

MANAGING THE SERVICE CONCEPT IN CREATING AN INNOVATIVE TOURISM PRODUCT

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Abstract

Purpose – A large number of players involved in supply and delivery of tourist experience, on the one side, and visitors' unique experience on the other, make the development of the service concept of an innovative tourism product at destination very complex. Although there is a tendency towards increasing multiple partnerships in managing services, the requirements and standardization of processes in the performance management model is missing. The proposed conceptual model of the service concept is a useful tool for analyzing the overall service concept performance, stressing the importance of the Quadro Helix Model of engagement. The paper aims to investigate the innovative service concept and service processes from the operational and service marketing perspective, starting from the theoretical background and the constructs such as “organizing idea”, “service provided” and “service received”. The proposed model is tested on the case of “Istra Inspirit”, a project that has received multiple awards for innovativeness and creativity in tourism offer by conceiving and organizing events that revive history, myths and legends.

Methodology – In order to obtain qualitative data for testing the creation of processes for the service concept, in depth semi-structured interviews with the service providers were conducted, focusing on actions, problems and processes research. In addition, introspective, life history and visual texts were used. The case of “Istra Inspirit” illustrates the service concept and its applicability in practice.

Findings – The paper brings forward the conceptual model of the components and processes of the service experience by which the tourism service concept can be articulated. This study attempts to develop a multi-disciplinary approach in managing the service concept at a tourist destination. The “Istra Inspirit” project presents the service concept created by the tourist destination itself (County of Istria), which became proactive in finding ways to create new tourism products in the Quadro Helix Engagement Model. This example was chosen because it is a good illustration of managing the service concept with an economic value. The paper presents the conclusion and the managerial implications, which can be used as guidelines for benchmarking innovative tourism products.

Contribution – Although final results might not be generalized, the processes used to create an innovative tourism product according to the service concept can be applied in other circumstances and on other projects. The intention of this paper is to contribute to tourism research with new content and new methodology. The service concept is stressing the importance of achieving a multidisciplinary performance management model and the need for improved articulation of the service concept. In this way, the paper brings forward a blueprint in order to propose a model of the components of the service experience concept and offers a methodological framework for articulation of service experience.

Keywords: service concept, innovative tourism product, Quadro Helix Model, service experience

INTRODUCTION

Due to the importance and commonness of services, it was necessary to develop the management and marketing model which would deal precisely and solely with services. This is important because users are involved in various stages of the production and delivery process. For this reason, as well as because of the intangibility of services, inseparability of production from consumption, time-perishable capacity, selection of the location of service delivery dictated by the location of the consumer, labor intensity and difficulties in measuring productivity, the role of service managers is twofold.

Organizations operating in the service sector are based on the principles of the system theory just as those operating in the manufacturing sector. While for the production of material products we need three elements (labor, machinery and raw materials) and the product is the result of their interaction, the service system is different in that the user is one of the participants in the service system itself. User involvement in the provision and delivery of services has important implications for the service provider, who must constantly take into account what and how the service is provided to customers. This interaction between providers and users has an impact on its final result and quality. Also, the success of services can be measured only after the purchase was made and the consumption took place. The experiences and expectations of the user are subjective, and the experience of service, satisfaction and trust can be considered only after the service is provided and used. Precisely because of this feature, it is hard to compare a particular service with the services of competitors, which calls for greater involvement of the service provider in terms of giving more physical elements and evidence to abstract performance in order to reduce the uncertainty of customers. Intangibility, therefore, is compensated by business premises, appearance and behavior of employees, equipment used in the provision of services and materials delivered to the user as well as by the company brand.

Due to their characteristics, services are made up of many small parts which include property, processes, people and skills, which are appropriately integrated so as to result in a planned or designed service. When developing a completely new service or redesigning an existing one, managers make the decisions about its every component. Even a simple service requires a number of decisions, from the formation of the idea, the design phase all the way to delivery. From the service providers' perspective, designing a service means defining a proper combination of physical and non-physical components. Our research, therefore, aims to answer the research question: *What are main steps in managing service concept? What can be considered as „new” in creating an innovative tourism product?*

The paper aims to investigate the service concept and service processes from an operational and service marketing perspective on the case of Istra Inspirit. Our intention was to illustrate the innovative service concept of re-inventing the tradition. The decisions of operations management directly affect the size, shape, quantity, quality, price, profitability and speed of delivering the output of travel, tourism and hospitality organizations. The proposed service concept is a useful tool for influencing the overall performance of the service concept. This inevitably presents certain

problems in the industry, largely due to the heterogeneous nature of the delivery of these services. In-depth semi-structured interviews with the service providers were designed and conducted in order to reach the goal of the paper.

