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**SEE THE HONEY: AN INITIATIVE TO BOND COMMUNITIES AND
PROTECT THE WILD PLACES OF EUROPE**

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Abstract

Technology is great. It has allowed the human species to surge forward through raising societies out of poverty, accelerating understanding and innovation. In some cases however, the excessive use of technology has led a progressive elimination of the friction that has allowed humans to thrive and evolve. Innovation has substituted grinding tasks, once undertaken by millions of people, with machines that think for themselves. And these machines require exponentially increasing amounts of energy in order to perform. The excessive energy consumption we are witnessing is causing one of the biggest challenges we are facing today: climate change. The same climate transformation that is causing ice sheets to shrink, oceans to warm up and the snowpack to retreat. And the cause behind the increasing extinction rate that threatens biodiversity and the decline in local businesses.

SEE THE HONEY is a solution for change.

Keywords

Climate Change, Environmental Impact, Adventure Tourism, Backcountry Skiing.

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1. The Problem

1.1 A Debatable Approach to Happiness

Every company today tries to make customers' experience convenient and pain free. In many cases, technology has allowed the human species to surge forward. It has raised societies out of poverty, reshaped democracy and accelerated understanding and innovation.

In others however, society's evolving nature has created crisis of identity for many individuals. Companies are now allowing people to have instant access to any information, service or product, increasingly seeking a "frictionless world". But is excessive comfort leading to better lives? Are people really happier today than they were in the past? Research shows that today's society is experiencing an increase in pain problems, depression and anxiety. And the reason might lie in the progressive elimination of the friction or resistance that has allowed humans to thrive and evolve. The modern society for example, has been trading the interconnection between humanity and the natural world for a more comfortable lifestyle, finding ways to be independent from natural ecosystems. This decreasing relevance derived from experiential separation from nature is one of the main implications of current trends in human-environment's relationship.

Innovation is substituting grinding tasks, once undertaken by millions of people, with machines that think for themselves. And these machines require exponentially increasing amounts of energy in order to perform. The excessive energy consumption is causing one of the biggest challenges we are facing today: climate change.

1.2 Climate Change

Earth's climate has always been changing throughout history. During the last 650,000 years there have been seven cycles of glacial advance and retreat, with the end of the last ice age about 11,700 years ago, marking the beginning of a new climate era and of human civilization. Most of these climate changes are attributed to very small variations in Earth's orbit, which leads to changes in the amount of solar energy our planet receives. However, this is not the main cause for the variations we are witnessing today.

Earth-orbiting satellites and other technological advances enabled scientists to collect information about our planet and this data reveals evidence of a changing climate. This warming trend is particularly significant because most of it is likely to be influenced by human activity. Burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil as well as clearing of land for agriculture, industry and other human activities have increased the concentration of atmospheric Carbon dioxide (CO₂), due to the combination of carbon with oxygen in the air. As a result, carbon dioxide is increasing more than 250 times faster than it did from natural sources after the last Ice Age (NASA 2021).

CO₂ and other greenhouse gases have the ability to trap heat's energy, affecting its transfer through the atmosphere. In response, raising levels of these gases surrounding Earth boosts the amount of heat trapped within the atmosphere, leading to a warmer planet. This is known as the "greenhouse effect".

As evidence shows, climate change is advancing at an unprecedented rate and since the late 19th century, the planet's surface temperature has risen about 1.18 degrees Celsius. This affects nearly every ecosystem: oceans are getting warmer, ice sheets are shrinking, snow covers around the world are retreating and extreme events are occurring more frequently.

2. Theory of Change

2.1 For the People

Psychologist Brock Bastian has studied why people need painful experiences to achieve meaning, purpose and greater fulfillment. It turns out that pain can increase a person's experience of pleasure in life (Brock Bastian 2019). If people are asked what the happiest moments of their lives are, chances are that if those moments are broken down to understand why they are source of happiness, two ingredients are often present. Whether it is achieving a career goal, finding the love of their lives or climbing a mountain, there are two elements that seem to drive this feeling, which sound like the exact opposite of comfort: possibility of failure and hard work.

