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# Introduction

## **On the theme of marketing in tourism, hospitality, events and food**

### ■ Introduction

The first edition of this book was motivated by a lecture series presented by the two authors at the Sheffield Business School. These lectures 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 outside of the sector, there wasn't a definitive text that reflected these debates and brought together a critical framework in which to surround the study of marketing of THEF experiences that could be recommended to students; we therefore took the opportunity to write one ourselves. This second edition continues our quest to introduce a critical consumer-orientated approach to the study of marketing and practice in our sectors, and as a result updates the ideas and examples introduced in the original. The book also adopts a new structure through the addition of three new chapters (2,3 and 4) which, with the inclusion of Chapter 5, introduce and position its critical approach.

## ■ Why this book is needed

The study of tourism, hospitality, events and food (THEF) has a long tradition of academic development, which has mixed together management theory and concepts with theories from the social sciences. This multi-disciplinary approach is reflected in the majority of THEF university courses and has given rise to many special interest groups that have produced knowledge in these areas. 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 not kept pace, and 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 more specifically. The sectors covered by this book 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 hard to escape for a couple of weeks and justify working hard to engage in what is fundamentally a significant component of their lived experience. While we introduce a diversity of ideas about marketing in this second addition, and hope to stimulate a debate about the nature of marketing and consumption in our sectors in general, the ideas in this publication are not to be considered as a replacement for traditional approaches. Therefore this work should be seen and treated as a complementary text, to be used alongside the more management-orientated texts that constitute the recommended reading on most courses in our field. Ultimately the purpose of this book is to provide critical insight into many of the perspectives and theories that inform aspects of marketing practice such as segmentation, targeting and positioning, and specifically the role of THEF marketing in creating meaning and value for consumers.

Due to the critical nature of this text, this book doesn't simply draw inspiration and ideas from the academic debates that surround and inform contemporary marketing theory and practice, it also plumbs a wide range of other academic disciplines for insight and understanding. So while traditional and emerging theories of marketing feature heavily in the arguments developed in this book, the areas of consumer

research, sociology, social theory, anthropology, and cultural studies, also play a major part. This multi-disciplinary approach enables the marketer to adopt a holistic understanding of their role and practice, linking together business studies and the social sciences; the result is to create an inclusive, creative and rigorous approach to the field of study. The ability to understand the world we live in, in respect of the wants, needs, desires and aspirations of the consumer, and their relationship to tourism, hospitality, events and food, is fundamental to being a successful practitioner in these sectors. That is to say, the adoption of a reflexive approach to marketing which is informed by a critical understanding of the marketing process and the nature of customers and consumption will provide the THEF marketer with a set of theoretical and conceptual tools that will enhance their practice and operational effectiveness.

The dominant approach to marketing that you see duplicated in nearly all generic marketing texts and marketing programmes serve to reproduce 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 ground our understanding of marketing on the whole, as well as provide industry-relevant data and case studies. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, they also focus attention on the key function of *value*, which is central to the marketing process and practice in general. This being the case, as you will see as you delve into this book, these approaches have limitations, and we feel that they work to obscure what is really in play and at stake in THEF marketplace transactions. There are a few exceptions to this exchange approach of course. Of particular note, is:

- 1 The work of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) researchers (see Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Thompson, Arnould & Gielsr, 2013) who collectively acknowledge that marketing and consumption are located within a broader framework of socio-cultural practices; and
- 2 The work developing from the Service Dominant Logic (SDL) school of thought (e.g. Vargo & Lusch, 2004), which amongst