Repositioning leisure services

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It is postulated that the key to winning broader support for public leisure services is to broaden the base of their appeal beyond regular users by stressing the collective benefits that also accrue to non-users and occasional users. This can be done by repositioning leisure services so they are aligned with the politically important issues in a community. Three repositioning strategies are suggested: real repositioning, competitive repositioning and psychological repositioning. Their application is illustrated in the context of the potential economic development contributions of leisure services departments through their involvement in tourism.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the basis for operating leisure service programmes in the United States shifted from the original rationale, which focused on meritorious social outcomes, to a more narrow notion that such services are provided because particular segments of the population want them (Godbey, 1991). In the 1990s, there had been growing recognition of the vacuity of this strategy. It has become increasingly clear that additional resources are likely to be forthcoming to leisure service agencies only when support for the field extends beyond that of existing participants who directly benefit from the services delivered (Crompton 1999). Servicing user groups will always be a central element of the mission, but in many jurisdictions they have proven to be too narrow a constituency for sustaining or securing additional tax resources.

User satisfaction, while necessary, is an inadequate indicator of the success of a leisure services department when used alone, because it does not incorporate non-users' evaluations of the agency. Most tax-payers are not frequent users of these services. Thus, many of them have difficulty

understanding why they should support them. The prevailing sentiment is often: If only some segments of our community use park and recreation services, then why should the rest of us have to pay for them? To gain the support of non-users, an agency has to provide a convincing answer to the fundamental marketing question, 'What is in it for them?' Broader community support is likely to be dependent on building awareness not only of the on-site benefits that accrue to users, but also of the off-site benefits that accrue to non-users, in communities.

There is increased recognition in the United States that while benefit driven programmes may lead to higher levels of satisfaction among participants and attract increased numbers, such 'private' benefits have relatively little impact on resource allocation decisions made by elected officials. These benefits are described as 'private' because they accrue only to programme participants and do not extend to the majority of the population who are only occasional users or non-users. Providing resources to a leisure department so a minority of residents can have enjoyable experiences is likely to be a low priority when measured against the critical economic,

health, safety and welfare issues with which most legislative bodies are confronted.

To justify the allocation of additional resources, elected officials have to be convinced that leisure agencies deliver collective or 'public' benefits. These are defined as benefits that accrue to most people in a community, even though they do not participate in an agency's programmes or use its facilities. There are just three broad categories of these public benefits: economic development; alleviating social problems; and environmental stewardship (Crompton, 1999b). A summary of these categories is given in Figure 1. However, even these three types of collective benefits receive funding support only when they are regarded as being high priority in a community. Hence, the task of leisure service agency managers is to identify which of these public benefits is most prominent on a jurisdiction's political agenda, and to demonstrate the agency's potential contribution to fulfilling that agenda.

THE CONCEPT OF POSITIONING

When an agency thinks in terms of aligning with a politically important issue such as economic development, it is embracing a concept termed positioning. Positioning refers to the place that leisure occupies in the minds of elected officials and the general public relative to their perception of other services that are the field's competitors for public tax dollars. Ries and Trout (1981) were the first to articulate the central importance of positioning. They criticized most organizations because they operate as though their services exist in isolation. Some thought there was nothing new in the Ries and Trout contribution because 'We have always positioned our services', which demonstrated the legitimacy of the authors' point which was that, 'Agencies and organizations don't position services, stakeholders do' (Ries and Trout, 1981).

Positioning operates at several levels in a leisure services agency. In this paper concern is with positioning the agency itself. However, programmes and services also can be positioned with respect to competitive alternatives. For example, at the programme level the issue may be, 'What is the aerobics programme's position vis-à-vis those classes offered by other organizations in the area?' The challenge is to identify features that give the programme unique or distinctive appeal and differentiate it from those of competitors.

Without competition, positioning would be unnecessary and a good image would probably suffice to attract support and resources (Aaker and Myers, 1987). Most leisure service agencies have a positive image in their communities. Surveys invariably report an overwhelming percentage of residents as being 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with an agency's performance. However, often this does not translate into increased resources, because the agency's performance and importance are evaluated in isolation and are not related to the performance and importance of other agencies with which it is competing for funds. Thinking in terms of position rather than image is more useful because it embraces comparison with competitors. It compares elected officials' and taxpayers' perceptions of the leisure services agency with those they hold of other public services in which they may invest.

