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Item Type	article;event
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Download date	2025-01-13 18:03:31
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/48332

Assessing Tourism Planning: Goals and Objectives for Egyptian Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses tourism plans by comparing principles in the literature on tourism planning with Egyptian National tourism planning documents. Issues that are addressed relate to the choice of goals and objectives and the form that they take in Egyptian national tourism planning. It is found that Egyptian tourism planning follows the trends of according growing attention to sustainability and promoting the value of collaboration and synchronization on the part of multiple agencies. However, there is much room for improvement, particularly regarding reaping the benefits of such initiatives due to a lack of comprehensiveness in planning.

Keywords: *tourism planning, assessment, goals, objectives, Egypt*

INTRODUCTION

The first step in planning should be to define the targets for development and recognize their associated limiting factors. Thorough planning targets are outlined within a framework set by the constraints (Gearing, Swart, & Var, 1976). Three main functions are served by defining the mission statement and corresponding goals: they are the linchpin that should dictate the contents of the entire strategic plan, they provide a common focus for all segments and individuals in the organizations that are affected by the plan, and they contribute to establishment a corporate identity for the organization promulgating the plan (Veal, 2002).

Further, the goals and objectives of tourism should be reflective of the desired results of development, and they usually include aspects of socio-economic benefits, while minimizing associated environmental and socio-cultural impacts (Inskeep, 1991). In this sense, environmental and socio-cultural impacts are often the major constraining factors that should be heeded when planning development targets. Tourism development targets are dictated by broader national economic intentions, as tourism is only one aspect of the economy. Some common targets may include improving the balance of payments, increasing employment, raising income, and stimulating overall economic growth (Gearing, Swart, & Var, 1976). Tourism development should rarely be a target in itself, rather it is usually a means to achieve broader development objectives although it is often not addressed this way in the plans, with unfortunate consequences.

When formulating, evaluating or implementing public policy, two key questions should be asked repeatedly throughout the policy development process: What are we trying to do? How will we know when we've done it? (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984). This paper focuses on evaluating the first question, and how well the plans serve the greater development agenda.

Irrespective of the broader agenda that tourism development serves, there should be a series of goals and corresponding objectives. Before exploring in detail of the characteristics of these goals and objectives, the components of strategic plans will be outlined, definition of the differences between goals and objectives will then be articulated, and the elements that should be present in tourism goals and objectives will be discussed, followed by a consideration of common problematic issues. The Egyptian tourism plan will then be evaluated in terms of its goals and objectives and, finally, recommendations will be made to improve the goals and objectives to better serve Egyptian tourism planning needs.

COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

In order to gain an appropriate perspective on goals and objectives, it is important to understand where they sit among the plans. Goals and objectives typically are a major component of the strategic plan. The mission statement and goals are essential elements, and programmes and projects that are believed to have the capability to achieve their corresponding goals and objectives are often introduced briefly. A strategy document should typically include the following elements (Veal, 2002, p. 112):

1. Mission statement
2. Goals statement
3. Summary of environmental appraisal
4. Summary of public consultation
5. Summary of alternatives considered and the evaluation process
6. Policies/projects/programmes
7. Goals for individual projects/programmes and objectives/targets (action plan) for the strategy period
8. Performance measures/indicators for the objectives/targets
9. Indication of persons/departments responsible for implementation.

It is possible that some of these items be presented in separate documents. Target dates for implementation should be stated both for specific stages throughout the strategy period, which is typically one or two years, as well as the strategy period as a whole, which is typically three or five years (Veal, 2002). This paper focuses on the first two elements, the mission and goal statements. They are a critical aspect of the strategic plan and contribute substantively to shaping the rest of the plan.