With this in mind, the paper proposes a different way of life. It intends to inspire people to exit their comfort zone and choose adventure over routine by reconnecting to the uncertainty and challenges of the natural environment.

2.2 For the Environment

Eventually, due to a more direct contact with nature, it would be possible to leverage societal change for sustainability. The importance of a strong connection between people and nature is comprised in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (see Appendix 1). Particularly, the 12th SDG -responsible consumption and production, emphasizes the importance for people everywhere to have awareness for nature and lifestyle in harmony with it.

Connection with nature is defined as a stable state of consciousness that reflects the realization of the interrelatedness between oneself and nature. It consists of three interconnected dimensions: cognition, which represent the perception and beliefs about nature, affection, which comprises feelings toward nature, and behaviour, represented by experiences in nature (Matthew J. Zylstra, Andrew T. Knight, Karen J. Esler, Lesley L. L. Le Grange 2014).

Until now, efforts aimed at increasing environmentally responsible behaviours have been mainly focused on the cognitive dimension through the spreading of awareness with information. Moreover, most of the messages have been relying on negative, catastrophic outcomes that highlight the gravity of the crises. Studies show that people generally avoid information that evoke sadness, guilt and fear (Ann Christiano, Annie Neimand. 2018). Instead, they are more likely to engage with messages that inspire, make them feel good and allow them to become better versions of themselves. For this matter, using media to spread sustainable lifestyles and how these contribute to increase well-being can motivate people to change behaviours.

Generally, knowledge about the issue alone is unlikely to change behaviour. In the Buddhist culture for example, educating about the issue is only the first step to drive a person to act. Awareness needs to increase until it leads to a firm conviction about the harmful effects of the problem (His Holiness The Dalai Lama,

Howard C. Cutler, M.D 1998). By having personal experiences directly affected by nature, people are more likely to create emotional bonds with the environment and eventually assume positive behaviours towards it.

Just like the cognitive, the behavioural dimension alone is insufficient to drive change (Matthew J. Zylstra, Andrew T. Knight, Karen J. Esler, Lesley L. L. Le Grange 2014). However, it is useful to shape internal factors that drive the transformation of behaviours.

It becomes easy to visualize this concept by thinking of indigenous societies. Still today, many indigenous people of the world live in deep harmony with the earth. They view themselves as part of nature and their survival depends on it. Because their vision of the world determines their actions, it is easy to understand why most of these cultures are famous to be stewards of their lands. Individuals with an increased affection towards nature, whose lives are directly affected by the environment will be the ones connected on all three dimensions – cognitive, affective, behavioural and will eventually be more likely to adopt environmentally responsible behaviours (see Appendix 2).

2.3 For the Local Communities

To do that, STH believes in empowering passionate people to share their ways of life. The project is structured to give market exposure to small communities, with the aim to link additional sources of revenue to sustainable lifestyles and decrease the dependency of local people on more invasive forms of business. The goal is also to increase economic incentives for people to engage in sustainable behaviors.

3. The Adventure Tourism Industry

Connecting people to nature through outdoor experiences can change people's behaviours towards it. In most cases, spending time outdoor is synonym for adventure and requires people to deal with failure, exit their comfort zone and devote time to reach their objectives. STH's mission is to design a solution capable of establishing the human-nature connection. And, due to its purpose of engaging people in exploration, travel or outdoor experiences, the project intends to carry out its operations in the adventure tourism industry.

The global market size of adventure tourism was valued more than 600 million dollars in 2019 and it is expected to reach 1.8 billion dollars in 2027, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15%. 41% of the revenue share accounted for the 20-30 years age group and the European region is the biggest benefactor, accounting for 30% of the total market (Abhishek Paliwal 2021). Moreover, land-based activities are the ones drawing the most interest, accounting for more than half of total revenues.