Identifying and establishing a strong, preferred position is the most important strategic decision that leisure managers make (Burnett, 1993). It is likely to determine the agency's future. Once it has been made, all subsequent actions should be geared to implementing it. An established position that reflects responsiveness to a community's central concerns is key to an agency developing and nurturing a broader constituency; securing additional resources; guiding programmatic and facility priorities made by staff and stakeholders; and improving the

Economic Development

Economic development is viewed as a means of enlarging the tax base. The enlargement provides more tax revenues that governments can use either to improve the community's infrastructure, facilities, and services or to reduce the level of taxes that existing residents pay. It is seen also as a source of jobs and income that enables residents to improve their quality of life. In some communities, park and recreation agencies play a major role in economic development. That role may take the form of:

(i) **Attracting Tourists**: The major factor considered by tourists when they make a decision which communities to visit on a pleasure trip, is the attractions that are available. In most cities, those attractions are dominated by facilities and services operated by park and recreation agencies and their non-profit partners (parks, beaches, events, festivals, athletic tournaments, museums, historical sites, cultural performances, etc.). Without such attractions, there is no tourism.

(ii) **Attracting Businesses**: The viability of businesses in the highly recruited high-technology, research and development, company headquarters, and services sectors, in many cases is dependent on their ability to attract and retain highly educated professional employees. The deciding factor of where these individuals choose to live is often the quality of life in the geographic vicinity of the business. No matter how quality of life is defined, park and recreation opportunities are likely to be a major component of it.

(iii) **Attracting Retirees**. A new clean growth industry in America today is the growing number of relatively affluent, active retirees. Their decisions as to where to locate with their substantial retirement incomes is primarily governed by two factors: climate and recreational opportunities.

(iv) **Enhancing Real Estate Values**. People are prepared to pay more to live close to natural park areas. The enhanced value of these properties results in their owners paying higher property taxes to governments. If the incremental amount of taxes paid by each property that is attributable to the park is aggregated, it is often sufficient to pay the annual debt charges required to retire the bonds used to acquire and develop the park.

Alleviating Social Problems

(i) **Preventing Youth Crime**. The use of park and recreation programmes to alleviate youth crime was a primary political stimulant for much of the early recreation provision in major cities at the beginning of the 20th century. There is strong evidence demonstrating the success of these programmes when they are structured to provide: social support from adult leaders; leadership opportunities for youth; intensive and individualized attention to participants; a sense of group belonging; youth input into programme decisions; and opportunities for community service. The return on investment of such programmes is substantial when it is related to the costs of incarceration.

(ii) **Healthy Lifestyles**. There is growing recognition that the key to curtailing health care costs lies in prevention of illness so it does not have to be treated by the expensive medical system. Park and recreation services contribute to this end not only by facilitating improvements in physical fitness through exercise, but also by facilitating positive emotional, intellectual and social experiences. People with high levels of wellness have a proclivity to act during their free time, rather than merely be acted on.

(iii) **Environmental Stress**. Environmental stress may involve both psychological emotions, such as frustrations, anger, fear and coping responses, and associated physiological responses that use energy and contribute to fatigue. It is experienced daily by many who live or commute in urban or blighted areas. Parks in urban settings have a restorative effect that releases the tensions of modern life. Evidence demonstrating the therapeutic value of natural settings has emerged in both physiological and psychological studies. The cost of environmental stress in terms of work days lost and medical care is likely to be substantially greater than the cost of providing and maintaining parks, urban forestry programmes, and oases of flowers and shrubs.

(iv) **Unemployment and Underemployment**. Basic psychological needs that many people derive from their work are difficult to acquire when unemployed or working in low-level service jobs such as cashiers,

Fig. 1 The Three Collective 'Public' Benefits that may accrue from Park and Recreation Services

janitors and cleaners which are the major growth positions in the economy. Such needs may include self-esteem, prestige accruing from peer group recognition, ego satisfaction of achievement, a desire to be successful, excitement and self-worth. For the growing number of people in low level jobs, these needs will be obtained in their familial or leisure milieus, or they will not be obtained at all.

Environmental Stewardship

(i) **Historical Preservation**. Without a cultural history, people are rootless. Preserving historical remnants offers lingering evidence to remind people of what they once were, who they are, what they are and where they are. It feeds their sense of history.

