

A Work Project presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's Degree in Management from the NOVA – School of Business and Economics.

“Strategic Marketing Plan of Loulé Municipality – New Tourism Development Destination”

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Abstract

This Work Project was created due to the interest and concern of the Municipal Council of Loulé in finding an economic and social solution to increase the awareness of the Loulé's Inland Regions.

In this Project it will be presented a strategic marketing plan for the tourism development of Loulé's municipality inland areas, to be developed in 5 years. It will be done field research about the different municipalities, with focus on the interior region, to assess the main strengths and weaknesses and the best way to explore them (SWOT) for social and touristic development purpose. The main objective of the marketing plan is to increase the awareness and attractiveness of the Loulé's Municipality inland areas in the domestic and international market, exploring the opportunity given by the industry new trends and Loulé's municipality coastline areas such as Quinta do Lago and Vilamoura which are known worldwide and regarded as competitive tourism destinations.

Keywords: Loulé | Inland Tourism | Strategy and Marketing | Nature/Adventure Tourism

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Literature Review

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon, with strong implications on the economy, natural resources, built environment, local population at the destination and even on the tourists themselves. By definition, "tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes" (UNWTO Definition).

The areas and locations that are now known as tourism destinations, went through several evolutionary stages that Butler (1980) describes as the Tourism Area Life Cycle model (Appendix 1). This model consists of six phases: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, decline or rejuvenation. This model is important to understand the economic effects of the tourism industry over time and to adjust the policies and strategies accordingly to the current destination phase.

Nowadays, tourism is considered one of the fastest growing and most competitive businesses in the world. International tourist arrivals grew by a remarkable 7% in 2017, to reach a total of 1,322 million. This is expected to continue in 2018 at a rate of 4%-5% (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, 2018). Portugal is no exception to this upward trend reaching 20.6 million guests in 2017, an 8.9% increase from 2016 (Travel BI, 2018).

Portugal, and more specifically the Algarve, are tourist destinations internationally known and recognized by the so-called "sun, sea and sand tourism". This type of tourism is usually affected by seasonality, which Butler (2014) defines as "a temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as numbers of visitors, expenditure of visitors, etc.". An example are the Faro airport activity numbers, 82% of the passengers fly in the high season and shoulder months, while in the rest of the year, the airport transfers less than 15% of the total passengers annually transported by the airlines (Aerportos de Portugal).

As this phenomenon increases, the need to search and develop new proposals of tourism products and motivations also increases, and to keep the destinations competitive new strategies must be adopted. To address the effects of seasonality, one of the main strategies used is to increase the demand outside the peak season. To achieve that increase, it is necessary to diversify the tourist product offer, meaning that new products and additional motivations to visit must be created, e.g. structuring new products as “backpacking activities, food and wine, niche accommodation, cultural and heritage tourism, getaway breaks, health or sport and activity-based holidays” (Ćorluka, 2014). Matching this strategy with the context of the region, so that the new products complement and support one another, and with the new preferences growing every day in the Travel & Tourism Industry, such as the search for products related with the sustainable use of environmental resources, nature and adventure, the exploration and development of tourism in rural areas might be one of the most successful approach.

The definition of rural tourism is not a consensus. Jingming & Lihua (2002), argue that Rural Tourism are “those traveling activities that aim at pursuing natural and humanistic attraction with rurality in rural areas”. Lane (1994), says that “more than a farm-based tourism, rural tourism also comprises special interest nature holidays and ecotourism, walking, climbing and riding, adventure, sport and health tourism, (...) and heritage tourism and in some areas, ethnic tourism” and, according to the OECD, Rural Tourism is defined as “tourism taking place in the countryside.”

Rural Tourism expansion is a common trend to most countries in Europe (Cánoves et al, 2004). In Portugal, Rural Tourism has been developed over time and become important due to its impact on the economic activity of the non-coastal areas and also brings a competitive advantage to deal with seasonality issues. The intrinsic rural characteristics of these areas represent the appeal for tourism and recreation, and,

according to Pina and Delfa, (2005), “the appeal of rural tourism lies also in the range and quality of attractions and facilities”.

Due to shifts in travelers’ tastes and in the importance of exploring these regions, there are government initiatives to help develop rural areas in Portugal, such as the “Programa de Investimento em Territórios de Baixa Densidade” which can only be used under certain conditions and approved areas (e.g. in Loulé the inland areas are considered Alte, Ameixial, Salir, Querença, Tôr and Benafim). The projects should also aim at promoting and developing the economy of the region in a sustainable way.

The impact of tourism on the natural environment and quality of life of the local communities is high, thus it is important to preserve the natural and cultural resources, by practicing a sustainable tourism development of these rural areas. Today sustainability – environmental, social, and economic – is increasingly recognized as the benchmark for all tourism business (CREST, 2017) and responsible tourism, and has become one of the biggest trends of the Travel & Tourism Industry for 2018, almost 70% of people now believe that travel companies should ensure their holidays help the local people and economy (ABTA Travel Trends Report, 2018).

The preferences and behavior of tourists have changed, and new trends have been emerging, as Bessièrre (1998) states, “rural areas are now increasingly seen as places for entertainment, leisure activities, second homes and as an alternative to urban residential areas”. There are four trends that align perfectly with the resources of rural areas i.e. Creative Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Nature Tourism and Wellness Tourism.

Creative Tourism is defined as a type of tourism that allows tourists to learn new skills and undertake recognizably creative activities (Cloke, 2007, p. 43). Creative tourism is also directed toward an engaged and authentic experience (UNESCO, 2006).