This growth is a result of new generations that are more and more willing to trade comfort for a taste of authenticity. They seek more unique, transformative and unforgettable experiences. Johannes Reck, CEO and co-founder of GetYourGuide, one of the leading Online Travel Agencies offering more than 30,000 activities worldwide, has seen first-hand how clients have become experience-driven. “When people book their activities, they are looking for something extraordinary, like a bungee jumping adventure in Kathmandu, Nepal.”, he explains (Sarah McCay Tams 2017).

From now on, paper explores the processes required for the initiative to effectively attract the initial set of customers on the supply and demand side. Due to the peer-to-peer business model, which will be discussed further down the paper, the engagement of not only the demand side but also of the supply side will be studied.

Particularly, the analysis focuses on how to develop a successful brand management strategy in the adventure tourism and on the partners, activities, resources and channels required to do so. Other critical aspects of the business such as operations, technology and financials remain outside the scope of this paper.

4. The Solution

4.1 Brand Positioning

Brand Positioning is “the act of designing the company’s offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market”. In other words, brand positioning describes how a brand is different from its competitors based on where or how it sits in the customers’ minds. In order to effectively position the brand, who are the target customers, who is the competition, how the brand is similar to the competitors and how the brand differs from competition need to be defined.

4.1.1 The Target Market

The Law of Diffusion of Innovation seeks to explain why and how new ideas are spread by breaking down the population into five segments: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards. Each group represents a particular psychographic profile that makes its marketing response different from the ones of the other groups and, depending on the context, people sit at different stages of the spectrum (see Appendix 3). The initial market for a new product or service needs to be made of innovators and early adopters (Geoffrey A. Moore 1991). These are the segments who perceive greater value in what the brand stands for and who will eventually tell others about it. Indeed, reaching this target is the first step to achieve mass-market success.

In the context of adventure tourism, innovators are outdoor enthusiasts. They are adrenaline seekers who spend hours online searching for hidden places to play. Their endorsement is critical to reassure the other groups in the marketplace that the service is good.

Unlike innovators, early adopters are not voracious explorers. Rather, they are people who find it easy to rely on their own intuition to understand and appreciate the benefits of the service. They are visionaries. And whenever they find a strong match, they easily base their buying decisions upon it. They know they are outside the mainstream, and they accept to take higher risks to try a product or service consistent with their own vision. Indeed, they are an early opportunity to gain visibility, increase the customer base and generate revenue as they are the least price sensitive segment (Geoffrey A. Moore 1991).

For a segment to be defined as so, it is fundamental that people inside can reference to each other. They must have a mean through which the marketing message spreads. There are different ways through which brands' messages circulate and social medias are one of the most effective in terms of the speed through which ideas can stretch throughout the community. This is because 60 percent of the world's population is on social medias (Brian Dean 2021) and the number increases progressively with new generations being the most active. More time spent on social media translates in a higher probability of having buying decisions influenced by brands or people who dictate purchases. Generation Z and Millennials spend an average of

almost 3 hours per day on social networks (Ashley Viens 2019) making them an easily accessible target group. As a result, as a survey conducted by Animoto (Jess Rozario-Ospino 2020) demonstrates, 75 percent of millennial's purchase decisions are influenced by a brand's social media presence. Thus, not only Gen Z and Millennials are accessible, but they are also highly responsive to marketing strategies.

As previously mentioned, Generation Z and Millennials tend to prefer adventure over routine. This is because new generations are rejecting the rules and confines in favour of activities with no sidelines. This approach extends beyond sports, impacting what they search for in every experience and changing the way they travel. And this allocates a substantial portion of innovators to this segment.

Moreover, 65 percent of millennials are currently saving money for travelling, which is more than the average for other generations. Thus, it is not surprising that they are the group having the most vacations with an average of 35 days per year. As a result, more than 40 percent of the global adventure tourism's revenue comes from people between 20 and 30 years old (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) 2014). Consequently, not only innovators, but also early adopters are present in this segment. And because these people have common means of communication, early adopters can base their buying decisions on innovators and lay down an opportunity to grow the market as well as to generate early revenues.

