

Strategic Marketing for Tourism and Hospitality

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Unit: Strategic Marketing

Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this assignment, titled **“Strategic Marketing for Tourism and Hospitality – SWEETDISCOVERY”** is entirely my own work and that all sources and references have been properly acknowledged and cited.

This document has not been previously submitted for academic credit at any institution. I confirm that I have read and understood the institution's rules and regulations concerning plagiarism and academic misconduct, and I affirm that this submission complies fully with those guidelines.

Marketing Planning for SWEETDISCOVERY

A Strategic Tourism Approach in Edinburgh

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1. Introduction to Strategic Marketing

1.1 Marketing Strategy

Companies that aim to operate in the tourism sector place great importance on strategic marketing. It is essential for identifying and analysing customer needs correctly, developing successful long-term decisions, and maximising company profitability. Strategic marketing not only helps companies assess and plan their current situation but also define their forward-looking vision and goals.

As Kotler and Keller (2016) suggest, strategic marketing is the process of identifying long-term opportunities and building superior value propositions to gain sustainable competitive advantage. This perspective supports the idea that companies must not only recognise current trends but also apply long-term insights to remain competitive.

In addition, strategic marketing enables companies in the tourism and hospitality sector to be prepared for threats and unpredictable external factors that may arise. For instance, economic crises and epidemic diseases can be considered typical external threats. Companies can evaluate such risks and develop flexible strategies to respond to changing market conditions and cope with intense sectoral competition.

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), strategic marketing provides companies with a structured yet adaptable framework to respond to market changes and maintain a competitive edge. In this way, with strategic planning, it becomes possible to demonstrate how to take advantage of opportunities that constantly change and may remain in the background.

To establish a strong marketing strategy, the company operating in the sector must prioritise profitability and ensure sustainability, while also being built on solid market research and a clearly defined product relationship. In a successful strategic marketing model, other elements that companies should analyse include the market size and competitive dynamics of the selected target segment. Through such evaluations, potential positive or negative situations the company may face in the near and distant future can be identified, and necessary actions can be recommended and justified.

Apart from all these, perhaps the most critical factor is the human factor, which is likely to shift constantly and must be considered throughout all levels of strategic planning. For the reasons stated above, in order to maximise company profitability and avoid possible negative outcomes, there is a need for a solid strategic marketing plan supported by thorough analysis and evaluation. This aligns with Kotler and Keller's (2016) view that effective marketing strategies must be both strategically consistent and operationally flexible. Such a plan must be as stable as it is adaptable, so that it can evolve and respond effectively to emerging situations that require strategic action.

1.2 Purpose

Our company aims to allocate the right services to the right channels, increase long-term profitability, and achieve the highest possible revenue. We will implement a marketing strategy that aims to analyse our target audience accurately and apply the most appropriate communication channels to reach them effectively (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

If we consider that our target audience consists of individuals between the ages of 35–60—couples or small groups of friends—we can identify that this group includes travellers who seek cultural depth, history, nature, and comfort, and who value high-quality experiences. Recent data demonstrate that this age group is now highly engaged with digital platforms, particularly Facebook and YouTube (Ofcom, 2024).

Therefore, it is essential to evaluate and select the most appropriate mix of digital and traditional media tools to reach this group and promote our services. Printed materials such as newspaper and magazine ads, as well as culturally-oriented travel brochures, alongside Facebook and YouTube advertisements, enable us to engage a large portion of this audience. According to data, 85% of UK adults aged 35–54 use Facebook regularly, and more than 70% actively consume content on YouTube (Ofcom, 2024; Pew Research, 2024; Eurostat, 2024). Through this integrated media strategy, we aim to demonstrate

how SweetDiscovery can connect with both traditional media users and those active on select social media platforms.

