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The Vienna Tourist Board: PR and marketing for Vienna's tourist industry

With a budget of some 24 million euros in 2012, the Vienna Tourist Board carries out subsidiary destination marketing for Vienna's tourist industry. Founded in 1955 under Vienna's Promotion of Tourism Act, the board is the city's official PR and marketing agency for this sector of the economy. It is financed by the hotel trade, and by all the city's taxpayers.

The Vienna Tourist Board's brief includes representing the interests of the city and province of Vienna in all matters relating to tourism, instituting measures to increase the volume of incoming tourist traffic, especially advertising, supporting any tourism measures instigated by the municipality, helping to create a modern infrastructure for the tourist industry, and promoting an understanding amongst members of the general public for the industry and its economic significance.

Management of the Vienna Tourist Board

The Vienna Tourist Board is headed by a president, a director of tourism, and a supervisory board. Renate Brauner, Vice-Mayor of Vienna and Councillor of Finance and Economic Affairs, has been President of the Vienna Tourist Board since 23 March 2007, and Norbert Kettner has been managing director (director of tourism) since September 2007. The president is nominated by the Municipality of Vienna, and the managing director by the supervisory board on the president's recommendation. The supervisory board –officially referred to as the tourism commission – consists of the president, two vice-presidents, and 15 other members, most of whom are appointed by the municipality. The supervisory board is responsible for the budget of the Vienna Tourist Board and other fundamental matters.

Marketing and service on a non-profit basis

The Vienna Tourist Board is a non-profit organisation, and not a travel agency – Vienna has about a hundred incoming travel agencies. Its destination marketing is carried out in close cooperation with Vienna's tourist industry. The board always operates in a subsidiary position: its operations always support and supplement – never replace – the marketing activities of Vienna's individual tourist and entertainment enterprises. Apart from marketing “in the world at large”, the Vienna Tourist Board also offers an information and hotel reservation service for potential visitors to Vienna from all over the world. This service is provided by telephone, e-mail, fax, post and the internet, via the board's “Wien Hotels & Info” team (tel. +43-1-24 555, info@vienna.info), and from its central tourist information office near the Vienna State Opera.

Primary source of revenue: local accommodation tax

The budget for 2012 is 23.9 million euros. 59 % comes from a local accommodation tax which, under the city's Promotion of Tourism Act, amounts to 2.8 % of net room rates. A further 20 % comes from the city's general budget, and the remainder is provided by the Vienna Chamber of Commerce, sponsors, and the board's own revenues. Over 80 % of the budget is invested in marketing (advertising, PR, sales promotion, production of advertising materials and visitor services) and the teams involved in these activities. The Vienna Tourist Board employs a total of 108 people, 80 % of them women.

Strategic Destination Development: basis and coordination of all the board's activities

The fundamental strategies underlying all the Vienna Tourist Board's activities are coordinated by the Strategic Destination Development Office headed by Markus Penz. The office is responsible for market and trend research, statistics and forecasts, visitor surveys and benchmarking, as well as international contacts with other tourism organizations, the Vienna Tourist Board's local tourism policy issues, and organizing the annual Conference on Vienna Tourism held by the board for the Vienna tourism industry.

The strategic partnerships cultivated by this office in the destination include not only the most important institutions and leading establishments of the Vienna tourism industry, but also public institutions and sectors of the economy extending far beyond the actual tourism sector itself. Representatives from all these sectors participate in the Vienna Tourist Board's strategy group, set up in 2002 to elaborate long-term concepts for the development of the destination. The current

Vienna Tourism Concept 2015 was presented at the Conference on Vienna Tourism in fall 2009. The original goal of this concept was summarized by the formula “100 and 1 and now”. This meant exceeding the previous record year 2008 with 487 million euros of room revenues and 10.2 million bednights by 100 million euros and 1 million bednights in 2015. The “now” referred to the advertising line introduced by the Vienna Tourist Board at the end of October 2009 that aimed to position Vienna as a destination where anybody failing to visit it “now” would miss something. Due to the fact that bednights developed far better than had been foreseen when the concept was originally drawn up (in global economic crisis year 2009), in 2011 the formula for the 2015 goal was adapted to “100 and 1 and now even more”. The Vienna Tourism Concept 2015 and reports on the progress that has been made since it was drawn up can be viewed and downloaded at www.tourismuskonzept2015.wien.info.