Market segments are generally difficult to define by its boundary. Because of the heterogeneity of people's characteristics, drawing a line inevitably causes some subjects to be at the edge of the segment leading to uncertainty on their inclusion and eventually a loss of integrity in the process. An alternative approach is to define market segments by their center points. A segment's center point is the representation of the ideal target customer, also called the poster child. Moreover, the whole marketing strategy can be aimed at that particular person because he has the perfect set of psychographic characteristics that resonate with all the other possible customers around him. The ideal target customer for STH can be defined as an outdoor enthusiast, between 20 and 30 years old, active on social media.

The market segment identified is applicable to both hosts and participants. This is because the project is designed to bring together like-minded individuals with common passions.

4.1.2 The Competition

Porter's Five Forces analytical framework represents five individual forces that shape the extent the overall competitive environment (see Appendix 4A and 4B). For the sake of the project, the direct competitors are online marketplaces for adventure travel.

Overall, the adventure tourism market is highly fragmented with thousands of small or micro-businesses. Nearly half of them are new entrants, less than five years old (Treksoft 2020). Heli for example, is a US-based online marketplace that allows people to find and book heli-skiing trips across the United States. After the second year in business, the company reached \$1M bookings over a period of 18 months. Now, after gaining traction in the heli-skiing niche market, the startup looks to expand to other outdoor sports and locations outside the US.

Indeed, the industry's rivalry among existing firms, moderate due to the limited number of appealing locations and suppliers, is experiencing a substantial decline.

The growing number of entrants is a result of the low capital requirements and the increasing appeal for the industry due to an exponentially growing demand. Even if the number of buyers is expanding, their bargaining power is still moderate due to the presence of indirect substitutes such as mainstream tours and activities as well as the growing online support for self-guided experiences. However, substitute services' threat is not strong due to the different business model among the majority substitute services, which will be discussed in the following paragraph. Moreover, the trend for customers to look for unique experiences is likely to contract the attractiveness of mainstream services, whereas self-guiding requires a significant investment of time for preparation in order to have enough know-how for the experience to be as enriching. Due to the exponentially increasing interest for adventures, most players in the industry have several opportunities for growth such as geographical expansion, brand extensions and formation of strategic partnerships. This increases the alternatives available to suppliers and thus their bargaining power. Effective branding and differentiation strategies will be vital to stand out.

Big and small players in the travel industry are looking to move away from mainstream tourism to take a piece of this growing sector. Airbnb seems to be the company gaining the most traction and “Airbnb Experiences” is its latest bet. Hosts can now share their passions with travelers by designing activities that range from hourly cooking classes to multi-day trips with meals and stays included. By bringing its disruptive p2p model to Tours and Activities, the company has decided to focus on one-of-a kind activities and describes its experiences as “an antidote to mass-produced tourism” (Cathy Schetzina, Douglas Quinby 2021).

Consequently, Airbnb is seeing adventure tourism’s demand rising. And its bookings for Nature Experiences are up more than 100 percent year after year (Cathy Schetzina, Douglas Quinby 2021). The company is the project’s biggest competitor not only due to its substantial market share but also because it shares some points-of-parity only with Airbnb.

The complete list of the most relevant competitors can be found in Appendix 5.

4.1.3 Points-of-Parity and Points-of-Difference

To understand why Airbnb might be the biggest competitor, the paper will now describe how the project plans to design its service to exploit the market opportunity, engage the target audience and eventually bring the desired changes to life.

The roadmap in Appendix 6 is useful to understand the service step by step, while the following analysis has the intent to identify the points-of-parity and points-of-difference of the project with competitors in the context of adventure tourism. Points-of-parity (POP) are those elements that are considered mandatory for a brand to be considered a legitimate competitor in its specific category. Points-of-difference (POD) instead, are attributes that consumers strongly associate with a brand and believe that they could not find to the same extent with a competitive brand. In order to have a more complete analysis, the paragraph mentions PODs that can lead to both positive and negative associations.