In addition, through advertisements and sponsorships on radio channels, we intend to build credibility and expand our reach among older audiences. Simultaneously, we will create opportunities for direct engagement by opening promotional stands at fairs, travel events, and book festivals. These actions will help us enhance brand recognition while also offering face-to-face interaction.

This hybrid marketing strategy will not only increase SweetDiscovery's visibility in the national market but also position the brand more prominently in the international space. To support this global reach, we plan to establish partnerships with international tour agencies and recommend the inclusion of Edinburgh in UK-bound package tours.

Ultimately, our purpose is to develop SweetDiscovery's brand awareness to its highest potential and to ensure that Edinburgh—famous for its captivating nature and architecture—becomes one of the most unforgettable experiences in the lives of our target audience aged 35–60, helping them to escape the stress of everyday life.

1.3 Research

In order to establish our marketing strategy on a solid foundation as SweetDiscovery, we have drawn upon both academic sources and real-world, recently successful campaigns. To test and evaluate the validity of our hybrid strategy, shaped by the media consumption habits and travel preferences of our target audience (individuals aged 35–60), four successful tourism brands have been analysed in depth. The strategies followed by these brands clearly demonstrate that, with a properly targeted and directed model, it is possible to maximise profit margins and ensure consistent company growth.

The first example is the “So Much South Dakota, So Little Time” campaign launched by Travel South Dakota in 2024. Starting with a Super Bowl advertisement, this campaign expanded across digital and traditional channels (Facebook, email, print ads, podcast

sponsorship), with messaging tailored to different age groups and interests to create targeted and effective communication (Travel South Dakota, 2024).

The second case is the Pure Michigan campaign led by the state of Michigan. The brand maintains a hybrid strategy—combining printed travel guides and radio ads with digital engagement on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. This structure clearly demonstrates the sustainability of a multi-channel approach in practice (Pure Michigan, 2023).

The third case, the “You’re Not Wrong” campaign by Saga Holidays, targeted travellers over 50 through a combination of ITV TV advertisements and short social media content. This campaign successfully strengthened brand visibility and emotional engagement, especially among older travellers, by using both traditional and digital media touchpoints (Saga Holidays, 2023).

Lastly, Jet2holidays’ 2022 campaign integrated television, radio, print, and digital channels under the unifying message: “Contact your local travel agent.” By targeting couples and small friend groups aged 35–60, the campaign mirrored SweetDiscovery’s demographic focus and provided a proven model for how to align traditional and digital approaches (Jet2holidays, 2022).

From an academic perspective, Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasise that media channel selection should be made in line with consumer behaviour and evaluated strategically within the communication process. This decision directly influences tone, content, and media effectiveness. Likewise, *International Marketing Management* (2022) supports the importance of aligning channel choice with customer behaviour, especially in global contexts.

Research also confirms that our target audience’s media behaviour is hybrid. According to Ofcom (2024) and Pew Research (2024), 85% of UK adults aged 35–54 regularly use Facebook and over 70% actively consume YouTube content. This evidence justifies the inclusion of digital media in our communication plan. Conversely, VisitBritain (2025)

reports that individuals aged 35+ continue to place high trust in brochures, radio, and other traditional media when making travel decisions.

These campaigns, supported by academic and industry sources, clearly demonstrate that a hybrid marketing approach is not just theoretically sound but also proven in real-world tourism campaigns. The balance SweetDiscovery plans to implement between print and digital channels can therefore be justified as both strategically valid and practically effective.

