Visitor Flow Management Strategy

Alignment with the Visitor Management Framework

A Visitor Flow Management Strategy is vital to the topic of site management because it will regulate the way visitors access and view the sites in the historic peninsula. Entrance and ticketing, exhibit flow, visitor orientation, and disabled visitor access are all major building blocks of site management. Therefore, such a strategy will allow the sites to standardize and enhance visitor experience while establishing consistency in the way these attractions are run.

NOW: Background

The historic peninsula of Istanbul has a plentiful and diverse offering of cultural heritage museums and other attractions. However, these sites are clogged with visitor flow issues such as congestion at entrances, overcrowding at popular points of interest, disorientation of visitors within the sites, and poor/nonexistent access for disabled visitors. These cultural attractions are providing an inadequate visitor experience for these guests, who in turn may hesitate to return to the area and/or recommend visiting the area to others. In an industry where the concepts of return visitors and word-of-mouth are absolutely crucial to a destination’s cultural and financial success, Istanbul must enhance its visitors’ experiences in order to ensure its success in the future.
FUTURE: Goals

- Streamlined ticketing and site entry processes
- Lack of congestion at the sites’ points of interest
- Increased availability of maps/floor plans
- Disabled access to cultural heritage attractions

ACTIONS: Activity Components

1. Create a ticketing strategy, including implementing use of a single ticket for all separate sections of each attraction; the Akbil/SmartTicket program for entry into cultural attractions; and an online ticketing system, perhaps in collaboration with www.istanbul.com
2. Create set pathways through the exhibits giving special consideration to crowded points of interest
3. Create maps/floor plans for each site to be made available at the entrances
4. Implement ramps and other access aids for disabled visitors in all sections of the cultural attractions

Activity Description

Ticketing Strategy

At Istanbul’s various museums and other cultural attractions, the ticketing processes remain a constant source of confusion and entrance congestion. Many of these museums require separate fees for separate sections of the museum, often collected from two different ticket offices (such as at Topkapi Palace, with the museum and the Harem). Additionally, multiple hard tickets are issued for these separate areas, which is unnecessarily wasteful. By instituting a system of single-ticketing, one ticket would be produced at one ticket office near the entrance. Visitors would pay according to which attractions they choose to see, but still only a single ticket would be issued. These paid-for areas would be indicated on the ticket so that staff members could check
them at the entrance to each section. This will dramatically cut down on the amount of paper tickets issued, which is an easily-employable sustainable tourism practice for these sites. Another activity that will increase ticketing efficiency is to introduce a cultural attraction Akbil. This pass will allow visitors to simply press the device to an entry machine and be allowed entry immediately (with the entrance fee being removed from the monetary balance on the device). It could also be used for more than one person, which makes it highly conducive to families who travel to Istanbul, as they can simply purchase one Akbil pass for the whole group. Offering a discount for Akbil users would be a positive incentive for guests to utilize the program as well as to visit the museums while they are staying in Istanbul. A third ticketing practice that would streamline the entry process is the introduction of online ticketing. If visitors were able to purchase tickets online before their visit, their entry into the sites would be efficient and easy. There is also the added benefit of guests being able to better plan their days. Adding this online ticket purchasing option to the www.istanbul.com website would ensure a centralization of Istanbul’s travel resources while allowing travellers to plan visits in their entireties.

**Resources:** Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the IETT, Mr. Faruk Boyaci, Mr. Fatih Sadirli, Biletix (Turkish Ticketmaster division), ADInteractive website design.

**Potential Funding:** American Express, VISA, Mastercard, Turkish Airlines.
Exhibit Pathway Management

The historic peninsula’s many cultural offerings provide visitors with a multitude of exciting exhibits to see. However, the area’s attractions remain highly congested at certain points, and nearly empty at others. Heavily viewed points of interest within these sites get more than their fair share of the visitor traffic, causing this congestion. Some of Istanbul’s cultural sites, such as Dolmabahçe Palace, employ the practice of roping off a set pathway to encourage visitors to walk in a certain way through the exhibits. Unfortunately, this attraction is in the minority, as most sites in Istanbul allow visitors to wander the exhibits without any guidance. While permitting guests to see the sites at their discretion is certainly desirable, as it adds to visitor experience, just a small amount of guidance regarding the suggested course through the exhibits would reduce the amount of congestion that builds up at particular spots, thereby enhancing that experience even more.

Resources: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, interior design company, fire department.


Orientation Materials

Upon entering a museum or other cultural attraction, visitors expect to be able to easily pinpoint maps/floor plans for the exhibits. This is a natural expectation because it is the best way to orient oneself in a new building. These materials show the different
levels (if applicable), the rooms within each level, and the exhibits housed inside each room. They also show changing and special exhibits, entrances and exits, retail opportunities such as cafes and gift shops, and necessary facilities such as restrooms and stairways/escalators/elevators. These maps and floor plans are not commonplace to the cultural attractions within the historic peninsula, leaving guests disoriented during their visits. This disorientation causes much confusion especially if they do not speak Turkish, as it makes asking attendants for directions nearly impossible. It also increases their stay within the sites, minimizing the time they have for other attractions. All of these factors dramatically lower the quality of visitor experience, again reducing the likelihood that the visitors will return and/or recommend the site to other visitors. Word-of-mouth is invaluable in the tourism industry, and Istanbul is missing an opportunity to orient their visitors from the minute they pass through the turnstiles. These recommended maps and floor plans must be readily visible upon entering the site, and the featured information must be all-encompassing for the whole facility.

**Resources:** Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, graphic designer, printing company.

**Potential Funding:** The Ministry of Culture & Tourism, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Eminönü Municipality.

**Disabled Access Plan**

Because of the historical nature of Istanbul’s cultural attractions, disabled visitor access is not a regular occurrence. Some sites, such as the Hagia Sofia, have attempted
to accommodate such visitors by placing temporary ramps over room entrances that have slight steps up. However, this is not sufficient. There needs to exist permanent solutions for these visitors, including built-in ramps, lifts where appropriate (and possible), and handicapped restroom facilities. To use the Hagia Sofia as another example, visitors in wheelchairs can enter the restroom, but cannot close the door due to space restrictions – clearly, these sites need to be updated. This activity requires some commitment, as building these additions or changes will take effort and time. However, taking these guests with special needs into consideration is imperative to Istanbul’s visitor experience. With the aid of the Türkiye Sakatlar Derneği (TSD), or the Turkish Disabled Association, these changes should begin to be implemented. A contractor, construction company, and interior design company may also need to be consulted for any changes that may be more structural in nature. Because this is a more costly venture than the other activities, we have priced out enough for only the ten most popular attractions; more may be added at the discretion of the stakeholders.

**Resources:** Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Turkish Disabled Association/Türkiye Sakatlar Derneği (TSD), contractor, construction company, interior design company, fire department.

**Potential Funding:** The Ministry of Culture & Tourism, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Eminönü Municipality.
### Timeline & Financing Plan

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<td>Create maps/floor plans for each site to be made available at the entrances</td>
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