The article is organized as follows: the following section provides a literature review regarding the constructs of services, service management and marketing and service concept. The third section describes the research methodology and results, followed by concluding remarks, managerial implications, limitations and directions for future research.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Services and Service Concept

The word “service” comes from the Latin word “servitium” which means slavery, condition of a slave, servitude. Many authors wanted to define what service is in order to be able to identify the activities that can be classified as services:

- “services include all economic activities whose output is not a physical product or construction, and are generally consumed at the time they are produced and provide added value in various forms (such as convenience, entertainment, timeliness, comfort and health) that are essentially intangible concerns of its first purchaser”(Quinn *et al.* 1987, 51);
- “services, activities, benefits and pleasures that are offered for sale or provided in connection with the sale of goods” (Gronroos 1990, 26);
- “service is any action or performance that one party can offer to another, which in fact is intangible and does not result in ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be associated with the physical object” (Kotler and Keller 2008, 402);
- “Products, such as a bank loan or home security, that are intangible or at least substantially so. If totally intangible, they are exchanged directly from producer to user, cannot be transported or stored, and are almost instantly perishable. Service products are often difficult to identify, because they come into existence at the same time they are bought and consumed. They comprise intangible elements that are inseparable; they usually involve customer participation in some important way; they cannot be sold in the sense of ownership transfer; and they have no title” (American Marketing Association, AMA, <https://www.ama.org/resources/Pages/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=S>, 21.12.2015).

A service is an act, effort or performance of a tangible, physical product including goods, objects and things. Services are often an integral part of the offer of many producers of goods and commodities (Zeithaml and Bitner 1996, 5). A service as an object of exchange has a market value, not only for the one who provides it, but for the customer, i.e. the user as well (Eiglier and Langeard 1999, 13). Such market value can be realized only under two conditions: the first is related to material resources and service staff, and the other to the users/clients who recognize the needs and desires that are fulfilled by contacting the service company.

The main features that distinguish a service from a product are intangibility, inseparability of product from its use, heterogeneity, impermanence or unstorability and lack of ownership (Lovelock 2001, Bateson and Hoffman 2012). *Intangibility* is the most prominent feature of services and represents a challenge in the management of services, since they cannot be seen, felt, tasted or touched as a tangible, physical product. *Inseparability* (simultaneity) of production and consumption is a specific feature of services relating to their concurrency. *Heterogeneity* (volatility) is reflected in the inability to standardize services in aspects of quality towards all users. The human factor, which is contained in the service itself, makes it difficult to monitor and control the standards controlling the uniformity of quality. *Impermanence* (unstorability) of the service means inability to store or use the service at a later point in time, arising from its intangibility and inseparability. Changes in demand are a specific feature of service organizations and may cause problems where these fluctuations are unpredictable (Mudie and Pirrie 2006, 5). *Lack of ownership* is a feature of services that prevents them to result in ownership, being intangible and unstorable they cannot be physically possessed. When a service is purchased, ownership rights cannot be transferred from the service to the user, only the right of use.

The term “service concept” was first used by Sasser *et al.* (1978) to describe the bundle of elements packaged to be sold to the customer. The service concept has been conceptualized as the way in which the “organization would like to have its services perceived by its customers, employees, shareholders and lenders”, (Heskett 1986) and “a bundle of goods and services” (Anderson *et al.* 2008, 365), defining the “how” and the “what” of service design, helping the mediation between customer needs and the organization’s strategic intent. The service concept is used to develop new services, being “the central component in designing services” (Goldstein *et al.* 2002) and the “overall process of developing new service offerings” (Johnson *et al.* 2000) and it includes all the phases from the idea to the launch.

According to Johnston *et al.* (2012), the service concept is an attempt to create a clear, agreed, shared and articulated definition of the nature of the service provided and received, in order to ensure that the essence of the service is delivered. In this way, the service concept is a shared view and is articulated in detail so operations could know what they have to deliver and how it has to be delivered, and the marketers could know what they are selling. This involves understanding customers' needs in the target market and arranging this with the organization’s strategy and competitive intentions. This approach was introduced by Lovelock *et al.* (1999) who separate the “service marketing concept” as the benefits to the customer, “what” service will be delivered, and the “service operations concept”, i.e. “how” the service will be delivered. Service operations and service marketing posit two fundamental types of service attributes (Anderson *et al.* 2008): (1) core attributes (what is delivered): “the core of a service is that part of the service we think of when we name the service” (Iacobucci and Ostrom 1993, 258) and (2) peripheral attributes (how it is delivered): physical attributes which include environmental, mechanical, and inanimate components of the service delivery, and interactional attributes which include all of the interpersonal encounters involved in the service delivery.