DEFINING TERMS: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The terms goals and objectives are related although they are not synonymous. Goals refer to aims that are striven for but may never be accomplished (Gunn, 1994). In this sense, they are continuous concepts that provide direction (Sinha, 1998). They are basically a more detailed

statement of the mission (Veal, 2002) and provide the framework for more specific policies and objectives (Gunn, 1994). Correspondingly, objectives are “specific, real, and actual activities that can be accomplished within a given time” (Gunn, 1994, pp. 11). Objectives are usually linked to particular programs or facilities, and tied to a time frame and a quantifiable measure (Veal, 2002). Planners usually use goals in reference to general development aims and use objectives in reference to more specific ones (Inskeep, 1991). Both goals and objectives should be dictated by the mission or purpose, which is essentially the “raison d’être” of the organization (Veal, 2002, p. 101) or initiative. In this sense, there is a hierarchical relationship between these different terms, as shown in Figure 1.

TOURISM GOALS

Although goals are broad aims, they should be feasible. This means that they should have the support of stakeholders and be realistic in their views of, or assumptions about, the tourism market and the demands of tourists. The wider the support for tourism goals, the more likely the planning initiative is to succeed (Sinha, 1998).

The literature suggests some possible goals for tourism development. For instance, Gunn (1994, pp. 11-18) described four essential planning goals that experience has demonstrated should be present for the improvement of tourism. Similarly, McIntosh (1977, p.151) listed a number of goals for tourism development. Goeldner and Ritchie’s (2003, p. 449) view of the goals of tourism development are very closely aligned with McIntosh’s, with the main difference being the addition of a fifth goal, and Sinha (1998) agreed with Goeldner and Ritchie’s list of goals. These goals are presented in Table 1.

Although there are differences in the representation of these goals, there are four main underlying themes. These are: visitor satisfaction, community development, resource protection, and economic development. This choice of goals for tourism is not surprising, as ultimately the primary motive for tourism development is likely to be economic gains both on the part of private investors as well as governments (Sinha, 1998).

The goals suggested by McIntosh, and Goeldner and Ritchie, tend to focus more on the benefits of tourism to the community rather than on what the community possesses to serve tourists and ensuring tourist satisfaction. Although the latter is important, it should be considered secondary to accruing benefits to local communities. Tourism goals should serve broader national development objectives and, as stated above, should be a means to achieving various ends rather than an end in itself. This standpoint was reflected in the 1966 OECD seminar, *Tourism Development and Economic Growth* (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1966) but, nevertheless, its importance is often overlooked.

It is critical to remain mindful of the fact that tourism development is engaged in as a means to achieve broader development objectives. Goals, therefore, should not be specified in terms of numbers of tourists or satisfying those tourists, but on promoting regional development, decongesting popular sites, and enhancing the lifestyles of local residents (Wall & Mathieson, 2006).

OBJECTIVES FOR TOURISM

The objectives for tourism are the main determinants of the policy and plan. They should be decided upon at the preliminary stages of the plan formulation; however they should also be tentative because later investigation may reveal that some may not be feasible or that they may conflict with one another. Re-assessment and modification may then be required (Inskeep, 1991). Furthermore, objectives should be defined in great detail for all levels in a way that clearly associates personal and departmental objectives with larger sectoral and national objectives (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984).

The literature does not specify actual objectives that should be present in tourism plans, as it is implied that the objectives should be reflective of the broader goals that they represent and they may differ with the particular circumstances in which the plan is being made. However, the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 1978) summarized common tourism objectives as pertaining to: foreign earnings; economic spin-off; parallel development of other sectors of the economy; social, cultural and political objectives; and preservation of the natural environment. However, such a statement of broad objectives fails to contribute very much to the assessment of tourism objectives. Hogwood and Gunn (1984, pp.159-164) address this concern by suggesting a checklist of questions that should be addressed in objectives. These questions are examined in the Egyptian tourism planning context in a subsequent section.

COMMON ISSUES WITH TOURISM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Although goals and objectives are the linchpin of tourism planning, there are a number of problems that are intertwined in the process of identifying and maintaining the influence of goals and objectives throughout the planning and development processes. These issues can be broadly categorized into three groups: multiplicity of stakeholders and agendas; identification and quantification; and inconsistencies.

