

IRU Coach Tourism Innovation Award 2015 - Application form

Name of the company parkyourbus.com
Postal address via Perla 79, 21100 Varese
Country Italy
Family name Ribera
First name Daniela
Email danielariberava@gmail.com
Phone number +39339313343

DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE

parkyourbus.com is an internet site that aims to help tourism coaches drivers, tour managers, travel agencies and tour operators in locating parking areas for tourist coaches. It focuses on the whole European area, providing at the moment about 2600 points of interest. The site has been developed to be easy to use, immediate in the contents, and as accurate as possible. Thanks to different icons, it is possible to recognize the bays for passengers drop on and off, the areas for longer stay and the offices where drivers are supposed to pay a fee to enter a city/town: locators appear on a map (provided by GoogleMaps) displaying also additional information (e.g. maximum stay time, fees, etc). By scrolling the page, one can also get information about facilities located in the nearby (e.g. toilets, gas stations, services provided by local means of transport, etc).

The information are collected thanks to requests sent to local police and tourist information offices, by direct experience made during journeys and by suggestions given by the customers who are using the site. In any case, any information is double-checked to make sure that the accuracy of the site is as satisfactory as possible. Nobody but the webmaster is entitled to add or change the contents: in this way, false information or repetitions of the same locations are avoided. Moreover, a period of general revision of all the data is foreseen once a year (during the low-season period - i.e. winter season).

The site is free of charge, no log-in is needed and it can be easily used also on smart-phones. In this way, the widest range of users can be reached by the service. Besides, the site has been created to be converted also in an application, which will happen by the end of the summer.

BENEFITS

Several benefits are achieved thanks to *parkyourbus.com*. In fact, it gives the opportunity to:

- plan the coach itinerary in advance and in any moment;
- plan the passengers itinerary so that they are enabled to walk short (or reasonable) distances; from this point of view, tour organizers as well as tour managers can understand in advance if it is the case and there is any possibility to combine coach transport with public means of transport services;
- make passengers' journey more pleasant: thanks to the additional information about facilities, tourists can get what they need without losing time and feeling that the people working for them are skilled and well trained;
- make drivers' job smoother: additional information provides news about gas station, relax areas, local services, etc.
- have an idea about parking expenses;

- avoid detours and long journeys through cities/towns: drivers can go straight to bays and parking saving time and fuel;
- plan drivers' resting time in an easy and sensible manner: by displaying drop-on and off bays and long term parking areas and by giving information about maximum stay allowance drivers can find the most suitable solution for their resting time according to the itinerary;
- improve traffic and environment condition: by going straight to the parking areas drivers are enabled not to drive around the city/town only to look for a place to stop;
- save money for phone calls meant to have suggestions about parking;
- save money from police fines.

MARKET ANALYSIS & PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS

No market analysis was done before starting the project: after eleven years spent working as a tour manager and local guide, I just felt that a better and more systematic way to find coach parking areas was needed. Helping coach drivers in their researches gave me the opportunity to understand what they need and what they are looking for; furthermore, I had the opportunity to develop several manners to look for parking areas and to start a rudimental database with all the information that I could collect. The only reason why the site was created was the passion for my job and for coach tourism. The same passion will lead me to the creation of the smartphone application, which will be free of charge for the users.

As far as promotional campaigns are concerned, the only advertisement comes by word of mouth from one user to another. A Facebook page was created along with the site: it is meant to share pictures, info and news and to make the site more visible.

ECONOMIC & FINANCIAL ASPECTS

At the moment, no subsidy was received and the internet page was created at my own expenses. A company that deals with web designing was in charge to create the site by following my instructions about the aims and the contents of the site itself. No revenue came from *parkyourbus.com*, as this is not the main reason why it was created. The smartphone application will be free of charge for the users, but with advertisement banners that will possibly create some income. That means that also the application will be created at my own expenses.

FEEDBACK FROM CUSTOMERS

As far as customers satisfaction is concerned, no analytics survey was made. Nevertheless, the fact that the popularity of *parkyourbus.com* is constantly increasing only by word of mouth is probably a clue to understand that the users are happy with the site. Moreover, on the Facebook page you can read encouraging comments as well as interesting suggestions to improve the site itself. Some customers sent also e-mail to express their satisfaction because the site was created and because it works well. Generally, positive comments like "Outstanding", "Very useful", "Thanks for what you are doing" are received. Furthermore, many users are asking for the smartphone application, which shows once more the satisfaction and the interest about the site. Also the fact that many drivers are sending pictures and very accurate information about points of interest is a positive feedback.

PROJECT'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Dealing with the achievements of the project aims, it is probably necessary to remind that the only purpose was providing an easy and reliable instrument to look for and to find tourist coaches parking areas. Therefore, as shown by the above-mentioned positive comments, this aim was

achieved, and the site is getting more complete and visible every day. In less than one year, about 2600 entries were filled in, thus showing the reliability of the site. Even more meaningful is the fact that *parkyourbus.com* is constantly increasing in popularity, as shown by the statistics provided by GoogleAnalytics: from the end of October 2014 (i.e. from when the site was officially on-line) until the end of June 2015 the site was searched more than 10,000 times (almost 3,000 times only in the last month). At the end of June 2015, the users that visited the page at least once were 6,221 and new visitors represented the 62% of the users visiting the site.