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A UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN TOURISM AND TOURISM MARKETING

Isn't it time for us to make this change?

If not now, when? If not you, who?

(Katie Snow)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Marketing can be defined as a social process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others (Kotler *et al.*, 1996). According to Drucker (quoted by Baker, 2000; Horner & Swarbrooke, 1996; Strydom, 1999), marketing is not only much broader than selling, it is not a specialised activity at all. It encompasses the entire business. It is the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is, from the tourists' point of view. Concerns and responsibilities for marketing, therefore, permeate all areas of the enterprise.

The market for tourists with disabilities is one that is undervalued and misunderstood, a boom waiting to happen in a competitive environment (Digh, 1998). People with disabilities shouldn't be viewed as charity cases or regulatory burdens, but rather as profitable marketing targets (Prager, 1999).

To be competitive in today's global and competitive marketplace, smart companies cannot afford to overlook people with disabilities as a significant part of their available human resources and of their customer base (CBLN, 2001). People with disabilities are a growing market for travel, sport and other leisure-oriented products and services (UNESCAP, 2002 ; Fost, 1998). Many in the forefront of serving this market have been inspired by personal circumstances and have been assisted by technology. Two keys to their success are: careful attention to design, and a positive attitude. Just because someone has a limitation does not mean he/she has less desire for recreation. There is one thing to keep in mind - make the product as accessible as possible. A well-designed product is a benefit for lots and lots of people. Universal design means "products designed for the widest number of people" (Fost, 1998). (Product owners in the tourism industry should also be aware of

the difference between a universal design and an accessible design. These differences will be discussed in this chapter.) Except for products geared specifically to disability related needs, the segment of the consumer market has been largely ignored. Only in the recent years have advertisers of general merchandise begun to recognise persons with disabilities as an important market segment (LBLN, 2001).

The key to marketing to people with disabilities is to remember that people with disabilities, like all customers, are individuals. People with disabilities have a range of preferences, perceptions, attitudes, habits and needs just like people without disabilities (Lewis, 1999).

According to Alpe *et al.*, (2002), travellers with disabilities, regardless of their disability, have the following needs:

- Respect and dignity in the access to services
- Specialised information services
- Precise and integrated information concerning the services offered
- Knowledge of the specific needs of every individual concerning the services being offered
- Adequate transport and information services
- Removal of barriers
- Access to a tourist infrastructure
- Harmonisation of accessibility standards in every country, at European and international level.

This chapter's aim is not to discuss the entire marketing process, but rather to identify the relevant aspects of the tourism systems approach (adapted from Saayman, 2000:240) and how to get the necessary information to tourists with disabilities, which will result in creating a universal accessible tourism product. According to Saayman, 1995 and Kroon, 1986 (quoted by Saayman, 2001:26), a system is made up of separate elements which operate to achieve a general goal which is to create universally accessible tourism as indicated in Figure 2.1.

2.2 THE SYSTEMS APPROACH IN TOURISM

According to Certo (quoted by Kroon, 1995:41), the foundation of the systems theory is that an entity must be seen as a system, in order to comprehend how it works. A system consists of a

number of interdependent parts, with certain mutual relationships that function as a whole and are aimed at a certain purpose.

The general theory uses knowledge of various specialised disciplines so that it is possible to understand the whole process better. The business is seen as a united, purposeful system consisting of parts that are mutually related. A system comprises a number of subsystems, which means that all the activities of the system influence each other mutually (Kroon, 1995:41-42).

According to Kast & Rosenzweig (quoted by Kroon, 1995:43), within the business as a system, management itself forms a system through the direction it gives to technology, through the organisation of people and resources and through the creation of a relationship between the business and its environment.

The systems approach, according to Figure 2.1, consists of the following aspects:

- Input – refers to an analysis of a universal accessible tourism product, human resources accessibility, facilities, locations, as well as destination
- Process – the process indicates the planning and development phase from which a final product results, for example marketing and promotional tools
- Output – a universally accessible tourism product, quality experience and quality service
- Feedback.

The aim of Figure 2.1 is to indicate what is necessary to create a universally accessible tourism product as well as what must be done to ensure that tourists with disabilities return to the tourism product. It therefore includes quality service and quality experience.