The service concept is the starting point to create an operations strategy, while at the strategic level it can be used to define and communicate the nature of the business, and to drive innovation and strategic advantage. The concept of service design is an interdisciplinary approach, which can be outlined along five basic principles: user-centered, co-creative, sequencing, evidencing and holistic (Stickdorn and Schneider 2010). According to Goldstein *et al.* (2002), there are three levels where this concept can be discussed. The first level of definition of the service concept is the strategic and core element for driving the design decisions for new and redesigned services. The second level is the operational level during the service design planning, especially in integrating the service strategy into the service delivery system, when the appropriate performance measures are determined. Third, the component of service design is used for the service encounter interactions, where the service concept is useful in design and enhances service offering.

1.2. Service Marketing and Management

Due to differences between services, it is hard to find a single definition and criteria for their classification, which is necessary for assessing the strategies and objectives for implementing management and marketing in service organizations. Service marketing has developed because the principles that are successfully applied to the manufacturing market are not effective in the services market. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (1996, 13), "service marketing is different" and requires the implementation of new development strategies, approaches and principles that will satisfy the needs of all service sectors. Service marketing becomes a separate scientific discipline aiming to provide better customer satisfaction and, thus, a higher degree of their loyalty. Service marketing means shaping and creating services according to users' needs and wishes, and how "to organize the implementation of the service strategy is one of the most important decisions" (Berry 1995, 121). It is usually defined as "the process through which the creation of services is planned and carried out, determining their pricing, promotion and distribution so as to achieve the exchange that would meet the goals of both individuals and organizations" (Dibb *et al.* 1995, 4). Marketing mix represents a selection and combination of various elements of marketing, coordinated and complementary ones, with which the company presents itself to the market and is directed toward external users. For manufacturing organizations, the traditional marketing mix consists of product, price, promotion and place (the "4P" concept), while services require greater marketing efforts due to their specific characteristics described above and include three additional elements: people, physical evidence and process (the "7P" concept) (Ozretić Došen 2010). *People* are "all human actors who play a role in the delivery of services thus affecting the consumer's perception; organizational staff, user and other users in the service environment" (Zeithaml and Bitner 1996, 26). Employees embody the service brand in the eyes of the user, therefore service companies should clearly communicate the goals, values and brand identity to their employees (Rajh 2009). Kotler *et al.* (2010, 366-367) note the importance of selecting employees based on their personality, as inherent attitudes cannot be changed, and employees in the services sector must be especially prepared to interact with the user. *Process* represents "actual procedures, mechanisms and flow of activities through which the service is delivered - the service delivery and operating systems" (Zeithaml *et al.* 2003, 27). Service processes vary, as they can be highly complex or very simple

as well as standardized or fully customized to the user. Inadequate process forming (Lovelock 2001, 16-17) would result in slowness, ineffective delivery of services, lost time or a disappointing experience for the user. As far as the service staff is concerned, the attention given to forming an adequate process would reduce fatigue, poor performance, low productivity and the possibility of errors. The process of providing services affects the perceived quality of the service (de Charnatony and Sagal-Horn 2003), and may increase or reduce the perceived value of the service (Tseng *et al.* 1999).

Service management studies the way marketing and operations, along with the used technology and people, enable the planning, production and delivery of the customer benefits package and, in connection with it, the service encounter (Ljubojević 1998, 46). In this way, service management combines many disciplines and represents the ability to develop and design service offers and strategies. In service management, the management of procedures is adapted to the characteristics of the service and the nature of service competition, and this is made possible by empowering service cultures of the organization since it is the key to quality service management, taking into account the impossibility of direct management of individual service transactions.

The ability to reproduce a service is necessary due to the ever growing service demand, and it represents a new challenge for management, because in this way the system would be sustainable over a longer period of time. The service company management system (Norman 2001) consists of five main elements:

- *target market* refers to primary and secondary target groups that management identifies and defines the target market segment for which a service system is designed;
- *service delivery system* is an equivalent of the system of production and distribution and must take into account the involvement of consumers in the service delivery, which hinders quality management. It consists of employees, consumers, physical environment and organizational structure;
- *image*, in this context, is seen as a means of providing information by which management influences employees, customers and other resource owners, whose actions and perceptions of organization are significant for market positioning and cost efficiency;
- *culture and philosophy* consist of the relevant standards and values, management and decision-making style and code, which form the culture and philosophy of service companies;
- *service concept* refers to the key benefits and advantages offered to the target group, made up of a complex set of values. The basic requirement for the development of this concept involves understanding consumers, their needs and preferences.