Brand Management and Advertising: image for destination Vienna

The Brand Management and Advertising Office headed by Bernhard Klein is responsible for cultivating the visual image and content of the destination Vienna on the international travel market as well as for the Vienna Tourist Board's corporate identity. Its tasks also include the ongoing development and enhancement of Vienna as a tourism brand, and implementing the brand guidelines in all the Vienna Tourist Board's marketing measures. As a result of a survey of about 11,000 travelers in important target markets – including both those with experience of Vienna and those who had never been there before – five “brand modules” of decisive importance to the success of Vienna's tourism brand were defined. The strongest of these is Vienna's imperial heritage, followed by its profusion of music and culture, its “savoir vivre”, its “functionalism” as a big city, and its healthy balance of urban ambience and green spaces. The advertising line developed by the advertising agency Jung von Matt/Donau and implemented worldwide by the Vienna Tourist Board since October 2009 is also based on these modules.

The Brand Management and Advertising Office is responsible for conventional advertising as well as for special forms of advertising. Besides its extensive advertising campaigns in all the main markets of Europe, in cooperation with various partners the Vienna Tourist Board also carries out advertising overseas – principally in the USA, Japan and other Asian markets, and Brazil. The Vienna Journal issued once a year, presents the city's tourist attractions in six different language versions (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Japanese), and the five brand modules are also visualized with modern aesthetics in posters, brochures and leaflets. The office is also responsible for image management, running an internet photo database at www.wien-bild.at from which about a thousand Vienna themes can be downloaded from all over the world.

Corporate Public Relations: the Vienna Tourist Board as an institution in the public eye

The Corporate Public Relations Office headed by Vera Schweder is responsible for the way in which the Vienna Tourist Board is seen by the general public. Apart from keeping the Austrian public informed about the work of the Vienna Tourist Board, it also aims to promote a general awareness of the tourist industry amongst private and public institutions, emphasizing the role of Vienna's incoming tourism as a significant economic factor not only for the city of Vienna, but also for Austria as a whole. This is particularly important where the work of the Vienna Tourist Board exceeds conventional destination marketing and visitor services in striving for active cooperation in the development of the product.

The activities of the Vienna Tourist Board are reported in press releases virtually every week, up to ten times a year at press conferences, and in the board's annual report. An electronic newsletter aimed at Vienna's tourist industry is published monthly and a quarterly preview of significant activities planned by the Vienna Tourist Board is produced for senior decision-makers in Vienna politics and industry. Apart from contributions to trade journals, a joint campaign with the City of Vienna is run occasionally, and aims at sensitizing the general public to tourist themes. The tasks for which the Corporate Public Relations Office is responsible also include structuring the Vienna Tourist Board's B2B website (b2b.vienna.info) and coordinating the articles published on it. The office's activities are rounded out by presentations on a wide variety of aspects of tourism in Vienna. Such presentations are given to groups of pupils and students, as well as to delegations of tourism specialists and politicians from abroad.

Content Management and Production: from customer website to advertising sales

The Content Management und Production department headed by Waltraud Wolf provides information for the entire tourist board as far ahead as possible about Vienna's complex, permanently changing and emerging range of tourism offerings. It also manages the Vienna Tourist Board's extensive B2C presence on the internet and in the social media, sells advertising and acquires partners for major advertising campaigns, and finally organizes the production and dispatch worldwide of all the board's advertising materials.

The Content Management team researches offerings of relevance to tourism. To this end, USP managers are in regular contact with providers in the fields of music, arts and sights, lifestyle and events. The results of their research form the basis of the content used for international marketing activities. The department itself prepares this data for the Vienna Tourist Board's comprehensive B2C website. This website at www.vienna.info is available in 13 different languages, and includes

an event database maintained on a daily basis with events up to five years ahead, and the possibility of booking a hotel room online. A version suitable for all mobile appliances is also available. The responsibilities of Content Management and Production also include worldwide online advertising campaigns and the Vienna Tourist Board's presence in the social media, where it is represented on Facebook and YouTube. The department is also responsible for looking after the Vienna Card and organizing the Vienna Experts Club. The Vienna Card costs 18.50 euros and offers 72 hours' free travel on subways, trams and buses as well as discounts on sightseeing, shopping, restaurants and cafés for a period of four days. More than 325,000 Vienna Cards were sold in 2011. The Vienna Experts Club is an educational program that enables the staff of Vienna hotels and incoming travel agencies to obtain free training aimed at continually improving their knowledge of Vienna's tourism product to ensure the highest possible quality of visitor service and product design. The club currently has more than 700 members.

The department is also responsible for handling the production of all the Vienna Tourist Board's advertising and information materials. Every year these comprise some 200 brochures, leaflets, posters, etc. in up to 20 different languages, as well as giveaways ranging from city bags and umbrellas to cooking aprons. In order to deliver all these materials worldwide, each year the shipping team sends about 250 tonnes of material around the globe. Advertising sales are an important factor in the production of advertising materials, generating revenues that significantly reduce the production costs of many publications, such as the city map, 4 million copies of which are produced annually in 13 languages. Many marketing campaigns can only be financed by the joint ventures which the Content Management and Production department sets up with local partners from the world of business and culture.