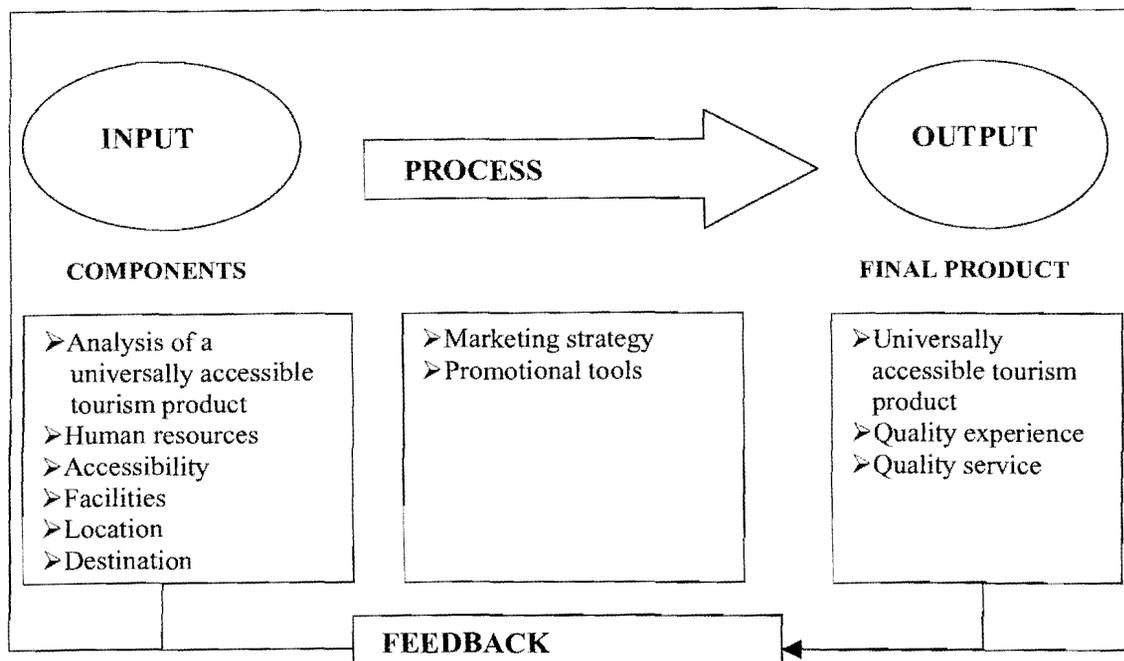


Figure 2.1: Systems approach

(Adapted for the purpose of this study from Saayman, 2000:240)

The systems approach in tourism, as adapted for the purpose of this study will now be discussed.

2.2.1 Input

Input consists of the following components with regard to tourists with disabilities:

- An analysis of a universal tourism product – to evaluate the current tourism product
- Human resources – what staff must know about tourists with disabilities and
- Accessibility – the one component that is of critical importance in a universally accessible tourism product, whether it be accessible facilities, locations, destinations, transport or information.

Before starting with a universally accessible tourism product, an analysis must be done to evaluate the current tourism product.

a) An analysis of a universal tourism product

According to Digh (1998), the intent of a universal design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Digh (1998) further states that a universal design benefits people of all ages

and abilities. According to the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (SA, 1997), it is the stairs leading into a building that disable the people that use wheelchairs, rather than the wheelchair. It is defects in the design of everyday equipment that cause difficulties, not the abilities of using it. It is society's lack of skill in using and accepting alternative ways to communicate that excludes people with communication disabilities.

All consumers deserve to be recognised and respected. Facilities, devices, services, and programs must be designed to serve an increasingly diverse clientele. Universal design provides a blueprint for maximum inclusion of all people (CUD, 2001). Universal design is a worldwide movement based on the concept that all products, environments and communications should be designed to consider the needs of the widest possible array of users. It is also known around the world as design for all, inclusive design or lifespan design. Universal design is a way of thinking about design that is based on the following premises:

- Varying ability is not a special condition of the few but a common characteristics of being human and the physically and intellectually change throughout a human's life
- If a design works well for people with disabilities, it works better for everyone
- At any point in our lives, personal self-esteem, identity, and well-being are deeply affected by our ability to function in our physical surroundings with a sense of comfort, independence and control
- Usability and aesthetics are mutually compatible (AEC, 2001).

Universal design asks from the outset how to make the design work beautifully and seamlessly for as many people as possible. It seeks to consider the breadth of human diversity across the lifespan to create design solutions that work for all users (AEC, 2001). As mentioned before, it is important for tourism product owners to know the difference between a universal design and an accessible design. A universal design integrates the accommodation of disability with the basic concept of the design, beyond the fact that accessibility is also expressed as an important element in the aesthetics of the product or building, whereas accessible design simply provides a token response to the needs of people with disabilities (Steinfeld, 1994). To avoid any misunderstanding of the above-mentioned designs, the differences will be discussed in Table 2.1.

According to Steinfeld (1994), the difference between a universal design and an accessible design are the following:

Table 2.1: Difference between a universal design and an accessible design

Accessible Design	Universal Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible design means products and buildings that are accessible and usable by people with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal design means products and buildings that are accessible and usable by everyone, including people with disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible design has a tendency to lead to separate facilities for people with disabilities, for example, a ramp set off to the side of a stairway at an entrance or a wheelchair accessible toilet stall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal design, on the other hand, provides one solution that can accommodate people with disabilities as well as children, women and men, left handed persons as well as right handed persons.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An entrance that is designed to be “universal” would not have stairs at all, instead of one toilet stall designed for people who use wheelchairs, a toilet room with a universal design might include more than one stall with larger space clearances and perhaps additional facilities such as a changing table for babies.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal design also presents an opportunity for economic development. The creation and production of consumer products that are easier to use for everybody can improve competitiveness in the world export market. Moreover, the development of a public infrastructure and cultural and recreational sites that are usable by all can improve tourism and contribute to general economic welfare.

There are seven principles that may be applied to evaluate existing designs, to guide the design process and to educate both designers and consumers about the characteristics of more usable products and environments. With the guidelines a short explanation will be given in order to ensure that the tourism product owner will understand each guideline during the evaluation process.

According to CUD (2001) the following descriptions can be given of each of the principles:

➤ **Principle One: Equitable use**

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities. This design doesn't disadvantage or stigmatise any group of users

➤ **Principle two: Flexibility in use**

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities

➤ **Principle three: Simple and intuitive**

The use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level

➤ **Principle four: Perceptible information**

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities

➤ **Principle five: Tolerance for error**

The design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions

➤ **Principle six: Low physical effort**

The design can be used effectively and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue

➤ **Principle seven: Size and space approach and use**

Appropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, and manipulation regardless of the user's body size, posture or mobility (CUD, 2001).