Multiplicity of Stakeholders and Agendas

Complications can arise resulting from value differences both between different interest groups, and within organizations, both horizontally and vertically. However, these can be rectified by ensuring that multi-purpose organizations have a hierarchy of mission/goals that are tailored to different levels, all of which serve common broader goals of the organization or initiative (Veal, 2002). This issue is emphasized in the public sector where there is usually a broad array of goals to attend to (Veal, 2002), organizations must address both internal goals that enable their institutional survival as well as external goals that serve broader national agendas (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984). Such is the case with tourism and it may result in contradictory effects from attempting to maximize some effects while minimizing others (Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Further exacerbating this issue is the notion that only people have goals, while organizations do not and that, in fact, the goals of the organization are in fact the goals of the dominant group within the organization (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984).

Identification and Quantification

It can be difficult to identify organizational goals. Although on paper the goals may be laid out in a clear and coherent manner, in practice they may be diffuse, unspecific, unclear and internally inconsistent (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984). Furthermore, there could be dissonance

between the goals stated in planning documents and the actual goals embodied in the organization (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984).

The difficulty associated with assessing goal achievement quantitatively adds to the difficulty of engaging all aspects of the organization in a common set of goals. Unlike the private sector, where the main goal is to maximize financial gain, which is measured in profit, tourism (and often other segments of the public sector) does not usually have a single bottom-line goal. This makes the measurement of goals achievement difficult. For instance, it is difficult to assess and compare the trade-offs between conservation and development quantitatively (Veal, 2002).

Inconsistencies

There are often inconsistencies between the different goals. These inconsistencies can be both within an organization and between organizations. Between-organizational inconsistencies may arise from the involvement of different political groups and other stakeholders who do not share the same views on the role of the state in tourism and leisure. This can lead to differences in their goals. One possible remedy to this is for statements to be general enough to accommodate different value positions. However, this may result later in different expectations in implementation, such as one group envisioning high-rise four-star hotels, while another group envisions backpacker hostels (Veal, 2002). Hogwood and Gunn (1984) suggested that objectives should be specific, stated clearly and widely understood, and give direction to an organization in order for the broad objectives to maintain their influence. Although some organizations may grudgingly accept broad objectives, some may derive satisfaction from the unifying purpose they serve and, thus, become increasingly motivated to work towards them.

Within-organizational inconsistencies may arise from the incompatibility of stated goals. They may address multiple goals rather than a single unitary goal and, in effect, may contradict one another (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984). Furthermore, goals may change over time, so even in cases where consistency has been ensured, the supportive relationship between different segments of an organization may break down over time if not regularly maintained (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984).

EGYPTIAN TOURISM PLANNING

Egypt's national development objectives are embodied in two key documents: Vision 2020 and the Sixth National Development Plan. In Vision 2020, the Egyptian government states its development goals from 2009 until 2020. The Sixth National Development Plan is Egypt's current formal development plan from 2007 to 2012. Together, these documents articulate Egypt's development aspirations and, thus, provide the foundation for the goals for tourism development.

In order to achieve the objectives of the two development plans, as outlined in Figure 2, the National Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan (NSTSP) was drafted by a team of consultants formed by the Ministry of Tourism's Tourism Development Authority (TDA). The team was comprised of national and international private consultants who worked with a steering committee comprised of both public and private sector representatives from the Egyptian tourism industry.

Details of the mission and objectives of the NSTSP are outlined in Figure 2. The NSTSP is to be implemented in three phases: phase one is a review of the existing status of tourism products, information systems, infrastructures, cultural heritage, marketing and the environment. Accordingly, growth targets are set. Phase two of the strategy consists of policies and plans to achieve the targets set in the first phase, and phase three is a five-year action plan of initiatives to kick-start the strategy from 2010-2014. It includes phasing of tasks, allocation of responsibilities for execution, monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, it is complemented by a five-year market planning document.

ANALYSIS OF EGYPTIAN TOURISM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In reference to the above-mentioned literature on tourism planning goals, there is a difference in Gunn's (1994) and Goeldner and Ritchie's (2003) views concerning the elements that should be present in tourism planning goals and objectives. Gunn emphasized tourism as a business that should offer quality services while Goeldner and Ritchie emphasized the role that tourism plays in improving the standard of living of local residents. This is not to imply that other elements were not considered by these authors; there is, in fact, considerable overlap in their views and it is the emphasis that differs.