Just like Airbnb, STH creates value by facilitating the interaction between individuals. The company is the project’s biggest competitor not only due to its substantial market share but also because it shares some

points-of-parity only with Airbnb such as the lack of professionals guiding the experience, the connection with locals and the peer-to-peer business model. So, locals propose experiences. Geographical and cultural barriers are broken to bond communities of individuals who share the same passion and exchange knowledge. This characteristic is particularly relevant for the project and mitigates the major POD of lack of professionals. Participants cannot count on the supervision of professional guides and everyone needs to have technical skills, adequate gear and is eventually responsible for oneself. This brings a potential loss for members of the local work force such as outdoor guides and, particularly when risky activities are involved, can lead to the emergence of scandals. So, having people from different places and backgrounds increases knowledge, experience, and eventually mitigate the risks associated with the activity.

The project is structured to have some unique processes that allows it to differentiate its offer not only from other competitors but also from Airbnb. Here, it is the platform which defines the guidelines for the adventure: the experience must be designed around a particular outdoor activity, must happen in the geographical region proposed by the platform, must aim to connect participants to the local natural and cultural environment, and must have a duration of at least one day and one night. Other than that, hosts are responsible for choosing all the other relevant characteristics such as duration, period of the year and level of difficulty. Moreover, the hosts targeted, differently from the end customers, must be familiar with the geographical area of the experience.

Then, instead of allowing anyone to post his offer, the platform selects the one experience that is most in line with the project's objectives. After defining the number of participants and the level of skills required, a selection process to know the participants is carried out by the platform. This is important to let people enjoy the experience but most importantly to increase safety. Indeed, a major POD with Airbnb is quality control: customers can experience a higher-quality service while still benefiting from lower prices due to the elimination of the middleman.

Just like Airbnb, the model is designed so that proposers are incentivized to suggest experiences. By hosting the experiences, more money goes towards local communities and, in addition to proposing their

remuneration based on the type of service they provide, hosts have the chance to repeat the hosting experience periodically.

Another relevant unique selling point is the use of storytelling, which will be discussed later and will be fundamental for customer engagement.

Lastly, arguably the main POD is the direct and indirect impact of every experience on climate change. In addition to change people's behaviour for conservation by connecting them with nature, after every experience STH allocates some of the revenue to support a non-profit organization addressing the issue.

Tours and Activities in general have lagged behind other segments of the travel industry such as air travel and hotels in their ability to digitalize (Treksoft 2020). Interviews were conducted on several guides and athletes from the Alps. The feedbacks received highlighted that the spreading of their service happens mainly through word-of-mouth. "Most of my clients are people I met at the climbing gym or people that have been coming here on holiday for years now" says alpine guide and professional climber Federica Mingolla. Indeed, one major point-of-parity that the project shares with competitors is to allow people to find and book outdoor experiences online. Another relevant POP is the presence of one main outdoor activity in every experience.

4.1.4 Behind the Name

The brand name chosen for this project is thought to create powerful associations in the minds of customers and connect people to what the brand stands for.

SEE THE HONEY (STH) is an invite for people to pursue curious and bold lifestyles.

It is believed that when someone dreams of honey, he must go on a spiritual journey because something is hidden from the physical eye. The mission of the project is to make people see the honey and design journeys for a rebirth of their relationship with nature and a rediscover of what it is like to be human.

4.2 Key Partners

Key partners are relationships that the project has with other entities that help the business model to work.

The most crucial partners for STH are the people hosting the event. They are on the supply side and help to deliver the value proposition to the demand side by offering their experience and know-hows to the end customers. Other potential partners can be companies operating in the travel and hospitality industry, NGOs addressing congruent social issues, outdoor brands, magazines, online distribution channels and athletes. These kinds of partnerships can help to build positive brand associations, can establish or reinforce an attribute as a POP or POD and can reduce the cost of marketing by implicitly expanding reach and visibility. Lastly, for the economic and legal sustainability of the business, SEE THE HONEY could consider partnering with insurances, investors and other commercial partners.

Specific partnerships related to the first event will be discussed later in the paper.

