

Marketing in Food, Hospitality, Tourism and Events

A Critical Approach

Richard Tresidder and Craig Hirst

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Introduction

■ Why this book is needed

This book was motivated by a lecture series presented by the two authors at the Sheffield Business School. The module aimed to provide a critical framework for students to apply their previous marketing knowledge to the marketing of tourism, hospitality, events and food (THEF). During this time, although there was a large body of critical and conceptual marketing literature being produced within the sector, there was not a definitive text that reflected these debates and brought together a critical framework in which to surround the marketing of THEF experiences that could be recommended to students. As a result, it was decided that this book should be written.

The study of tourism, hospitality, events and food has a long tradition of academic development that has mixed management concepts and a social science based discourse. This multidisciplinary approach is reflected in the majority of THEF university courses and has given rise to many special interest groups that have forwarded knowledge in the subject area. This has created a critical approach to the contemporary study and analysis of THEF. However, the theoretical development of marketing in the subject area has largely developed around marketing practice and general marketing concepts and theory rather than developing a critical understanding of the marketing process within these sectors specifically. THEF form both a significant element of the service economy and a critically important role in the lives of consumers.

Consumers use tourism, hospitality, events and food as markers of their lives, they save to escape for a couple of weeks and justify working hard to engage in what is fundamentally a significant aspect of their lives. While we hope to stimulate the debates that surround marketing in our sector, the ideas in this publication are not to be considered a replacement; therefore this work should be seen and treated as a complementary text that is used alongside more management orientated texts. The purpose of this book is to provide a critical insight into many of the process that inform elements of marketing such as segmentation, targeting and positioning and specifically the role of marketing in creating meaning and value.

This book adopts a critical approach to marketing that it draws its inspiration not just from the academic debates that surround and inform contemporary marketing practices, but also from the areas of sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, tourism, events and hospitality studies, the theory of food, critical marketing and social theory. This multidisciplinary approach enables the marketer to adopt a holistic approach that links together business studies and the social sciences, the result is to create an inclusive, creative and rigorous approach to marketing. The ability to understand the world we live in respect of the wants, needs, desires and aspirations of the consumer, and their relationship, to tourism, hospitality, events and food, and the elements is fundamental to being a successful practitioner in these sectors. In conclusion, the adoption of a critical approach to marketing provides the marketer with a set of theoretical and conceptual tools that will enhance practice and effectiveness.

The dominant approach to marketing that you see duplicated in nearly all generic marketing texts and marketing programmes serves to replicate the marketing paradigm that is embedded in notions of economic and psychological exchange. There is much value in these texts and this general approach as they advance our understanding of developments in marketing practice and provide

industry-relevant data and case studies. There are a few exceptions to this exchange approach, notably the work of consumer culture theory (CCT) researchers who collectively acknowledge that marketing is located within a broader framework of practices that serve (to reproduce) the marketplace. This book aligns with this philosophy and many of the themes identified by the CCT tradition are explored in this book. The benefits of adopting a more socially and culturally aware approach enables the marketer to understand how culture shapes marketplace trends, consumer behaviours and the practice of the market and marketer themselves. This approach also liberates the consumer from being identified as merely a target to be acted upon.

There are certain themes that run throughout the book that inform the agenda for the critical marketing of THEF, these include:

- Power
- Culture
- Motivations
- Marketplace meanings and value(s)
- Marketplace resources and practices
- Ethics and morality

■ How to use this book

This book provides a critical analysis of the marketing process and as such should be used alongside more traditionally orientated marketing books. The theory developed in this publication does not supersede the work of authors such as Kotler, Solomon or Vargo and Lusch, rather it complements it by offering an alternative method of greater understanding of the marketing process. Additionally, the book provides an insight into the particular nature of the marketing of tourism, hospitality, events and food in the form of experiences marketing. This is of particular importance,