2. Destination: Edinburgh

Our target audience has been identified as travellers between the ages of 35 and 60 who are primarily interested in history, culture, nature, and comfort. As SweetDiscovery, we have selected Edinburgh as our strategic destination due to its unique ability to meet the needs and preferences of this demographic. The city’s year-round festivals, quality gastronomy, stunning natural scenery, and rich historical character together demonstrate a comprehensive offering that directly aligns with the lifestyle and expectations of our target market. After a detailed evaluation of the behaviours and motivations of this group, we have drawn the following conclusions:

Historical	and	Cultural	Depth
The Old Town and New Town areas, which hold UNESCO World Heritage status, have positioned Edinburgh as a prominent cultural and historical destination (UNESCO, 2024). Key landmarks such as Edinburgh Castle, Holyrood Palace, the Royal Mile, and the Writers’ Museum offer authentic and immersive experiences. Additionally, the city’s designation as the world’s first UNESCO City of Literature in 2004, and the ongoing success of the annual Edinburgh International Book Festival, demonstrate the city’s			

strong literary identity and appeal to culturally motivated travellers (Edinburgh City of Literature, 2024).

Natural Beauty and Cosiness

Arthur’s Seat, located just minutes from the city centre, provides a scenic and accessible route for mid-life travellers seeking both natural beauty and relaxation. Green spaces such as Calton Hill, Princes Street Gardens, The Meadows, and Holyrood Park have been identified as ideal rest areas for nature-seeking visitors. Furthermore, the city’s position among the UK’s leading cities in terms of trees per capita reinforces its appeal to environmentally conscious tourists (City of Edinburgh Council, 2023).

Gastronomy and Accommodation

Edinburgh’s culinary scene has been evaluated as diverse and well-suited to the refined tastes of our target audience. As of 2024, the city is home to six Michelin-starred restaurants, including The Kitchin, Martin Wishart, and Conditia (Michelin Guide, 2024). In addition to fine dining, travellers can also explore local pubs and themed food tours offering traditional Scottish cuisine. The accommodation offering is equally varied, with options ranging from boutique hotels to five-star properties, most of which are situated within 2 km of the city centre—justifying the city’s convenience and appeal (VisitScotland, 2024).

Festival City

Edinburgh’s cultural calendar includes more than 12 major festivals annually, which reinforce its identity as a hub for arts and celebration. Events such as the Edinburgh Fringe, the International Arts Festival, the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, and the International Book Festival attract a culturally engaged audience during the summer. Meanwhile, winter events like Hogmanay offer tradition-based experiences that further align with the values and interests of the 35–60 age group (EventScotland, 2024).

Ease of Transport and Accessibility

As of 2024, Edinburgh Airport offers direct flights to 43 countries and 157 destinations (Edinburgh Airport, 2024). With only a 4.5-hour train journey from London, the city is highly accessible for both international and domestic travellers. The walkability of the city

and the availability of well-integrated tram and bus networks highlight Edinburgh's practicality, particularly for middle-aged travellers who prioritise comfort and straightforward planning (Ofcom, 2024; VisitScotland, 2024).

Location of SweetDiscovery

SweetDiscovery aims to leverage Edinburgh's strategic advantages through a hybrid tourism approach. Personalised cultural routes, literary and nature-themed tours, and gastronomy-focused experiences will be delivered via digital platforms. Simultaneously, visibility will be reinforced through traditional communication channels, including brochures, radio ads, and travel agency partnerships. Positive customer experiences will be encouraged to foster word-of-mouth marketing and long-term loyalty, thereby supporting brand awareness and increasing repeat tour purchases (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

3. Marketing Models Used

We have found it appropriate to structure SweetDiscovery's marketing strategy around the AIDA model, which conceptualises the travel decision-making process of the target audience in four basic stages: Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), response hierarchy models like AIDA provide an effective roadmap for planning and evaluating marketing communication, especially in sectors like tourism where building emotional connection is crucial. Through this model, marketers can analyse each stage of the consumer journey and apply tailored communication methods to attract, engage, and ultimately convert potential travellers into customers.

At the awareness stage, SweetDiscovery adopts a hybrid media strategy to attract the attention of its target audience aged 35–60. By using printed brochures featuring iconic landmarks of Edinburgh, radio advertisements on local cultural channels, and age- and interest-targeted Facebook ads, we have been able to demonstrate meaningful reach and cultural alignment. These tools help establish Edinburgh's image as a rich, comfortable, and accessible destination.

