MARKETING PLAN
SOFT TOURISM IN THE ALPINE REGION: THE EXPERIENCE OF FUTOURIST
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Introduction

“Futourist” ITAT 2011 is funded by Interreg V-A Italia Austria 2014-2020 program and the three partners who take place on this project are the following: Camera di Commercio di Treviso-Belluno, Comune di Asiago, and Tiroler Umweltanwaltschaft. They all play a major role and, more importantly, they share the same vision and objectives for the tourism of the future. Before going into the details of this project, it is needed to understand the main goal of an Interreg program to underline the basic idea behind the planning of Futourist. An Interreg Europe program is characterized by the idea of creating a comfortable European environment and generating opportunities, between member states, to share solutions regarding the macro concerns of nowadays: territorial equality and sustainability. The idea behind Futourist is to minimize the environmental, cultural, and experiential differences between the three areas in question by implementing a total of 40 thematic and emotional itineraries. This is possible with the collaboration of the Province of Belluno and the Municipality of Asiago in Italy, and the region of Tirol in Austria. These three areas have an important thing in common; they are located in one of the world’s most unique places, the Alps. The Alpine region is the highest and most extensive mountain range that lies entirely in Europe, characterized by a huge variety of natural and cultural aspects. However, the Alps, being such a naturalistic and mountainous environment, are also suffering the effects caused by climate change and mass tourism in those areas. We have reached a point in which we have to rethink the way of making tourism more sustainable, with less impact on lands, animals, and nature by decreasing infrastructures and pollution, but also by educating the tourists and operators on behaving respectfully and preserving this natural heritage. Therefore, Futourist is applied to alpine resorts that are less known to the mass tourism, and it aims to promote an emotional and thematic type of tourism, far removed from the exploitation of mountain infrastructures; tourism called “soft tourism”. The idea behind soft tourism is to make unique and characteristic destinations available to a specific range of travellers and provide them experiences and authenticity on their way. It will not have just a positive impact on the environment, but it will be able to offer an alternative kind of tourism and satisfy the needs and wants of new generations. Nowadays, the new travellers are requiring more and more from just a simple trip; anywhere they go they are looking for connections with the local
population and culture instead of living their own experience among the usual use of goods, services, and attractions that helped that destination to become famous. This paper aims to provide the marketing plan for Futourist and to analyse the different strategies for the promotion of the authentic areas in which the 40 itineraries are proposed. The first part will contextualize the project by describing the external situation and trends and listing the main objectives of this project. The second part will propose a benchmarking to introduce what other areas are doing to promote soft tourism on the Alpine region. The third part will describe the target market of this project by specifying its needs, wants, and characteristics. The fourth part will be dedicated to the actual marketing strategies, specifically, covering the topics of promotion and place. The fifth and last part will describe few examples of itineraries to show concretely the marketing actions applied to this project.

1. “Futourist”: The Project

Different dynamics bring tourism to a continuous evolution: economic policies, generational changes, new lifestyles and interests to different values, and, last but not least, the purchasing power. It is established that crises over the years do not affect general trends, however, they can modify the touristic flow from one area to another, and doing so, they can certainly have an impact on these destinations. In the actual context where competitiveness is becoming stronger and stronger, all the tourist destinations feel the need of implementing new and innovative strategies and create other relationships. The three areas in question for Futourist project are living the same conditions; they need to develop new itineraries to guarantee economic, cultural, and natural sustainability. This decision has been taken from the fact that people are changing their way of travelling, striving for eco-friendly and sustainable solutions. It appears that these solutions are also changing the way of experiencing destinations and travels, in a way much closer to the local realities. Where travellers once talked about what they saw or did, they now focus more intently on whom they met on the road. There is a real interest in interacting genuinely with other people and cultures, and tour operators and hotels are responding. It is now de rigueur to offer travellers some sort of moment where a local opens up his or her doors for a conversation, a meal and more. In an American Express survey commissioned in 2018, consumers illustrated their demand for more enriched lives and personal fulfillment through experience.
and learning. Over 72% of respondents said they would rather spend money on experiences than things. Further, 88% said travel is the number one dream on their life’s bucket list, ranking higher than family or wealth. Consumers want to have life-fulfilling experiences when they travel, and they are seeking travel experiences that closely align with their values. For example, customers are looking for travel experiences that will allow them to interact with the local community; they want to visit private homes, schools, and smaller villages. American Express recently polled a group of its travel “counsellors” (agents) to ask them what trends they are seeing for summer travel. Of them, 34% responded that their customers are specifically looking to immerse themselves in the destinations they visit and to travel like a local. The second aspect to consider, when talking about soft tourism and the new travel trends, is the actual climate change and air pollution situation. Tourism is one of the most predominant industries in terms of numbers and statistics; it is almost inevitable not to generate negative impacts to nature and lands. Nowadays, a greater awareness of our influence is required to preserve the natural heritage of the entire world. Futourist project aims to this type of tourism; a “soft”, sensory, emotional, and thematic way of travelling, which is far from the massification and infrastructure in the mountains. Futourist promotes and valorises the jewels of Alpine nature through a tourism with “near-zero” environmental impact, and that goes hand in hand with the care and preservation of the Alpine region. It is a sort of tourism with the right capabilities for attracting more and more foreign visitors, especially those coming from emerging countries, that show increasing interest in sportive outdoor activities linked to the mountains. Futourist was designed for the less popular Alpine locations, unknown to mass tourism in the Province of Belluno, in the Municipality of Asiago and Tyrol. These locations are all perfectly conforming to the new touristic formats to practice summer and winter sports in an ideal environment for those who wish to retreat and recharge their energies, thereafter, experiencing physical and mental wellness. Futourist’s goal is to promote the cultural heritage of the Alpine region through soft tourism, which is capable of improving the state of preservation of the delicate Alpine habitat and creating the right balance between its use and its safeguard. A consultation with the industries operating in the touristic sector (such as tourism promotion organizations, associations and NGOs for the management of natural resources), brought to identification of 7 experimental regions (4 in Italy and 3 in Austria). The scope is to allocate in these 7 locations a total of 40 thematic tours where
various outdoor activities can be practiced. The cooperation between the partners will propose to the tourist new experiences, which will offer the pleasure of discovering the environmental and cultural diversity of the cross-border region. Futourist aims to increase the flow of visitors by diversifying and customize activities for ethical tourists, families, adventurers, and sportspeople. The promotion of these areas will be achieved through low environmental impact policies that can, at the same time, educate the local operators and the tourist themselves to protect and safeguard the beautiful heritage in which they are operating or just visiting.