4.3 Key Activities

Key activities are what the business needs to deliver the value proposition to customers. For the sake of this analysis, they are the key processes required to effectively attract new customers.

Inspiring change starts before the event actually takes place. As previously mentioned, new generations are more and more influenced by what they see online and social medias are allowing content to be shared and to go viral at unprecedented levels. No matter where they are, people are not more than a screen away from connecting and feeling part of their community. And stories are still one of the most powerful tools to do so. Storytelling is made to shape and celebrate the facets of this world that matter most to the audience. SEE THE HONEY tells stories through short films preceding every event to connect not only the people participating, but every viewer to the character hosting the event, to the culture and the place. Although virtual experiences do not evoke the same emotions as physical ones, this type of content allows the message to reach a greater audience.

4.4 Key Resources

Key resources are what is needed for the business to deliver value to the customers. In this analysis, these are the most important things the business has for attracting new customers.

The brand and the mission are crucial for what company stands for. Creating a strong brand image is important for STH to gear towards not being seen as an intermediary platform but as the actual provider of the customer experience. And this must be coherent with the service. It is thus as critical to guarantee customers engagement with conservation means and authentic experiences, delivered through the event and aimed at achieving the desired externalities.

4.5 Channels

Channels are how the company communicates and reaches its customer segment.

For the entity of the target market and for the market opportunity previously described, social medias and partners' webpages are indispensable in order to engage with the target market since they are the platform through which content will be shared.

Specifically, content will be shared through Instagram. The social media is one of the best platforms to share all types of media content such as videos and pictures. Thus, it allows a great variety of interactions with the target market. Moreover, the target audience is part of Instagram's largest age group since 33% of the users are between 25 and 34 years old (Brent Barnhart 2021). What's more, word of mouth is another strong driver to alleviate concerns users may have on the quality of the service, especially in early stages.

4.6 Customer Relationships

SEE THE HONEY needs to foster important layers of relationship with participants and hosts as well as the communities and the environment around them in order to be attractive.

One of the most important aspects of the relationships with participants and hosts is the safety and security of both parties. To assure this, required measures need to be carried out based on the activity. The selection process of both hosts and participants is also important to guarantee an adequate general level of experience.

However, STH is not a training or guiding service but an experience provider. Each participant is therefore ultimately responsible for his/her own safety and must sign a declaration before the event.

Other important sides of the customer relationship with hosts and guests are the respect for all host's properties, the creation of good matches of like-minded individuals based on attitude and skills, and the delivery of the promised authenticity of the experience.

Moreover, STH is responsible for changes in the design of the event, adapting to weather forecasts to deliver the safest and best experience.

The project must look beyond the direct customer to address the impact of its activities. Each experience must be designed in line with the rules provided by the region to guarantee the respect of the natural, social and economic environment. It is therefore required to assure the legality of all the proposed activities in the proposed place.

5. From Theory to Practice: The First Event in the Alps

Now the paper will now from theory to practice. It will design the first STH event by finding an attractive business opportunity, a place and an activity coherent with the brand's mission and it will draft how customers can be attracted to it.

5.1 Climate Change in the Alps, a Market Opportunity

The Alps are the highest and most extensive mountain range system of Europe. They are home for 13,000 species of plants and 30,000 species of wildlife. Due to their alpine tundra domain that covers 25,000 km² at altitudes above the climatic tree line, the Alps provide habitat to unique species, are a vital source of fresh water and one of the last wild places of Europe (WWF).

Stretching across eight countries, the Alps have a unique cultural landscape rich of diverse languages, cultures and traditions. In the last 50 years, rural areas are being abandoned for urban centers and traditional practices replaced by more profitable but invasive activities.

This ecosystem is one of the last wild places of Europe, it is a vital source of fresh water and provides habitat to unique species. Climate change, as well as mass tourism and urbanization are a threat for the biodiversity

of the ecosystem. In a 3 °C global warming scenario, the alpine tundra domain would shrink by 75% (Feyen L., Ciscar J.C., Gosling S., Ibarreta D., Soria A. 2020; Appendix 7). And the shrinkage reduces the quantity and quality of available fresh water, declines cold mountain habitats and its species but also affects economies.