Table 2.2: Universal accessible tourism product

Principles	Guidelines
Principle One: Equitable use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible, equivalent when not➤ Avoid segregation or stigmatising of any users➤ Provide for privacy, security, and safety and is equally available to all users➤ Make the design appealing to all users.
Principle two: Flexibility in use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Provide choice in methods of use➤ Accommodate right and left-handed access and use➤ Facilitate the user's accuracy and pace.
Principle three: Simple and intuitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Eliminate unnecessary complexity➤ Is consistent with user expectations and intuition.➤ Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills➤ Arrange information consistent with its importance➤ Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.
Principle four: Perceptible information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information➤ Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings➤ Maximize "legibility" of essential information. Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e. make it easy to give

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ instructions or directions ➤ Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.
Principal five: Tolerance for error	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible: hazardous elements eliminated, isolated or shielded ➤ Provide warnings of hazards and errors ➤ Provide fail safe features ➤ Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.
Principal six: Low physical effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Allow user to maintain a neutral body position ➤ Use reasonable operating forces ➤ Minimise repetitive actions ➤ Minimise sustained physical effort.
Principle seven: Size and space approach and use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user ➤ Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user ➤ Accommodate variations in hand and grip size ➤ Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

(CUD, 2001)

After analysing the current tourism product, it is necessary to look at human resources and the role they play in creating a universal tourism product. Human resources play an important role in quality service to tourists with disabilities.

b) Human resources

According to Swarbrooke (quoted by Drummond & Yeoman, 2001:177), the management of human resources at attractions could arguably be considered to be the most important aspect of visitor attractions. As a service industry, the attitudes and abilities of the staff will have a crucial impact on the way the service is delivered to the customer, and will therefore directly affect their enjoyment of the visit and their perceptions of the attraction.

The core role players in human resources for the purpose of this study will be:

- Travel agency counter officers
- Tour operators
- Hotel/Restaurant staff
- Tourist office and tour guides.

Travel Agency counter officers

- Specialised travel agencies, transport offices (airlines, trains), hotels, tourist offices

- Evaluate the reliability and the quality of information in cooperation with disability organisations
- Refer to the suggested information centres, check how the data were collected and if the structure has been verified by trained checkers
- When arranging air travel for a person with reduced mobility, do not feel afraid to ask intimate questions about his/her weight and the use of the toilets (AFB, 2002).

Tour operators

- Tour operators must have a knowledge of the company, national railways (base stations), airlines and the services they offer
- Knowledge of the rules regulating transport of people with disabilities.

Hotel/Restaurant staff

- Hotel staff must know the level of accessibility of the hotel
- Maintain good contact with the tourist offices to get information on accessible sights and museums (AFB, 2002)
- A hotel perfectly accessible to all persons with disabilities does not exist but with some practical and technical advice the situation can be much better than expected. If the hotel has some technical aids available, the staff should know how to use them. It is possible to identify a list of actions, which are fundamental for people with disabilities, as they are also for the use of all of us
- In case of a self-service restaurant, people with disabilities should be served at the table upon request
- Some technical aids should be available, like specially designed plates, forks, knives, spoons and straws
- If the restaurant has seats fixed to the table, there should be a place for wheelchair users where the seats are not fixed
- Rather than written information, propose an audiotape. If written, it should be in large letters, and in Braille (relief plans, menus, guides)
- If audio or written material is not available, read aloud, though with a normal voice (Alpe *et al.*, 2002).

Tourist Office and Tourist Guides

- Tourist Office and Tourist Guides must know the city and tourist attractions, as well as how the facility caters for people with disabilities
- Adapt special guided tours to the tourist's needs and know about possible alternatives (e.g. bike paths)
- Know about places of interest (accessible museums, sights suitable for the blind and scented gardens)
- Know about the places of interest and the possibilities they offer (accessible museums, sites suitable for visually impaired people as well as scented gardens)
- Know about the leisure offer: sport (water sport, skiing, hiking), restaurants, beaches, technical aids and possibilities to rent e.g. a hand-bike or a tandem
- Know about special city or area-guides
- Know if the structures have been checked locally
- Co-operate with disability organisations and exchange information with them (AFB, 2002).

Accessibility plays an important role in creating a universal accessible tourism product, whether it be access to a facility, destination, location, transport or access to information.

c) Accessibility, facility, location, destination

If a tourism and hospitality company meets people's needs, it will attract and keep consumers (George, 2001:11). To create tourism that caters to the full range of consumer needs, there is a need to improve the use-ability of transportation, accommodation, tourism sites and services, and tour programmes (CMPT, 2000).

As a general principle, the design of environments, modes of transport and communications systems should cater for the needs of the widest possible range of abilities. Accessibility will be increased if the particular needs relating to different types of disability are known and integrated in design specifications. New design standards based on this ethic must be sought to ensure that barriers are no longer built into the things that people use, the places that are frequently visited and the means of transport in which people travel (Autonomia-Europe, 2001).

Micro-elements for accessibility should be comprehensive by including information about transportation, lodging, restaurants and attractions. This would make it possible for tourists with disabilities to plan an entire trip or vacation ahead of time and have reduced concerns for unforeseen problems. While recognising that all access cannot be remedied overnight, the provision of accurate access information by the tourism industry can be addressed immediately. The provision of inaccurate access information can prove disastrous for holiday planning. If the original information is incorrect about accessibility and there are no alternatives, people with physical disabilities have no choice but to abandon their plans (Darcy & Daruwalla, 1999).