Service providers seek the most convergent areas so that the organization could work in synergy with the interests of all its stakeholders. Due to the importance of the user in the service system and the user being an integral element of the final service, the classic organizational pyramid for services is changing (Mudie and Pirrie 2006, 33-34): the hierarchical form of the pyramid structure gives way to more horizontal

communication and coordination, where the chain of command and control is generated by the top management, while the decisions are implemented through middle management and front line employees, who have no support. This reveals major differences in power, status, authority and general working conditions. Because of these negative characteristics, the traditional pyramid levels tend to be reversed, thus aiming at creating and delivering excellence. In this way, middle and top management represent support for the front line employees who want to meet the needs of the user in the best possible way. The organization must be closely and continuously connected with customers, who are part of the service and its processes, thus becoming the center of interest of the organization. As services are produced and used at the same time, it is impossible to control their quality prior to the production, because the production process takes place in the presence of the user and the service provider. Service companies implement the quality control of the services provided in three stages (Kotler 2000, 432): (1) investing in good hiring and training procedures, (2) standardizing the service performance process throughout the organization; (3) monitoring customer satisfaction through suggestions, complaints system, customer surveys and comparison shopping.

2. CAPTURING THE INNOVATION PROCESS – WHAT IS IMPORTANT?

2.1. Creating an innovative tourism product - for *whom* and *how*?

Innovation is a process. Organizations (people) innovate in response to new challenges or new demands. Innovation seeks to drive economic growth and to assure organizational success. To thrive, a company must develop products and services that have a discernible edge and this can only be achieved if there is an ongoing commitment to recognize the changing needs of the customers, to identify gaps in the market, and to develop socially innovative products that consistently meet those changing needs (Urip 2010, 28). So, the new question is: “*Who*” are we creating a new tourism product for?

The best starting point is perhaps to consider the features of the newest tourist (Zátory 2013, 28):

- Spontaneous, unpredictable, makes decisions regarding traveling, traveling is a part of his/her life, “global nomad”;
- An individualist, experienced traveler, understands all aspects of organization, has full control over the tour;
- Seeks higher-quality, satisfactory value ratio and additional values;
- Demands a constant flow of new experiences while visiting a destination;
- Wishes to experience existential authenticity;
- More aware of the environmental and cultural values of the destination, and reflects more on his own past experience and lifestyle;
- Internal motivational factors (demand for self-development, demand for creative self – expression).

In other words, the best way of creating value of an innovative tourism product is customer learning. Also, customer involvement may be the source of innovative ideas for new products, new technology, market information and development opportunities that are not in-house (Gonan Božac *et al.* 2012). Once there is a sense of “who” for, there is a new question: *How to create an innovative tourism product?*

Kotler's definition that a “product” conceptualizes “anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need”. It includes physical objects, services, persons, places, organizations and ideas” or Smith’s definition “Ideally, tourism products meet marketplace demands, are produced cost-efficiently, and are based on the wise use of the cultural and natural resources of the destination” (Smith, 1994, 582) provide an insight into the extent of the service concept. We can assume, first of all, that the innovation process of creating an innovative tourism product is determined by the creator of the idea and his/her vision in creating the service concept: “*organizing idea*” – “*service provided*” – “*service received*”.

This concept refers to the constant issue: *service provided vs. service received*, because the main distinctive features of service provided can be assured through processes (service activities), however, they depend on the evaluation of customer satisfaction of service received. So, before developing the service concept, it is important to keep in mind that today the idea of an innovative tourism product includes: *a lot stronger experience for customers (often both creative and participatory), which must be authentic, highly distinctive and highly creative (lots of different services included); willingness of the organizer to adjust to the audience, destination, etc.* A practical service blueprint, i.e. the visualization of service provided, represents a challenge (customer actions are a central point in creating the service blueprint).

According to Gonan Božac *et al.* (2012), the literature on innovation in the service sector has to a large extent been influenced by the manufacturing sector based on the general view that the manufacturing industries are the main source of innovation. Even though service generates a high share of employment and value added in the global economy, innovation in the service sector has for a long time been a neglected area of the innovation research (Drejer 2004). According to the specificity of services, the simultaneity of service production and consumption is the source for potential innovation activities.