In the interest stage, content becomes more informative and personalised. Blog posts, social media content, and brochures are used to highlight unique experiences such as literary walking routes, guided whisky tastings, and seasonal festivals like Hogmanay. These offerings are carefully evaluated and designed to appeal to the lifestyle motivations of the 35–60 age group—namely, a desire for cultural depth, relaxation, and connection to heritage.

During the desire stage, marketing messages are crafted to build emotional resonance. With messages like “Travel through time, discover flavours in award-winning restaurants, explore gardens where history and nature intertwine—no rush, just wonder,” SweetDiscovery encourages the audience to visualise their ideal trip. These messages are supported by curated imagery to reinforce the sense of aspiration and value.

Finally, in the action stage, SweetDiscovery simplifies the booking process through partnerships with travel agencies, a user-friendly website, and the inclusion of QR codes in print materials. This approach ensures that both digitally active users and those who prefer traditional methods are able to act efficiently, thereby increasing conversion rates and customer satisfaction.

Overall, we have applied the AIDA model as a strategic framework to understand and map the consumer journey in a tourism context, and to justify our communication choices based on both behavioural insight and media engagement data.

To further evaluate SweetDiscovery’s positioning within the Edinburgh tourism market and its alignment with the expectations of our target audience, a SWOT analysis has been conducted. This analysis provides a clear overview of the brand’s internal capabilities as well as external conditions that may influence its performance.

Strengths

SweetDiscovery is strongly aligned with the preferences of the 35–60 age group, who seek cultural, historical, and gastronomic richness in a calm and meaningful setting. The brand’s hybrid marketing approach—which combines digital platforms with traditional

media such as brochures and radio—demonstrates strategic versatility. Additionally, Edinburgh itself offers a strong cultural infrastructure (UNESCO status, festival culture, accessibility), which further supports the brand's value proposition.

Weaknesses

As a relatively new market entrant in Edinburgh, SweetDiscovery may initially face challenges in building brand awareness and trust. The dependence on seasonal events (e.g., Hogmanay, summer festivals) could lead to reduced visibility during the off-season. In addition, limited physical presence—such as local offices or permanent partnerships—may cause logistical inconsistencies in early stages of delivery.

Opportunities

The increasing demand for heritage-based and slow tourism, especially among middle-aged travellers, presents a significant opportunity to develop deep, immersive experiences. Edinburgh's expanding tourism ecosystem offers numerous chances to form partnerships with boutique hotels, cultural institutions, and local guides. There is also room to scale the brand beyond Edinburgh into similar, experience-oriented destinations that serve the same demographic.

Threats

The Edinburgh tourism market is highly competitive, with numerous well-established operators offering similar services. External factors such as global economic instability, shifts in travel sentiment, and geopolitical risks (e.g., pandemics or regional conflict) may affect the travel decisions of our somewhat risk-averse target demographic. Moreover, changes in digital marketing regulations or platform algorithms could threaten the performance of key communication channels.

4. Marketing Mix (7P Model)

As SweetDiscovery, we have developed our tourism marketing strategy in Edinburgh based on the 7P marketing mix model, which we have carefully evaluated as particularly suitable for the service sector (such as tourism and hospitality). By going beyond the traditional 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion), we have applied three additional components—People, Process, and Physical Evidence—to better address experience delivery, customer satisfaction, and service quality. In this respect, the 7P model offers a comprehensive and adaptable structure that allows us to meet and respond to the expectations of the 35–60 target audience effectively.

Product:

SweetDiscovery delivers personalised travel packages in Edinburgh that blend culture, gastronomy, nature, and literature. These offerings have been carefully designed and aligned with the preferences of middle-aged travellers who seek cultural richness and authenticity. Experiences such as literary walks in UNESCO-protected areas, whisky tastings, Michelin-starred restaurant visits, and participation in local events like the Fringe or Hogmanay demonstrate this commitment to high-quality, experience-based tourism.

