

Bridging Tourism Theory and Practice
Volume 8

**Knowledge Transfer to and within
Tourism: Academic, Industry and
Government Bridges**

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Recognizing the increasing gap between what is researched in academic community and what is practiced in industry, this series aims to bring together academic and industry leaders in their respective fields to discuss, exchange, and debate issues critical to the advancement of tourism. The book series intends to not only create a platform for academics and practitioners to share theories and practices with each other, but more importantly, to serve as a collaborative venue for meaningful synthesis.

Each volume will feature a distinct theme by focusing on a current or upcoming niche or “hot” topic. It shows how theories and practices inform each other; how both have evolved, advanced, and been applied; and how industry best practices have benefited from, and contributed to, theoretical developments. Volume editors have both strong academic credentials and significant consulting or other industry engagement experiences. Chapter contributors will be identified through professional conferences and trade conventions. In general, the book series seeks a synergy of how concepts can inform actions, and vice versa. The book series will inspire a new generation of researchers who can translate academic discoveries to deliverable results valuable to practitioners.

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Volume 8

Knowledge Transfer to and within Tourism: Academic, Industry and Government Bridges

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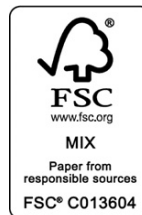
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Contents

Acknowledgments ix

PART I INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 Introduction: Tourism Knowledge Transfer 3
Mathilda Van Niekerk, Marcella De Martino and Noel Scott

PART II ACADEMIC LED TRANSFER

**Chapter 2 Experience Design: Academic-Industry Research
Collaboration for Tourism Innovation** 13
Sarah Gardiner and Noel Scott

**Chapter 3 Knowledge Transfer: Can Research Centers
Make a Difference?** 27
Simon Hudson, Fang Meng, David Cárdenas and Kevin So

**Chapter 4 “Best Green”: Synergy Between Academia and
a Hotel Chain** 37
Pedro Moncada Jiménez and Jean Rene Nogueras Deminieux

**Chapter 5 Knowledge Transfer between Educational Institutions
and Destinations** 59
Luigi D’Ambrosio, Jan Halberg Madsen and Lone Møller Wejrums

Chapter 6 Tourism Microentrepreneurship Knowledge Cogeneration	73
<i>Duarte B. Morais, Bruno S. Ferreira, Shahab Nazariadli and Ladan Ghahramani</i>	
Chapter 7 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: Knowledge Transfer	97
<i>Adão Flores, Elsa Pereira and Henrique Graça</i>	
Chapter 8 Tourism Knowledge Transfer in Brazil: The Gap between Academy and Industry	113
<i>Alexandre Panosso Netto, Luiz Gonzaga Godoi Trigo and Carlos Eduardo Silveira</i>	

PART III PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Chapter 9 Collaborative Strategy for Tourism Development and Regeneration: Italy's Coast of Naples	131
<i>Massimo Clemente, Eleonora Giovane di Girasole, Casimiro Martucci and Daniele Cannatella</i>	
Chapter 10 Tourism Innovation-Oriented Public-Private Partnerships for Smart Destination Development	147
<i>Luisa Errichiello and Alessandra Marasco</i>	
Chapter 11 The Destination Triangle: Toward Relational Management	167
<i>Egbert van der Zee, Jan van der Borg and Dominique Vanneste</i>	
Chapter 12 Strategic and Participative Planning in la Comarca de Los Alerces: The Process and Outcomes	189
<i>Mario L. E. Córdoba</i>	
Chapter 13 Intelligent Governance for Rural Destinations: Lessons from Europe	203
<i>Umberto Martini and Federica Buffa</i>	

PART IV NEW APPROACHES

Chapter 14 Measuring the Quality of Destinations: A Portuguese Case Study	221
<i>João Albino Silva, Dora Agapito and Patrícia Pinto</i>	
Chapter 15 Social Media and Knowledge Transfer in Tourism: Five-Star Hotels in Philadelphia	239
<i>Malcolm Cooper, Le Quang Thai, William Claster, Kazem Vafadari and Phillip Pardo</i>	
Chapter 16 Art, Architecture and Archaeology: Pompeii and Oplontis	257
<i>Marilicia Longobardi</i>	
Chapter 17 Knowledge Transfer Through Journals	271
<i>Iris Lopes, João Albino Silva, Guilherme Castela and Efigénio Rebelo</i>	
Chapter 18 Tourism Distribution Channels: Knowledge Requirements	289
<i>Edoardo Colombo and Rodolfo Baggio</i>	