2.2. Linkages and Integration in Creating an Innovative Tourism Product

The tourism industry comprises a complex network of stakeholders and it is closely connected to the destination. The main challenge in creating a tourism product is the stakeholder engagement process, which should be tailored to the particular needs of the product, the destination and the situation. However, more often than not there is no activity included in the development phase regarding the stakeholder engagement, although there is literary evidence about the increasing importance of anticipatory coordination. So we suggest using a 2IAV model (Golja and Paulišić 2013) to guide and direct the process of stakeholder engagement through four building blocks:

- (1) **identifying** stakeholders: brainstorming a list of stakeholders without screening, including everyone who has an interest in the destination/products (services);
- (2) **analyzing**: understanding stakeholder perspectives and relevance;
- (3) **inviting**: to be part of cross-functional groups in the destination;
- (4) **value**: the rationality in understanding their influence and the necessity of involvement according to the below activities.

Stakeholder participation can vary from informing, consulting, involving, collaborating, empowering, so that the next step which is based on extensive experience, is evaluating linkages and integration in terms of regularity, enhancing creativity, notable benefit, etc. of different stakeholders in creating an innovative tourism product. This process will provide valuable information about stakeholders. Understanding stakeholders is important because it provides cutting-edge management and marketing point of the service concept; it enhances the creativity process and helps understand problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions, etc.

In 2000, with the Triple Helix Model (Etzkowitz and Leydesdoff 2000) the innovation model got a new dimension. The model introduced the three dimensions of the social system: geography, economy and knowledge. The main institutions in the Triple Helix Model are *university, industry and government*, later called Academician, Business and Government (acronym A-B-G, a term that has become more popular). According to Etzkowitz and Leydesdoff (2000), the university can play an enhanced role in innovation in increasingly knowledge-based societies. Different stakeholders from these three centers, academician, business and government, recombine from their respective perspectives. These recombinations are knowledge-based innovations and reorganizations. The Quadro Helix Model (also called Quadruple and Quad) is the extension of the Triple Helix Model and adds as fourth helix the “*public*”, more specifically defined as the “media-based and culture-based public” and civil society. This fourth helix connects the “media”, “creative industries”, “culture”, “values”, “lifestyles”, “art”, and perhaps also the notion of the “creative class” (Carayannis and Campbell 2009, 216-218). The collaboration of these four actors is the key to success in knowledge economy. In this interaction, the competitive advantages are arising from new ideas and knowledge shared between academician, business, government and community. A year later, in 2010, the Quintuple Helix was presented. The Quintuple Helix adds as the fifth helix the “*natural environment*” and represents a ‘five-helix model’ (Carayannis and Campbell 2010, 61). The model can be proposed as a framework for transdisciplinary (and interdisciplinary) analysis of sustainable development and social ecology and it stresses the necessary socioecological transition of society and economy in the 21st century (Carayannis and Campbell 2010, 62). Accordingly, collaboration is developing in the innovation model, and linkages as well as integration are becoming increasingly important and complex.

3. ISTRA INSPIRIT – AN INNOVATIVE TOURISM PRODUCT

3.1. Methodology

The research (desk and field) was conducted for the purpose of capturing some key guidelines in the operational stage of creating an innovative tourism product. Istra Inspirit was recognized and selected from among various events presenting the County of Istria as a destination. The criteria were as follows: (1) new product(s) – max. 5 years old; (2) offering a set of products; (3) links with the destination; (4) involvement in community; (5) stakeholder participation networking. The research interview is used as one of the most important qualitative data collection method. Interview as a main source of primary data was chosen because this data collection technique was able to provide intensive, detailed and valuable information on our research topic. Nonetheless, beside of the interviews, we used source of information as companies' internal documents, which also helped us to understand the concept. Furthermore, authors passed through all interview design process: pre-establishing questions – choosing type of interview – choosing of method of the research result interpretation. For the purposes of our research content analysis technique was applied. Thus the content of all interviews were divided into groups according to the questions that was discussed. This information gave us an understanding of used service concept, what are the main steps in managing service, who is involved in the process and how the process is organized. Finally gathered data was analyzed based on theoretical concept.

The structured questionnaire with questions is divided into three parts and is thematically structured starting from general to specific and 4 interviews were examined. The research was conducted during December 2015 and January 2016 through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the service providers focused on action, problem and process research, while using introspective, life history and visual texts. Topics were distributed into the service concept box: “*organizing idea*”, “*service provided*” and “*service received*”, which were then formalized to be explored. The interview was designed as a face-to-face table talk lasting for approximately 45 minutes. The advantages of free-response questions are that they offer greater flexibility to the respondent, but also represent a major challenge to the authors in terms of remaining objective, since the method is inherently subjective.