Price:

We position our pricing strategy as accessible premium, reflecting both the high quality of service and the level of personalisation offered. Furthermore, we plan to apply flexible pricing policies during off-season periods to ensure inclusivity and appeal to various income levels within our target group. This approach supports both market responsiveness and brand positioning.

Place:

SweetDiscovery implements a hybrid distribution strategy to facilitate accessibility. Customers can book through both digital channels (website, social media) and traditional

sales points (travel agencies, cultural institution partners). This enables the brand to reach both digitally active and traditionally inclined consumers simultaneously, maximising exposure and customer convenience.

Promotion:

We have applied the AIDA model to structure and justify our promotional strategy. Awareness is generated through printed brochures with visually striking designs, targeted Facebook ads, and radio broadcasts. Interest is stimulated through blog posts and themed content. Desire is evoked by emotionally engaging messaging, and action is driven via accessible calls to action, including QR codes and direct booking links. This approach demonstrates how communication efforts are systematically aligned with consumer behaviour.

People:

SweetDiscovery's field team—including guides, accommodation partners, and customer representatives—have been selected and trained not only for their expertise but also for their interpersonal skills and ability to convey local insights. Our brand values of authenticity, care, and cultural depth are consistently reflected across all team members, which reinforces our service promise and customer trust.

Process:

The entire customer journey has been designed and structured to be smooth and seamless from information gathering and decision-making to booking and feedback collection. Both digital and printed materials are utilised to support this process, and the booking system is optimised to be manageable for both individual customers and travel agents. This structured process ensures consistency and enhances satisfaction.

Physical**Evidence:**

We incorporate tangible elements that reinforce the reliability and quality of the SweetDiscovery brand. These include professionally printed itineraries, branded welcome kits (e.g., maps, bookmarks, tasting notes), and consistent visual branding across partner hotels and tour stops. These physical assets provide credibility, continuity, and a memorable brand experience from start to finish.

5. Next Goal

After establishing a defined and focused position in the Edinburgh tourism market, SweetDiscovery's next strategic goal is to develop a dual-pathway approach focused on strengthening local partnerships and investing in technological infrastructure. This approach has been formulated to support both short-term differentiation and long-term sustainable brand development.

Our first priority is to build stronger and more meaningful connections with local actors such as boutique hotels, cultural venues, local producers, and independent guides. These partnerships will enable our company to create and deliver co-branded experiences, exclusive packages, and deeper integration into the cultural fabric of the region. In doing so, SweetDiscovery will demonstrate and reinforce its alignment with the authentic and personalised experiences that are most valued by our target audience.

Secondly, in order to increase customer engagement and streamline service processes, we plan to design and launch a mobile application under the SweetDiscovery brand. This app will not only simplify the booking process but also function as a digital travel assistant.

Its features will include personalised itinerary tracking, real-time festival updates, interactive cultural maps, and post-trip feedback collection tools. Given that middle-aged users are increasingly adapting to mobile technologies, this investment can be justified as an effective response to current consumer behaviour trends, while still remaining inclusive of more traditional user habits. Furthermore, the mobile application will enable us to collect and analyse behavioural data to enhance future decision-making and service personalisation.

In addition, SweetDiscovery aims to introduce seasonal variety into its portfolio. While summer festivals continue to be a strong attraction, we also recommend the development of off-season packages—such as autumn-themed history and gastronomy tours, or winter literature retreats—to ensure a balanced visitor flow and stabilise revenue across all seasons.

Through these next steps, SweetDiscovery will be able to further enhance its positioning as a high-quality, culturally rich, and tradition-conscious tourism provider. By leveraging local partnerships, investing in digital infrastructure, and applying seasonal flexibility, the brand will not only expand its impact within Edinburgh but also establish a strong foundation for future growth in other culturally aligned destinations.

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