(ii) **The Natural Environment**. People turn to the natural environment, preserved by humans as a park, wilderness, or wildlife refuge, for something they cannot get in a built environment. The quality of human life depends on an ecological sustainable and aesthetically pleasing physical environment. The surge of interest in conserving open spaces from people motivated by ecological and aesthetic concerns, is matched by a similar surge from those concerned that the inexorable rise in demands for outdoor recreation is not being matched by a commensurate expansion of the supply base.

Fig. 1 Continued

morale of staff by raising their perceived status in the community. The goal should be to reinforce the desired position by integrating as many of the agency's actions as possible, so each component action fulfils a role in helping to establish the position in the minds of stakeholders.

It has been noted that the provision of leisure opportunities for their own sake lacks political clout (Glyptis, 1989). They have to be shown to solve community problems before politicians see them as being worthy of additional funding. The present position of leisure services in the United States, which has existed in the minds of most stakeholders for several decades is that they are relatively discretionary, nonessential services. They are nice to have if they can be afforded after the important, essential services have been funded. Driver and Bruns (1999, p. 351) observed that:

> Elected officials in the United States and Canada tend to hold the erroneous belief that most to all of the benefits of leisure accrue to the individuals who use leisure services and that there are few if any spin-off benefits from this use to society in general. This contrasts with their views about the social merits of other social services (e.g., education, health services, police and fire protection, transportation) for which these elected officials

acknowledge large benefits to society beyond those that accrue to the direct users of those services. Therefore, these officials have improperly adopted for leisure services the principle of public finance, which dictates that only limited public funds should be allocated to a social service that does not promote the general welfare.

Thus, the key to securing additional resources for leisure services is to reposition them so they are perceived as contributing to alleviating problems which constitute the prevailing political concerns of policy makers who are responsible for allocating tax funds. Only when they are so repositioned will leisure services be perceived positively as part of the solution to a jurisdiction's problems, rather than being perceived as having no impact or even as being a negative drain on its tax resources.

Positioning implies a commitment to segmentation. Thus, if the selected focus is on economic development, it means that market segments, services and facilities that did not contribute to strengthening this position would not be emphasized or prioritized. The agency is likely to be successful in establishing a distinct position to the extent that it is not constrained by the need to dissipate energies elsewhere. The selection of which

issue an agency elects to focus upon, depends on the community's priorities and the agency's personnel and facility resources. The preferred position should be the optimum 'selling idea' for motivating taxpayers and elected officials to allocate additional resources for parks and recreation.

A cardinal rule is that an agency should position itself by aligning with only one or at the very most two community issues, since establishing a position in residents' minds requires prolonged focus. This is because in order to manage the cacophony of information to which they are now exposed, individuals limit their intake to the minimum they need to get by. Hence, they tend to know a small amount about many things, but they don't know much about anything. This applies to the mission of a leisure agency equally as well as it does to any other public agency, private organization, or commercial business.

To residents, perceptions are truth. Their perceptions may not be correct, especially those of non-users who have little contact with a leisure agency, but it is what they know and they have no reason to make an effort to know more. Thus, most taxpayers are unlikely to pay much attention to the details, subtleties and complexities of a leisure agency's mission. In the age of the 'sound-bite', focus is everything. The message has to be pervasive. The best an agency can hope for is that an occasional piece of information may penetrate to reinforce or amend residents' existing perceptions. Hence, the value of consistency over time in programme emphasis and in communication messages cannot be overemphasized. Without concentrating resources to support the selected repositioning strategy, it will not succeed. Aligning with multiple issues may be tempting, but such efforts are unlikely to be successful. The probable outcome of diffusing resources by aligning with multiple issues is that no clear identity will be established,

and that a fuzzy, confused position similar to that which currently exists will emerge.

Positioning reflects people's beliefs and value systems which are hard to change because they define who individuals are. Thus, repositioning is a difficult task because it involves shifting a widely held, long-established attitude towards the field. Further, there are pragmatic difficulties in shifting to this mode. An agency cannot immediately abandon many of its current tasks and switch those resources to strengthen its repositioning efforts. If this was done, there would probably be a loud outcry from existing clienteles. Such shifts can only be implemented over time. Agencies should think in terms of 10 years, rather than a one year time horizon to accomplish repositioning. After all, that is probably the minimum time period for which stakeholders have held the existing position of park and recreation services being relatively discretionary and non-essential. Although repositioning is likely to take many years of effort, the imperative to initiate it was articulated by the commentator who observed. 'the divide in government between "essential" and "non-essential" service is going to get greater and greater. We are standing in the middle of that divide and need to jump as it widens' (Godbey, 1994, p. 17).