PART V CONCLUSION

Chapter 19 Bridging Theory and Practice: Lessons and Directions	305
<i>Marcella De Martino, Mathilda Van Niekerk and Noel Scott</i>	
About the Authors	313
References	327
Index	377

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Tourism Knowledge Transfer

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Tourism is an essential component of contemporary life in countries worldwide and like many aspects of modern society, is challenged by unprecedented change and disruption. People everywhere are struggling to meet the global challenges of climate change, development, and participatory governance. Many developing countries are facing loss of their traditional culture, language, architecture, and social structures. These challenges indicate that the tourism industry needs an adaptive strategy such that it can contribute to global sustainability and progress. This measure is to supplement the industry's ability to create and acquire knowledge. Specifically, its transfer denotes how knowledge and ideas move from the sources to the potential users of that knowledge. Over the last decade, the meaning of knowledge transfer has widened to encompass the collaborative and iterative nature of its creation and exchange, by including concerns about the dynamic processes by which it is co-created and exchanged across disciplines and organizational boundaries.

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4 Knowledge Transfer to and within Tourism

In the emerging knowledge-based society, the ability to transfer it within and between tourism organizations has been found to contribute to their innovativeness and competitiveness.

Academic institutions are actively generating fresh perspectives and knowledge in the field of tourism, while often the tourism industry “actively” ignores this stockpile. Similarly, academics may be accused of lack of practical insights and application in their teaching and writing. Governments, often without consultation with their broader stakeholders, develop policies ignoring tourism’s socioeconomic depth and spread at local, national, and international levels.

Thus, it is important to build bridges so that ongoing tourism research outcomes find their way to the industry and the “know-how” lodged at the latter is channeled to the academia and knowledge institutions. While some attempts have been made in the past in this direction, they have been sporadic and disconnected. It is this going-no-where situation in tourism, this disconnect, which led to the formation of a new initiative, formation of the Tourism Intelligence Forum (or the t-Forum). Like other endeavors, tourism can move forward if intelligent governance and policies are in place to uplift performance. It is now increasingly evident that assumptions about the effects of tourism must be re-examined in the light of advanced knowledge, and reformulated accordingly. Technological innovation is frequently a necessary but not sufficient condition for tourism activities to achieve efficiency and quality. Subtle innovations in goal setting, policies, and procedures are essential in contemporary tourism.

Many lessons can be learned from innovative destinations and businesses showing how intelligent governance can lead tourism to a new level, in a framework responding to the needs of the host community, tourism industry and its stakeholders, and their customers. Achieving this goal will be highly dependent on intelligence, knowledge transfer, and actual innovation, as well as on deep understanding of likely impending future scenarios. Hence, beyond the usual theoretical perspectives derived from increasing tourist numbers, it is essential to consider scenarios that address innovation and change efforts. In these, more realistic, optional frameworks for action, the use of energy and physical capital is bounded by priorities of natural, human, and institutional capital. The challenge is to depart from the pervasive “business as usual scenarios” in tourism and instead explore how transfers of knowledge to and within tourism can uplift future landscapes.

While tourism is an essential component of contemporary life, it has paid little consideration to matters of efficiency and sustainability. This is untenable. Tourism has no choice but to increasingly compete with other

industries for the use of scarce resources, and for the preferences of quality-, price-, and sustainability-conscious citizens. Science-led technological innovation will have to play a growing role in tourism. These challenges suggest the need to create a common understanding and shared vision among the various stakeholders. At macro level, it is undeniable the role of various national and international policies, cooperation programs, and initiatives (such as those carried out by the European Union, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the World Bank) in promoting the sustainable development and innovation of countries and regions.

Within the industry, the potential role of networks in enabling destinations and firms to access valuable external sources of knowledge is a *condition sine qua non* for improving their competitiveness. This includes the collaboration among industry, government, and research institutions to promote effective knowledge sharing at the territorial/destination level as well as the different types of business networks that foster knowledge creation and exchange. Furthermore, drivers and processes that can favor the firm's capability to create retain and transfer new knowledge within organizational boundaries is particularly relevant for the small and medium enterprises in tourism. This relates to the absorptive capacity of the firm, to its reservoirs of knowledge—mainly individuals, structures, and artifacts—and the mechanisms (such as social networks, routines, and boundary spanners) that make the created knowledge available to other individuals or units so that they can use, integrate, and transform it effectively. To advance the position of tourism globally, the t-Forum acts as the leading hub for the sharing of knowledge in theory and practice, by linking and involving destinations, businesses, and knowledge institutions.

