

Best practice 5: Beaune, the exceptional role of a tourism office in boosting tourism activity

Scale: Urban

Stage of tourism development: Growing

Main objectives: Tourism quality management/ Balanced tourism growth (year-long activity)/ Destination promotion.

Categories of effects:

Effects on urban governance

- Sustainable partnerships
- Regional cooperation
- Destination management

Effects on quality of life

- Urban economy
- Social life

Beaune is a 21 000 inhabitants city in the heart of Burgundy/France, and in the midst of some of the most famous vineyards in the world. Beaune is also a fine art city (labelled Ville d'Art & d'Histoire), with its famous Hospices (former hospital, now a museum and an auction-room for Burgundy wines), museums, tasting cellars, churches and markets. With all these assets, Beaune could have just waited for its visitors to come, and then let them go away to the famous surrounding wine cellars of Pommard, Nuits St Georges, Pouligny or Chassagne-Montrachet. Yet Beaune, decided to take control of its tourism activity, to develop it round the year and to maximise its benefits. Though, like everywhere else, public subsidies are decided by the municipal council, and private investments are due to the initiative of private entrepreneurs, the tourism office of Beaune plays a key role in the way tourism is globally operated, coordinated and managed in the city. By now, the city has 33 hotels in town, with a total of 1 530 rooms, numerous restaurants, 6 camping sites, many B&Bs, large shopping areas with art galleries, allowing large numbers of tourists simultaneously and high amounts of expenses. Knowing that the cellars and vineyards surrounding Beaune were closely linked to the city itself as tourism attractors, the tourism office of Beaune became also the tourism office of the neighbouring villages or small towns. It also has developed close partnerships with other cities' tourism offices in Burgundy, regional and national tourism bodies, wine professionals bodies, automobile clubs, an art city network and the museum network of Burgundy, either because it could maximise the tourism activity in Beaune, or because it could end up with scale economies. The Beaune tourism office performs the usual duties of such a body, providing information, guided tours, organisation for groups... But, what is rather less usual in France, is that it also makes reservations and commercializes accommodation, tours, seats for shows and festivals; controls the global quality of all tourism services; promotes 3 festivals and 2 events on wine (including the famous St Vincent Day); manages 2 museum-pass, one at the level of Beaune, the other for 50 cultural sites in Burgundy; participates in the promotion of the Conference Hall, that can house 850 participants; has a local observatory of tourism activity, providing a monthly newsletter on the context and a yearly synthesis, in order to keep track with volatile demand; keeps up an intranet correspondence with local professionals and another one with the members of the tourism office. Very often, questions are raised on tourism governance in a city: who should coordinate the wide variety of tasks necessary to the tourism activity within the city? Beaune is giving an efficient answer to this question: the city authorities have delegated a consistent part of their prerogatives to a very skilled team of tourism professionals in charge of this tourism office.

Source : City of Beaune, Comité Régional du Tourisme de Bourgogne, Comité Départemental du Tourisme de Côte d'Or.

Links:

<http://www.ot-beaune.fr/>

<http://www.beaune.com/hospices/index.html>