The following steps are taken to distribute information or to make a place or destination accessible:

- Compile a test of tourist products and determine the ability to satisfy
- Compile a priority list to reach the needs of the tourism market
- Choose distribution channels that are reconcilable with the tourism market
- Provide transport that is reconcilable with the tourism market
- Facilitate movement into the country with effective customs and also within the country by means of good roads, clear directions and assistance to travellers.

The tourism product has no or little value if it is not placed in the hands of the consumer, namely the tourist. The product must thus be accessible or made available. The decision also has an influence on the other elements (Saayman, 2001:224).

User information is a vital necessity. It is particularly important that information should be accessible at the point of interface between an information system and the end user. Information technology can be used as a means of increasing both the supply and the quality of information provided. The integration of people with disabilities is often thought of in purely physical terms. Linguistic integration must also be considered, including acceptance of sign language for the deaf and hard of hearing (Autonomia-Europe, 2001).

In the USA, since the passage of the ADA (American Disability Act), rapidly evolving technology has led to innovations that promise to enhance transit accessibility for people who are blind or visually impaired. Computer screen interfaces are being developed that read aloud information

displayed on video screen monitors, information kiosks with tactile maps that "talk" to those who seek information about the location of key places in transit stations, multimedia interactive software allows users to query a map to plan routes, and global positioning satellite (GPS) technology enables people to use a portable computer to monitor their progress as they travel from place to place. The same GPS technology can be used to drive automatic digitised stop announcements and can be linked to external bus speakers that will announce vehicle identification information to those waiting at vehicle stops. Also, infra-red signals and radio transmitters can be programmed to broadcast the visual messages displayed on print signs so signs can then be "heard" by people who use special voice output receivers (AFB, 2002).

Those who do not have access to available information for any reason will be disadvantaged. Denying anyone access to the great stores of information that will be available will lead to a segregated society based largely on the ability to access and use needed to information resources. The changes wrought by information technology are accelerating and those who are not included in the use of these changes for whatever reason will be at a distinct disadvantage. Valuable contributions will be lost or delayed, and the society that does not include all its members in the benefits of the information age (here as presented by the Internet) will not long remain competitive in global markets. Segregating any segment of the population from information access for any reason will eventually lead to losses in productivity in all areas of the society (Burks, 2001).

Information should be accessible to everybody. Produce the general information about the services in large print version and in Braille. Telephone booths should be accessible to all users. One text-telephone should be available at the reception for people that are Deaf. Safety instructions must be placed at an accessible height. For people with hearing impairedness, it is of crucial importance that they can be informed in case of fire alarm: in case of non-availability of special equipment, the staff has to be informed on bedrooms occupied by deaf people. Staff should be trained for emergency situations. Persons with disabilities may need help in case of emergency. It is therefore important to provide a list of rooms occupied by guests with disabilities to the hotel staff (Alpe *et al.*, 2002).

Direct communication should be possible without obstacles (e.g.: reception desk, which is usually too high for a wheelchair user). Plan to organise another possibility in the reception hall where staff and client can sit together and have a friendly dialogue. To start a dialogue with a person that is blind, give a touch signal in order to let him/her know that you have to give information or ask questions. When you are with a person that is Deaf, do not forget that you can write down what you

want to communicate; An induction loop placed in the reception hall may be useful for persons with hearing aids (Alpe *et al.*, 2002).

The input phase is followed by the process. The purpose of the process is to further develop and plan the universal accessible tourism product.

2.2.2 Process

Marketing is not a means to an end; it is an ongoing process, which starts by identifying the needs of the tourists. As different tourists will have different wants, effective marketing targets particular types of tourists of the market (George, 2001:8). The purpose of marketing is to recognise that the tourists are of critical importance (Mawson, 2000:8).

As mentioned before, this chapter aims not to discuss the entire marketing process. However, the following points with regard to marketing to people with disabilities will be looked at namely:

- The benefits derived from marketing to people with disabilities
- Key issues that are important when marketing to tourists with disabilities.

For the purpose of this study, a marketing strategy will be discussed in detail which include the following:

- Who the tourists with disabilities are
 - What the market trends and potential are
 - Where tourists with disabilities can be located
 - Where the tourism product owners can get information on tourists with disabilities
 - How tourists with disabilities can be reached
 - What tourists with disabilities buy and
 - What tourists with disabilities regard as value for money.
-
- Promotional tools – to get the necessary information to tourists with disabilities
 - Internet
 - Other channels.

According to Saayman (2000:242), a facility should be planned according to the needs of a specific target market (in this case tourists with disabilities). In other words, the tourist is the core element from which planning is done. Hence, the needs as well as the type and size of the target market are critical (statistics will be provided later on in the chapter).

➤ **Benefits derived from marketing to people with disabilities**

Marketing to people with disabilities is more than placing a universal access symbol outside a business, using a person with a disability in an advertisement, or including politically correct jargon in promotional material. It is understanding the market's culture; getting input from consumers, developing, implementing and executing a comprehensive and effective strategy and making sure the company's staff is skilled to provide excellent service. If the appropriate steps are not taken, businesses damage their credibility, image, and customer confidence. Companies who build programmes that communicate to the need of the market, and positively portray people with disabilities in advertisements, sell more products. They also reach family members, relatives, friends and associates (SMG, 2002).