Adventure Tourism is one of the fastest growing categories in the Travel & Tourism Industry (UNWTO, 2014). According to the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), Adventure Tourism is a trip that includes at least two of the following three elements: physical activity, the natural environment, and cultural immersion. As this type of tourism recognizes the ecological, cultural, and economic value of the destination, countries are prioritizing Adventure Tourism for market growth. It is also attracting attention for its emphasis on rural areas, local culture, and because it can be developed within existing infrastructures (UNWTO Report, 2014) and using local resources. Adventure Tourism is a complex concept that englobes activities with different adventure levels (Appendix 2), around 46% of the travelers join soft Adventure Tourism and 16% practice hard Adventure activities (Buckley 2006).

Nature Tourism is based on the enjoyment of natural areas and the observation of nature (Lucas, 1984). It is correlated with Adventure Tourism as most of the activities that occur in nature are soft/ hard adventurous. Ingram and Durst (1989) studied the promotion of activities in a study of nature-oriented tour operators, and the results showed trekking and hiking the most included activities in advertising (72% of operators) followed by birdwatching, nature photography, wildlife safaris and camping (over 60%).

Wellness tourism is when a traveler goes to a destination to access certain wellness services. The main push motivations are relaxation, pampering, physical activity, avoiding burn out and mental wellbeing (Laesser, 2011; Mak et al., 2009). Therefore, Rural Areas have an enormous potential to develop this type of tourism providing resources like access to nature, local food and local ingredients. Additionally, rural areas have ideal places that reflect peacefulness, relaxation, authenticity and tranquility.

In such a competitive industry, it is crucial that destinations have more interesting and diversified tourism products that are attractive and can motivate the existing market

and attract the potential consumer of Travel & Tourism. In tourism, the term “product” does not suggest only a physical object it also covers physical goods, services, and a variety of other service product (Gautam 2008). A tourism destination needs a good product portfolio strategy that should be based on the existing attractions and resources, but also consider the essential infrastructures, facilities and services needed to make the development come true (Datzira-Masip, J 2006). The process of creating a “tourism product” is complex and needs to consider several factors (Appendix 3).

Though tourism is one of the fastest growing industries, it still needs marketing due to high competitiveness and complexity of the industry, especially regarding rural areas that need to gain awareness and brand themselves as new destinations. In reality, there is a lack of destination management and destination marketing organizations specifically established for these areas (Pike, 2014). There is the need for a strong orientation toward the consumer as the heart of successful tourism marketing management (Robert et al.,1995).

Due to the increasingly dynamic changes in the Travel and Tourism Industry, the success of tourism services and destinations depends not only on satisfying the costumers’ needs but also to respond to current challenges. Therefore, strategic marketing becomes a necessary practice for contemporary tourism services firms (Rodoula, 2012).

Methodology

This project started with a literature review, introducing the main topics related to the Travel and Tourism industry, as well as the recent trends and motivations of travelers. It will be followed by the analysis of the information collected and some proposals to structure the not yet existing touristic offer.

According to Hooley, Saunders and Piercy, (2004), the development of a marketing strategy should follow three steps: the establishment of a core strategy – where an evaluation of the strengths and weakness is necessary, SWOT analysis, and a Tourist Rehabilitation and Interventions Valorization Program of Loulé's Inland is presented as a base for the strategy; the development of the competitive positioning – determining the competitive advantage and target markets by structuring the touristic offer and products; the implementation of the marketing strategy – how to place the strategy in the market and how to promote/communicate it.

The marketing/communication plan will be divided into two phases, the first one to attract national and international tourists who are visiting the coastal areas of Loulé and the Algarve in general. The second phase to be implemented in 3 to 5 years to target tourists with specific motivations that are in coherence with the resources offered by the inland region, alongside with the continuity of the first phase.

Description of Loulé Municipality Areas

The Algarve, the south province of Portugal, is one of the most well-known tourist destination regions in the country. It attracts innumerable domestic and international visitors and tourists every year and, when it concerns Travel & Tourism product offering, it has something for everyone, from beaches, golf courses that are internationally acknowledged, nightlife with casinos and music clubs to small authentic villages, full of culture and stunning natural spots and reserves, either in coastal areas or in the rural regions. The Algarve is divided into 16 municipalities, being Faro de capital of the region, where is located the Faro International Airport. Within Faro, Loulé is one of the biggest municipalities, with two major cities, Loulé and Quarteira. Its coastline includes the civil parishes of Almancil and Quarteira, while the inland aggregates the parishes of Alte, Ameixial, Boliqueime, Querença/Tôr/Benafim, Salir, São Clemente and São Sebastião.

Loulé, as a municipality, is one of the most visited destinations in the Algarve, however the concentration of tourists is all on the coastline, mainly in Quarteira, Vilamoura, Quinta do Lago and Vale do Lobo resort areas, where we can find the best beaches, golf courses, bars and restaurants, while the inland regions struggle with the lack of tourism and of local or residing population. Due to this disparity of tourist demand, in the high peak season, Loulé (and the Algarve) is full of domestic and foreign tourists and visitors, being sometimes overcrowded in areas like Quarteira and Vilamoura, but during the low season struggles to attract those tourists and visitors. Hence is imperative to find ways, not only to deal with seasonality, but also to distribute the incoming tourists, allowing them to visit different municipality areas. Adding this need with the search for new products and authentic experiences, one of the solutions might be using the Loulé's inland areas, making them more interesting to visit and attract the domestic and foreign visitors, not only during the peak season but also in the low season months.

