
ANALYSIS OF A VILLAGE FROM THE POINT OF MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

There are numerous smaller or bigger villages around the Lake Balaton. I chose Balatonszárszó from them to make a marketing analysis. First, I carried out a secondary research, and then I made an interview with the mayor of the township. On the basis of these results I made a SWOT-analysis for Balatonszárszó. The main argument is that the developing village is a perfect summer resort for people who like peaceful, quiet places.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are numerous smaller or bigger villages around the Lake Balaton. Some of them are well-known for everybody: Siófok ('Golden Beach'), Balatonfüred ('Anna Ball'), Tihany ('Abbey'), Badacsony (the wine 'Badacsonyi szürkebarát'), just to mention some of them. There are some places which are not mentioned so often in connection with the Balaton but if we hear them, we can immediately recall some memories about them. For example, Balatonszárszó is of that kind. There are some who associate to József Attila, some to the „Soli Deo Gloria” Association and some to the meeting of Szárszó in 1943 when hearing the name of this small town.

In the last 8 years I spent 2-3 weeks in Balatonszárszó every summer so I had the possibility to get to know this evocative, nice village. I could see how it was improving in appearance, how it was developing, so it is not by chance that I chose it as the subject of this essay.

In this study I am aiming to describe past and present of this settlement, and to make a SWOT-analysis on the basis of the given information.

2. ROLE OF MARKETING IN CASE OF SETTLEMENTS

Regional and settlement marketing, which was formed in the second half of the last century, is defined in different ways in the specialized literature. Mészáros (1997) regards it as a development, Kozma (1995) as a method, while László (1998) as a tool. According to Piskóti (2002) we can accept any definitions, but we have to see that the tasks of the regional and settlement marketing are to explore the competitiveness, advantages and attractions of the area, then to help their realization, to communicate them in order to achieve certain scopes in economy and development.

If we consider marketing, firstly, we have to have a product to sell, and secondly, a customer to buy it. We can regard the local inhabitants, persons taking part in business life and tourists as customers (László, 1998). The product is nothing else than the area (settlement, town, village) itself which is much more complex than a traditional item of goods, since in this case, the landscape and the built environment should be sold together. To be able to sell our products for our customers we have to have a marketing strategy. It can be established with the following three main steps:

1. Internal and external environmental analysis,
2. Segmentation,
3. Advertising (Kovács, 2001).

3. MATERIAL AND METHOD

During my work I carried out a secondary research. After studying the relevant chapters of the specialized literature I started to examine the settlement from the aspect of marketing. I found the majority of materials on the past of Balatonszárszó in a local publication based on a very thorough work of collection. I visited the village library, too. Besides printed sources I used information from the Internet, too. Dr László Méhes, the mayor of the settlement, who I made an interview with, helped me a lot explore the present situation.

4. PAST OF BALATONSZÁRSZÓ

The original name of the village was: Szárazaszó, from which „aszó” means „valley”- so it meant „száraz völgy” or in English „dry valley”. During the Ottoman occupation it was called „Szársó”, while on the maps from the 19th century it is denoted as „Szárszó”. It obtained the anterior constituent „Balaton” in 1922 (Reöthy, 1990a).

On the basis of the findings from archeological researches it can be said that people lived in the settlement as early as the neolithic age, and around 2100 AC, in the late copper age, life was lively here (Sági-Cséby, 1990).

Examinations in 2001, which preceded the construction of motorway M7, explored the remains of a village from the Turkish era, the basement walls of a church built in the 13th century and tombs nearby (www.balatonszarszo.hu [a]).