The Tourism Intelligence Forum is a global institution with the core mission of bridging tourism theory and practice by transferring knowledge (t-Intelligence) to and within tourism. The unique strategy of t-Forum is to link and engage destinations and tourism businesses, as well as knowledge institutions. With the accomplishment of this mission, the global position of tourism as an instrument for knowledge, culture, economic progress, sustainability, and development in the context of inclusive governance is advanced.

The objectives of the t-Forum are to identify sources of t-intelligence in destinations, businesses, and knowledge institutions; to foster, support, and create platforms for the dissemination of t-intelligence, and finally to facilitate its transfer to and application in destinations, businesses, and knowledge institutions and to nurture t-intelligence programs or actions for innovation in tourism.

GENESIS OF THE BOOK

This book is the fruit of the first t-Forum global conference: “Tourism Intelligence in Action,” held from 4 to 7 May 2015 in Naples, Italy. The Conference was dedicated to seeking answers and solutions to the current challenges the tourism industry faces by providing a platform of discussion among destinations, businesses, and knowledge institutions. Three main themes were addressed during the Conference. One, “Intelligent Futures: t-Intelligence in Action” was dedicated to unfold social and technological frameworks, innovative strategies, and inclusive governance applicable to tourism for sustainable development. Two, “Science and Technological Innovation: t-Applications” aimed at introducing innovative methods, policies, and initiatives for the transfer and application of knowledge in destinations and enterprises. Three, “t-Intelligence in Governance: Proposals and Cases” focused on successful cases of t-Intelligence transfers and delineated processes for action.

The book seeks to bring together examples, ideas, and directions for transfer of knowledge in every direction, from academia to government and the tourism industry, from the tourism industry to the academia and government, and from government to the academia and the tourism industry. Its 18 chapters (not all presented at the t-Forum conference) provide examples of knowledge transfer within a number of tourism’s fields of operation and demonstrate best practice outcomes. They are grouped into three sections: Academic Led Transfer (seven chapters); Public-Private Partnerships for Knowledge Transfer (five chapters); and New Approaches (five chapters).

In the Academic Lead Transfer section, the seven chapters indicate the importance for small businesses to innovate through the knowledge transfer between themselves and knowledge-institution partners. Universities have the capability to conduct research that can effectively contribute in enhancing the competitiveness of destinations and local the small and medium enterprises. When these entities work together and share their competencies, innovation potential is enabled. Academia, however, should have knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research and have a customer-centric focus in the design experiences (Chapter 2).

This section also identified the important benefits academic research centers at universities can have for the tourism industry, specifically when dealing with the effective and regular transfer of knowledge between the two. This knowledge transfer assists the destination to become more competitive and gain a competitive advantage (Chapter 3). The next chapter

provides a good example of how a university assisted in elevating the importance and urgency of environmental and social responsibilities within a company. The universities' intervention ensured the buy-in of the staff and in so doing improve the integration and loyalty of the staff and the company. The latter's workplace was transformed from a traditional workplace to one that channels the participation of the staff in environmental and social responsibility programs and improved learning attitudes during training. The outcome of this initiative was a saving in the cost of energy, water, and solid waste management.

Chapter 5 illustrates the "knowledge transfer triangle" model and its potential to transfer inter-industrial knowledge between the destination and the academia. The formation of networks among private stakeholders has assisted not only in the rationale and the structure of the research but also in boosting the self-esteem of the actors within the networks. The industry also indicated their appreciation for the unbiased inputs that they got from the academia. To maximize the benefits of the knowledge transfer triangle, all parties share their knowledge equally and the transfer is not unilateral but bilateral.

Chapter 6 emphasizes the importance of leveraging local knowledge for socioeconomic change. The People-First Tourism research project is a partnership between local academic institutions and community agencies and microentrepreneurs. It showcases how microentrepreneurship can play a role in the self-determination of people who have vulnerable livelihoods and provide tourism experiences to the tourist who is authentic and genuine. The project gives access to local data and so creates economic opportunities for microentrepreneurs. The partners cultivate and educate themselves through changing their pre-understanding of one another. Microentrepreneurs, local partners, and researchers co-create knowledge as they develop a shared vision for the destination. Chapters 7 and 8 provide case studies that seek to close the academic-industry gap in Portugal and Brazil.

