# Competitive Strategies of Tourism Businesses

## Prof. Alessandro Ceriani

***Text under revision. Not yet approved by academic staff***

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The tourist offer is a set of ordered and programmed elements functional to tourist satisfaction. The resources of the territory and the offer of services are increasingly complementary elements and therefore the Italian tourist product, thanks to a competitive advantage consisting of the natural, artistic and cultural heritage of the territory, must be defended and expanded to compete in a more structured way internationally.

The management of tourism activities requires professionalism and technical culture of the sector on the part of operators to be able to act in an integrated way and to expand the offer by increasing tourist satisfaction. In this context, the course of "Competitive Strategies of tourism companies" intends to deepen the characteristics, specificities and strategic and management problems of tourism companies also with a view to defining the environmental and competitive context in which they operate.

In summary, the course constitutes a connection point between the theoretical framework of tourism businesses, managerial activities and business economic techniques applicable to sector operators. The approach used is to provide an articulated training course integrated with a transversal reading that includes management, finance, accounting, human resources and marketing.

The course aims to:

explore the different business realities from a systemic perspective, in order to understand the most relevant topics related to the economics and management of tourism businesses. In particular, it will offer an overview of the different types of companies, the context in which they operate, their development potential, and the most relevant features in terms of management, with a focus on key elements of management and production. In addition, the course will introduce a selection of updated case studies, aimed to explain the differences between the activities carried out in this sector, such as: the commercial role played by the Internet, tour operators, hotels, other accommodations, conferences, and transports;

introduce the key methodologies used to measure and analyse the results achieved by tourism businesses. In particular, thanks to the growing quantity and quality of data available, students will have the opportunity to learn to use some management control tools (e.g. key performance indicators, revenue management, budget creation, interpretation of financial statements, etc.) that are fundamental for the management of tourism businesses;

analyse the way in which the different qualitative and quantitative variables can be used to launch competitive strategies related to the offer of products and/or services. In addition, the course will study the impact of these strategies on investments and/or the sustainability of the actions taken by companies

*Intended learning outcomes*

At the end of the course, students will be able to have a clear overview of the objectives, essential features, and market segment of reference of tourism businesses.

In particular, they will be able to develop their knowledge of the financial terms and tools they need to understand the functioning and the importance of some relevant variables that characterise tourism businesses, and how they are influenced by the actions they take.

Finally, students will be able to assess the quality and effectiveness of tourism businesses, and represent their performance, in order to design action plans reflecting the strategies adopted by the different operators.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will analyse the different types of tourism businesses, following these steps:

definition and key concepts;

international context of reference;

the Italian context, with a focus on the economic sector and the regulatory framework;

an overview of the type of services and products provided, and the organisational features;

strategic orientation and marketing policies.

In particular, the course aims to present the different types of tourism businesses from the point of view of their complex organisation and the management patterns that can be applied, trying to outline their most innovative aspects.

In addition, it will analyse a selection of case studies in order to identify the financial tools at the basis of the functioning of organisations, and assess their performance in the different segments of tourism (e.g. accommodations, restaurants, planes, cruises, etc.).

Finally, also with reference to the context of 2020, 2021 for the COVID-19 health emergency, some business cases will be presented to examine the type of strategies adopted in the emergency and prospective phase for the year 2022 and subsequent ones.

***READING LIST***

Textbooks of reference:

1. The slides that will be made available during the lessons and any other material presented in the classroom (downloadable by blackboard).

Recommended readings (optional):

* Clara Benevolo, Mario Grasso, *Destinazioni e imprese turistiche*, FrancoAngeli, terza edizione aggiornata e ampliata 2021
* Anna Lia Scannerini – Miriam Beretta, *Strumenti di controllo per le imprese turistiche*, FrancoAngeli, 2014
* Manuela De Carlo, Stefania Bertolini, *Management delle aziende del turismo,* McGraw-Hill Education Create, 2019

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures, presentation of case studies, and meetings with subject matter experts.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Oral exam, consisting in three-five questions based on the reading list mentioned above.

It aims to assess knowledge of the topics explained in class, use of appropriate terminology, ability to use argumentation in a structured and coherent way, and capacity to identify conceptual connections and open issues.

Assessment criteria: accuracy of answers, use of proper terminology, and ability to carry out a critical analysis of the key elements that characterise organisations (from the point of view of the management of human resources and the use of control and planning financial tools).

During the exam, students may be asked to answer questions on the slides and case studies presented during the course.

In any case for the examination:

For students who will attend lectures in the classroom, due to the completeness of the additional material presented with the cases / testimonies, the study of the optional texts indicated in the bibliography section is not required.

For students who will not be able to attend the scheduled lessons, the study and reading of the manual indicated above (previous section, bibliography) "*Destinazioni e imprese turistiche*" is required in addition to the material of the lessons published on Blackboard.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course. However, students should show a certain curiosity towards the latest economic events. For this reason, they are invited to read, on a regular basis, Italian press articles and the section ‘investor relation’ and/or ‘corporate governance’ of the websites of listed companies, important businesses, international groups in the field of tourism (hotels, restaurants, tour operators, etc.).

*Student meeting time and place*

The meeting is scheduled after class or by appointment at the Brescia branch of the Catholic University by writing by email to the Prof. at: alessandro.ceriani@unicatt.it

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage (Alessandro Ceriani) at <http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG> or on the Faculty notice board.