The inland area of Loulé, has an enormous hospitality and tourism potential, with its typical villages and traits, local producers of typical products (e.g. honey, jams, “medronho”) and environmental and natural resources to be able to deliver a quality type of cultural, nature and adventure tourism. However, its resources and infrastructures are poorly explored and not organized and are lacking facilities to interest and attract investors and to help and develop the local tourism sector and industry.

Nonetheless, it is important to understand what kind of tourist profile is suitable for this particular region, considering that the type of tourists that will be attracted to Loulé's inland is not, in general, the same tourists who wish to visit and stay for example, in Vilamoura or Vale do Lobo.

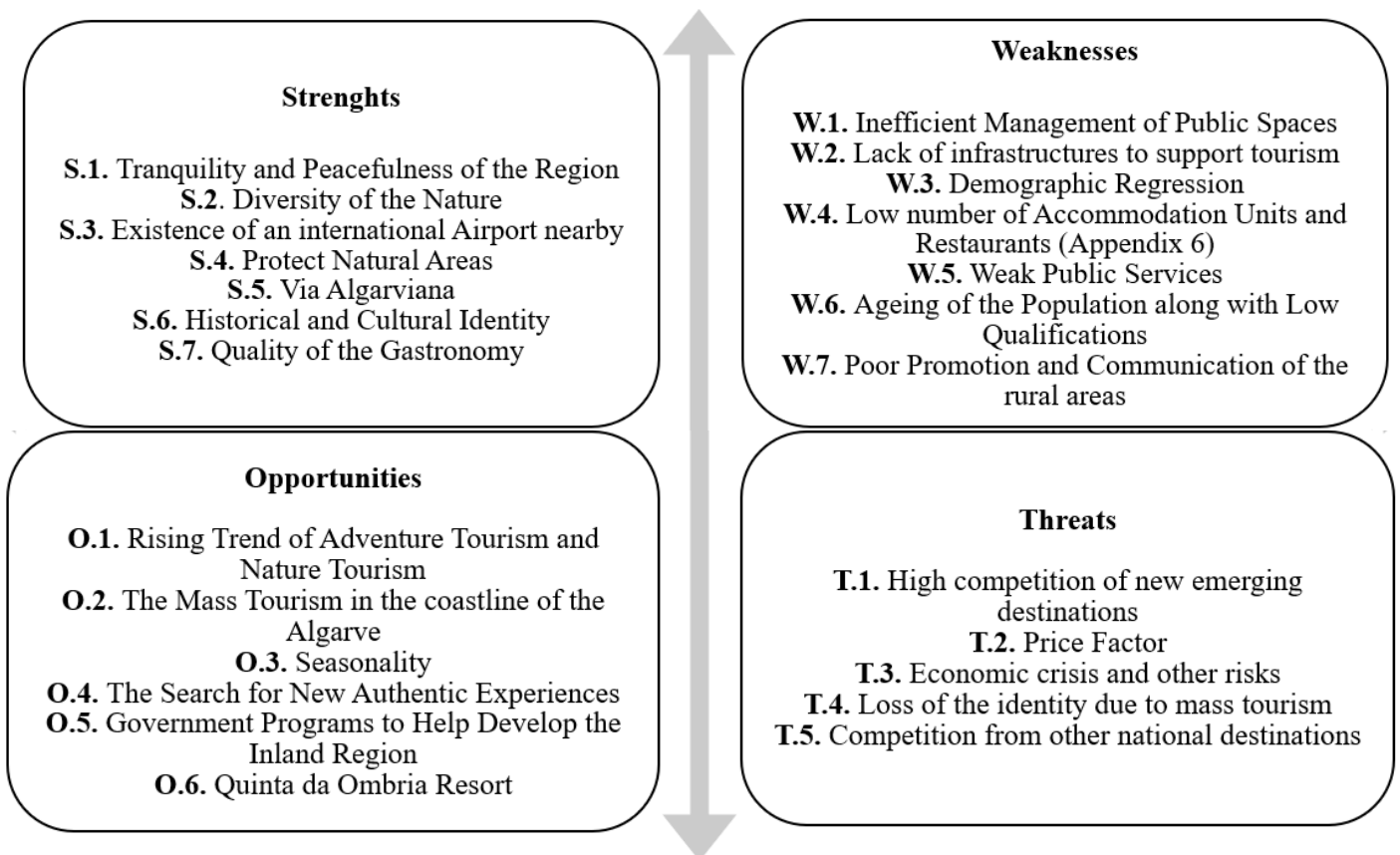
To develop a plan that enhances Loulé's rural area tourism, it is crucial to understand, firstly, what are the resources already being explored and in need of

promotion, secondly, the places that have touristic potential but need to be explored and lastly, what facilities are missing in the region to fulfill the tourist's needs. The area that the following analysis is going to be focused on is Loulé, Alte, Querença and Salir (Appendix 4).

Establishment of a Core Strategy

Loulé's Inland Areas SWOT Analysis

To understand the current situation of the destination, it was conducted an interview with the Presidents of the Parish Council of Salir and of Querença/Tôr/Benamfim (Appendix 5 and 6). With the information retrieved in those interviews and visits, a SWOT Analysis was made, since it allows to recognize the internal aspects of the destination, the strengths and weaknesses, and the external factors of the Travel & Tourism Industry, the opportunities and threats, that can affect the region being analyzed.



Considering the SWOT Matrix presented above and the focus of this work project, the more relevant **Strengths** are:

S.2. Diversity of the Nature – Loulé's Inland as a potential tourism destination has breathtaking views in Salir, water spots in Alte like the Vigário Falls, Fonte Grande and Fonte Pequena, and a huge variety of nature, including birds, trees and flowers.

S.4. Protect Natural Areas – This destination is well known for its protected areas that attract several specifically interested tourists, such as, Rocha da Pena in Salir and Fonte Benémola, near Querença.