Jumping in time: the two world wars effected the local population, too. The roll of honour from the First World War contains the name of fifty soldiers, while the one from the Second World War contains the name of 34 soldiers. Altogether about 120–130 people died or lost, together with the deported, from the village which that time had a population of 1.500 people. After land distribution councils were established. Between 1970 and 1975 Szárszó had a separate council which was then followed by fusions. In 1975 Szárszó, Szemes, Öszöd, then two years later the other smaller villages (Kötcse, Szólád, Nagycsepely, Teleki) were under the same president of the council. From this period it is worth mentioning the construction of the new Council Hall which was opened in 1982, and the first prize in a competition called „Competition of Settlement Development and Cleanliness” which meant a reward of 350.000 Fts, too. (Reöthy, 1990b)

5. PRESENT SITUATION OF BALATONSZÁRSZÓ

Balatonszárszó is one of the settlements of the Multi-Purposed Small Regional Partnership of Balatonföldvár. It is situated in the Southern shore of the Balaton, between Balatonföldvár and Öszöd. Number of the permanent population was 2182 in 2008, their composition is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic distribution of the permanent population of Balatonszárszó (2008)

	Age: 0-18		Age: 19-60		Age: 61-100	
	person	%	person	%	person	%
Man	155	7,10	673	30,84	245	11,23
Woman	137	6,28	637	29,19	335	15,35
Altogether	292	13,38	1310	60,03	580	26,58

Source: on the basis of data from the Local Government of Balatonszárszó, my own calculation

We can see from the data that the significant part (60%) of the inhabitants belongs to the age group capable of earning their living. So the next point of examination is given: what opportunities do the people living here have to find work?

According to the Mayor, at least 100 workplaces should be established in the village. However, it is an almost impossible task, regarding the present economic conditions. Today it is the Local Government that ensures most of the workplaces, it can employ 88 persons, involving the public workers, too. To increase employment, they have tried to invite some of the multinational commercial chains into the settlement but the number of the permanent inhabitants is too low, there should be at least 6.000 – 8.000 people. A part of the population finds work in the neighbouring settlements, as a result of the general development (Méhész, 2009).

For an unprofessional the solution is obvious: tourism could ensure the living conditions of the local people. The 9 hotels, pensions, the 2 camping sites, and countless summer cottages make possible to accommodate at least 15.000 tourists (www.balatonfoldvarterseg.hu). Data summarised in Table 2 refer to this possibility which I collected from a brochure published in the village every year which contains the current programmes, attractions and advertisements. Besides the following enterprises, naturally there are others, too, since the above mentioned source mentions 250 of them.

Table 2. Composition of enterprises in Balatonszárszó

Object of the advertisement	Number of occurrence	
	item	%
Hotel, guest house	3	3,53
Apartment, rooms to rent	8	9,41
Camp	2	2,35
Restaurant	5	5,88
Commercial unit	23	27,05
Bar (pub, wine-shop)	8	9,41
Fish-, fried dough-, pancake bakery	3	3,53
Ice-cream shop	2	2,35
Other services	31	36,47
Altogether	85	100

Source: On the basis of Balatonszárszó Infó, 2009, my own table

I counted every shop that can be found in the village to the commercial units – from the „Chinese shop”, and shops of the „Coop chain of stores” to the bathroom saloon with 2.000 m² of ground space. Other services embrace gas-mechanic, electrician, joiner and blacksmith, hairdresser and beautician, place where „water-bicycle” can be borrowed and estate agency.

Those who wish for cultural experiences, in addition to swimming and relaxing, have the possibility to visit the József Attila Memory Museum or to borrow books from the local

library. Besides, every weekend different programmes are organized for those interested, this summer for example, pop or rock concerts, folk-dance gala, children concerts, brass band concerts or street ball.

6. CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS

I have made the SWOT-analysis for the settlement on the basis of the above mentioned facts and my experiences (Table 3).

Table 3. SWOT-analysis of the village Balatonszárszó

STRENGTHS József Attila – cult Level of services Programmes in suitable quantity and quality Settlement image Free beach	WEAKNESSES High prices (food) The current state of the Memory Museum Lack of children programmes Playgrounds with toys in suitable quantity
OPPORTUNITIES Motorway M7 Soli Deo Gloria movement Memory of the meeting of Szárszó in 1943 Increase of marketing communication	THREATS Economic situation Tax on „Üdülési Csekk” Attitude of hosts Development of other settlements around the Balaton

Source: my own work

Despite these weak points it can be concluded that the village, which has developed a lot in the last few years, is an ideal place for those who long for a more peaceful, less frequented settlement where they can relax without the noisy crowd.

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