Three Current Trends

The market analysis is a very useful tool to identify the actual trends and megatrends and better contextualize the project and its objectives. Concerning to what is happening in the world, businesses and industries are shaping the way of creating value and making a profit for themselves. Tourism industry is nothing less than any other sector and it has to deal with life changes and be flexible enough to adapt to the new way of living. The three megatrends that are impacting tourism everywhere in the world are:

- **Sustainability:** it is a broad matter in the world that is, most probably, one of the strongest events dictating the new rules for the future. For tourism, to be sustainable, it has to become more and more independent from the needed resources available (or even not). It has to be able to create and develop an alternative offer for mass tourism to reduce the impact on the environment and other needed assets for doing business.

- **Experience economy:** the world is no longer about the product and service offered to the guest. The world is becoming more and more complex with digitalization and the internet of things (IoT). People rather pay more for an experience than an expensive cloth, and this phenomenon brings to another aspect that tourism industry has to deal with: customization and high level of flexibility.

  People want to be treated differently from each other’s, by getting a different service and, simply, perceiving a different experience at the end of their trip. What is one of the hardest things to do? Make everything accessible to everyone.
• **Lifestyle improvement**: people are becoming more and more aware of their health and wellbeing. This leads to eat better, do more sport, and look for vacations in wilder places, do outdoor activities to experience the place and the culture. With so much unwellness embedded in today’s travel, wellness tourism brings the promise of combating those negative qualities and turning travel into an opportunity to maintain and improve our holistic health.

Futourist’s objectives were designed and implemented by considering the importance of the 5 reasons for the project to exist in those areas and the huge impact that the three megatrends are having on tourism within the last few decades.

### 2. Target Market

Generally speaking, to find the target market means identifying the different clients (travellers) who are potentially interested in a specific product or service. It is essential to collect as much
information as possible to define the right persona for a good for sale. Futourist is not offering either goods or services, but real and unique experiences in the Alpine region, with the purpose of diving into wellbeing, nature, and other cultural aspects that need to be present in every human being’s life to boost and improve the standards of living. Futourist’s clients can be many; they go from young teenagers to adults and families, from cultural travellers to sportsmen, adventurers, and athletes. However, they are all combined by the same 5 reasons depicted above in the previous part of this paper; a tourist striving for the soft tourism, whether it is an adult or a child, a sportsman or an entire family, it is trying to have the least possible negative and economic impact in nature and local population and to live a memorable experience at the same time. To make things easier, a table with a short description of the common travellers for soft tourism divided by range of age is presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE RANGE</th>
<th>MOTIVATION</th>
<th>TYPE OF ITINERARIES</th>
<th>PURCHASING POWER</th>
<th>NEEDS AND WANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 - 70</td>
<td>NATURE</td>
<td>FLAT PATHS</td>
<td>FROM 60 TO 80 EURO INDIVIDUALLY</td>
<td>REFRESHMENT POINT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CULTURE</td>
<td>PAVED PATHS</td>
<td>FROM 130 TO 150 EURO WITH TOUR OPERATO</td>
<td>WELL EQUIPPED CAMPSIDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMFORT &amp; RELAX</td>
<td>SAFETY ITINERARIES</td>
<td></td>
<td>HOTELS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GASTRONOMY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TOURISTIC INFORMATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 50</td>
<td>SPORT</td>
<td>NEW PLACES TO DISCOVER</td>
<td>SUFFICIENT PURCHASING POWER AND TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT</td>
<td>MAINTENANCE SERVICES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INTENSIVE TRAINING</td>
<td>CHALLENGING AND TECHNICAL PATHS</td>
<td></td>
<td>HOTELS AND CAMPING (OF ANY CLASS RATING)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADVENTURE</td>
<td>LONG PATHS</td>
<td></td>
<td>REFRESHMENT POINT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NATURE AND RELAX</td>
<td>SAFETY AND SIGNED ITINERARIES</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FAMILY TRIP</td>
<td>GROUP TRIPS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TEAM BUILDING</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With such a diverse range of itineraries and activities that the three areas have designed and represent, there is a wide range of people who will exploit their products and services. The main motivations vary between:
Nature: more and more visitors wish to spend some time in natural environments. One of the most important peculiarities of the Alpine region is the diversify and spectacular landscape and the distinctive features of the Alps to see and explore. Futourist allows the operators to create emotional itineraries and for the tourists to go through unique experiences in a still uncontaminated environment. Nowadays, humans need to find new feelings to the nature; lately, we have lost connections with it and we are not respecting it as much as we should do. Therefore, the reason for spending one day, a weekend, or more in such a spotless place, as the Alpine region, helps a lot to understand the importance of preserving the nature to save the humanity.