The more concerning **Weaknesses** are:

W.1. Inefficient Management of Public Spaces – An example is the existing parishes main churches. They are considered an important reference for the tourists to visit and, in general, they are closed to public access and no visiting is allowed out of mass hours.

W.2. Lack of infrastructures to support tourism – This is visible in the lack of human content and supporting facilities (such as tourism information centers, coffee shops, security) in the Protected Natural Areas.

The main **Opportunities** are:

O.1. Rising Trend of Adventure Tourism and Nature Tourism – The Travel and Tourism Industry has been facing changes and two of the biggest trends right now is the Adventure and Nature Tourism, which this destination has an enormous potential to fulfill with its Protect Natural Areas and natural trails.

O.2. The Mass Tourism in the coastline of the Algarve – It is easier to attract tourists to the inland areas when they are already visiting the region (in the coastline of the Algarve and the municipality).

O.4. Search for New Authentic Experiences – Travelers, nowadays, want to be in touch with the locals, try typical food and live the culture of the destination safely. As these places are very traditional, they can take advantage of their culture to attract these tourists.

The main **Threats** are:

T.3. Economic crisis and other risks– Due to the economic crisis that many people still haven't recover, the Travel and Tourism Industry is not yet at its full capacity again and some tourists prefer not to travel or to travel for closer and cheaper destinations. Additionally, the Tourism Industry is always at risk either due to economic reasons, safety or political (e.g. Brexit).

T.5. Competition from other national destinations – Some destinations in Portugal are being able to structure the touristic offer in a more effective and attractive way. One example is Évora, although this destination doesn't offer exactly the same products, it is still able to capture the tourists, unlike the inland of Loulé.

Tourist Rehabilitation and Interventions Valorization Program of Loulé's Inland

The following suggestions are a consequence of all the visits arranged to explore and get to know the places and have a real perspective of what is missing and what could be improved. All the data was gathered from local observations, interviews with the destination stakeholders, physical visits to the inland regions and meetings with the Vice-President of the Municipal Council of Loulé. These interventions aim at exploiting the strengths in areas of opportunity and build new strengths to tackle the threats, creating key factors for the success of the core strategy.

When analyzing Loulé's inland according to Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle model, I believe this destination is on the involvement stage which is characterized by some regularity in the number of visitors, the emerge of some organizations and tourist

travel arrangements, existence of local accommodations and the appearance of a tourist season can be expected. Thus, to transform this area into a more attractive destination and move to the next phase, the development phase, it is necessary to re-explore the local resources and strengths that already exist, to take advantage of the opportunities that the Travel and Tourism Industry provides, as well as to improve, change or even create from scratch new facilities, infrastructures and new attributes, to be able to tackle the threats.

The following interventions are proposals to improve the attractiveness of the Loulé Inland destination, assuming the support and investment from the municipality council, SME or economic programs aimed at supporting financially the inland development. All these proposals should be part of a Touristic Intervention and Valorization of the Inland Program developed and controlled by the municipality and other regional stakeholders.

1. Improvement of the “Fonte Grande” space, in Alte:

The Fonte Grande is one of the most attractive spots in Alte for tourists. Currently, its potential is undermined due to the bad signalization and the lack of facilities to support tourism, such as a coffee and a restaurant or snack bar. Thus, by improving these two issues, the Fonte Grand has all the attributes to be considered a river beach and an obligatory stop in Alte.

2. Rehabilitation of the area next to “Queda do Vigário”, in Alte:

The Queda do Vigário is one of the most demanded places by tourists in Alte. However, the disparity of the promotional pictures with the reality of the place is concerning. The rehabilitation should focus on the surrounding space; the access and signalization need to be improved, it is very difficult to access it, especially for children, families with kids and elder people. The abandoned and vandalized structures should be rehabilitated and used

to support tourism, including to create conditions for a small coffee shop to be operated or a parasol rental for people who want to stay out of the sun. Lastly, some security cameras should be installed, to prevent the place to be vandalized and offer more security for the visiting people.

3. Church opening hours in Salir:

The churches are, in general, an important touristic attraction for visitors, therefore it is important to open the church of Salir to the public. Both churches in Alte and Querença are already open to the public (with a small entrance fee) and despite their small size, tourists want to visit them and find it worth it.

4. Improvements in “Rocha da Pena”:

Rocha da Pena trails are known for the breathtaking views; however, the directions are poor, which makes the access hard for tourists. Additionally, the local coffee shop should be improved to give more support to the tourists, furthermore, the adventure tourism plays a huge role in Rocha da Pena, thus, an “adventure pole” should also be created with activities and professionals to support the tourists who wish to practice radical sports.

5. Improvement in “Fonte Benémola”

Fonte Benémola is a natural protected area, perfect for walking, relaxing and picnicking. However, many visitors complain about the garbage and poorly cared spots which should be solved to preserve the natural beauty of the place.

6. Investing in restaurants (one per village)

Gastronomy is becoming an important motivation to travel and, the inland local cuisine is very rich, tasty and typical, thus, there should be created conditions and given initially

support for, at least one main typical restaurant to be open in every spot, with characteristic food and products of the region in each village.

7. Improving the Querença Water Museum

Water is a crucial element in Querença and the museum, located in the central area near the Mother Church, enhances exactly that importance of the water to this village. However, it lacks dynamic and the available information is entirely in Portuguese. There should be a creative museum renovation to create a more interactive exhibition and the information it should be translated to English and other languages.

8. Create a local brand label “Proudly produced in Loulé’s Inland”

There should be one store in each of the parishes with local and typical products from the region, such as local foods and ingredients, drinks and traditional handicrafts with a certified label of local production.