Statistics have indicated the following:

- Four in every ten consumers are reached when advertisements are aimed at people with disabilities
- Four out of 10 people with disabilities are online, spending more time logged on and report more positive feelings about the Internet than non-disabled Websurfers
- People with disabilities spend an average 20 hours per week logged into the Internet. Forty-eight percent say that the Internet has significantly improved the quality of their lives, compared with the 27% of adults without disabilities (SMG, 2002).

➤ **Key issues in tourism marketing to travellers with disabilities**

According to Autonomia-Europe (2001), the first thing to remember when marketing to tourists with disabilities is that they have the same range of preferences, perceptions, attitudes, habits and needs that drive consumer behaviour of persons without disabilities. Consumers with disabilities have the same requirements as customers without disabilities, quality products and services that meet their needs, reliability, and competitive market prices. Product owners outreach initiatives need to

convey that people with disabilities are valued as customers. If their needs are satisfactorily met, customers with disabilities become loyal users and advertisements of the products and services.

The following points indicate what is important in marketing to travellers with disabilities:

- **Knowledge is power:** Knowledge and power should be shared with people with disabilities. They must be allowed time to assimilate information and decide what is valuable or relevant to themselves or their own lifestyles
- **Experience promotes confidence:** People with disabilities must be allowed and encouraged to exercise their skills and knowledge. Experience is a learning process as well as framework of references and this enhances decision-making
- **Decision-making:** Making informed choices and decisions on any issue depends on information, knowledge and experience
- **Consultation and assumptions:** Proposals, plans or developments must be discussed with people with disabilities and their opinions or comments on issues relevant to them actively sought. Decisions should not be made on their behalf, nor should they be excluded from information about their own lives
- **Communication and comprehension:** The quality, appropriateness and effectiveness of communication between a traveller with disabilities and the advertisers of tourism destinations are of extreme importance (Hales, 1996:21-22).

a) **Marketing strategy**

According to Bennett (1995:253-254), marketing management has the responsibility of formulating a marketing strategy. The marketing strategy is formulated against the background of the organisation's corporate objectives and strategies. Marketing strategy planning means finding attractive opportunities in the market and developing market strategies to pursue the opportunities identified. A marketing strategy specifies the target market and the related marketing mix.

As with any market, it is important to segment and define the disability market and to utilise a variety of strategies that include both the generic and niche market. In developing a marketing strategy, perhaps the most important thing to remember is that people with disabilities are the only ones who really know what they need or want. For much too long, assumptions have been made for

them, rather than with them (AEC, 2001). Consumers increasingly look beyond advertising to question the deeper commitment of the product owners to people with disabilities (Prager, 2001).

Strategy has many roles, but good marketing principals should underpin strategy in all trading organisations. Marketing strategy focuses on the product/market/exchange area, and will aim to achieve some form of competitive advantage to ensure that exchanges take place (Adcock, 2000:22).

According to AEC (2001), ideas that should be considered in a marketing strategy for consumers with disabilities are the following:

- Test the company's marketing approach on people with disabilities. Select a variety of disabilities to be part of the strategy
- Keep an open mind about what persons with disabilities can or cannot do, want or need, to drive the marketing strategy. Advances in technology, rehabilitation, and medicine, coupled with changes in societal attitudes, make many activities previously thought impossible for persons with disabilities possible
- Recognise the diversity of the disability market. Do not assume that one size fits all. Define why this market sector and its development team and individual components, need the company's services or products
- Include people with disabilities in product development. Remember that the products geared to meet the needs of persons with disabilities often can be marketed to the public at large
- Develop simple modifications to make existing services and products user-friendly to persons with disabilities
- Test market the company's products and services with the disability community to measure accessibility and/or usability by persons with different types of disabilities
- Develop promotional strategies that target persons with disabilities and their family members as desired customers
- Integrate persons with disabilities in the company's print and television advertising and use persons with disabilities as models or actors in commercials, or as spokespersons
- Include disability community newspapers, magazines, and newsletters in the company's print advertising budget
- Attend and exhibit at annual consumer disability conferences

- Become involved with the disability community by sponsoring and/or participating in a national or local event or project.

➤ **Who the tourist with disabilities is**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (quoted by Trigg, 1995:107), the customer is a person who buys goods or services from a shop or business or a person that one has to deal with.

According to McDonald & Morris (2000:21), recognising that tourists differ from each other in terms of who they are and why they buy, provides opportunities for market segmentation. The product owner needs to know the characteristics of the people making up a segment so that he can communicate with the target market.

It is widely recognised in many quarters that people with disabilities constitute a large potential consumer market segment for the tourism and hospitality industry. However, the possibility of taking advantage of this potential niche market will depend on how the tourism sector as a whole, and the tourism industry in particular, will address the issue of tourism accessibility for people with disabilities (UNESCAP, 2002).

Market segmentation can be defined as the process of dividing a market into distinct groups of buyers who might require separate products and/or marketing mixes (Kotler *et al.*, 1996). According to George (2001:9) and Youell (1998:236), segmentation means dividing the market into groups that share similar needs and wants. According to Chisnall (quoted by Morgan & Pritchard, 2001:152), segmentation is a tool which assists marketing management by dividing total market demand into relatively homogeneous sectors that are identified by certain characteristics. After all, not all consumers are the same; consumers have different needs and desires. Similarly, no single offering appeals to everyone. The point of thinking about segmentation is to help define, structure and understand the market from the consumer's point of view, so that the product owners can go on to decide on the best strategy for the product owner's existing and new brands (Randall, 2001:112). By recognising the characteristics of each segment the product owners can make and sell products which best serve tourists' specialised needs at an acceptable price – though not necessarily at the lowest price (McDonald & Morris, 2000:21).

