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*»With Knowledge and Experience to New Entrepreneurial Opportunities«*

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## **Zgodbarjenje kot operativno komunikacijsko orodje pri trženju turizma na Cerkljanskem**

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### **Izveček**

Oblikovanje zgodb za potrebe turizma je odraz našega razumevanja in odnosa do dediščine. Cerkljanska se ponaša s starodavno in raznoliko kulturo ter bogato in pisano tradicijo ki se prenaša iz roda v rod, vendar zgodbarjenje kljub mnogoterim vidikom, in elementom z obstoječim trženjskim potencialom, ni v zadostni meri vključeno v trženje turistične destinacije. Zgodbe so od nekdaj predstavljale učinkovit način širjenja idej. Privlačna zgodba, ki pritegne pozornost, je torej ključna za vzbujanje pričakovanj pri potencialnih kupcih, in tako ena pomembnejših komponent kakovosti turističnega doživetja. Ironično, toda s pomočjo zgodb doživetja postanejo bolj prepričljiva in verodostojna, hkrati pa z obiskovalci vzpostavimo učinkovitejše čustvene povezave. Premik od faktografskega k čustvenemu komuniciranju tako postaja imperativ sodobnega trženja. To se še posebej kaže v sektorju turizma, kjer trgujemo s predstavami o doživetjih, ki naj bi jih obiskovalci doživeli na izbrani destinaciji. Zgodbe služijo kot medij za prenos navdušenja, ki ga čutimo do krajev, njihovih znamenitosti in tradicij. S pomočjo zgodb omenjeno navdušenje delimo in širimo ideje, za katere menimo, da so pomembne. Zgodbarjenje tako ponuja učinkovit način, kako poudariti geografski karakter destinacije ob enem pa obiskovalcem zagotoviti višjo kakovost turističnega doživetja.

**Ključne besede:** zgodba, zgodbarjenje, geografski karakter destinacije, turistično doživetje

## **Storytelling as operational communication tool in Cerkljansko tourism marketing**

### **Abstract**

Creating a story to use it in tourism business is a part of how we do understand our heritage. Despite many different issues in town, in spite of ancient legacy and rich and colorful tradition handed down through generations, despite diversity in cultural heritage and various features with existing marketing potential, storytelling unfortunately hasn't been sufficiently integrated into Cerkljansko tourist destination management. The key issue we are facing is how to get engaged with prospect's attention, how to match the voice tourists' worldview was seeking and how to sync right up with their expectations. Since stories are the only way we know to spread ideas, the shift from factographical to emotional marketing communication is required. Using stories to provide experience tourism ironically brings about more convincing and authentic events while allowing visitors to establish more effective emotional connection. We are talking about the idea of sharing enthusiasm for somewhere or something that we feel is special with others. Storytelling is about a useful approach to provide overall sense of place and the finest technique to achieve the higher quality of visitors' experience at the same time, which in return brings the desired interest and excitement of our guests.

**Key words:** story, storytelling, sense of place, tourist experience

## 1 Introduction

The need for storytelling in the field of marketing is generated in line with a switch from material to emotional in postmodern society. The main core is to reach the prospect's wants and desires and finally win their hearts. Storytelling as operational communication tool in the field of heritage management for places where tourism relies mostly on the country's culture and landscape is precisely relevant. However, a good story is the best attitude in making a visit something more than just a trip to see the sights. »In some cases a story is essential if the sight is to 'come alive' at all« (Carter, 2001, 4) and that makes a story as important part of tourism product as nice places to stay, a friendly welcome, delightful cuisine and so on. After all a good story makes for excellence in experience tourism which makes for satisfied customers, and satisfied customers are good for business. »Truly great stories succeed because they are able to capture the imagination of large or important audiences« (Godin, 2005, 10). The trick is in »telling authentic stories in a low-trust world« (Godin, 2005, 1). »Using stories makes the messages memorable, gives visitors something to relate to, and above all captures their attention, motivates and inspires them in new ways« ( <https://novoed.com/storytelling-change-2016-2>, 29. 2. 2016). Godin (2005, 5) refers: »Don't just tell me the facts, tell me a story instead«, which is in non-contrast to Štefančič (2012) conclusions that the facts are not enough, that imagination is more important for people than facts themselves, that linking new ideas and concepts and images to facts makes a simple access to the truth, that there is no truth without a good narration and that people we are trying to mobilize desperately need a story. What's left to do is highlighting the state of affairs, opening discussion around what we see and hear and feel and know to be true, recognizing existing potential and taking the initiative to inspire actions and reach beyond the given facts.