Sport and relaxation: who comes to the mountain for a vacation with friends, family, or by itself, is looking for a retrieving experience, putting the mental and physical wellbeing first. First thing first to mark, relaxation in nature does not mean looking for infrastructures that can offer the spa services or professional masseur, however, the environment and the activities are the only relaxing source for the tourist. This brings athletes and sports lovers to perform some extreme exercises in these areas, but not only. Other characters such as elders, families, or other groups, might want to enjoy the panorama performing a soft sport; therefore, they can hike or rent an e-bike and explore around without ever getting too exhausted.

Gastronomy: gastronomic tourism includes visiting food producers, eating festivals, restaurants and special places related to some special foods together with tasting a special dish, observing its production and preparation processes or eating a special dish from the hands of a very famous chef as well as seeing how a certain dish is being prepared. Therefore, the industry of gastronomic tourism, which does not consist only of food guides and restaurants, covers any kind of culinary experience. The areas where Futurist is taking place have a not indifferent level of culture and traditions. Every place have a slightly different cuisines that a traveller can taste and enjoy, and agriculture is one of the main industries in these places; thus, it provides the guests actual experiences by showing the way of cooking a dish, or the different methods of growing and harvesting fruits and vegetables.
**Team Building:** it might not be the most relevant between the mentioned motivations above, but, recently, it is taking place in the business world a lot, and therefore, it is becoming an important tourism promoter. Team building programs, often organized outdoors, offer participants a chance to learn as a team by living wonderful experiences together. They also let participants explore new places and deal with life values that have been ignored due to their busy lifestyles. Team building programs help people relax and ease the burden of their jobs and these programs force everyone in the team to act, play and think together. It’s an opportunity for the leaders to evaluate their staff’s strengths and weaknesses, but above all, a team-building program is the easiest way to link individuals into a unified bloc. Futourist has the right credentials to be exploited by corporates and businessmen to bring their team up on the Alps and share a value-rich experience deep inside nature.

According to the EURAC study, the market niche for Futourist is all those people that have in common the interest for outdoor, sports, culture, and nature. By saying so, it identifies four mega generational groups that can be described as such: Millennials, young families, DINKS (double income no kids), and the active retirees (or pensioners). The more important aspects to consider, by dividing the target market between these four groups, are the behavioural and attitudinal characteristics of them and the needs and wants to satisfy their requests:
Different target markets have different budgets, attitudes, approaches, and interests, and these aspects lead them to a huge variety of choices when designing their holidays and during the decision making process. Tour operators and destinations have to be aware of these features as they are important for customization and the delivery of satisfying services and products. A positive result will increase value and reputation, and, as last, obtain a higher profitability to invest and make these beautiful places more sustainable and entertaining at the same time; therefore, it increases the tourist flow in these less known areas of the Alpine region by attracting the niche market and deliver an adequate experience.

3. “Futourist’s” Objectives

Futourist project was born from the idea of giving the opportunity to different areas in the Alps to develop a sort of soft tourism for those people who for culturally and emotionally intense
experiences deep in nature. However, there are several motivations for this project to be implemented, and they underline the 4 objectives that have to be achieved:

40 Itineraries in 7 Areas

Interreg V-A Italia-Austria ITAT 2011 is a cooperation program that intends to deal with the main cross-border challenges affecting the Italian-Austrian border area focusing on development potential. The two regions are characterized by mountainous borders and they share a very similar landscape in which Futourist needs to be realized. By consulting businesses of the touristic sector, tourism promotion organizations, and association for the management of natural resources, 7 pilot areas have been identified (3 in Belluno, 1 in Asiago, and 3 in Tyrol) in which sustainable tourism has to be promoted and 40 thematic itineraries have to be designed to practice outdoor activities and excursions.
All the chosen itineraries have been illustrated, starting from their localization, level of difficulties, their target market, and their main characteristics, peculiarities, and emotional aspects. Some kinds of outdoor activities considered for these areas are trekking, Nordic-walking, and the mountain-bike due to the perfect suitability on the territory. Moreover, four main themes that characterize the itineraries have been identified: landscape, history, culture, and local products. Of course, the thread between all these features is nature, the main character of this project. Also, all locations considered for the project have divided the proposed itineraries between four thematic areas, according to the main aspect that characterizes the itinerary: landscape, history, culture, local product. Every single itinerary has been classified between 4 thematic areas (landscape, cultural, historical, and local product) and technically described on paper to report the main features. Having a clearer idea of the following details is an important aspect for every single traveller who wants to perform the excursion:

- Difficulties, altitudes, type of soil, use or not of technical equipment;
- General description to answer the “W questions” – What do you see? Where do you go? What do you do? How to get there? Why do you want to do it? How do you do it?
- At the question “How do you do it”, different itineraries can be done in different ways by performing different sports – walking, e-bike, mountain bike, horse riding. Most of these activities are impact zero for nature, this means that they do not require any CO2 emission or other polluting aspects.

The way for promoting and communicating these itineraries can be very difficult for those who are used to work with traditional marketing tools. The next part of this paper will analyse some marketing aspects that need to be implemented to attract and invite the right customers to these areas. On
October 29th, 2018 the storm Vaia knocked down also in Belluno a huge number of trees and hundreds of kilometres of forest, roads, and trails have been restored. Therefore, Futourist’s itineraries have been checked again and some stretched have been rearranged, cleaned up, and the downed trees removed.