Effective market segmentation depends on research to identify the characteristics of the types of visitors who seek particular benefits from the destination. An issue of segmentation research is whether to focus on actual behaviour, or clients' expressed preferences (Laws, 1995: 110). If needs differ across countries and regions, a product owner must consider how to adapt its products and the various elements of the marketing mix to best satisfy customers around the world. Product owners also need to develop a global customer database and information systems to understand and respond to customer needs and purchasing habits (Terpstra & Sarathy, 2000).

Successful segmentation of the product implies a detailed understanding of the market and will therefore take time. The market segments can be determined by identifying the preferences of different types of consumers and by determining buying behaviour. With the help of consumer patterns, market segmentation tries to divide the heterogeneous market into homogeneous segments of people with similar needs and buying habits. The market is divided to provide maximum heterogeneity and homogeneity between segments (Saayman, 2001:84-85).

➤ **What the market trends and market potential of tourists with disabilities are**

Another emerging economic trend is the increasing "globalisation" of the marketplace. Consumer businesses hoping to remain successful in the coming decades must recognise the opportunities and challenges inherent in global competition. While the size of potential customer markets is growing, the diversity of the customer base is expanding at the same time to include differences in language and culture, customs, experiences, and historical design precedents. All of these increase the need for design that is sensitive to individual abilities and preferences. Because reasonable cost is a fundamental issue in any design and production process, universal design has become a very marketable approach, since it addresses the diverse needs of the majority of consumers (CUD, 2001).

According to Van Horn (2001), in the 1990s there was a significant growth in tourism worldwide by persons with disabilities due to increases in the population with disabilities, disposable income and accessible facilities and services.

People with disabilities tend to

- Stay longer at a destination

- Spend more on average per day
- Travel in low season to avoid crowds
- Demand more services
- Require personal and specialised attention
- Become repeat customers when services and facilities meet their needs.

➤ **Where tourists with disabilities can be located**

Future demographic and social trends will influence a demand for tourism and hospitality offerings in the 2000s. Demographic factors such as ageing populations along with a decline in the number of young people in South Africa’s major tourist generating countries (USA, UK, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Australia) are important considerations for the marketer. These demographic trends are interrelated with social trends that will lead to a significant change in the family lifecycle structure. Tourists from developed countries will continue to escape their lifestyles. In addition, there will be a trend towards heterogeneity (or diversity) in populations, creating more niche markets as opposed to a mass market. A continued increase in media attention and levels of education will give people more time, resources, and an inclination to travel (George, 2001:320-321).

It is estimated that there are 1.6 million Deaf and hard of hearing people in South Africa (Smal, 2001), 243 812 blind people and around 21 906 partially sighted people. This puts the total of people with visual disabilities in South Africa at 365 718 (SANCB – The South African Council for the Blind, 2001). Currently, there are limited statistics available on people with physical disabilities.

The following statistics on people with disabilities are as follow in some of the above-mentioned tourism markets:

Table 2.3: The size of the potential market of tourists with disabilities (in millions)

Market of Origin	Persons with Disabilities	Potential Market
USA	40 000 000	25 800 000
Canada	4 200 000	2 700 000
Western Europe	50 000 000	32 200 000
Total	94 200 000	60 700 000

(Kéroul, 1994 (quoted by Van Horn, 2001)

Table 2.4: Percentage of persons with disability in Germany

Estimated Population in 2000 in millions				Estimated percentage of disabled in total population: People with disabilities			
Country	Geographic Group	Estimated tot. population	Data Source	Data Date	% of Tot. population	Data Source	Data Date
Germany	361	82	United Nations, World Population Prospects Database, 1950-2050, Population Division, UN, New York, 1995	1994	8.4	UN Statistical Chart on World Families. Statistical Division and the International Year of the Family, New York, 1993	1993

(FAO Database on the Rural Disabled – Statistics, 2002)

Table 2.5: Percentage of persons with disability in The Netherlands

Estimated Population in 2000 in millions				Estimated percentage of disabled in total population: People with disabilities			
Country	Geographic Group	Estimated tot. population	Data Source	Data Date	% of Tot. population	Data Source	Data Date
The Netherlands	361	16	United Nations, World Population Prospects Database, 1950-2050, Population Division, UN, New York, 1995	1994	11.5	UN Statistical Chart on World Families. Statistical Division and the International Year of the Family, New York, 1993	1993

(FAO Database on the Rural Disabled – Statistics, 2002)

Table 2.6: Percentage of persons with disability in the UK

Estimated Population in 2000 in millions				Estimated percentage of disabled in total population: People with disabilities			
Country	Geographic Group	Estimated tot. population	Data Source	Data Date	% of Tot. population	Data Source	Data Date
UK	361	59	United Nations, World Population Prospects Database, 1950-2050, Population Division, UN, New York, 1995	1994	14.2	UN Statistical Chart on World Families. Statistical Division and the International Year of the Family, New York, 1993	1993

(FAO Database on the Rural Disabled – Statistics, 2002)

➤ **Where to get information on tourists with disabilities**

- Disability organisations in South Africa for example the Federal Council on Disability and Eco-Access
- International information offices such as ALPE in Spain, CNAD in Portugal, CNRH in France, Co.In. in Italy, Info-Handicap in Luxembourg and MIS Switzerland, SATH
- Mobility International
- The MI Switzerland Infothek database which comprises a lot of city, region and country guides worldwide
- Internet and relevant printed media
- Different guides published in the various countries (AFB, 2002).