3.2. Istra Inspirit Concept and Services

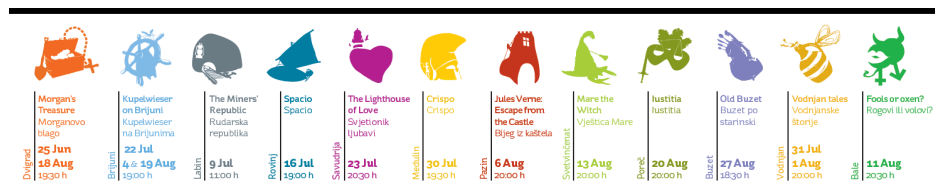
Istria as a destination, beside sun, sand and sea, offers relaxing landscapes, quiet roads, historical buildings and a rural way of life. When conceptualizing the project Istra Inspirit, the idea was to re-enact or live history or some kind of an interesting live event. In particular, encounters of tourists with costumed characters coming from the past, while visiting a historical site in Istria, are more than entertainment because the participants must think, learn and be directly involved (in tastings, scenography, etc).

The development project started in 2008 in order to enhance the offer and enrich customer experience for the purpose of increasing tourist arrivals. But it was a conceptually new project characterized as high risk, so it needed government support,

specifically, the support of the County of Istria, the destination management organization (DMO) Istrian Tourist Board and Istrian Development Tourist Agency.

In 2012, the first 9 events were launched, but with idea to develop 100 of them. Today, through the Istra Inspirit brand more than 12 stories, myths and legends from all over Istria are revived and turned into interactive experiences.

Figure 1: **Istra Inspirit – travel through time, unique experience performances in 2015**



Source: Private materials of Istra Inspirit

In an effort to understand the service concept of Istra Inspirit we made the following summarized table.

Figure 2: **Istra Inspirit service concept - a set of principles**

ORGANIZING IDEA	SERVICE PROVIDED	SERVICE RECEIVED
– myths and legends	– revived myths and legends	– discovering tangible and intangible cultural heritage
– authentic locations	– authentic locations	– social contacts with locals
– interactive event	– food tasting	– education
– market segmentation	– performances	– relaxation
– involvement of different stakeholders	– guided service	– memories
– possibility of tailor-made activities	– stakeholders	

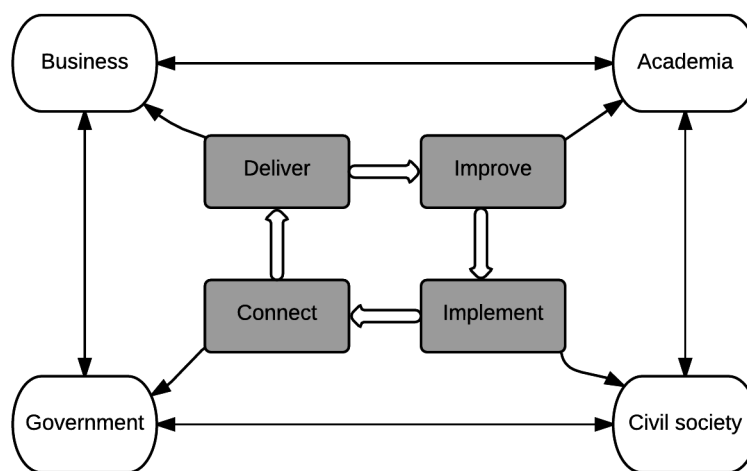
Source: Author's interpretation

A combination of creativity and high quality consumption creates a unique experience that attracts a range of people who participate in different ways. Delivering customer value through distinctive, memorable service experiences requires a cross-functional perspective with a common goal. To this end the Quadro Helix Model has been used from the very beginning of the Istra Inspirit project. After years of implementing Quadro Helix, many positive effects can be perceived:

- communication between stakeholders at different levels (*government, business sector, civil society, academics*) is easier and more successful,
- opportunities to achieve co-financing are increased,
- promotion is improved; the project is being promoted at different levels, by different stakeholders,
- students that are included in the project get more practical skills and become more competitive in the labor market.

Despite all these positive effects, Istra Inspirit has faced many challenges in implementing Quadro Helix due to the fact that this model is still not well recognized in Croatia. It was hard to explain the model, the roles of each stakeholder and why it was necessary to include all Quadro Helix dimensions for the best outcome. In this interaction, the competitive advantages are arising from new ideas and knowledge shared between academician, business, government and community. By adding the Johnson *et al.* (2012) frame for developing and using the service concept, a new model is created as shown in Figure 3. Quadro Helix Model.