Development of the Competitive Positioning

Target Market and Motivations

The motivations and needs of these new tourists are related with the culture, environment and nature tourism, which means experiencing natural areas, culture and lifestyle of local people and Adventure Tourism, that is related to excitement, risk, and discovery to mental and physical experiments in nature and also is also tied together with sports like walking, trekking, biking or even bird watching and camping. Thus, using a psychographic segmentation with factors like personality, interest/hobbies and lifestyles, the target market for this destination are tourists and visitors who have an adventurous personality, are interested in nature or like to have new and authentic experiences.

Structuration of the Touristic Offer and Products

In order to create or structure a tourism product, as Datzira-Masip, J (2006) explained, the strategy needs to consider existing attractions and resources, but it should also consider the essential infrastructure, facilities, services needed to make the development come true and the tourist's motivations to travel to these destinations. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate and match the destination's resources and attractions with the activities and experiences tourists would like to have.

For the purpose of this project, I will assume that the valorization program suggested was approved and completed in order to include the tourism products in the structuration plan of the touristic offer for Loulé's inland destination.

It should be defined several Touristic Micro Poles (one in each identified village) that could attract tourists and where they can visit and explore local cultural assets and resources, the main local and typical food restaurants, important monuments (e.g. churches), local nature and taste and buy local products.

Alte Micro Pole – “Cultural Village”.

Monuments: Church of Nossa Sr^a da Assunção; Cândido Guerreiro e Condes de Alte Museum. Local Nature: Vigário Falls; Big and Small Spring. Local Product Shops: Casa Memória D' alte; Papa Figo; Agua Mel; J.R Medronho. Events: Alte Cultural Week.

Salir Micro Pole – “Traditions and Gastronomy”

Monuments: Mother Church; Castle of Salir; Archaeological Museum. Local Nature: Rocha da Pena. Local Product Shops: Crafts Store (Tourism Pole). Events: Spike Feast and Salir do Tempo. Restaurants: Tia Bia; Casa dos Presuntos; Montes Novos.

Querença Micro Pole – “Water and Picturesque”

Monuments: Mother Church; Water Museum. Local Nature: Fonte Benémola; Ribeira de Algibre. Local Product Shops: Fire Water; A Farrobinha. Events: S. Luis Feast.

Considering the information above, it is possible to structure the touristic offer in a few predefined circuits, between the referred Loulé inland villages or inside each one always focusing on each attraction pole, since it is an area that contains all the most important assets of the region:

1 Day Village - In these circuits, tourists should be able to visit and experience everything in the village, from the cultural monuments to the nature of the region, taste typical gastronomy, buy local products and have contact and mingle with the locals.

The Weekend Getaway – This is a two/three-day getaway where visitors should have the possibility to discover Loulé, Salir, Querença and Alte, all in one trip. They should be able to visit the most popular places in each parish and stay overnight in one of the local rural tourist accommodations.

Water Route – In this route tourists should be able to visit all the water spots in the inland region. This circuit should start in Querença to visit the Water Museum to understand the importance of water for the region. Followed by a trip to Fonte Benémola, where it should be possible to do a 4.5km trail, alongside the water, surrounded by an amazing variety of animals, birds and plants - it is recommended to take food and drinks and do a picnic. The visit should then continue in Alte to visit the small and big springs and the Vigário Fall, where visitors can rest and appreciate the astonishing nature views.

Nature Protected Areas Route – This route should give tourists the possibility to explore the two Nature Protected Areas, Fonte Benémola (two trails available – 4.5km

or 7km) and Rocha da Pena (one trail available – 4.7km). In both places, there is a picnic area and all the trails are well identified.

Safari Trip – Allowing tourists to visit the villages in a different way, with off-road drive. These trips should include a meal in a typical restaurant and the possibility to visit a local producer either of jams, medronho (local spirits), honey and so on.

Walking or BTT Tours - There are different trails to choose from, with different distances and difficulties to accomplish. All the trails are well identified and have available information and documents to download.

Radical Sports – This pack should offer the possibility to practice radical sports, as climbing in Rocha da Pena, perform water sports in Ribeira de Algibre and others.

The Cultural Circuit – The cultural circuit should be for those who want to understand how the locals live and all the traditions that remain an important aspect in those people lives. This circuit includes visiting the churches, the most important monuments, the museums and the local shops with handmade products, in each village.

The Gastronomy Route – This is the perfect choice for all the foodies who wish to taste the most typical flavours of the region. In this route, tourists should be able to find a list of the most traditional restaurants with characteristic local dishes, as well as the local producers and shops where they can taste emblematic sweets (e.g. Jams, Fig Sweets, “Xeringos”) and drinks (e.g. Liquors, Local Spirits).

To develop these circuits and place them in the market, it is recommended to contact specific SME (e.g. tour operators, travel agencies, hotels, etc) to establish a partnership. It should also be created an organization in Loulé to address environmental, adventure, cultural or rural motivations, and to support soft and hard adventure activities and to create conditions to develop wellness services.

Implementation of the Tourism Marketing Strategy

Following the framework of Hooley, Saunders and Piercy (2004) in the establishment of an effective marketing strategy, the final step is the implementation. The objectives of this strategic marketing plan are to increase the attractiveness and awareness of Loulé's inland regions to tourists and visitors by, firstly, a rehabilitation/valorization phase and then showcasing its potential and newly created touristic offer. This destination is about nature and adventure but also authenticity and tranquillity, so the value added for costumers will be the exclusive experiences in unique places in the south of Portugal.