Market and Media Management: cooperation with the travel industry and media

The Market and Media Management department headed by Gudrun Engl consists of four market teams which plan and implement the worldwide marketing measures projected for Vienna's most important source countries and potential markets. Media managers are responsible for inviting journalists to Vienna and attending to them, as well as for press conferences in the markets themselves. Market managers, on the other hand, present the Austrian capital's tourist facilities to the travel industry by means of presentations, workshops and trade fairs, and by inviting study groups of travel agents to Vienna. Their duties also include the acquisition of partners for product placements and special campaigns.

Each year, the market managers represent Vienna at some 100 trade fairs and shows, presentations and workshops for tour operators and travel agents, and other trade events. In the process, they cultivate relations with business partners, and introduce new offers and advertising aids. They organize showcase campaigns for travel agencies, the distribution of advertising materials at points of sale, and also arrange Vienna promotions by means of product placements, for which they acquire business partners in the consumer goods industry and services sector. They also manage and continually expand the Vienna Experts Club International, a service and training program provided by the Vienna Tourist Board for the staff of foreign travel agents. The club has its own website, and currently has chapters in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, Romania, Spain, and the Netherlands with a total of more than 10,000 members. The department also provides the Vienna Tourist Board with information on countries' bookings in Vienna, and competition surveys which are vital for the continuous adaptation of the board's general strategy. Market Management is also responsible for taking care of more than 3,000 travel agency representatives visiting Vienna every year.

The department's media managers serve some thousand selected media representatives whom the Vienna Tourist Board invites to Vienna each year, or who participate in special press trips. Journalists from print media, as well as many radio, television and film teams receive valuable support for their research work, in their search for locations and shooting. The media team also provides regular press services for 16 countries and quick messages to journalists via Twitter. New trends and Vienna offers are presented at about 50 press conferences a year in key markets. Every year, all this intensive media work results in over 3,000 attractive and large Vienna reports in print and online media, on radio and television in all parts of the world. This is in addition to a significant number of contributions in an unmonitored "grey area".

Convention Bureau: successful long-term acquisition

The Vienna Convention Bureau – the Vienna Tourist Board's congress office – was established in 1969 with the assistance of the Municipality of Vienna and the Vienna Chamber of Commerce. Under the direction of Christian Mutschlechner, ten congress specialists work to acquire congresses, corporate conventions and incentives worldwide. For over 40 years, the office has built up an enormous database of facts and figures: a conventional "business database" pales into insignificance by comparison. Even in this area, the Vienna Tourist Board operates on a non-profit basis: its successes benefit Vienna's congress centres and hotels, and professional congress organisers (PCOs). The Vienna Convention Bureau provides detailed information about everything Vienna has to offer as a convention resort on its own website at www.viennaconvention.at, with a print version in the "Vienna Meeting Planners' Guide".

Congresses, corporate conventions and incentives are an important element of Vienna's tourism, accounting for 12.4 % of overnight stays by visitors to the Austrian capital, in the year 2011. The city's excellent congress infrastructure, the high standard of service provided by its PCOs, congress and travel agencies, interpreters, etc., and the cultural attractions of the city all help to make Vienna one of the top destinations for international conferences worldwide. The statistics published by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) and the Union of International Associations (UIA) – the two leading organizations in this field – regularly rank Vienna amongst the world's top congress destinations. The latest ICCA ranking placed Vienna, for the seventh time in succession, in first place ahead of Paris and Barcelona in 2011, whilst the 2010 UIA list (2011 not published yet) placed the Austrian capital in 4th place behind Singapore, Brussels and Paris.

Visitor Services, Staff and Finance

The visitor services offered by the department headed by Klaus Eichhorn range from providing information to booking hotel rooms and dealing with complaints. In 2011, the services offered by the board's "Wien Hotels & Info" team (tel. +43-1-24 555, fax 24 555-666, e-mail: info@vienna.info) and by the tourist information office in the city centre were used by more than 490,000 potential and actual visitors to Vienna – by telephone, post, fax, e-mail or in person. At the tourist information office in the city centre right behind the opera (Albertinaplatz / corner of Maysedergasse) not only free services provided by the Vienna Tourist Board are being offered 365 days a year, but also theatre ticket sales and sightseeing tours, handled by a commercial partner. Other activities carried out by this department include accounts, controlling, HR administration, organization and HR development, office equipment, the board's computer network and maintenance.

Marketing support in Japan: Vienna office in Tokyo

For its tourism marketing, the City of Vienna has set up a representative office in Tokyo that also supports the Vienna Tourist Board's marketing activities in Japan. Apart from this, the Vienna Tourist Board does not have any overseas offices of its own, but uses the branch network of the Austrian National Tourist Office for activities in foreign countries.