Section II's five chapters examine the transfer of knowledge between the public and private sectors. Chapter 9 describes a program to enhance the quality of urban planning and life specifically in cities by the sea with the starting point being the involvement of the community. A shared innovative vision will create the starting point for the regeneration and valorization process.

Chapter 10 focus on tourism innovation-oriented public-private partnerships in developing smart tourism services at the destination level. Structure, process, outcomes, and drivers of smart tourism, innovation, and services are discussed and collaborative arrangements and identities are

8 *Knowledge Transfer to and within Tourism*

explored. These complex collaborative arrangements are particularly valuable as it influences the performance of innovation-oriented public-private partnerships. Chapter 11 lay is the foundation for improving the quality of the tourist experience through improving intra-destination network relationships and relationship management. A valuable lesson is learned as “This is Antwerp” the destination management organization of Antwerp neglected one side (supply side) of the destination triangle (governance, supply side, and tourists). The tourists in the destination did not use the destination organization as the tourists were not familiar with their brand. These organizations neglected their stakeholders creating an agnostic position of the supply side toward the legitimacy and initiatives of the destination management organization.

Chapter 12 focuses on 22 public and private organizations within the la Comarca de Los Alerces region, Argentine, that worked together in a strategic and participative tourism-planning project. This chapter examines how the private and public organizations worked together beyond their personal and sectoral interests. They develop a plan that set long-term goals for the destination with short-term action programs to achieve a strategic vision. Chapter 13 shows how the adoption of a good governance model can help overcome problems faced at a community level. It explains how a bottom-up approach facilitates stakeholder involvement and assists in product differentiation and innovation. The model demonstrates that if people are open and willing to dialogue and debate, then adopting an listen governance model (LGM) model can produce convincing results.

The final section of the volume discusses new approaches and knowledge developed by tourism academics concerning the knowledge transfer process. Chapter 14 provides a new measure of the “quality” of a destination (in this case Algarve, Portugal) incorporating the tourist experience, governance, and sustainability. Such a quality assessment using a holistic approach is needed if the stakeholders want to sustain their destination competitiveness. Chapter 15 focuses on the transfer of knowledge in the tourism and hospitality industry through social media. Knowledge on tourist concerns and perceptions require dedicated research in the past, but through the use of social media, accommodation providers can gain valuable information of their guests’ motivation and sentiment which can then be used to predict tourist behavior and destination performance.

Chapter 16 looks at new methods for bringing cultural heritage to life through the stimulation of the senses of the participants. Multi-sense installations at archeological sites near Pompei, Italy, created a sense of involvement for children and enabled adults to understanding the sites better.

These new approaches to cultural heritage site interpretation can assist with the transfer of valuable knowledge from supplier to customer. Chapter 17 investigates the differences and similarities among four academic journals regarding trends, objectives, and limitations of tourism research. It produces maps that can be used by all tourism stakeholders to understand the status of academic research and hence to identify opportunities. The last chapter of this section focuses on the transfer of knowledge through distribution channels. It discusses the best use and optimization of electronic distribution channels, the need for standardized representation of transactions and data, the role of the Internet, and how this information can be used for product planning and market analysis.

Together these chapters challenge traditional academic research processes and the barriers between industry and academic stakeholders. Overall, they suggest the replacement of an expert led scientific investigation leading to propagation of knowledge in academic journals, with an emphasis on collaborative enquiry, objective setting, and continuous reflection. Such a model of academic-industry integrated and collaborative discovery can challenge established norms and practices of university research. This approach requires trust, in-depth industry and academic knowledge, and longer time horizons in order to produce results.

Academic research is becoming increasingly entrepreneurial at this regard, actively seeking to build direct connections with industry to pursue both individual and joint opportunities. Some best practices employed by universities to build linkages with industry are presented in this volume. However, universities need to “optimize” knowledge transfer at regional level through the strong support of government and other local stakeholders. As such, academic, industry partners, and policymakers have collaboratively to adopt a localized view of university-industry knowledge transfer in order to favor the development of new and existing capabilities that could ensure the long lasting competitiveness of the entire community/society.