Figure 3: **Quadro Helix Model** .



Source: Authors

Istra Inspirit as a case of an integral service concept with an economic value, designed to reinvent tradition in a different way, has faced some challenges, such as: *achieved rhythm of service delivery and operations needs to be geared to meet stakeholders expectations; place dependency (authentic locations); specificity of food preparation, delivery and operations connected to food; connections and activities of different suppliers;* etc. The innovative tourism product – Istra Inspirit is based on the existing attractions and resources, but with consideration of essential infrastructure, facilities and services needed for the project/product to be realized. During this process the blueprint was needed to help accurately evaluate the real success potential of different products. Following this idea, causal mapping (blueprint) was selected as a solution to illustrate the impact of a decision on input, processes and the service concept on product outcome (customer satisfaction). The blueprint helped in understanding the challenging situations of the service concept and provided an opportunity for managers to consider the effect that changes in input, processes and services may have on the success of the event and the final outcome. The table addresses the theoretical background and constructs such as organizing idea, service provided and service received through time, in particular, from the perspective of customer experience and service outcome.

Providing a “creative” experience and offering more in-depth participation pose considerable demands and require a challenging scope for customization or personalization of the operational services so as to meet various guest requirements (e.g. luxury market). In the future, these factors will impact the design and management of operations. Also, in the future it will be hard to find a “balance” between a personalized service and a highly standardized service that Istra Inspirit would like to offer in the future.

Table 1: Istra Inspirit product platform – general blueprint of events

Istra Inspirit (product platform)	Inputs	Processes	Service Concept	Customer Experience
Crispo (Town of Medulin)	Actors, musicians, catering, students, children from local kindergarten, scenographers, costume designers, technical equipment, requisites for the show	Promotion activities → selling tickets → preparing the location (entrance, stands, decoration, etc.) → welcoming guests → show → catering → questionnaires → cleaning the location	Welcome drink, theatre show, Roman dinner, <i>fire show</i> , musicians, Roman <i>wellness</i>	Traditional food and beverages inspired by Roman recipes, education about Roman history in Istria, sunset experience, unusual visit to the archaeological site of Vizula
Mythical Creatures of Istria* <i>Istra Inspiritić</i> (County of Istria)	Actors, musicians, scenographers, costume designers, technical equipment, requisites for the show	Agreements with schools and kindergartens → setting the stage → show → workshop → feedback	Theatre show, workshop, tailor-made on demand	Istrian most interesting myths and legends presented in an interactive way for schools and kindergartens
Spacio (Town of Rovinj)	Actors, musicians, catering, students, local museum, local associations, batanas, requisites for the show	Promotion activities → selling tickets → welcoming guests → visit to Batana Eco-museum → guiding guests from ecomuseum to <i>batanas</i> → <i>batana</i> rides → dinner → feedback	Welcome drink, theatre show, dinner, musicians, dinner, fishermen of Rovinj, <i>batana</i> ride, visit to Batana Eco-museum	Traditional Istrian food and beverages, education about Istrian history in an entertaining way with sketches and original music
The Miner’s Republic (Towns of Labin and Raša)	Artists, expert guide, catering, students, technical equipment, organized bus ride	Promotion activities → selling tickets → welcoming guests → guiding guests to the coal mine → expert guided tour through the mine → <i>art</i> performance at the end of the tour → feedback	Welcome drink, expert guided tour, bus ride, lunch, coal mine experience	Coal mine experience, education about the coal mine workers’ life and habits in an interactive way with participation

