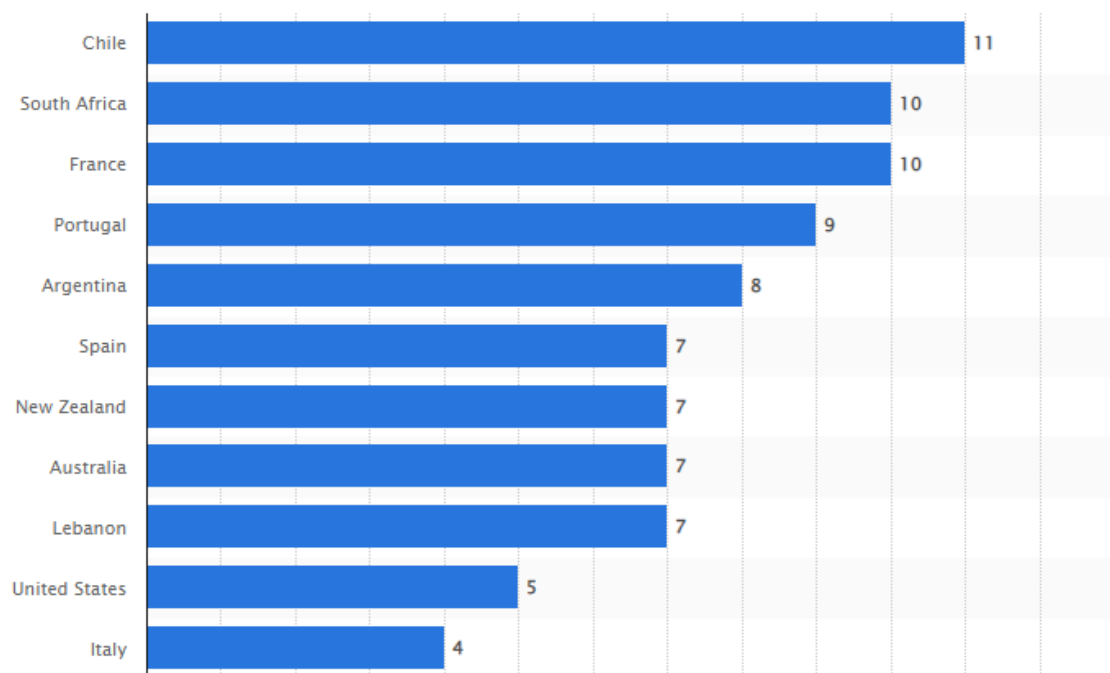


Image 12: the leading vineyards worldwide in 2021, by country. (Statista, 2021)

In addition, in terms of tourism numbers, Italy emerged as the leading destination for wine tourism in 2021 (Statista, 2021). As potential international competitors of Alella, the analysis will be focused on these three European countries: France, Italy and Portugal.

Consequently, for each country, region or municipality that has similarities with Alella on its tourism offer, has been chosen and given as an example below.

- **Cassis, France:** Situated in the southeastern of France, in the Azur Coast, it is a small commune near Marseille. Its entire landscape is exceptional, it is well-known for its history, art, local food, and, of course, its vineyards and wine tasting tours. In Cassis, all three colours are offered but white wines represent the majority of the production. Tourists that visit the region of Cassis generally come from Marseille, which is a tourism destination that received 4 millions of tourists in 2021 (+14% more than 2020, and -20% less than 2019).
- **Montepulciano, Italy:** Montepulciano is a medieval village in the province of Siena, in Tuscany. Situated 605 meters above sea level. The municipality has a history, a pleasant architecture, museums, and many historical and cultural sites to visit, combining this with wine tours to its excellent vineyards. Apart from this, Tuscany itself, as well as Sicily and plenty of regions in Italy may be considered as competitors. One of the reasons is that Italy is also very close to the south of France, which is one of the main markets of Alella.
- **Pinhão, Portugal:** It is a small village located in the Duoro River, about 20 kilometers from the city of Peso da Régua. This village is surrounded by terraced slopes where is located a port wine making region. It is a very pleasant riverside location that makes it a great place for relaxing stopovers, where local food and wines can be tasted. Autumn is generally the season for tourists to go there, as it is the annual grape harvest, an event is organized to involve visitors to their local traditions.