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Economic significance of Vienna’s tourist industry

Vienna is certainly one of Europe’s most successful city tourism destinations. In a Europe-wide survey of visitor overnights that also takes into account the tourist traffic generated in the environs of major cities, the “Greater Vienna” region has ranked among the top ten for decades. Some 12.2 million overnights were registered in this region, in 2011. In its core area (within the city limits), Vienna recorded some 11.4 million overnights, in 2011 (10.9 million attributable to visitors from abroad), with some 5.2 million arrivals. According to economic surveys, the annual value-added generated by tourism in the core Vienna area (direct and indirect benefits) amounts to some 3.6 billion euros. This represents approximately 5 % of Vienna’s gross regional product, and some 15 % of tourist value added for the whole of Austria. The “world capital of music” offers its visitors the world famous Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, four opera houses, two imperial palaces, 50 theatres, more than a hundred museums, and 415 hotels and pensions with around 56,000 beds in the high season.

Visitors to Vienna (core area) come from all parts of the world. The most important countries of origin are listed below together with the percentage of total overnight stays accounted for by each in the year 2011.

Germany	21 %
Austria	18 %
Italy	6 %
USA	5 %
Russia	5 %
United Kingdom	3 %
Spain	3 %
Switzerland	3 %
France	3 %
Japan	2 %

Statistics and surveys

According to visitor surveys, the average visitor is 41 years old, is very well educated, is either an employee or self-employed, and lives in a household with an average monthly income of around 3,000 euros. He or she travels with a partner, and generally without children. 40 % of the city's guests are visiting Vienna for the first time, and 43 % of them have already been here more than twice. The main reasons given for visiting Vienna are above all its art and culture, the city's sights, its atmosphere and diversity, as well as its beauty and architecture.

Almost 50 % of the visitors travel to Vienna by air, somewhat more than a third by car, whilst 15 % travel by train and 4 % by bus. A small number of visitors uses other means of transport ranging from hire cars to yachts and bicycles. The cycle path along the Danube from Passau to Vienna is regarded as one of Europe's finest cycling routes, and yacht owners arriving in Vienna from Western Europe via the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal find a well equipped marina in the Danube metropolis.

What do visitors to Vienna do? After the culinary delights offered by restaurants and coffee-houses, the list is topped by sightseeing followed by the inevitable shopping spree, walking through the city, and visiting museums and exhibitions. Recreational activities in "green Vienna", heuriger wine taverns, trendy bars and clubs, festivals and events as well as classical music are also very popular. According to economic research, the average visitor to Vienna spends around 263 euros a day.

From luxury hotel to simple pension

Vienna offers a wide range of overnight accommodation, from stately palace and international hotel chain to family-run establishment. Palais Württemberg has become the *****Imperial Hotel, the palace of Archduke Leopold Salvator is today the ****Hotel Schloss Wilhelminenberg, and Palais Schwarzenberg has retained its name as a five-star hotel (at present closed for refurbishment). The internationals include familiar names such as Inter-Continental, Hilton, Marriott, Le Méridien, Sofitel Radisson, Renaissance, Mercure, Holiday Inn, nh, and Starwood, and the Austrian chains range from Austria Trend Hotels & Resorts to Austria Hotels International. The *****Hotel Sacher, the ****Stefanie and the ****Altstadt Vienna are still family-run hotels.

Vienna has a total of 56,000 beds in 415 hotels and pensions (including seasonal hotels open during summer only). More than half of these belong to the luxury and first-class categories. In the year 2011, the average length of stay was 2.2 nights, and average bed occupancy 56.5 %. This is equivalent to a room occupancy (not measured in Austria) of around 71 %.

Conventions, congresses, incentives...

It is estimated that at least a fifth of visitors to Vienna are business travellers. The congress sector is the most important source of revenue for the city's tourist industry: congress visitors and individuals attending corporate events (meetings, product presentations, incentive trips) generate significantly higher revenues than "normal" tourists, with daily average expenditure of around 475 euros a head.

According to the latest statistics published by ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association), in 2011 Vienna, for the seventh time in succession, ranked in first place worldwide as an international congress destination with 181 such events, ahead of Paris (174) and Barcelona (150). The UIA's (Union of International Associations) 2010 survey (2011 not published yet) placed Vienna in fourth position with 257 international congresses, behind Singapore (725), Brussels (486), and Paris (394). Vienna's congress statistics for 2011 reveal 3,151 national and international congresses and corporate events with a total of 475,298 participants, and 1,412,133 overnights. This sector therefore accounted for 12.4 % of the total number of overnight stays in 2011.