THE SET OF REPOSITIONING STRATEGIES

There are three strategies that agencies can pursue to achieve this repositioning (Kotler, *et al.*, 1993). They are not mutually exclusive; rather, all three should be embraced simultaneously. For the purpose of illustrating the application of the three repositioning strategies it is assumed that the most important political issue in the community is economic development and that the leisure agency decides to position itself as being a central contributor to economic development by adopting a more aggressive entrepreneurial

approach to soliciting tourism business for the community.

The first strategy is *real repositioning*, which means that an agency changes what it does so that desired community priority needs are met through its offerings. This could involve developing packaged services for visitors. For example, in every area of the United States there are numerous clubs and non-profit organizations that have a programme chair whose challenge is to develop a programme of activities for the group. Leisure agencies have a smorgasbord of offerings available to meet those groups' programming needs. Managing facilities and services does not stop at the front gate! The challenge is not merely to provide services that people want; it is to package them so they can be accessed conveniently. Packaging means that the agency links with a transportation source and necessary support services, such as a restaurant and hotel (if an overnight stay is involved), and offers a fixed price for the total experience to targeted groups. Thus, if an agency offers a fishing trip to senior citizen groups, the package may include a chartered bus, lunch, fishing poles, and staff person who meets the chartered bus and provides interpretation and assistance with bait, fishing, cleaning fish, and so forth. Targeting groups from outside of the community with packages would help to reposition an agency as a central contributor to tourism and economic development.

Real repositioning may involve not only changing its programme offerings but also changing the types of alliances and partnerships that the agency forms, and changing the community forums in which it becomes involved. Allying with other agencies or organizations that already have a firm, well-crystallized image and position may provide a leisure agency with a bridging reference point to the position it is seeking. If someone wants to know where a particular address is located, it is much easier to say 'next to the tourism agency' if that location is well-known, than to describe the various streets to take to get there!

Thus, strengthening linkages with a jurisdiction's tourism agency may also be an effective real repositioning strategy for responding to a community's emphasis on economic development. If that organization has a positive position in stakeholders' minds, then closer links with it by a leisure agency are likely to lead to some of its positive position being conveyed to the agency by association. Real positioning could involve actively partnering with the community tourism agency to create new events designed to attract outside visitors to stay in the jurisdiction for multiple days. Such linkages make pragmatic sense because the two organizations often have complementary assets. Tourism agencies typically have funds available for promotion and in the United States such funds are scarce at most leisure agencies. In contrast, tourism agencies rarely become involved in directly producing programmes and services. Thus, some departments, for example, cooperate with tourism agencies to fund special-event coordinators who are responsible for organizing and soliciting sponsorship for special events in the community. The tourism agencies recognize that leisure departments have the expertise and a mandate to organize special events, but frequently lack the funds to launch and promote them effectively. Hence, tourism agencies help fund such positions, provide initial seed funds for some events, and promote all events.

Real positioning is the foundation upon which all actions rest. An agency must not try to be something it is not. It is important that it is able to deliver the outcomes which it promises. If it aligns with economic development, an agency must structure its services and engage in cooperative partnerships that are compatible with its alignment promises.

The second strategy is *competitive repositioning*. This means altering stakeholders' beliefs about what an agency's competitors do. In the context of tourism, in most US communities an independent tourism bureau is charged with the primary responsibility for attracting visitors. The bureaus frequently imply that the economic impact from all visitors is attributable to their efforts. In this way, they have positioned themselves in the minds of stakeholders as important contributors to economic development, and they receive resources commensurate with that favourable position. This substantially overstates their contribution because many visitors would come even if there was no convention and visitors bureau, while others are there because of the park and receration agency's efforts rather than those of the bureau. If the discrepancies between the established psychological position of bureaus and reality are subtly pointed out, then resources that would otherwise be appropriated to the convention and visitors bureau may instead be allocated to the parks and recreation agency to develop additional events or facilities that will attract visitors.