To communicate this value proposition to the desired travelers and visitors the communication and promotion plan was divided into two phases with different objectives and distribution channels.

Communication and Promotion Plan

1st phase

Goal and Target Audience: In the first 2 to 3 years the main objective is to create awareness and critical mass to make the destination more attractive to further investments and new enterprises; the main target are the innumerable domestic and foreign tourists whom are already in the Algarve, visiting and staying in the coastline areas of Loulé, such as Vilamoura and Quarteira.

Message: This segment will be targeted with the idea of a different afternoon, an authentic experience in the nature or a one-day get away from their own sun and beach or golf vacations, to explore something else other than sun, sea and sand.

Communication Channels: Since the tourists are already in the Algarve the main channel will be the hotels, tour operators and specific enterprises (e.g. Stressaway Safaris)

located in the coastline. A partnership will be created to promote and give access to information about the circuits and programs available, this will be made through flyers and one on one conversations. In addition, it will also be used Instagram and Facebook posts to promote the activities with the specific target location: the coastline. It will also be created a website exclusively for Loulé's inland that will be used to promote and share activities, circuits and events of the region.

2nd phase

Goal and Target Audience: In the following 3 to 5 years the objective is to attract tourists and visitors with specific motivations and to make the Loulé's inland areas the vacation specific destination. The main targets are tourists who seek nature and environmental activities, adventure, countryside experiences or just relaxation away from the city. Nevertheless, the previous phase will still be implemented continuously alongside this new one.

Message: For this target is crucial to transmit the idea that in the inland of Loulé they can find a place either for an adventure – with soft or hard adventure activities like hiking, tracking, cycling – either to relax and enjoy the peacefulness of the village, to engage with the local community and to explore the nature of the region with breathtaking views, or a mix of all the formers.

Communication Channels: To reach consumers with specific interests/motivations the main channel are tour operators and travel agencies that work with these specific interests all over the world (Appendix 8). Social media, more precisely, Facebook Groups and Association Pages are important to have access to a lot of people that share the same interests whether is in Hiking and Trekking, Walking Tours or Nature and Adventure Tourism, national or international (Appendix 9). The Loulé's

inland website and Instagram will also be active platforms to promote the variety of touristic products with different promotion conditions to different groups of interest. Lastly, some strategic partnerships, for example with Odysseys, a company that sells vouchers and gifts related to experiences, from gastronomy to adventure, nature to accommodation and many others. To take advantage of the digital era, reaching to some travel influencers from all over the world and offer a partnership could create a big awareness since they have a huge power and engagement rate with millions of people.

Final Considerations and Recommendations

The Travel & Tourism industry has been facing changes and challenges with the new travelers' trends and motivations, thus it is important that this strategic marketing plan assures that those challenges are taken into consideration and the visitors' needs are fulfilled. In this project, supported by the Municipal Council of Loulé and respective Tourism Department, where a strategy to develop Loulé's inland as a new tourism destination was created, not only the market analysis was considered but also the internal assets of the destination (resources and infrastructures) were analyzed and structured in a way that provides visitors with a unique, authentic and nature/adventure-based offer.

However, some limitations need to be pointed out, firstly, the assumption that all the Rehabilitation and Interventions proposals are met and secondly, the idea that all the investment necessary (either through programs, private investors or the municipality council) to develop this strategic marketing plan is assured (rehabilitation costs, marketing costs, administrative costs, among others).

As a final recommendation, I propose that the Loulé's municipality council should create a specific oriented group or department, to implement and follow up some suggestions and proposals included in this document and to create a Loulé's Inland Area

Tourism Development Plan to control the respective execution and progresses. In addition, it should develop a Communication and Marketing Plan, based on the suggestions in this document, to increase the awareness not only to tourists but also to investors and touristic services.

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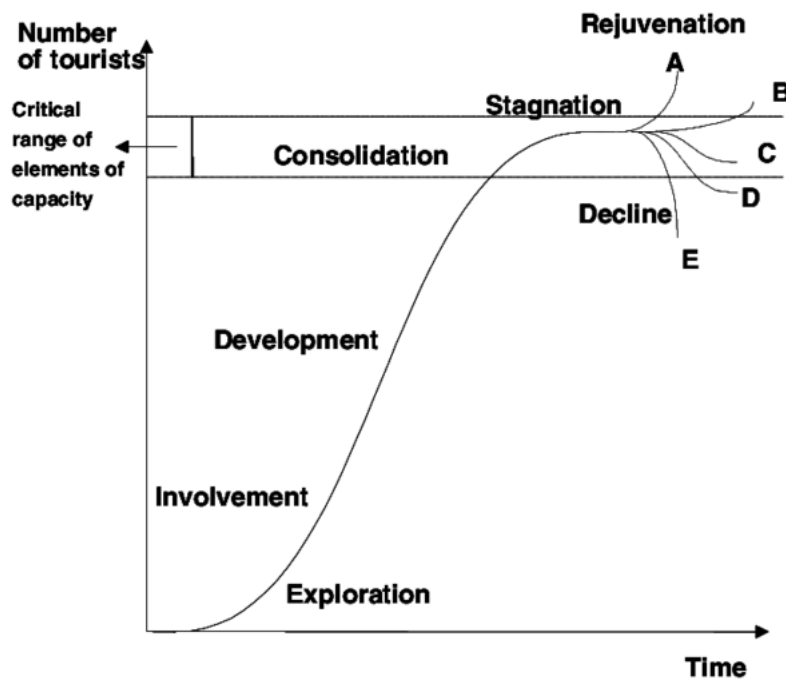
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Appendix