On the other hand, wine tourism destinations that compete with Alella at a national level, or more specifically in Catalonia, are illustrated in below. (Image 13)



Image 13: Catalonia Vineyard Wine regions. (Source: winetourismspain.)

The map below (Image 14) shows the different locations of these wineries of Catalonia. The largest market of those wineries come from Barcelona, as it can be noticed, Alella is the closest one to the city, which represents a big advantage.

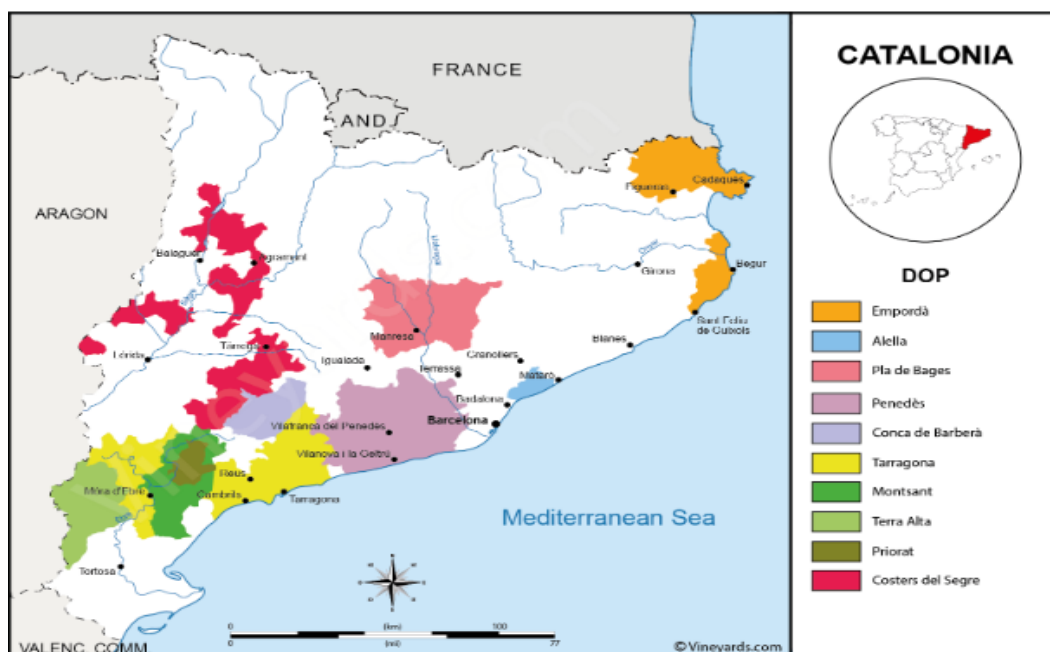


Image 14: Catalonia vineyards and wineries map. (winetourismspain)

From these nine destinations, the most visited ones that compete with Alella are the following:

- **Penedès:** It is probably the most famous denomination of origin in Catalonia, and the largest one. Situated halfway between Tarragona and Barcelona. It shares the

territory with the D.O. Cava, the Catalan sparkling wine. It occupies more than 24,000 hectares and includes 188 wineries. Wine tours combine a history and cultural visit at “Vinseum Museum” with a wine tasting. In addition, it is famous for its jazz festival.

- **Empordà:** Located more in the north, very close to France, this proximity might represent a threat for Alella, and must be the first reason of its competition with this DO. It has a beautiful landscape and it is considered as the place where the Romans started to cultivate wine.
- **Pla de Bages:** It is a small DO but with great wine making traditions. The brand was promoted in the tenth century by the Benedictine monks of the monastery of Sant Benet del Bages. All types of wine are produced, and many activities are proposed to visitors.