The Alps attract on average more than 60 million visitors every year. And winter tourism is estimated to account for nearly EUR 50 billion annually, providing more than 10% of the jobs in the region (ClimateChangePost 2021). Today, most of this revenue comes from resort skiing and snowboarding. But will resorts keep up these numbers?

Alterations in the climate system also result in changes in socio-economic systems. The duration of the snow season is likely to be shortened across all Europe due to decreased snow precipitations and a higher average winter temperature. Research shows that the number of snow reliable areas in the Alps would decrease from 600 to 200 under a 3 °C warming scenario (Agnes Kelemen, Wolfgang Munch, Hugo Poelman, Zuzana Gakova, Lewis Dijkstra, Beatriz Torighelli 2009).

The multi-billion-dollar winter tourism industry will be particularly affected. Ski resorts are not only profitable for themselves. They have influence on the viability of other local businesses such as restaurants, commerce, hotels and complementary activities. In other words, entire local economies depend on their success.

Now resorts will have to incur in higher costs associated with innovative solutions to drive tourism in the short-term and their economic viability may be threatened in the long-term. The influence of natural snow patterns on winter tourism might have changed over the years due to the introduction of artificial snowmaking. In Austria for example, the proportion of resorts covered with snowmaking facilities increased from 20% to 67% and from 1.5% to 39% in Switzerland. The expansion of these technologies signals that the relationship between natural snowfall and winter tourism is now overrated, especially in popular destinations. For a ski resort in Austria, the decline in seasonal visitors with a predicted temperature increase of 2 °C is between 6 and 28% when considering snowmaking compared to a decrease of 22 to 64% without

the introduction of artificial snow (Andrea Damm, Wouter Greuell, Oskar Landgren, Franz Pretenthaler 2016).

Just like technology companies, the ski industry is enabling tourists to ski their favourite resort without depending on natural snow. Skiers will not be thankful for natural snow anymore, but rather for the technology advancements that allow them to ski every day.

Snowmaking may drive tourism, but it does not happen without complications. First, only large resorts enjoying financial autonomy will be capable of investing in the technology and thus remain profitable in the long-term. And, even though new innovations are allowing more sustainable and cheaper snow production, it still requires significant energy and water usage. It takes 200 lt³ of water to cover a medium-sized ski slope of 1.6 km long (Tom Harris 2021). And although most of the water goes right back to where it came from, the process takes away vital minerals from the source, altering the natural growth cycle of rivers and lakes. Furthermore, artificial snow has a higher density and concentration of liquid water compared to natural snow. 1 m³ of artificial snow weighs 350 kg compared to the 70-100kg of natural snow. Consequently, it has a higher weight and a lower thermal insulation capacity between soil and atmosphere. These causes the underlying soil to freeze, preventing the passage of oxygen and causing the death of all the vegetation below, altering the ecology and biology of the mountains.

What's more, snowmaking machines run off electricity. The energy used to feed snow cannons to cover slopes in the Alps is equivalent to the annual consumption of more than 500k people (Roberto Furlani 2013). Especially for low-altitude resorts, having artificial snow coverage can boost winter tourism in the short-medium term. However, the long term ecological and economic sustainability of this practice are in question. CO₂ emissions are causing climate to change, which is reducing the amount of snow coverage. To compensate, new technologies are burning more coal to make artificial snow, which only worsens global warming. Studies argue that increased temperatures, make snow production less efficient and more expensive over time. In other words, mass-tourism viability will keep harming natural resources and ski resorts, in order to remain profitable, will have to substantially increase prices.

Ski pass price are reportedly increasing by 4% every year (SnowPlaza 2019). And this is likely to gradually shrink the already below expectations' percentage of visitors viewing resort sports essential for their winter stay. The share of visitors that consider these activities particularly important account for only 57% (Thomas Bausch, William C. Gartner 2020). However, the industry has struggled to provide compelling alternatives to the remaining 43% of travellers, making resort skiing the only available option ((Bausch, Humpe, & Gössling, 2019).