## 2 Materials and methods

To make a story as effective as possible we followed some principles in order to get attention, to hold attention and finally to help people paying attention to the story, taking an interest in new ideas and remembering the main issues. If something is to be relevant to visitors it must be both: meaningful and personal (Carter, 2001, 39) and therefore connected with one's personal experience, which in return brings requested recognition and awareness. Spinning a story with a clear structure provides clues to the themes which the story contains to keep us away from overwhelming people by data discovering all the details on the chosen place. We also tried to keep in mind that making the whole thing enjoyable is essential. Hitting the spot with a fascinating, delighting, thrilling, amusing and overall entertaining story is quite an easy job. Furthermore good provocative ideas have a lot in common with getting people to pay attention in the first place. Triggers are used to generate 'a-ha effects' which manage »the common human experience of suddenly understanding a previously incomprehensible problem or concept« ( [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eureka\\_effect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eureka_effect), 28. 2. 2016). Visitors might be pushed suddenly into a completely new understanding of what they have come to see. Getting them some new points of view is precisely the point.

## 3 Results

I've intended to do a corporate gig for the company I work for, which makes and sells services in tourism business, to inspire their sales staff to greater heights. Following the idea it turned out there was a story missing. It was weird. Despite living in a privilege time in a privilege part of the world, in spite of ancient legacy and rich and colorful tradition handed down through generations, despite various features with existing marketing potential, we let the story missing. A story, dear ladies and gentlemen, is the first lady of every place. Stories are awesome. Stories are the only way we know to spread ideas.

We don't have to be artists to value cultural heritage. We don't need to become poets to tell stories about our place. But all good tales need at their heart an enthusiasm and a love for a place and a desire to share that with others.

We begin in places we don't even understand as beginnings. We circle around highlighting the state of affairs, opening discussion around what we see and hear and feel and know to be true, trying to find a piece of status quo – something that bothers us, something that needs to be improved - and taking the initiative to inspire actions, to serve the arriving idea and to reach beyond the given facts. Over time we "spin" a story, a product, a business, a relationship, a satisfying life,... We do decide.

#### Discussion

While I have Cultural tourism issue in front of me, please don't make the mistake of thinking the art and the tourism are at odds with one another. That is a recent, stupid, and damaging idea. If you need proof: Jazz Cerklno festival for example with a large audience engagement attracted over the sessions.



Figure 1: Jazz Session in Cerklno  
Source: Bojan Tavčar, 2015

Tourism needs to work together with Cultural and creative industries to build an environment for a stronger experience tourism which can stand up for any kind development. Unfortunately our development model has stuck on the level of lowering labor costs and thus on the out-of-date style of management. The idea that many people - including our business executives as well as our government, both local and state - believe that shaping policies to create an environment that helps tourism operators of every size and sector to grow is controversial, is a powerful indicator of the extent of our failure to communicate. However business Culture and enterprise norms are not given, they are made; even like fictions. They are 'made up'. Possibilities and limits of everyday role-playing reminds us that people and cultures are more than just created; we are creative. Delivering a promise of re-

imagining and refashioning the world we offer a switch from principles of stability and closure to constant possibility. Would you believe Culture means real business? If you would not, I would. Simply allowing this text to enter into our business reality might bring about some change in our future economy. In searching for arguments of cultural norms evolution further back in the past, the world's oldest known musical instrument was found at archaeological park located near Cerčno. The artifact, older than any cave paintings so far discovered, dated about 55,000 BC, implies the cultural values originate in our country. The greatest invention ever we believe were those holes along a bear's bone tube from the stone age cave designed by Neanderthals. They started to whistling and fluting down Cerčno hills and then they lived more sophisticated ever after.



Figure 2: The Flute

Source: <http://www.delo.si/kultura/dediscina/v-sloveniji-se-kopljemo-v-kopanju.html>, (14. 4. 2016)

We built great big things in the time gone by. We have been exploring and learning and sharing the knowledge, bringing up concepts and high-reaching visions. We have been running things and running things out and we have been committed to progress. We aspired to intelligence, we didn't belittle it, it didn't make us feel inferior. And we made some huge technological advances in industry and tourism business sharing know-how with foreign countries.

We were responsive. We cared about our neighbors. We stood up for what was right, we opposed and disobeyed. We sacrificed, we fought for moral reasons, we fought for liberty. We flied in the face of the issues and we didn't scare so easy. We took care of our brothers. Even under the hardest circumstances. We remember the resistance.



Figure 3: Winter

Source: <http://www.jazzcerkno.si/info/nastanitve/cerkno>, (14. 4. 2016)



Figure 4: Remember The Resistance

Source: [http://www.culture.si/en/Franja Partisan Hospital](http://www.culture.si/en/Franja_Partisan_Hospital), (14. 4. 2016)

There is an epic place remote enough to nearly be left on its own for good, without identity, beyond GDP, with a half millennium mercury mine legacy frozen in time. A great industrial heritage located near Cerklje ob Savi, which could easily rusted away on the ash heap of history, since managed sustainably and contributed to intercultural dialogue has joined the outstanding valued attractions in Unesco global network.