Furthermore, three other competitors are identified in the table below. These destinations have been considered as competitors with Alella according to the different elements that are mentioned in the table. (Table 2)

	Manresa	Mataro	Palamos	Alella
Proximity to Barcelona	65-75km	35km	120km	20-25km
Accessibility	Car: 55-65min Bus 70-85min Train: 80-90min	Car: 25-35min Bus 40-45min Train: 45-50min	Car: 90-100min Bus: 120-130min	Car: 20-25min Bus 30-35min
Tourism offer	Heritage Cellars Gastronomy Nature Family tourism Active tourism (Trails) Wine tourism route Culture	Commerce Gastronomy Nature (beach) MICE tourism Sport tourism	Nature (beach) touristic places (Port, Museu de la Pesca, Espai del Peix) Gastronomy	Cellars Nature Culture
Cultural places	Cova de St Ignasi (Since 1522) La Seu de Manresa Parc de la Sequia Museu de la Tecnica Teatre Kursall	Nau Gaudi Ca l'Arenas Can Marfa Can Serra Casa Coll i Regas Can Gassol Vila Romana Can Boet	Claustre del Mas del Vent Santa Maria de Bell-lloc	Can Magarola Can Manye Can Lleonart Espai d'Arts Escèniques Casal d'Alella
Principal events	La Viba - Viu La Cultura Del Vi Del Bages	Mitja Marato Volta Ciclista Festes de les Santes	Sport Events	Festival d'Estiu d'Alella Festa de la Verema Cicle de musiques del mon d'Alella
Other proposals	Geoparc Cat Central	Culture (Museums) Nightlife	Culture (museums and monuments) Local products	Parc Serralada del Litoral Local Gastronomy

Table 2: Comparative analysis of Alella and its competitors.

6.8 ACTION PLAN

6.8.1 Increase the awareness of Alella by adding value to its existing tourism products.

- Improvement of the wine tourism product.
- Incorporation of gastronomic resources into wine tourism products.
- Encourage the creation of combined proposals between the different wine tourism companies of the DO.
- Creation of wine tourism proposals for each time of year for different segments.
- Improve the access to the natural environment from the center of Alella.

6.8.2 Increase the awareness of Alella by promoting all the facilities available nearby, in the Costa Maresme.

- Collaboration with the Municipalities of El Masnou, Premià de Dalt, Vilassar del Dalt, Vilassar del Mar, Montgat, Cabrils, and Mataró to diversify the product offer, such as Beach Tourism, Sport Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Nature Tourism and Leisure Tourism.

6.8.3 Collaboration with Julia Travels Agency, located in Barcelona.

- Organizing guided tours and guided visits excursions in DO Alella.
- Organize a “tapas day” event to promote Alella’s restaurants and its gastronomy.



Inicio / [Tours y Excursiones](#)

Image 15: Julia travel agencies web.

6.8.4 Optimize Alella tourism official website.

- The use official translations to Spanish/English and French.
- Send exclusive newsletters through advertising formats.
- Add audiovisual content to the website.
-

- Change the main colors used for the website and the logo. It has to represent the colors of the destination, at least, green for the nature, its best wine colors, and blue for the sea.
- Increase the number of online promotions related to accommodation offers throughout the year on the website, by adding an Events Section in the official website, where all the events in Alella as well as in its neighborhoods will be shared.
- Create a logo that represents the brand and make it visible in the official website.



Image 16: Alella Turisme Official Website.

6.8.5 Ameliorate the content of Social Medias (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter).

- Translation of the content to two more languages at least: Spanish and English.
- Communication of Alella Wine Tours by Bici that are organized, such as:

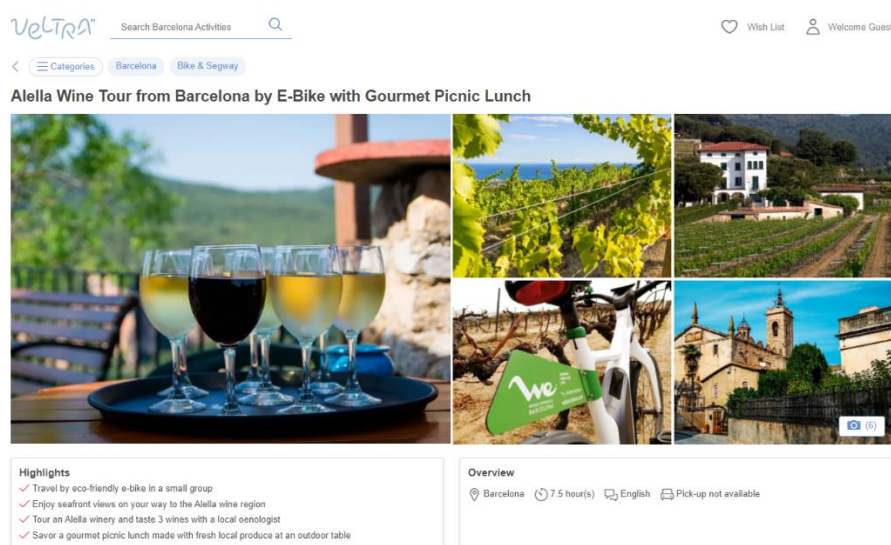


Image 17: Alella wine tours by bici.