➤ **How can tourists with disabilities be reached**

To learn more about serving these travel market companies, one can go to National and International Institutions (South Africa Federal Council on Disability, Eco-Access, Kéroul, Mobility International), the Internet and Specialised conferences and trade shows (Van Horn, 2001). One way to reach a geographically diverse marketplace is through travel agents (Kotler *et al.*, 1996:455).

Agents interested in serving travellers with disabilities should keep certain pointers in mind. According to the Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality (SATH), 54 million Americans have some sort of disability, and the buying power of this market is growing. Yet it remains relatively untapped. Fewer than 100 agencies specialise in this niche.

➤ **What the tourist with a disability buys**

The benefits are derived from the product or service (Bennett, 1995:169:170). Tourists do not buy product specifications: the motive for their purchase is what it will do for them (Mawson, 2000:54). Product owners must remember that tourists can to some degree be influenced in their purchasing habits, but at the end of the day, if they are unhappy with the product on offer or the level of service they receive, they may not come back again (Youell, 1995:224-225).

➤ **What the tourist with a disability regards as value for money**

- The basic quality of the product or service
- The support service such as customer assistance

- The recovery process for counteracting bad experiences
- Extraordinary services which appeal to customers' personal preferences and values to the extent that the product/service feels customized (Adcock, 2000:221).

To get the products and services to the potential market, in this case the disability market, the tourism industry needs to look at the various promotional tools to marketing their universally accessible tourism product.

b) Promotional tools

Technological innovations may be the most significant factors to affect the South African tourism and hospitality marketer in the coming years. The impact of technology may affect every aspect of marketing. As more of the world's population becomes computer literate and computer dependent, consumers will seek and purchase holidays from their home or work computers. Increased use of smart cards and other labour-saving devices will reduce costs and prices of providing tourism and hospitality offerings. New tourism offerings such as virtual reality (VR) and artificial environments such as indoor ski resorts may compete with holidays and other more natural leisure activities. The trend towards video conferencing will continue over the next few years, further reducing the demand for business travel. Technological advances will continue to improve the efficiency and speed of land transport, which may eventually compete with air transport (George, 2001:321).

The extensive use of information to communicate the nature and availability of most products in travel and tourism means that the access to information and promotion, if not points of sale, can easily be created wherever sufficient numbers of prospective customers congregate (Middleton, 2001:298).

➤ Internet

Because of a disability, some Web surfers may not be able to access the whole site. How can the product owner make his/her site better for everyone? The concept involved is universal design, or universal access. When walking up a wheelchair ramp to avoid climbing the stairs, you have experienced it. Features that assist people with disabilities can help everyone. On the Web, universal design can be as simple as developing a navigational system that is easy-to-use for people

with limited mobility, or implementing a consistent design scheme that helps users who are blind to know what to expect (Jensen, 2001).

Screen readers help users who are blind to surf the Web, and many design features for people who are blind also help other visitors. If audio or video is included on the site, features can be added that will provide benefits for a range of users. Someone who cannot hear or cannot use audio will appreciate the option of clicking on a transcription of a speech. QuickTime movies can be captioned on a separate track that is accessible to multi-format movie players such as Movie Player. Acrobat files include a link to Adobe's Access software, created to help users that are blind read PDF files (Jensen, 2001).

➤ **Other channels**

- Word of mouth
- Advertisements carrying coupons to be completed by those requiring information
- Cards or other inserts into press and magazine media, which are an alternative form of media space
- Direct mail to loyalty club members and other previous customers, using own databases and names and addresses bought for the purpose from a list broker
- Direct distribution on a door to door basis in targeted residential areas
- Direct distribution at exhibitions and shows open to the public, e.g. travel trades fairs.
- Distribution via retail travel agencies
- Distribution via tourist information centres and public libraries
- Distribution via relevant third parties. For example, American Express and many clubs and societies will, for a fee, include printed leaflets with their regular mailings to members; alternatively via hotel reception desks and similar relevant outlets (suitable for attractions, entertainments, car rental)
- Collaborative distribution via marketing consortia and trade associations (this is a variation of distribution via multi-site operation under one owner)
- Distribution via Web sites that offer e-mail addresses or call centre numbers as the means to access printed materials (Middleton, 2001:283-284)

- Display and distribution of product information such as brochures and leaflets, or multi-media information that may be accessed and down loaded via the Internet (providing choice for customers) (Middleton, 2001:300).

2.2.3 Output

All the information obtained can now be implemented to create a universal accessible tourism product.

The demand for quality and comfort is not contradictory with accessibility; indeed, the contrary is true. To create a good product, the tourism industry has to consider the potential market represented by people with disabilities so as to design a model composing all the qualities of “Tourism for All”. This would not only facilitate the access to all tourism activities, but should also promote a tourism offer with quality, security, comfort and beauty. Increasing the knowledge of the needs of travellers with disabilities and providing more attention at local and national level will contribute to achieving a situation of equal opportunities for these people who have often been denied their right to leisure time because of the lack of accessibility in tourist facilities (Alpe *et al.*, 2002).

a) Universally accessible tourism product

According to Thompson (2002), a universally accessible tourism product can be defined as a tourism product that recognises and provides for the diversity of tourists and their range of needs. It is a product that can be enjoyed by all tourists with equal levels of experience with no or minimal special provision.

