

## Chapter 45

# The Management of Archeological Sites as Tourism Resources: The Role of Information Sources

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This article aims to study the potential of archeology as a tourism resource in the field of cultural tourism, given that good tourism management of archeological sites can attract a larger number of visitors and contribute to the socio-economic development of the areas involved. Specifically, it will examine the role of information sources in the management of such sites, focusing on the case of Segóbriga Archeological Park, Cuenca, Spain. Based on the analysis of the results obtained from surveys of tourists to this destination, this article makes a series of management recommendations concerning the importance of disseminating and promoting this type of tourism resource through various information sources.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-2469-5.ch045

## INTRODUCTION

As one of the world's largest economic activities, tourism has become an important source of income for many countries (Su & Lin, 2014), as well as a creator of jobs in various service industries (Yang, Lin & Han, 2010). This is particularly true in Spain, which has established itself as one of the world's leading tourism powers, second only to France (World Tourism Organization, 2018). Spain not only possesses many attractions, it also rivals China and Italy in terms of the number of goods it produces (UNESCO, 2015). Meanwhile, the country's position on the World Heritage list, a marketing tool used by national tourism campaigns to attract a large number of visitors (Li, Wu & Cai, 2008), speaks to the richness of its historical and archeological heritage (Boto, 2016). As cultural tourism has gradually become pivotal to a destination's attractiveness (McKercher, Ho & Du Cros, 2005), Spain has outpaced many other countries in leveraging its cultural resources, becoming the second-most important country for this type of tourism (Santos & Meléndez, 2016). In 2017, more than 82 million foreigners visited Spain, a year-on-year increase of 8.9% (Ministry of Energy & Tourism, 2018). As a result of this growth, competition between destinations has increased, requiring the implementation of creative and effective management measures (Woo, Uysal & Sirgy, 2018).

Culture plays an important role in tourism, as it increases the attractiveness and competitiveness of tourist destinations (Hennessey, Yun & MacDonald, 2014; Pal, 2015). Indeed, several studies have shown that tourists are particularly drawn to destinations with a richer cultural or natural heritage (e.g., Bille & Schulze, 2006; Cooke & Lazaretti, 2008; Yang et al., 2010; Su & Lin, 2014). Through cultural tourism, visitors gain insight into the history, culture, and way of life of other regions of the world (Pal, 2015). As cultural tourism gains ever more importance (Chen & Chen, 2010), it is worth noting that the fastest-growing places are those that offer tourists a glimpse into both the tangible and intangible sides of cultural experience (Datta et al., 2015).

In recent years, increasing international competition between tourist destinations has prompted an interest in offering and managing a positive image in order to gain a better positioning (Tasci & Gartner, 2007) and solidifying a national identity (Li et al., 2008). However, even when the value and meaning of heritage resources are understood, but they are not always included in the management process (Carter & Bramley, 2002). To overcome this problem, the initial stages of transforming a destination into a tourism resource should involve learning, research, adaptation and collaborative marketing (Char-lee et al., 2014).

ICT has changed how cultural heritage, in this case, archeological heritage, is promoted in the field of tourism (Caro, Luque & Zayas, 2015). Tourists have become tourists 2.0, much more experienced, demanding and technologically savvy. Tourism destinations must follow suit, which is why those responsible for managing them should take advantage of the opportunities offered by Web 2.0 to boost or promote the destination through new information sources, such as eWOM (Márquez-González & Caro, 2017). Recent research on Web 2.0 applied to heritage management and, in particular, cultural communication and the management of museums and archeological sites, suggests that it can be used to motivate the public and turn recipients of cultural heritage into transmitters and disseminators of information about it (Andreu-Pintado, 2014). In this regard, tourism companies responsible for managing destinations should thus use the free access they have to these information channels to understand the demands and expectations of their visitors with a view to informing future improvements to their dissemination and promotion efforts (Zhang & Cole, 2016). Leveraging their communication skills in this way will also yield other benefits, in addition to the purely communicative, enabling an efficient discussion with all

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