1. Butler (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle Model



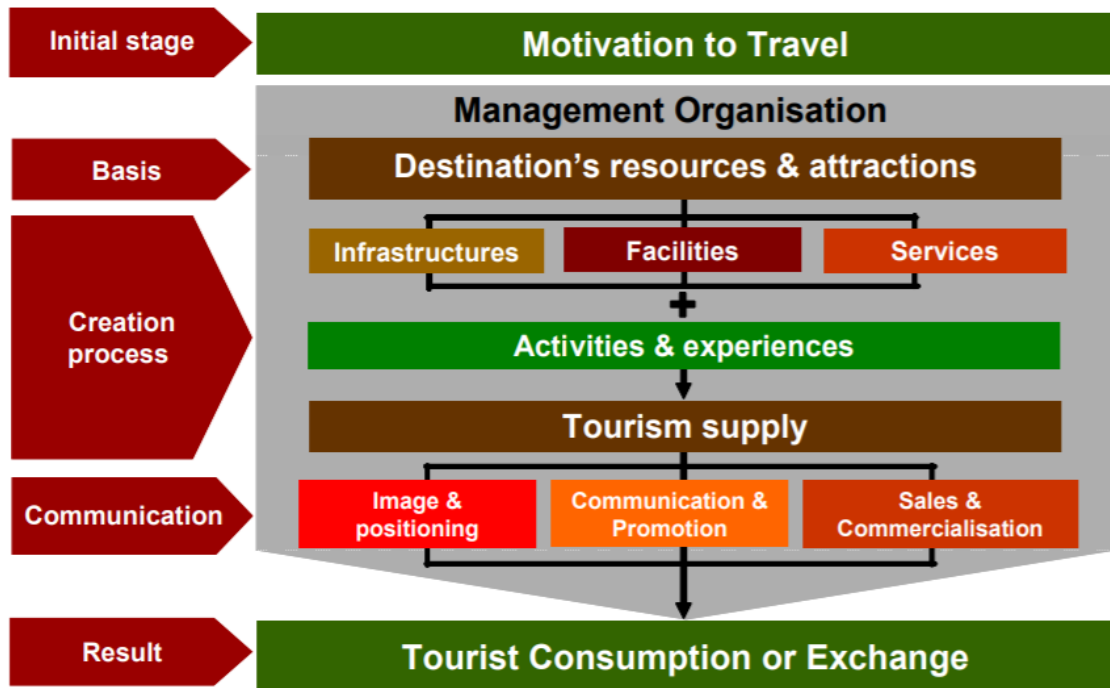
2. Adventure activities classification

ACTIVITY	TYPE
Archeological expedition	Soft
Attending local festival/fairs	Other
Backpacking	Soft
Birdwatching	Soft
Camping	Soft
Canoering	Soft
Caving	Hard
Climbing (mountain/rock/ice)	Hard
Cruise	Other
Cultural activities	Other
Eco-tourism	Soft
Educational programs	Soft
Environmentally sustainable activities	Soft
Fishing/fly-fishing	Soft
Getting to know the locals	Other
Hiking	Soft
Horseback riding	Soft

Hunting	Soft
Kayaking/sea/whitewater	Soft
Learning a new language	Other
Orienteering	Soft
Rafting	Soft
Research expeditions	Soft
Safaris	Soft
Sailing	Soft
Scuba Diving	Soft
Snorkeling	Soft
Skating/snowboarding	Soft
Surfing	Soft
Trekking	Hard
Walking tours	Other
Visiting friends/family	Other
Visiting historical sites	Other
Volunteer Tourism	Soft

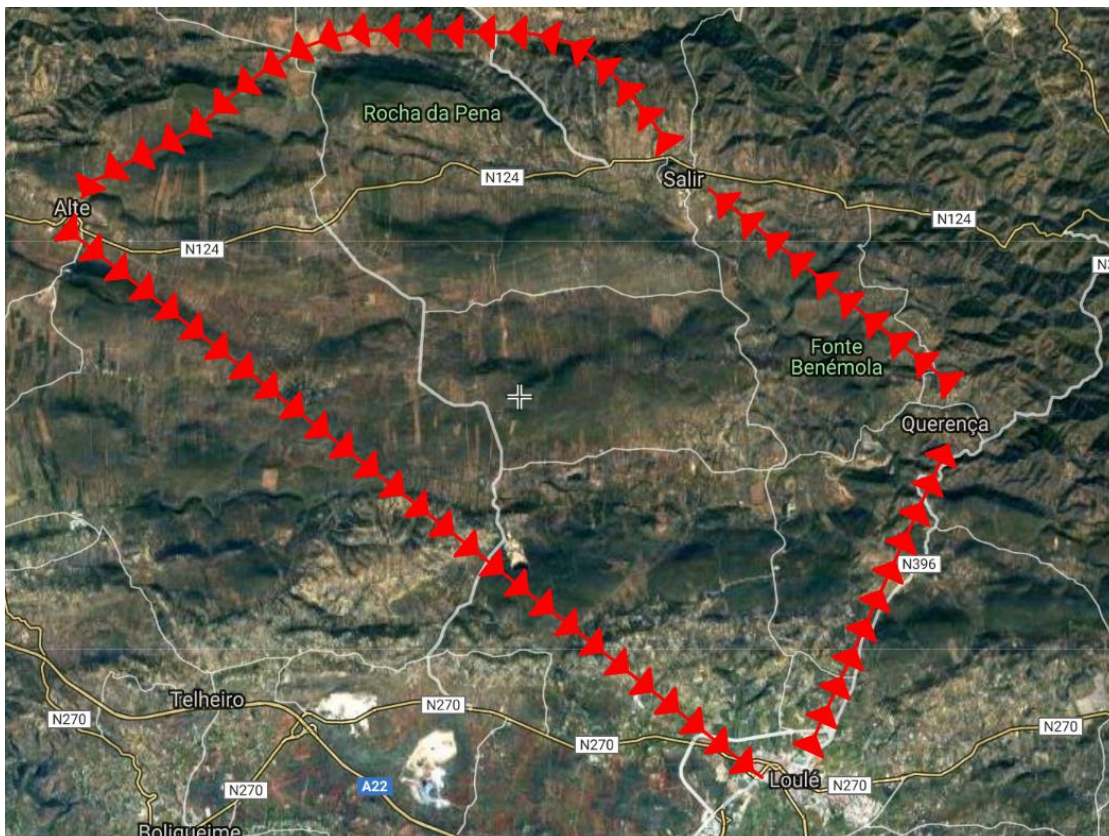
Source: ATTA (2013)