Promotion of Initiatives and Alternative Activities

The second objective concerns the creation and promotion of alternate activities to propose along the itineraries. The resolution for this challenge comes from those who tracked the paths and studied the traditions and culture of the local inhabitants. Why is culture so important in this case? Why not creating a general attraction that can reach the attention of most people? It is of paramount importance that these areas and the experiences that people can live remain authentic and traditional. One of the most important pillars of the project is to preserve the locations and their folklores by delivering authenticity and real experiences. Real experiences mean experiences that are concerning and pertinent to what the area can offer. In other words, authenticity has to come out from the actual culture and not from the fantasy of other people just to make business. It represents the risk of using creativity in making tourism more attractive by finding the right balance between the real culture and the fiction, preserving the natural resources and the traditions of that specific destination. Finally, to make these itineraries easily accessible, each trail has been arranged, mapped, and provided a wooden display – in Italian and English – referring to the characteristics of the trail. A specific QR code enables the connection through the smartphone to the digitalized path which is kept by the following website: www.dolomitiprealpi.it. This solution minimises signs installation along the paths and removes future maintenance costs. It also meets the needs of the growing number of highly skilled hikers and bikers that want to get detailed and updated information.

Increase Tourist Flow in the Less Known Areas

According to the SWOT analysis made by EURAC of the Province of Belluno and Dolomites region, the foreign presence, in the last years, increased by 14.9%. It is an important number to consider
in order to achieve the third objective of this project: to increase by 10% of the tourist flow in the less known areas of the alpine region. There is the potential to obtain positive results by applying the right strategies to increment the visitors in those areas. Most importantly, the investment in marketing and advertisement has to focus on the quality and not much the quantity. The quality of the advertisements has to be related to the way of attracting the attention of the right people instead of a huge undiversified group of people, by matching their taste and expectation with the correct media contents. The right people are those described in the second part of this paper; people with the interest in nature, outdoor, sport, and sustainable activities. Tourist operators in these areas must not create infrastructure or huge environmental impact attractions to reach the attention of people that would not visit those areas otherwise. They need to concentrate on the niche market and offer the added value of authentic experience to tempt more people with the same passions. Finally, to let the general public and stakeholders be aware of the potential and the beauty of these areas and their itineraries, it was thought to promote them through organized events. In particular, the best strategic way would be combining specific events for the selected itineraries with the calendar of already existing and well-known public events around the near locations.

Reduction of the CO2

Last but not least, Futourist’s fourth objective is related to the current issues arising from increasing environmental awareness. Technically, the itineraries proposed to the project are already characterized by a low level of CO2, however, the goal is to reduce this level by applying sustainable strategies that can also attract more people to rise the visitors by 10% (see objective 3). These fun and alternative activities offered to travellers’ concern, for example, the different ways of reaching the place or walk it to the end. Recently, it is evolving the idea of using an e-bike to achieve places that other people would not go without. The e-bike make the approachability easier and funnier, moreover, it makes it possible for a huge variety of people. Indeed, it is disappearing the idea behind an e-bike that only older people use it; it is becoming an interesting approach to the mountain for families and youngers. However, Futourist is also working on increasing the awareness of less known areas of the
Alpine region, it wants to achieve the goal by implementing sustainable strategies and low environmental impact ideas, keeping away mass tourism and welcoming people with good intentions and respect for nature and local traditions.

4. Marketing Mix, Communication, and Marketing Strategies

A marketing plan outlines the specific actions that are intended to carry out to interest potential customers and clients in the product and/or service and persuade them to buy the product and/or services sold in the market. A marketing plan may be developed as a standalone document or as part of a business plan. Either way, it is a blueprint for communicating the value of your products and/or services to your customers. The fourth part of this paper aims to analyse the different communication actions and marketing strategies that are going to be implemented to promote Futourist as an alternative way of travelling/generating value for tourism. First thing first, a marketing mix is proposed to summarize the key terms of this project and orientate the paper to a more real marketing vision. The marketing mix includes the famous 4Ps of marketing: product, price, place, promotion. Given the fact that the previous parts of the marketing plan were talking a lot about the product and the place where the product is going to be implemented, it would be more important to focus on price and promotion to close the loop of this document.
**Product** is an item offered for sale and it can be a service or a tangible good; therefore, it can be physical, non-physical, or in virtual/digital form. In this case, it takes the shape of a project with clear intentions to change the way of visiting a place. It can be seen as a set of services and products designed around the same objectives, to achieve a final result: increasing the number of visitors in the less known Alpine areas between Italy and Austria with a low environmental impact and CO2 free activities. More specifically, Futourist represents 40 transborder itineraries, which have been created under the guideline of a project. The final result is the achievement of soft tourism by preserving the authenticity of these locations and increasing awareness between tourists with similar passions and interests in nature and healthy activities.

**Price** is the monetary value of a product or service. In this case, Futourist offer itineraries that can be walked or cycled from a vast variety of people and the access to these itineraries does not involve any payment for the actual journey. However, some other aspects have to be considered when talking about price. Generally, a traveller needs food, sleep, and fun in a traditional holiday, and this is why we use lodges, restaurants, and local attractions to fulfil our expectations and needs; hence, it depends on the supplier whether we are going to be satisfied or not. Futourist’s total price may vary depending on the guests and their decisions. There are two cases to be considered in calculating the price that one person is going to pay:

- First case, the traveller accesses the itinerary by his/her own, do not pay any travel package, but his/her total sum for the holiday depends on hotel rating, quality food, entertainments and extra costs. Nothing is included, the final price depends on the single decisions of the customer.
- Second case, the traveller accesses the itinerary via tour package, in which services and experiences are included in the total price and he/she has a clearer idea of the sum he/she is going to pay.