- Commercialize the packages, Escape Rooms events, Boat Tours in El Masnou and other nautical sports.

-Publish posts about Alella's restaurants, gastronomy and local food in the different social medias and communicate the same message in all of them (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter).

6.8.6 Capture of the Maresme segment.

- Collaboration with the Costa del Maresme Tourism Promotion Consortium.
- Campaigns in hotels and campsites in Costa Maresme.
- Collaboration with Maresme Events, Maresme Film Commission,
- Communicate their activities and increase the number of potential events in Alella spaces, such as La Finka 4.1 y Can Cabus.

6.9 PRODUCTS IMPROVEMENT AREA

Tourism in Alella has to be improved in terms of awareness. For this reason, all the actions above are oriented to promotion strategies and guidelines. Gastronomic tourism, beach tourism, natural, cultural and sport tourism have to be promoted as it is the case for wine tourism.

Also, increasing the number of investments in accommodations to offer is a crucial point. The capacity to host tourists is very low, as there is only one hotel in the destination, and some second houses rentals.

Furthermore, the number of attractions has to be increased in order to attract different segments to the destination. And, transportation has to be facilitated to have a great communication between the destinations and other municipalities.

Finally, an implementation of a tourist knowledge system is needed, and the identification of the main indicators of the city is required to keep professionals informed about its situation.

7. CONCLUSION

This research paper has been done in three main parts, with the objective of analyzing the relevance of elaborating a marketing plan for tourism destinations.

The first part was dedicated to the theoretical framework, the authors involved approved that planning is a successful key for tourism destinations, whatever its situation is.

Moreover, many concepts in relation with the topic have been developed, such as Butler's model (1980), tourism products, DMO's and their roles, and the content of the marketing plan itself.

Then, surveys have been distributed to professionals with the aim of evaluating the relevance of those concepts, and other points related to the importance of the marketing plan in the tourism industry, according to their experiences.

Results have shown that most of the elements are necessary for the development of tourism destinations.

On the other hand, a third part has been established to analyze the importance of the marketing plan, by elaborating the marketing plan for Alella, which has been taken as an sample.

After having participated to worktables in the tourism office of the destination with the different stakeholders involved (Annex 1), with the aim of working on a strategic plan for Alella, it has been mentioned by the participants, that the key of success is the collaboration between them that is why it is the first value mentioned in the marketing plan. (Annex 2)

Finally, the elaboration of the marketing plan of Alella can affirm the hypothesis. Alella can be considered as it is still in the beginning of its lifecycle, or, the exploration stage.

Thus, it has been relevant to elaborate its marketing plan to explore the potential that it has to grow as a sustainable tourism destination, but also, how it can diversify its tourism products and increase its awareness at a national and international level.

8. ANNEXES

The first annex below shows the worktable I had the opportunity to assist to, in Alella tourism office. The pictures illustrate the presentation done by the representatives of Alella tourism office, which consisted of presenting a strategic vision they had, and some highlights of the action plan. Then, all the stakeholders that were present had to participate and got involved into this process. (Annex 1)

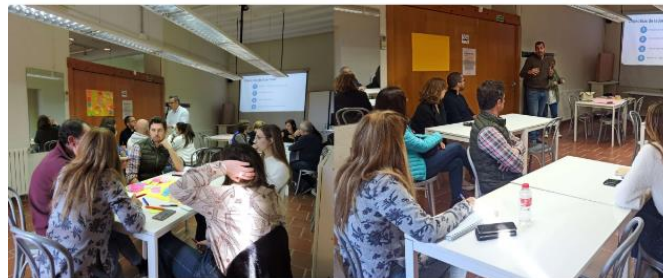
ANNEX 1: Worktable with Alella Tourism Office.

Resum Primera taula de treball del sector turístic d'Alella

25 d'Abril 2022
10:00 h
Can Lleonart



Resum fotogràfic



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