Figure 5: A Piece Of Excellence

Source: <http://siol.net/trendi/dom>, (14. 4. 2016)

We also boast of delightful cuisine. The first ever Slovenian dish protected by the EU's Traditional Specialty Guaranteed label originates close to Cerklje ob Savi area. We used to have »žlikrofi« on common as well as on special occasions. We still do. In less than one sentence - pasta excellence!

These days Cerklje ob Savi is a stress free zone and thus a perfect leisure escape. It boasts of wonderful countryside all created by nature but well managed by enthusiastic women and men. We won several awards for best ski-resort over past decades and fit leisure activities to a sophisticated level using expertise from many different fields all based on the healing effects of nature.

Creativity has a long tradition in the city, long enough to boasts of the greatest spin-off performance in the country based on ancient ritual culture and the art of medieval theatre. Using ideas, characters and roles from pre-existing cultural material Cerklje ob Savi runners carnival not only represents their mutual legacy but precisely celebrates the sense of the world as one great communal performance.

And we were managed to be and to do all these things because we were connected. Because we were inspired by each other. We still are wired to connect. All we need is to plug-in. We are the missing link. All we need is to find these little bits of threads, little threads of interests, little separated pockets of people who are interested and connect them and amplify them. They say in the past the locals were collecting threads over carnival festivity as a part of an old trick or treat performance. From my point of view they were connecting people. However, »to speak of carnival is to speak of a society engaged in collectively dramatising itself for a moment on a premise that everything could be completely different than it is« (Schindler, 2002, 93). But Žižek (2012) notifies: »Carnivals come cheap. What matters is the day after [...] the basic message is 'we are allowed to think about alternatives«.

In to that end we are delighted to introduce to you an ancient character, a purely mythic creature - primitive, irrational and heretical - affected with that very fiber of interaction ritual processes who annually turns up to model for us the very principles that can make for a successful communal performance. He is a member of a large Cerkno runners family and he always enjoys their full support. He turned up in an old rite of passage while the ancient down to earth tribal cultures existed in the area. But no one knows for sure, there are no written sources. What is for sure, his costume made of flax is fully decorated with threads madly fluttering while he is running around. He wears a scary mask and he boasts of sophisticated ancestral hairstyle. He is different, he is innovative, as we heard likes running, he is enthusiastic and he s got ideas on his own, ladies and gentlemen, please help me welcome Mr. Thread man from Cerkno Resort.



Figure 6: The Thread Man  
Source: Bojan Tavčar, 2016

Doesn't he look nice? Of course not. He is a piece of art, he doesn't suppose to look nice, he supposes to make you feel something!  
He is a symbol, he is a sign.  
He is the role, he is the plot.  
He is a hot spot.  
He is a challenge, he is the quest, he is the leap.  
He is a nightmare of censorship.  
He is the voice from thousands years ago.  
He is yourself while you refuse the status Quo.  
He is the loss of the right to freedom of speech  
He is a hacker.  
He is a hoaxer.  
He is a whistleblower.  
He is a spy.  
He is the alternative.  
He is the local source of action.  
He is the structure shaping energy in social interaction.  
He is the trigger, he is the trickster.  
He is the state of constant change.  
He is an agent he is the link  
He is the flow spilling over, crossing elsewhere situation.  
He is the force of social action trailing off in time but remaining long enough to charge up another scene another site another spot.  
He is the local here and now of face to face in the set of circumstances.  
He is the spirit leaving traces, bringing further chains of consequences.  
He is spinning agencies of change at scenes and sites of social action trying to fix community together, to provide for adjustment between people and to transmit power.

Dear ladies and gentlemen, whenever »we take up a mask to dance in, to use it in ritual or to work magic with«, or to turn out more initiative, more generous, more artistic, more connected or leading »we transform ourselves. Masks are not there to hide ourselves but to offer a face to a character waiting "over there" to come "over here" and act« (<http://www.whitedragon.org.uk/articles/masks.htm>, 3. 3. 2016). And we have got to gather here, listen to the story, meet our rustic down-to-earth folk culture, try your pasta and even use our drug only to get the message across: we are all allowed to think about alternatives.

So welcome to Cerkno where nothing is ever fixed or set or done, until the very end, where everything is in the state of becoming. Turn the world upside down. Remember the resistance. And take your creativity to a cheerful degree. Explore the European destination of excellence. Try our local delightful cuisine. Enter a stress free zone and treat yourself with a perfect leisure escape. Wish you were here. You are sincerely invited.

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