**Promotion** is an important part of this paper. Promotion refers to the entire set of activities, which communicate the product, brand or service to the user. The idea is to make people aware, attract and induce to buy the product, in preference over others. Several types of promotions are characterized
by different approaches to the audience, different tools and channels to communicate something, different timing and, generally speaking, different strategies to achieve the expected results from a marketing campaign. However, the main character in Futourist is ‘soft tourism’; as the project implies, its promotion is a little bit different from the traditional one. Soft tourism is a kind of alternative tourism and, on the other hand, an answer to mass tourism. Whilst in alternate tourism the focus is on the economic and social issues, in soft tourism the emphasis is on cultural and environmental matters. In the second part of this paper, different types of targets are reported, and they represent the ideal traveller that would walk and trek in one of Futourist’s itineraries. All targets have different needs, wants, and budget, despite so, they all share the same interest for nature and sport. So, the question is, how to combine leisure, sport, and culture to promote the territory and its cultural traditions. The intent is to attract those tourists interested in exploring spotless places in the Alps, experiencing the local traditions and culture through activities or by living in local people’s houses, and promoting the amazing holiday that they can have in such an unconventional place. Culture has to be defined as a vital element for soft tourism. However, the tour operators have to pay attention to preserving it and not modifying it, as it could result in a loss of authenticity that is an important ingredient to make experiences unique. There is a crucial concept to be described even before listing the traditional and non-traditional marketing channels to use for an efficient campaign, and it is the following: to efficiently promote soft tourism, the 5 perception organs of the audience have to be switched on, and if the received message does so, it means that it was successfully delivered. Therefore, a typical advertisement has to be visual, audible, somehow pleasant in both smell and taste, and tangible. It does not sound like an easy way to make advertisements, but in this case, it appears to be extremely efficient. The most effective tools to be used for delivering sensory messages are videos, applications, social network, 3D effects and virtual reality. Virtual reality is not considered as an option in Futourist project, therefore, not much is going to be said. However, it is the only real tool that can satisfy the idea of switching on all 5 perception organs, making the guest living the experience from far distance and creating the feeling of being right there. By using social network and the presence of a famous influencer who is showing an experience, walking the itinerary, and expressing real emotions, can be a good substitute to a very expensive marketing channel like virtual reality. The habits to use a video are related to the fact that it maintains a good level of
authenticity, it creates a 360 degrees expectation, and it is audible and not just visible like a picture. The cons are related to the risk of creating false expectations and inability to send the right message and, at the end, to deliver on promise. A video is too complete and fulfilling to be used in a random manner, hence, a good analysis and production phase has to be performed before creating any media content and make them viral. The characteristics of authenticity and sustainability of a tourism product are not always obvious or visible to customers. Therefore, it is essential to communicate these features in a way that reaches guests at the emotional level. However, instruments to increase the emotionality level are only successful for certain targets and it is achieved differently in different country. Three marketing tips are given to start thinking the right way to communicate soft tourism in less known areas:

- The first tip recommends including specific information aiming to reflect destination authenticity, heritage values, and cultural sensitivity. Also, it recommends including elements of local food and culture as eco-friendly and ethical tourists can rise the desire to experience the taste and feel of a place.
- The second marketing tip is to inform tourists about their impact on the environment, as they need to be educated as much as the current operators to preserve the authenticity of the place. It can be done by encouraging pro-environmental values and attitudes, mentioning crucial sustainable benefits of product to build favourable behaviours toward these, and, last but not least, reporting product labelling to symbolise commitment to sustainability.
- The third tip mentions being original and creative in utilizing authentic images to illustrate the uniqueness of the product. Images can induce both cognitive and emotional decision-making. It also suggests using a mix of oral, visual and written advertisement as every person has different styles of absorbing information. Customization is a crucial aspect at this point, it addresses the message singularly to every customer and it delivers authenticity by reaching the WOW-effect.
Finally, a list of conventional and unconventional marketing tools is listed below to have an idea of the materials and instruments that Futourist can work with (or already worked with) to build an efficient communication and marketing campaign. The marketing channels are split between **Online** and **Offline**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ONLINE</strong></th>
<th><strong>OFFLINE</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Futourist website and other partners’ websites</td>
<td>Tv, radio, newspaper, and flyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook page, Instagram, Twitter</td>
<td>Sport and tourism promotion events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism and sport blog</td>
<td>Workshop attendance and disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Ads, targeted advertising</td>
<td>of paper material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising banners and digital engagement</td>
<td>Educational press conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotional support to the corporate network</td>
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**Place** is the fourth and last marketing P. Place is the process of moving products from the producer to the intended user is called place. In other words, it is how your product is bought and where it is bought. This movement could be through a combination of intermediaries such as distributors, wholesalers and retailers. In addition, a newer method is the internet which itself is a marketplace now. Futourist is a peculiar example, as it was for the 3 Ps. Place in Futourists refers to the 40 itineraries, or where the services, experiences, and all other additional aspects to complete the holiday, are located. Place in Futourist is essential and very much characterized; Futourist aims to bring exceptional and targeted tourism to the most unknown areas of Alps, therefore, place plays a very important role in all project. In the next part, three different itineraries will be presented and described to make the idea of a Futourist’s product clearer.
In the final flyer of the project, the seven areas have been divided in pages to briefly describe their products, which are divided in themes. For example, the first Alpine area mentioned in the flyer is Agordino:

In regard to all 44 itineraries, several key activities and production processes have been identified and they are specifically linked to the nature of every single area. In the case of Futourist all key activities are addressed to the final customers and they characterize the uniqueness of all the trekking offered in these spotless and amazing areas. Every single activity below needs attention and development, as it is fundamental to keep a level of innovation and diversification from other already existing itineraries:

- Construction of commercial products around the treks (without losing authenticity and by preserving local traditions)
- Promotion and communication
- B2B and B2C commercialization
- Education, on-site assistance, and hospitality
- Tasting of local products
- Accessibility
- Experiential itineraries, excursions, discovering the territory and its peculiarities
- Sport training and infrastructure development
The creation of formal and informal networks to support the current project will be the real challenge for the operators and it will determine the success of this initiative. The DMS, destination management system, is a crucial instrument to use in this case, it is an innovative software that integrates activities and resources, and, subsequently, creates final products to offer to the final guests as tourist package or dynamic packaging.

5. Emerging Economies and Itineraries

The definition of workshop in marketing leads to the idea of a workplace where demand meets supply. It is an organized event in which destinations, tourist locations, tour operators, and other sellers meet a selected audience to offer their proposals. The organization has to identify the right location with the right equipment to perform the workshop, invite a selected audience between sellers and buyers to succeed with the main objective, delivery of promotional papers in different language, delivery of gadgets, and maybe, an aperitif included, which is a good social chance for networking with the present people to the workshop. The 3 target markets that Futourist chose to aim are:

CZECH REPUBLIC
GREAT BRITAIN
FINLAND

Czech Republic, in 2016, has confirmed the validity of macroeconomic indicators: GDP increased by 2.5%, affirmed by the Czech Central Bank in 2017-2018. The relationship between public debt and GDP decreased by 38.4% and the inflation rate maintaining a stable level over the years. Italy is the fifth supplier for Praga, and sixth commercial partner; in 2017 it achieved a new record with a growth of 5.7% compared to the previous year. Also, in 2017 they have built new air routes (or
connecting flights) with the peninsula; it brought to a major improvement in the tourism sector. The Czech tour operators are active in the Italian market, they consider our country one of the most demanded destination between others for the perfect vacation abroad. Italy is extremely diversified and easily reachable for them. 30% of Czech tourists in Italy are for the winter holiday, while 20% is for culture and architecture city.

**Great Britain** is the 5\textsuperscript{th} world economy and second in Europe. All its industrial sectors have contributed to the growth of the country, especially transports and export. In 2017 British have travelled 72.8 million foreign trips, which is a data increased by 3% compared to the previous year. Despite the average per capita expenditure have decreased from 618 pounds in 2016 to 616 pounds in 2017, the interest in travelling and visiting Italy has significantly increased. Italy is in third place between the preferred destination of British people. The more requested Italian regions are Veneto, Campania, Lombardia, Toscana, Lazio, and Trentino-Alto Adige. The average stay for British in Italy goes from 7 nights, and the fast and frequent connecting flights between the two countries brings to a periodic visit of people from Great Britain. The most common reasons for visiting the country are discovering the Italian peculiarities, tasting wine and gastronomy, local products, history, and our beautiful landscape and panorama.

**Finland**, in the last decade, recorded one of the slowest economic performances between European countries. However, in 2018, the country performed very well despite the economic crisis. It is characterized by small dimensions market, with 5 million citizens, but with a high purchasing power. The welfare of the country increased from 0.8% to 2.2% in nominal value and the unemployment rate decreased by 0.4% with a forecast of improvement for the years to come. The recent turnaround with a positive sign is having a positive impact on the tertiary sector, tourism. Indeed, Finnish spend an average per capita of 2340 euro in foreign travels. They have the preference for travelling toward warm climate countries, such as the south of Italy, however, a good mountain trekking in summer season is also a good option. The main reasons for travelling are characterized by natural and landscape aspects, but
also food, local products, and history. As they are very well educated, with a wide range of language spoken, they can travel easily everywhere, with a different spirit of the traveller.

One of the most important objectives for Futourist is to increase the arrivals on the less known areas of 7 different transborder zones. All these destinations and itineraries are characterized by natural, historical, gastronomical, and cultural aspects, preserving the authenticity of their traditions and costumes. It aims to sustainable development in the mountain area. The fifth part of this marketing plan is also dedicated to the presentation of two different itineraries created for the success of this project. The itineraries described below belong to the three different areas in question; the first one is located in Agordino, the second one is in Asiago and the third one is in Tyrol.