Based on a comparison of Gunn's (1994) views on the goals that should be present in tourism plans, and the Egyptian tourism plan objectives, it is found that there tends to be an over-representation of the first two goals (enhanced visitor satisfaction, and improved economy and business success), and a much weaker presence, if any, of the second two goals (protected resource assets, and community and area integration). The third goal of protected resource assets is highly underrepresented, with only one objectives relating to it. Tables 2 and 3 detail the presence of each of these goals.

Egyptian tourism planning tends towards Gunn's view of planning over that of Goeldner and Ritchie. The Egyptian tourism objectives include two aspects that are outside the scope of Goeldner and Ritchie's goals; these are expansion of the product base and promotion to the market. Further, Goeldner and Ritchie focus on aspects that are outside the scope of Egyptian tourism objectives such as appropriate development, and cultural, social and economic philosophy. The factors that do in fact overlap, do so minimally. For instance, one of Goeldner and Ritchie's goals, raising the standard of living of locals, is only represented by infrastructure and superstructure improvements, which may be developed primarily to serve tourists, but separating the benefits of these to tourists and residents can be difficult and unwise.

Hogwood and Gunn (1984, pp. 159-164) described a checklist of questions about objectives. These comprise the main questions that should be addressed by objectives, which should be referred to periodically to ensure their presence. The following section examines the presence of each of these items in the objectives in the Egyptian tourism development plan.

1. Where are you now?

Each objective includes a section entitled "background and issues" which describes the current situation regarding the respective objective, as well as issues that have been prominent in the past with regards to achieving that objective.

2. Where do you want to be?

The tourism vision is reflective of this: “A mature, sustainable and responsible tourism industry contributing significantly to the economic development of Egypt and the quality of life of its people - primarily through the creation of foreign earnings, public and personal income and employment”. The aspirations of this vision however are not quantified.

3. What’s stopping you?

Issues regarding the achievement of each objective are discussed briefly in the planning document.

4. What do you need from other agencies?

The NSTSP recognizes that the achievement of its goals is contingent on cooperation from ministries and bodies other than the Ministry of Tourism. The plan involves the creation of 13 panels of factors that are seen as necessary to achieve the objectives. These panels (access, security, transport, health and safety, business, marketing, planning, human resources development (HRD), infrastructure, environment, culture, community, and research) are comprised of different representatives from appropriate ministries, associations and authorities. A total of 45 bodies is mentioned, of which 23 are ministries, and the remainder are other public-sector bodies. There is no private-sector nor local community representation, although one of the bodies included is municipalities, which may or may not choose to involve the local community. The role of the private sector is described in a separate section, which discusses public-private partnership (PPP) as a means for involving the private sector in traditionally public sector infrastructure projects, particularly in cases where the public sector lacks the equipment and capability to carry out required developments.

5. What is required from whom in your agency?

The Ministry of Tourism is divided into four main branches: the Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA), the Tourism Development Authority (TDA), the Egyptian Tourism Federation (ETF), and the Council for Sustainable Tourism (CST). The plan outlines which of these is to be a lead entity in achieving each of the activities under each objective; however, there are no details concerning the specifics of who the tasks are delegated to.

6. How will you handle multiple objectives?

There is no mention of how different objectives that can potentially be incompatible will be addressed, no mention of prioritization and no discussion of the distribution of resources. One of the major areas for incompatibility of objectives is sustainability. This is made mention of in a section dedicated to sustainability: it is mentioned that sustainability considerations are central to drafting the strategy and that, if this is not achieved, the quality and competitiveness of Egyptian tourism will suffer, and that this will be reflected in the achievement of goals and objectives.

7. What will you regard as ‘success’?

Each objective has “objectively verifiable indicators” as well as the means of verification to indicate the achievement of the objective. Moreover, each objective is divided into several detailed activities and each activity has specific “success criteria” which are tangible tasks that should be completed.

8. Should success be quantified?

The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism adheres to the notion that success should be quantifiable as reflected by their selection of success criteria and methods of verification of objective achievement. Furthermore, the ultimate success is to be quantified based on achieving a target of 25 million visitors by 2020, which is double the number of visitors in 2008. Furthermore, developers hope to achieve an increase in revenue of two and a half times what it was in 2008.