3. Datzira- Masip, J. Tourism Product Development



Source: Adapted from Datzira-Masip, J. 'Cultural Heritage Tourism-Opportunities for product development: the Barcelona case' in *Tourism Review*, Vol 61, No 1 AIEST, 2006

4. Destination to Study/Analyze



to

Where are the tourists from? Germans (mainly through the Algarvian route), French and Spanish

How long and where do they stay? Or in local lodgings such as the Casa da Mãe, Casa da Tita, Monte da Portela or Barranco do Velho or rent houses through booking. There are also a lot of tourist wanting to buy a house for the security of this place.

What do they usually do? Many like the calm of the mountain or visit the park near the municipal pools and football field (which needs a lot of help and investment from the city council. They also come for the gastronomy, of the mountains, mainly: Tia Bia, casa dos presuntos, montes novos – with weekend reservations, 30min from here. The main attractions are Rocha da Pena (where is possible to see fossils) and Fonte Benémola.

What is missing to attract more tourists? A more well-structured marketing, more associations like ranches because it attracts more youth, maybe betting on sport and create outdoor events – mountain biking, hiking, themed tours – and more accommodation, people are starting to want houses in the inland region and at this point they are all occupied. I also think that Quinta da Ombria may be a starting point to attract more visitors.

6. Interview with the President of the Parish Council of Querença/Tôr/Benafim – Margarida Correia

How are the tourists distributed in the three parishes? Querença is undoubtedly the parish that attracts more tourist, mainly due to the walking routes.

What do they usually do? In Querença they visit the centre of Querença, Fonte Benémola, the cemetery, Fonte Filipe e come to the feast of St. Luís in January. In Tôr there is little things to do, only a closed church, the viewpoint overlooking Quinta da

Ombria and the Feira da Tôr. In Benafim we have Penina which is a typical village, the viewpoint of Espargal, the Ribeira de Algibre and the Algarvian Route passes by.

What is missing to attract more tourists? There is no information or signalling in Tôr and Benafim. There is a lack of promotion of the three parishes and little support to the classified and protect places. There is no human presence in those places, either to provide information, water or just coffee shops. I think we should bet on the nature-based tourism and in exploring the fact that Querença is wealthy in terms of water, in April there is a trail walk, the water route with a lunch at the end where you can visit the Fonte Benémola and the Fonte Filipe.


7. Restaurants and Accommodations

Querença		
Restaurantes / Cafés	Bar Querença	Central Querença
	A Tasquinha do Lagar	Central Centre
	Café D. Rosa	Central Querença
	Café Mateus	Amendoeira, Querença (7km)
Alojamento	Monte dos Avós	6 rooms, 2 apartments
	Quinta dos Valados	5 rooms
Alte		
Restaurantes / Cafés	Fonte Nova	Central Alte
	Cantinho D'Alte	Central Alte
	O Folclore	Central Alte
	A Ponte	Central Alte
	Germano BiciArte	Central Alte
	DS Pastelaria	Central Alte
	O Regional	Central Alte
	A Cataplana	Alte Hotel (27km)
Rosmaninho	Alojamento Rosmaninho (26km)	
Alojamento	Alte Hotel ***	28 rooms, 2 suites
	Rosmaninho	6 beds
	Cerro da Janela Hostel	6 beds
Salir		
Restaurantes / Cafés	Restaurante Tia Bia	Barranco do Velho, Salir (12km)
	Casa dos Presuntos	Cortelha, Salir (14.4km)
	Restaurante Porto Doce	Central Salir
	Café Largo da Bica	Montes Novos, Salir (17.5km)
	A Medronheira	Portela do Barranco, Salir (7km)
	Restaurante a Vila	Central Salir
	Janela da Serra	Central Salir
Alojamento	Casa da Tita (Nave do Barão)	3 rooms, 2 apartments
	Cantinho da Serra (Cortelha)	3 rooms
	Pensão Tia Bia (Barranco Velho)	9 rooms
	Casa da Mãe	4 rooms
	Casa do Torreão	5 rooms

8. Tour Operators/Travel Agencies for Adventure or Nature Tourism

Adventure.Travel
G Adventures
Exodus Travels
Natural Habitat Adventures & WWF
Responsible Travel

9. Facebook Groups/Pages with Interest

Caminhadas e Passeios Pedestres por terras e lugares de Portugal	42070 members
Caminhar em Portugal	12 090 members
Turismo Algarve	10 745 followers
Caminhadas	10 527 followers
Trilhos e Trekkings & CiaCaminhadas	4730 members
World Trekking Club (Group)	3491 members
Turismo de Nichos – Turismo de Natureza	1872 members
BD.Travels and Adventure Tourism--Group 	1265 members
Adventure Tourism Group	1152 members