The New Global Players – Designing City Tourism Destinations from Scratch – the example of the United Arab Emirates

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The UAE

Early seventies …

... to present day

Image source: Websites and portals on the Internet
The rise of the UAE in the international tourism arena

International tourist arrivals (million)

Source: UNWTO

World Economic Forum’s Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015 ranks the UAE 24th out of 141 nations.

Image source: Websites and portals on the Internet
Dubai is at the core of the UAE’s remarkable tourism success story. The city-state aims to become the world's most visited city by 2020.
The MasterCard Global Destinations Cities Index 2015 ranks Dubai as #3 among 132 city destinations … and one of the fastest growing cities in the global top ten

Image source: Websites and portals on the Internet
Dubai is an example of a city destination created from scratch...

- A visionary product of its rulers
- Developed a fully integrated tourism offer:
  - world-class infrastructure, airports, airlines, ports and cruise terminals, and hotels
  - iconic buildings, unique attractions & shopping experiences & sporting events
- Created ‘more’ Dubai by increasing the shoreline
- Established investment-friendly & tourist-friendly policies
- Ensuring a safe & stable holiday environment

Image source: Websites and portals on the Internet
... with world-class transport infrastructure

- Dubai International (DXB) - the busiest airport in the world, with annual capacity for 75 mn passengers; over 70 mn passengers in 2014
- New airport DWC – to become the world’s largest with annual capacity of 160 mn passengers
- Dubai Cruise Terminal - one of the top 5 luxurious ports to dock at
- New Hamdan bin Mohammed Cruise Terminal - set to be the world’s largest covered cruise facility with daily capacity of 14,000 cruise passengers
- Emirates - world’s most valuable airline brand, valued at US$5.5 billion.¹
- Connecting 142 cities in 80 countries across all six continents
- Carried over 49 million passengers in 2014-15

¹Brand Finance Global 500 Report, 2014

Image source: Websites and portals on the Internet
... and an accommodations sector with strong local & global brands driving growth

- Dubai currently has a stock of 612 hotels with 85,000 rooms
- By the end of 2016, it is expected to see an additional 140 hotels and 30,000 rooms
- Exciting ‘lifestyle’ brands coming up in Dubai include Bulgari, Hard Rock, Hotel Indigo by InterContinental, ME by Meliá, Nikki Beach, Palazzo Versace and Paramount
- Dubai boasts the only 7-star hotel in the world – Burj Al Arab
- And the world’s tallest hotel - JW Marriott Marquis Dubai, a 76-story, 355 m (1,165 ft) twin-tower skyscraper complex with 1,608-rooms

Image source: Websites and portals on the Internet
Dubai’s leisure and entertainment offerings are among the best in the world

- More than 175 tourist attractions for business & leisure travelers
- Combination of historical and new build creations
- Over 70 shopping centres, including the world's largest - Dubai Mall
- Dubai also hosts world-class sporting events including the world’s richest horse race

Image source: Websites and portals on the Internet
Dubai has pursued a well-defined & unique brand identity developed through a clear strategy …

… with brand positioning complementing its unique brand character

It has focused on creating a carefully crafted image of:
• Luxury • Prestige • Modernity

…and has come to be known as a City of Superlatives

… garnering worldwide publicity for its bold, innovative and often unimaginable architectural wonders

Image source: Websites and portals on the internet
... and Dubai leaves no stone unturned when it comes to tourism promotion

- High visibility & high profile promotion are the cornerstone of Dubai’s tourism marketing strategy.

- Dubai’s Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing (DTCM) and Emirates Airline continually showcase Dubai through joint marketing campaigns aimed to increase awareness among global audiences and to attract tourists and inward investment into the emirate.

- Marketing activities include presentations, road shows, advertising, brochure distribution, direct sales meetings and media education programmes, which include familiarization visits for business and travel journalists to Dubai.

- In addition, the DTCM has 18 international offices in key target markets for in-destination tourism promotion.
Highly ambitious, Dubai recently bid for and won the rights to host Expo 2020, a six-month global exhibition that is expected to attract 25 million visitors.

Expo-related infrastructure development and operations will cost the emirate around US$8.8 billion.
By 2020, Dubai will welcome 20 million visitors per year, and the annual contribution made by tourism to the city’s economy will triple.

Two central tenets of Dubai’s future tourism strategy:

1. Widen its range of tourism offerings across events, attractions, infrastructure, services and packages and to enhance the overall visitor experience from arrival to departure.
2. Adapt its marketing approach in order to showcase Dubai to a wider audience and grow the conversion rate of awareness to bookings.

A range of initiatives will be put in place in both of these areas in order to attract more visitors to the city and encourage them to stay longer and spend more money during their time in Dubai.

Image source: Websites and portals on the Internet
Dubai – an inspirational success story

- Dubai is an exhilarating, dynamic and constantly evolving destination.

- The city’s rise to international prominence in a mere 40 years is staggering. And unprecedented.

- Dubai’s success story should inspire destinations across the world to grow and develop their industries to local and global benefit.
Thank you very much. Please keep in touch.

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