9. *On what conditions is success contingent?*

One of the major conditions upon which the goals are contingent is that there is continued economic growth, both internationally and in Egypt, and that no outbreak of war or other major event occurs that would significantly constrain the success of tourism outside of the regular fluctuations in economic cycles.

10. *What will you do if objectives are not achieved?*

The possibility of failure is not considered and there is no room for feedback to create more robust and flexible objectives that can be adapted throughout the process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this examination of Egyptian tourism goals and objectives, the conclusion can be drawn that broad goals often fail to be translated into more specific objectives. Elements of sustainability and community development are mentioned in the title of the tourism development plan (National *Sustainable* Tourism Strategic Plan), as well as in the broad vision, but do not penetrate into the more specific objectives. Furthermore, they are not quantifiable, and not among the criteria upon which success is to be measured. Prominent factors that resonate throughout the plan are elements of increasing tourist numbers and tourism revenue. These are quantifiable and their goals are unequivocally and quantifiably stated in the planning documents. However, as argued above, these might be better regarded as means rather than ends, or perhaps as objectives rather than goals. As mentioned earlier, Hogwood and Gunn (1984, p. 156) noted that a problematic element in organizational goals is that stated and real goals may be inconsistent. Perrow (1961) outlined the differences between what he called “official” versus “operative” goals, where official goals are those stated in public statements while operative goals are those that are the actual goals of the organization. These may be presented as a means to achieve official goals but, due to the vagueness of the official goals, they in themselves become the final goals.

In order to improve the status of Egyptian tourism planning, it necessary for the official goals for tourism development, stated in the vision as “[a] mature, sustainable and responsible tourism industry contributing significantly to the economic development of Egypt and the quality of life of people”, to be translated into operational objectives. This should be done in a quantifiable manner so that the success of the plan can be gauged and improvements can be made as needed.

Furthermore, there is no prioritization of objectives, which creates the possibility of incompatibility between multiple objectives. The importance of this issue may become more apparent with the active implementation of sustainability and community objectives, which may conflict with goals of increasing tourist numbers and tourism revenue. It is, thus, recommended that the goals and objectives be prioritized, and that sustainability be placed at the top of the agenda.

Another element that should be considered is the flexibility of the plan. The proposed plan is a long-range plan that sets objectives based on assumptions of political, market and economic conditions that were prevalent during the time that the plan was being drafted. Since then, these situations have changed drastically in Egypt resulting from the January 25th revolution. The tourism industry has greatly suffered from this event, especially in the short-term

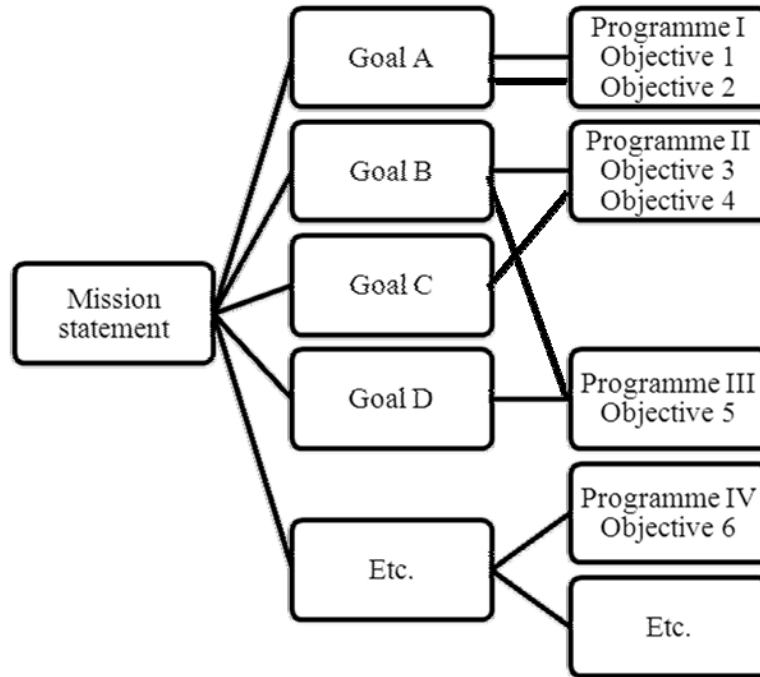
and the long-term implications remain unclear. The rigidity of the plan, however, does not allow for accommodating current circumstances by allowing for the amendment of goals and objectives. Related to this, is consideration of the situation in which objectives are not achieved. The plan does not address this as a possible outcome and what to do in this case.