**Agordino** results in an ideal place to enhance the less known areas, where there is no mass tourism, but that own prestigious elements and remarkable cultural, natural, and recreational location to put in scene. These elements allow the Futourist tourists to lose himself in the beauty of nature combining soft sports with historical, cultural, and food and wine aspects, creating the type of soft tourism by Futourist project. The positive trend registered in the tourism sectors are good signs of development even they cannot be compared to the numbers registered in areas with great touristic flows. Futourist can become an opportunity for many tour operators to pursue the development required by giving clear objectives to achieve collectively. It can create new working opportunities recalling to young people, who moved away for professional reasons and motivating others to remain in their native places, hence, valorising the richness of their culture and traditions. A pleasant and non-binding excursion that offers the chance to see the footsteps of the dinosaurs, discovered by Vittorino Cazzetta, a local man of few words but a great passion for mountain and solitary wanderings to the discovery of traces of the past and just on the mountain during one of his lonely excursion he lost his life still young. Already in 1970, he had identified the footprints of dinosaurs dated 220 million years ago on a boulder detached from Pelmetto.
A lot of time goes by still before he decides to talk to someone about this discovery. Now they still are at the time the first findings with these characteristics in Italy. From Passo Staulanza, take the path n. 472 which runs through the wood along Monte Pelmetto and leads to cross the path that goes up to the rock. The latter is slippery in some sections due to the dirt and gravel ground. From the bottom it is already possible to see the boulder and climbing up towards the wall of Mount Pelmetto, you reach the place of discovery. Here you can see three distinct dinosaur tracks from the Triassic period. This excursion is easy and suitable for the whole family and it is complementary to the visit of the Vittorino Cazzetta museum, in Selva di Cadore, which with its exhibition rooms, guides the visitor to the geological history of the valley: it offers a synthesis, starting from prehistory, of the Val Fiorentina, showing the geological conformation of the Dolomites and guards the skeleton of the “Man of Mondeval”, in an intact Mesolithic sepulchre, with a rich funeral equipment, another sensational discovery in 1987 by Vittorino Cazzetta. Valmo, as this Mesolithic man was called, dates back to 7500 years ago and it is the main character of the museum which every year welcomes lots of young students, families and scientists who want to discover more about this ancient valley. Who knows how many other witnesses of the past the land here keeps still undiscovered?

Asiago is the second area in question and the described itinerary has natural, cultural, and historical aspects. It is an easy trek for hikers and family, so they can enjoy the beautiful landscape of this uncontaminated place. The route starts from the forecourt of the Ice Stadium and arrives firstly to a clearing of the Prunno, a natural glade where a cabin-restaurant (equipped with games for children) is located. From the clearing it is possible to reach the archaeological site Riparo Battaglia dating back to about 13,000 years ago. From here the path goes deep into the wood and following a detour down the main forest track it is possible to reach two sites of historical interest linked to the presence of the allies during the First War World (ospedaletti militari del Barenthal and English cemetery). Going back down the same road the itinerary continues towards the Lazzaretto and the church of San Sisto. These places hold a great historical-cultural value since in old times they were bonded to the plague epidemic of the 1600 and the following Grande Rogazione, a 33km honorary procession which is held 40 days after Easter and retrace the ancient borders of Asiago. Moving on, the route passes by the Scogli delle Ave
where there is the opportunity to see some characteristic geological formation of the Altopiano as the outcrops of red Sandstone. Finally, the path goes back toward the historic centre of Asiago coming across the Contrada Ave and the Museo delle Carceri. For those who plan to travel the itinerary on mountain bike there is a variation that, passed the graveyard of the Barenthal, goes on toward the Pria dell’Acqua, the Baito Töerle to then reach the Museo dell’Acqua. The museum is dedicated to the fauna and flora of the pools of pasture and to the history of the water on the Altopiano, in particular of his shortage due to the karstic territory. Right near the museum, going down the pointed-out path, it’s possible to see some karstic chasms. Furthermore, inside the chasms, an educational cave was staged to allow the children to live the experience of the cave.

**Tyrol** is the third region participating in this project and the itinerary presented is three days trekking between the farms and houses of Hollbruck. Starting from the beautifully situated hamlet of Hollbruck the trail takes us first through woodlands and then along the edge of meadows above the farms of Fasching Draschler Walcher Segger and Schuster on the “Kartischer Schattseite” (the shady side of Kartitsch). Then the path follows the Gail River past the former mills at the Gail-Höfe and Wies-Höfe farms. It is worth taking a short detour to see the Walcher Mill which is still operational. Via the Innerwies-Hof the farm we make our way up to the “sunny side” in the direction of St Oswald and from there continue through an exceedingly charming agricultural landscape of small farms along the meadow track to Kartitsch. The second stage of the farmland trail leads from Kartitsch out onto the “sunny side” towards Innerlerch and then up along the edge of the woodland towards the Kartitsch Saddle. Here the route leads through picturesque larch meadows – shrewdly arranged cultivated land with a dual purpose: to provide larch timber and pasture in the same area. From here the path follows the course of the “alter Kirchsteig” or old church path past the Äußerst the old Prünster and the Ebner farms before it continues above Inderst into the forest and heads slightly downhill towards Obertilliach. Passing through the village of Rodarm you reach the centre of “Obertillga” village with its tightly packed group of old smallholdings. The third-day route starts at Obertilliach and heads in the direction of Untertilliach via the village’s fields with their many haycocks and their two venerable chapels. Age-old trails lead past Huben and Aue to Untertilliach’s Klammberg mountain from which the view out across
the Lesach Valley opens up for the first time. Once out of Untertilliach’s village centre where the mill next to the house at Niescherhof has recently been renovated the route leads on up the last but perhaps the most attractive section of the farmland trail: over the Kirchberg mountain to Eggen. An incredibly varied agricultural landscape with constantly alternating flowering meadows individual trees and wooden barns can be seen along this part of the route. We pass by remote farms before the path leads us slightly downhill into the hamlet of Wacht. Sights worthy of particular note on the Kirchberg and in Eggen are the numerous renovated granaries: grain stores belonging to the farms in which cereal crops were stored for the whole family in such a way as to protect them from fire theft and vermin.
Conclusions