Psychological respositioning is the third strategy. This type of repositioning means altering stakeholders' beliefs about what an agency currently does. In many leisure agencies, existing services and facilities already attract an extensive number of visitors to the community. In these cases, the primary strategy should be psychological repositioning which involves documenting, demonstrating and informing stakeholders of the economic benefits that accrue. Since associating leisure services with economic development is a very different perspective from that which prevails in most communities, the results of such studies may be viewed as interesting and newsworthy which would facilitate communication of them by the media to stakeholders.

It has been suggested that park and recreation agencies have a labelling problem. Agencies are labelled based on the means used, i.e., recreation, rather than the ends that they aspire to achieve, e.g., contributing to economic development (Godbey, 1993). In the past two decades, emphasis was placed on providing the means, while the ends were forgotten. Psychological repositioning involves bringing outcomes to the forefront so that when the words leisure services are mentioned, people immediately think of them as wanted outcomes or benefits. This is illustrated effectively in the area of tourism where public investments in promoting tourism or developing new tourism opportunities are associated in people's minds with economic development, which most consider to be a highly desirable outcome. Consider the following example which reports a situation that occurred recently in the author's home town:

The city has plenty of money for economic development, but the council could not be persuaded to commit $1.5 million for a 150 acre youth athletic field complex for which there was a clearly demonstrated need. The proposed site was adjacent to two major highways and would be well suited for tournaments in such sports as soccer, rugby, baseball, softball, tennis, and lacrosse. Hence, after an initial rejection by the council, the project's supporters regrouped and repositioned the project as an outdoor special-events center. This terminology resonated with the council and taxpayers because the city had both an existing indoor special-events center and a conference center, and they were recognized widely to be good investments in economic development because of the nonresident visitors which they attracted. Representatives of the hotel-motel association, restaurant association, convention and visitors bureau, and chamber of commerce came to a council meeting to lobby for the ahtletic complex because its supporters pointed out that the city could hold frequent tournaments bringing 300 to

500 people to the community each weekend from out-of-town. Once it was repositioned into this economic development context and viewed as an outdoor special-events center, the council approved resources to acquire the site. They also recommended that some hotel-motel tax funds be used for this purpose, reducing the amount needed from taxpayers.

Another strategy for psychological repositioning is to take advantage of the positive position that tourism organizations in many communities have established in stakeholders' minds by making extensive use of the vocabulary of 'tourism'. The extreme case would be a change in the department's name that better reflected an agency's central contribution to tourism in the community. A name such as the department of leisure and tourism, or the department of leisure amenities and attractions may achieve that end. If political considerations make such a change non-feasible, then constant reference to the 'leisure and tourism industry' and to the 'tourism' services provided by the agency may enable a leisure agency to build a bridge to tourism's established position. Over time, this is likely to lead to some of the positive connotations and aura associated with tourism being transferred to the leisure agency.

POSITIONING LEISURE AGENCIES AS THE ENGINES OF TOURISM

Tourism is not recognized as an official industry in the United States Census Bureau's Standard Industrial Classification system. The Classification recognizes hotel, restaurant, airline, automobile, shipping, retail and advertising industries, along with many others that are involved in meeting the needs and desires of various types of travellers, but it does not include tourism as an industry. The inappropriateness of using the term 'tourism industry' has been explained in the following terms by Smith and Wilton (1997, p. 280):

Although it is common to hear or read references to the 'tourism industry', such a phrase is problematic because tourism is not an industry in the conventional sense. It is not an industry because its components (individual businesses) do not provide a common product or service and they do not use the same fundamental technology.

The tourism 'industry' is a generic umbrella term that advocates derive by aggregating the outputs from an arbitrary combination of dozens of recognized industries. From an economist's perspective, treating tourism as a distinctive industry causes double-counting, because the outputs of those businesses that advocates subsume under the tourism industry are already officially allocated to different industries. Such 'industry' data are contrived and meaningless.

The broad field of travel is commonly divided into four major segments based upon purpose of trip. They are (i) business-related travel; (ii) personal business, including visiting friends or relatives; (iii) conventions and meetings; and (iv) pleasure travel. There is some overlap between these trip purpose segments. For example, while the primary trip purpose may be attending a convention or visiting friends and relatives, this may be integrated with pleasure activities. Traditionally, the term 'tourist' referred only to pleasure travellers and did not embrace the other three trip purposes. The inclination of most public tourism agencies and private tourism advocacy groups today is to extend the definition of tourism to include all these segments, since the broader it is defined, the more visitors it embraces and the larger its economic value is perceived to be. This leads to enhancement of the stature and visibility of those in a community associated with tourism, enabling them to position themselves more favourably in the psyche of both the general public and legislators.