The following steps can be used to develop universal accessible tourism products:

Step 1: Universal access is supported by the following framework:

- Promotion of universal access
- Well established policy
- Legislative framework
- Private sector commitments
- Strategic alliances of various sectors
- Infrastructure development
- Comprehensive training.

Step 2: Universal access requires an integrated delivery:

- Conscious development of a universally accessible product
- Consultation with all users
- Review system procedures, for example arriving at the hotel, getting to a facility
- Develop recognised responses
- Integrate all aspects of your product and business (Thompson, 2002).

The above-mentioned steps will be discussed throughout the study.

It is advanced here as a sensible and economical way to reconcile the artistic integrity of a design with human needs in the environment. Solutions, which result in no additional cost and no noticeable change in appearance, can come about from knowledge about people, simple planning and careful selection of conventional products (Mace *et al.*, 1996).

Good design has practical benefits for all users. It is also likely to be more economical in the long term. The marginal costs of making environments accessible need not be high if the right considerations are built into designs at an early stage. But cost can be prohibitive if facilities have to be made accessible later. Think of the expense of installing lifts in old railway stations, for example. Generally, accessible environments should improve access for people with both minimum and maximum abilities. Fewer problems will be encountered by the majority, resulting in better service all round (Autonomia-Europe, 2001).

Public acknowledgement of people with disabilities and progress toward universal design have developed in the last few decades along three parallel tracks of activities: legislation fuelled by the disability right movement, barrier-free design to universal design movement, and advances in rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology. The purpose of universal design and assistive technology is the same: to reduce the physical and attitudinal barriers between people with and without disabilities (CUD, 2001).

a) Quality service and quality experience

To conclude, to provide a quality service and experience as well as to increase tourism for people with disabilities requires the following:

1. Adapting infrastructure

- Hospitality providers
- Restaurants
- Airports, bus and train stations, and ports
- Museums and tourist attractions
- Signage

2. Developing services

- Accessible tours
- Supply of medical equipment and personal care attendants

3. Gathering access information and targeting the market (Van Horn, 2001).

2.2.4 Feedback

According to Kroon (1995:42), feedback refers to an input that originates in the system, and informs the system how effectively its objectives have been achieved. Tourism is a dynamic, constantly changing industry and it is critical that tourism products evolve with it. For continued success, stay abreast of changes and trends, communicate with the target market (tourist with disabilities) and actively seek their feedback (TIRC, 2002).

Assessment of the tourism product's accessibility can be done through The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa.

The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa is proud to announce that the option of grading establishment for accessibility will be available shortly. The accessibility assessment system will be integrated within the main grading scheme and will be an optional extra for accommodation establishments. In the new accessibility scheme you can choose to grade your establishment in one or more of the following categories, viz:

- Physical
- Visual
- Cognitive/communication.

For each of these categories the product owner will be graded according to 3 levels, 1 being the minimum specified requirements and 3 being excellent. The criteria for assessing accessibility are already well developed locally and are based on international best practise (The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa, 2002).

2.3 CONCLUSION

Adaptive Environment has established a niche in the international spectrum of organisations and individuals that share a vision of design-for-all/universal design (AEC, 2001).

According to Cohn (1999), the number of people with disabilities are rapidly growing. This might have been considered a sympathy market, people wanting to do right by this market. The diversified nature of the market both in the supply and demand for tourism leads to a need for distribution channels to overcome the gaps of distance and knowledge (Laws, 1991:40).

Advertisers should keep images positive. People with disabilities are very sensitive to being portrayed as dependent, vulnerable, or as objects of pity. Already well aware of the difficulties they face, they like to see images of themselves overcoming these difficulties, transcending their limits, and living a life as other people do (Fost, 1998:54-55).

The tourism industry needs to adopt a marketing strategy which takes into consideration different requirements. The design of a tourist product should not be made for a standard person since each individual has different needs (Alpe *et al.*, 2002).

While equal access for all will not ensure a totally productive and globally competitive society, it will offer opportunities to all to participate in all sorts of activities that are not commonly available. It will offer the chance for all to participate regardless of whether they have a disability, are aged, or are simply unable to be in a particular place at a particular time. Equal access to information is vital to participate in society, both nationally and globally. To remain competitive in a worldwide market no one can be disregarded. Every person who can make a contribution should have the full opportunity to do so. Denial of this access disables not only the members of society that are denied, but it disables the society that denies them that access (Burks, 2001).

As comfort, safety, and flexibility become more important keywords in advertising, emerging technologies will continue to respond to the needs of people of all ages, abilities and sizes. Designers will be faced with a choice: reluctant compliance with a minimum of accessibility standards, or positive, sensitive offering of universal design (Mace *et al.*, 1996).

The universal design has been discussed throughout the chapter. The reason for product owners to make their products universally accessible is because an accessible design acknowledges that people with disabilities have a right to access and the use of products and environments, but it doesn't go far enough because it doesn't express social integration. Moreover, it doesn't acknowledge the social trends that are changing our societies. It will never be a completely adequate solution to accessibility. On the other hand, a universal design promotes full integration in every way. Moreover, it symbolizes that integration. Universal design makes a place for people with disabilities alongside everybody else. It acknowledges disability, aging and other differences as a part of everyday life (Steinfeld, 1994).