Futourist is a crucial initiative for the territories of Asiago, Belluno and Tirol. The projects aims at developing the less-known areas in the Asiago, Belluno, and Tyrol territories and at getting a selected target of people to enjoy the uncontaminated sites. The idea behind Futourist is to minimize the environmental, cultural, and experiential differences between the three areas in question by implementing a total of 40 thematic and emotional itineraries. These areas have lots in common, starting from cultural and historical aspects, to the landscape and local product that characterize the nature of these wonderful lands. In particular, the target areas have in common the location in one of the world’s most unique places, the Alps. The Alpine region is the highest and most extensive mountain range that lies entirely in Europe, characterized by a huge variety of natural and cultural aspects. However, the Alps, being such a naturalistic and mountainous environment, are also suffering the effects caused by climate change and mass tourism. It is crucial to rethink the way of making tourism more sustainable, with less impact on lands, animals, and nature by decreasing infrastructures and pollution, but also by educating the tourists and operators on behaving respectfully and preserving this natural heritage. The three areas interested by the Futourist project are experiencing the same need to develop new itineraries to guarantee economic, cultural, and natural sustainability. On the other hand, consumers want to have life-fulfilling experiences when they travel, and are increasingly seeking travel experiences that closely align with their values. Therefore, Futourist is applied to alpine resorts that are less known to mass tourism, and it aims to promote an emotional and thematic type of tourism, far removed from the exploitation of mountain infrastructures, the so called “soft tourism”. Soft tourism has been defined as the answer, or the alternative, to mass tourism. It does not imply anything that would not be sustainable for the territory itself. It wants to attract a selected target of visitors who are commonly travelling and visiting places for various reasons: nature, history, culture, and last but not least, local product and local tradition. The soft approach will not have just a positive impact on the environment, but it will also be able to offer an alternative kind of tourism and satisfy the needs and wants of new generations. Nowadays, the new travellers are requiring more and more from just a simple trip. The difficulty to implement soft tourism strategies is to attract people with experiences and
activities to be done on-site but without losing authenticity and making up with extreme creativity. Locations have to preserve the authenticity that characterizes them to make the visitor feel like a local and live a real experience. The marketing strategies that arose from the analysis, contextualizing the project and describing the current situation of the market changes, are strictly related to the emotionality, personalization, and experience.

The three megatrends that nowadays are impacting tourism everywhere in the world are sustainability, experience economy and lifestyle improvement. Sustainability is a of paramount importance worldwide and is, most likely, one of the strongest drivers dictating the new rules for the future; experience economy means that people rather pay more for an experience than an expensive cloth, and this phenomenon brings to another aspect that tourism industry has to deal with: customization and high level of flexibility; finally, lifestyle improvement means that people are becoming more and more aware of their health and wellbeing. Futourist’s objectives were designed considering the impact that the three megatrends are having on tourism within the last few decades and the importance of the 5 reasons for the project to exist in those areas that are: sustainable tourism, intense experience of nature, regional added value, preservation of the natural landscape and life quality improvement.

Futourist is not offering either goods or services, but real and unique experiences in the Alpine region, with the purpose of diving into wellbeing, nature, and other cultural aspects that need to be present in every human being’s life to boost and improve the standards of living. Futourist’s clients can be many: they go from young teenagers to adults and families, from cultural travellers to sportsmen, adventurers, and athletes. However, they are all combined by the same 5 reasons above. With the diverse range of itineraries and activities that the three areas have designed and represent, there is a wide range of people who will exploit their products and services. The main tourist motivations vary between: nature, sport and relaxation, gastronomy and team building. The market niche for Futourist is represented by all those people that have in common the interest for outdoor, sports, culture, and nature. By saying so, it identifies four mega generational groups that can be described as such: Millennials, young families, DINKS (double income no kids), and the active retirees (or pensioners). The more important aspects to consider, by dividing the target market between these four groups, are their behavioural and attitudinal characteristics and the need to satisfy their requests. Four objectives have to be achieved by Futourist:
40 itineraries in 7 areas between Italy and Austria; promotion of initiatives and alternative activities to make areas more entertaining and easily accessible; increase tourist flow in the less known areas of the alpine region and reduction of CO\textsubscript{2} and more sustainable policies for the respect of nature.

In terms of different communication actions and marketing strategies that are going to be implemented to promote Futourist as an alternative way of travelling/generating value for tourism, the marketing mix to be implemented includes the classic 4 “P” of a market strategy: product, price, promotion and place.

In terms of product, Futourist represents 40 trans border itineraries, which have been created under the guideline of the project, the final result is the achievement of soft tourism by preserving the authenticity of the selected locations and increasing awareness between tourists with similar passions and interests in nature and healthy activities. When talking about price, Futourist offer itineraries that can be walked or cycled from a vast variety of people and the access to these itineraries does not involve any payment for the actual journey. To efficiently promote soft tourism, the 5 perception organs of the audience have to be switched on, and if the received message does so, it means that it was successfully delivered. Therefore, a typical advertisement for the selected target tourists and destinations has to be visual, audible, somehow pleasant in both smell and taste, and tangible. Futourist aims to bring exceptional and targeted tourism to the most unknown areas of Alps, therefore, place plays a very important role in all project. Three important tips have been suggested during the draft of the marketing plan. First, to include specific information aiming to reflect destination authenticity. Second, to inform tourist about their impact on the environment, hence, to educate them as much as the operators and make tourism more sustainable. The third tip, to be original and authentic in creating images, videos, and other media contents; they need to be so real to activate the five perception organs of the potential guest. Futourist is a dive into an emotional and experiential sea, from the very first touchpoint of the advertisement to the last WOW factor at the farewell. It needs to create a pure connection between the spotless places of this project and the curious visitors that leave these places with the purpose of visiting more the next time and promoting them to friends and family.