Tourism agencies are unlikely to have any influence on business travel or on visiting
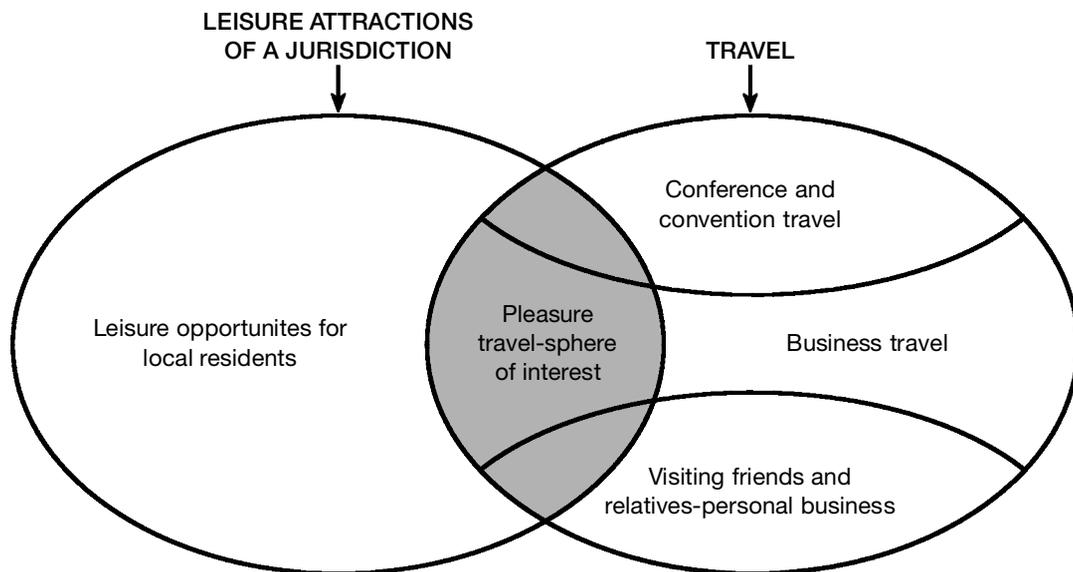
**LEISURE ATTRACTIONS
OF A JURISDICTION**

TRAVEL

Conference and
convention travel

Leisure opportunites for
local residents

Pleasure
travel-sphere
of interest

Business travel

Visiting friends and
relatives-personal business

Fig. 2 Segments of travel and their inter-relationship

friends and relatives/personal business. The two segments of travel that are most likely to be responsive to their efforts are conference and convention travel, and pleasure travel. The shaded area in Figure 2 indicates that this latter segment is a primary sphere of interest and influence for leisure agencies. It is in this area, where leisure attractions are the primary purpose of travel, that leisure agencies often can claim to be the primary engine that drives tourism economic impact in a community.

Figure 3 shows a simplified model of a tourism system (Gunn, 1988). It indicates that visitors use some mode of transportation (e.g., automobile or airplane) to leave their homes and travel to attractions, which are supported by various kinds of services (e.g., hotels/motels, restaurants, retailing). The attractions and support services provide information and promote their offerings to target groups whom they have identified as potential visitors.

This tourism system is activated by attractions. Only in rare cases do people leave their home milieu and travel some distance by automobile, airplane, or ship because they want to stay in a particular hotel or dine at a particular restaurant in a different locale. Most of the time, the desire to go to a destination on a pleasure trip is stimulated by its attractions.

A taxonomy of attractions likely to activate pleasure travel is shown in Table 1. A perusal of this list of tourist attractions leads to the conclusion that almost all of them are developed, and in most cases are operated, by the public sector or by nonprofit organizations. A large proportion of them is likely to be the responsibility of leisure agencies. This leads to the conclusion that *in most communities, pleasure travel is a business that the public sector drives, and leisure agencies are central to that business.* Thus, in most communities, leisure agencies are the engines of tourism.

