

Coopetition Instead of Competition: Tourism Promotion during COVID-19

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Abstract

The tourism market was severely affected during the first lockdown related to the COVID-19 outbreak in Poland from March to May 2020. Suddenly, all tourism traffic was halted; at the same time, no predictable prospects for returning to normal were presented. Tourist destinations faced the challenge of adapting their tourism promotion activities to the new reality.

The article presents a case study of the #CityWillWait and #CityIsReady campaigns, which between March and July 2020 exemplified the unique promotional cooperation of 13 of Poland's largest cities. The previously competing city tourism destinations decided to cooperate and use their highly effective on their local markets marketing tools to recommend each other in terms of planning future travels.

The cities' cooperation resulted in two low-cost complementary promotional campaigns, which gained enormous impact and publicity in Poland and abroad. They explored the possibilities of domestic travelling and directed the interest of tourists to urban tourism in the time after the lockdown. Moreover, the effectiveness of the marketing activities raised because of using the communication tools that are more credible for the local target audiences.

The campaigns were later recognised in many competitions and plebiscites of best promotional practices and those related to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic time. Participating cities remodelled their future promotional plans to benefit from the synergy achieved through this cooperation.

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