Istra Inspirit (product platform)	Inputs	Processes	Service Concept	Customer Experience
Mare the Witch (Town of Svetvinčenat)	Actors, musicians, catering, students, local associations, scenographers, costume designers, technical equipment, requisites for the show	Promotion activities → selling tickets → preparing the location (entrance, stands, decoration, etc.) → welcoming guests → show → catering → questionnaires → cleaning the location	Welcome drink, dinner, theatre show, musicians, presentations of old crafts, knight fights, medieval games, local products	Education about Istrian history in the Middle Ages focused on legends, traditional food and beverages inspired by the Middle Ages.
Iustitia (Town of Poreč)	Actors, musicians, catering, students, local associations and producers, scenographers, costume designers, technical equipment, requisites for the show	Promotion activities → selling tickets → preparing the location (entrance, stands, decoration, etc.) → welcoming guests → show → catering → questionnaires → cleaning the location	Welcome drink, theatre show, musicians, sightseeing the old town of Poreč, visit to the museum	Traditional Istrian food & beverages inspired by the Baroque period, education about Istrian history focused on the Baroque period.
The Lighthouse of Love (Town of Savudrija)	Actors, musicians, catering, students, scenographers, costume designers, technical equipment, requisites for the show	Promotion activities → selling tickets → preparing the location (entrance, stands, decoration, etc.) → welcoming guests → show → catering → questionnaires → cleaning the location	Welcome drink, dinner, theatre show, musicians	Traditional Istrian food & beverages inspired by the Austro-Hungarian period, education about Istrian history and the legend of Count Metternich
Old Buzet (Town of Buzet)	Actors, musicians, catering, students, local associations, scenographers, costume designers, technical equipment, requisites for the show	Promotion activities → selling tickets → preparing the location (entrance, stands, decoration, etc.) → welcoming guests → show → catering → questionnaires → cleaning the location	Welcome drink, dinner, theatre show, musicians - typical Istrian music	Traditional Istrian food & beverages, education about Istrian history
Morgan's Treasure (Town of Kanfanar)	Actors, musicians, catering, students, local associations, scenographers, costume designers, technical equipment, requisites for the show	Promotion activities → selling tickets → preparing the location (entrance, stands, decoration, etc.) → welcoming guests → show → catering → questionnaires → cleaning the location	Welcome drink, dinner, theatre show, musicians	Pirate life experience, treasure hunt, pirate songs and games and food and beverages inspired by pirates

Istra Inspirit (product platform)	Inputs	Processes	Service Concept	Customer Experience
Vodnjan Tales (Town of Vodnjan)	Actors, musicians, catering, students, local associations, scenographers, costume designers, technical equipment, requisites for the show	Promotion activities → selling tickets → preparing the location (entrance, stands, decoration, etc.) → welcoming guests → show → catering → questionnaires → cleaning the location	Food and drinks tasting, theatre show (based on different stories), presentations of old crafts	Traditional Istrian food & beverages, education about Istrian history
Fools or Oxen? (Town of Bale)	Actors, musicians, catering, students, scenographers, costume designers, technical equipment, requisites for the show	Promotion activities → selling tickets → preparing the location (entrance, stands, decoration, etc.) → welcoming guests → show → catering → questionnaires → cleaning the location	Theatre show, dinner	Experience of the Venetian period in Bale, typical food inspired by this period
Jules Verne: Escape from the Castle (Town of Pazin)	Actors, musicians, catering, students, local associations, scenographers, costume designers, technical equipment, requisites for the show	Promotion activities → selling tickets → preparing the location (entrance, stands, decoration etc.) → welcoming guests → show → catering → questionnaires → cleaning the location	Theatre show, musicians – classic music, dinner	Istrian food & beverages inspired in Austro-Hungarian period, education about Istrian history and Matthias Sandorf.
Kupelwieser on Brijuni (Brijuni Islands)	Actors, musicians, scenographers, costume designers, technical equipment, requisites for the show	Promotion activities → selling tickets → welcoming guests → show → feedback	Theatre show, musicians – classical music, boat ride	Interactive game about the history of the national park, learning about famous persons that visited Brijuni

CONCLUSION

With Istra Inspirit the Istrian tangible cultural heritage is being presented through the most attractive segments of its intangible cultural heritage. Another reason why Istra Inspirit can be seen as an innovative cultural tourism project is that it networks a huge number of local stakeholders at all levels – from local authorities and local tourist boards to numerous associations, craftsmen, manufacturers of Istrian souvenirs, family agricultural holdings, etc. It is also a good example of implementing the service

concept and adding value to customer experience. However, for strong theoretical proves it is necessary to include more cases from different customer-oriented service.

Main steps in managing service concept is to understand the “main idea” (What is a main idea in proposing product / service?); what will be provided (need and expectation of tourist and environment in general); set of service received (to fulfill different expectations of customer). “New” in creating an innovative tourism product is: *developing product platform, interactive experience, public –private partnership, Quadro Helix Model, “balance” between a personalized service and a highly standardized service.*

The main challenge remains to identify *unique features of a destination and support them through high quality interpretation, positioning and marketing in the process of developing a competitive tourism product.* Different experiences are clustered around the product platform with the same mission, within collective branding, in order to offer a wide range of fulfilling experiences to meet the demands of the newest tourist and increase the competitiveness of the destination.

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