CONCLUSION

The goals and objectives that are established for a tourism plan are critical to the success of tourism planning and development. These goals and objectives are not merely statements written in planning documents, but are ideologies that are embodied by organizations. Every aspect of the organization should be a manifestation of these goals, which should be reflective of broader national development objectives. Inadequately specified goals and objectives will reverberate throughout the plan, resulting in policies and other initiatives that do not meet the real needs for which tourism development is desired.

TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1
Mission-goals-objectives: hierarchy



Source: (Veal, 2002, p. 101)

Figure 2
Hierarchy of Egyptian Tourism Development Goals and Objectives

National Development Objectives

Vision 2020

High and sustainable economic growth, alleviation of poverty, attenuation of income disparities, creation of productive jobs and increased gender equality. It requires an annual growth of 7% in GDP

Sixth National Development Plan

Reduction in population concentration in the Nile valley and Delta, alleviating poverty and reducing social regional disparities, reducing unemployment and increasing standards of living and quality of life to comparable standards prevailing in advanced countries

Tourism

Vision: A mature, sustainable and responsible tourism industry contributing significantly to the economic development of Egypt and the quality of life of the people primarily through enhancing contribution to national income, job creation and foreign earnings

Tourism can contribute to national objectives through:

- Increased foreign exchange earnings
- Sustainable contribution to national income
- Enhanced employment and income opportunities
- More equitable distribution of benefits
- Improved/enhanced recreational facilities
- Conservation of cultural and environmental resources

National Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan (NSTSP)

Further develop tourism as a major engine for socio-economic growth, with a view to maximizing its economic impact through the creation of sustainable livelihoods and using tourism as a means to protect and preserve the country's unique cultural and natural heritage.

Objectives:

1. Ensure an appropriate institutional framework
2. Ensure easy access, safety and security
3. Expand the product base
4. Provide the necessary infrastructure and superstructure
5. Improve the quality of service
6. Promote the product to the market

Table 1

Goals of tourism development

Gunn (1994) and Sinha (1998)	McIntosh (1977) and Goeldner & Ritchie (2003)
1. Enhanced visitor satisfaction	1. Providing a framework for raising the living standard of the people through the economic benefits of tourism
2. Improved economy and business success	2. Developing an infrastructure and providing recreation facilities for visitors and residents
3. Protected	3. Ensuring types of development within visitor centers and resorts that are appropriate to the purposes of those areas

resource assets	4. Establishing a development program consistent with the cultural, social, and economic philosophy of the government and the people of the host country or area
4. Community and area integration	
	5. Optimizing visitor satisfaction (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003)

Table 2
Gunn's goals vs. Egypt's objectives for tourism planning

Gunn's (1994) goals that should be present					
Egypt tourism plan objectives		Visitor satisfaction	Economy and business success	Protected resource assets	Community and area integration
	1. Institutional framework		X		X
	2. Easy access, safety and security	X			X
	3. Expand product base	X	X	X	X
	4. Infrastructure and superstructure	X	X		X
	5. Quality of service	X	X		
	6. Promotion to the market		X		

Table 3
Goeldner & Ritchie's goals vs. Egypt's objectives for tourism planning

Goeldner and Ritchie's (2003) goals that should be present						
Egypt tourism plan objectives		Raising standard of living	Infrastructure and facilities	Appropriate development	Cultural, social, economic philosophy	Visitor satisfaction
	1. Institutional framework					
	2. Easy access, safety and security					X
	3. Expand product base					X
	4. Infrastructure and superstructure	X	X			X
	5. Quality of service		X			X
	6. Promotion to the market					

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