In the United States, this central role in tourism is not a position that leisure agencies occupy in stakeholders' minds. Indeed, it is the antithesis of the general public's and tourism field's conventional wisdom. Most
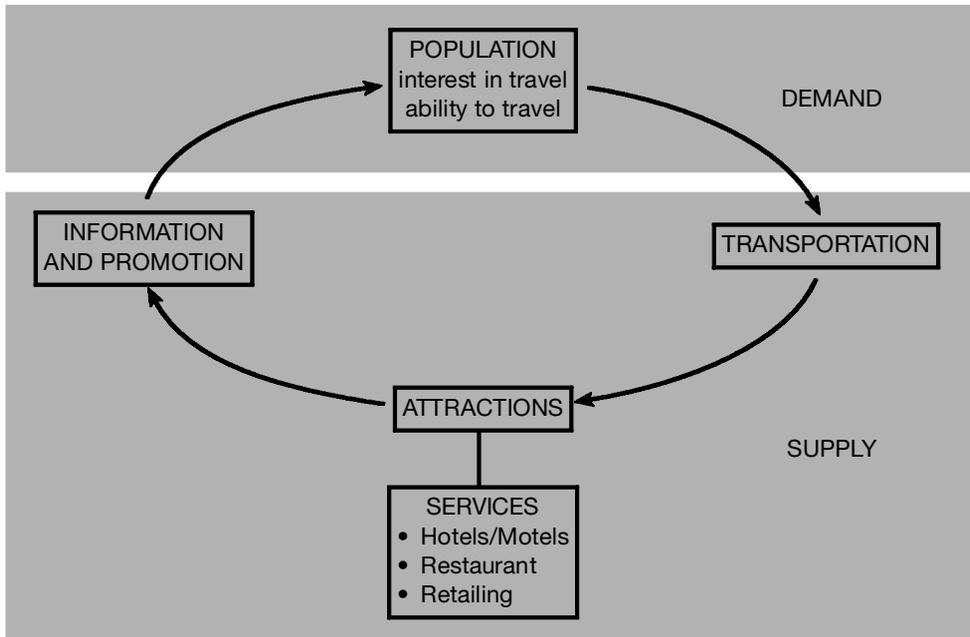
Fig. 3 A simplified model of a tourism system

people are under the misapprehension that tourism is the almost exclusive preserve of the commercial sector. The commercial sector offers essential transportation; support services, such as accommodations, restaurants, and retailing; and information and promotion dissemination (see Figure 3). However, in most communities in the United States the public sector is the primary provider of the attractions that activate pleasure travel.

The popular perception of tourist attractions is dominated by glamorous, large-scale, commercial developments such as Disney-World, Disneyland, other theme parks, cruise ships, casinos, Las Vegas, and all-inclusive resort hotels. However, in terms of annual visitor days, such attractions account for

Table 1 A Taxonomy of Tourist Attractions

Arts	Theatres, art galleries, museums, performing groups, music concerts
Heritage Places	Ethnic cultural places, shrines/churches, historical sites and structures, educational institutions, industry factory tours
Parks	National, state, regional, local beaches, theme parks
Recreation	Events and festivals, aquatic and coastal areas, outdoor recreations (e.g., camping, fishing, hunting), sports (e.g., golf, tennis, skiing, sailing, softball), fitness and wellness centres
Arenas	College sports, professional franchises, concerts and exhibitions
Other	Gambling places, cruise ships

only a small percentage of pleasure travel in the United States. DisneyWorld and Disneyland may attract more than 40 million visitors per year, but this number represents only 12% of the visitor days recorded in the national parks and less than 3% of visitor days at all federal recreational areas (including those operated by the US Forest Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management). The annual number of visits to state parks is approximately 740 million, and this number, in turn, is minuscule when compared with the number of visitors to regional, county, and local parks and beaches.

Very few communities have large scale commercial tourist attractions. Despite their absence, most jurisdictions recognize the importance of tourism to economic development and establish tourism bureaux or similar agencies, whose primary mission is to attract visitors. They invariably rely on the leisure agency to create attractions that will persuade visitors to come to the community and spend money there. The extent to which the leisure agency constitutes the engine of tourism in any particular community can be ascertained by listing all the programmes, festivals, tournaments, competitions and facilities operated or co-sponsored by the leisure department that attract pleasure travellers to the community from out-of-town. Similar lists should be developed for nonprofit organizations and for commercial attractions. In most communities, the commercial attractions list will be the shortest. In such cases, this *competitive repositioning* strategy will show the relative insignificance of commercial enterprises in attracting visitors to the community when compared to the public sector attractions. The dissemination of such comparative lists may make an effective contribution to repositioning leisure as being central to tourism in the minds of stakeholders.

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