As a result of the lack of offerings on resorts' web pages, tourists looking to enjoy winter nature through a more intimate experience are deciding to forego future travels to the Alps. And this seems to occur more and more with the generational shift. Baby boomers born in the late '50s and early '60s are now the largest portion of the current ski market (Thomas Bausch, William C. Gartner 2020). But, as the demographic change occurs, it does not seem that an equivalent number of skiers are interested in resorts. One decade ago, the aim of going on holidays was to relax and the ski industry has been able to address demand through seat-heated chairlifts and luxury mountain huts right on the slopes. But as previously mentioned, new generations have shown a change in preferences.

5.2 The Rise of Ski Touring

With resorts closing or limiting capacity due to Covid-19, more and more skiers have been opting for the backcountry to search for new snow and avoid crowds. As a result, the global sales of touring equipment have soared to new heights during the 2020-2021 winter season. In the US, ski sales were up 81% while the all-important backcountry accessories' category (including safety gear and skins) was up 150% (Marc Peruzzi 2021). And this trend is meant to last. People look more and more for what resorts can't deliver. As founder and CEO of the backcountry gear brand G3 says (2019), "they want to go a little further, they want to expand their experience". And expanding the skiing to the backcountry, looking for time away from resorts and crowds, in contact with nature, is exactly the spirit of ski touring.

The first event consists of designing a backcountry skiing experience in the Alps.

The following section of the paper describes how the partners selected will help to engage customers and how costs and revenues will be allocated for the first event.

5.3 The Partnerships

5.3.1 Protect Our Winters

Protect Our Winters (POW) is a non-profit organization founded by professional snowboarder Jeremy Jones. It helps outdoor people protect the places and lifestyles they love from climate change by acting on legislation.

For the first event, STH will link with POW Italy, established in the Alps. The linkage seems natural because of the shared idea that experiencing wild places inspires people to protect them. Moreover, it will be fundamental to improve discoverability. The event in the Alps will appear on POW website and social medias. POW Italy has a following of more than 1,000 outdoor enthusiasts on Instagram, it is strongly connected to POW, which has a following of more than 200,000 people and is a point of reference for mountain lovers. Lastly, by linking the environmental NGO to the event, the project will reinforce its focus on environmental conservation as a unique selling point.

On the other hand, in addition to receiving part of the revenue from the event, POW will have the chance to be part of something that brings the mission from theory to practice by having its audience engaged through a personal experience.

5.3.2 Glacier Optics

The second collaboration is with Glacier Optics, founded by filmmaker and freeskiier Arnaud Cottet. Glacier Optics produces sunglasses hand-made in the Alps for high mountain activities. From the case to the lenses, the brand works with manufactures from the Alps with the aims to give back to local family businesses. Glacier is a good fit because it emphasizes the willingness to empower local people. And the collaboration creates interesting synergies in terms of visibility. Glacier could use the event and the related media content as a platform to showcase the quality of its products in the mountains and eventually extend its reach to a wider outdoor community. Meanwhile, given Glacier's brand focus on freeskiing, STH could benefit from

the visibility given by the company's platforms. Moreover, due to Arnaud's videomaking experience in the mountain environment, the partnership can be beneficial to both parties and can be important for implementing key activities to engage customers such as the creation of content.

5.4 The Costs and the Revenues for the Event

For the first event, revenues are meant to cover the operational costs. The goal at this stage is to build momentum and build a strong brand image rather than to make a profit. Therefore, STH's first event will not generate any profit from it and will not be required to report information.

The pricing for the event is proposed by the organizers based on their package and considering that they must take care of all the expenses related to the event implementation.

A fee of 20% of the revenues will be retained by the platform, 5% will be donated to POW for conservation purposes while the rest will be earned by the organizer.

Due to the flexibility granted to organizers in the design and pricing of the event, total revenue is difficult to predict until one host's proposal is selected.

Key cost items for the implementation of the event are cost of revenue, marketing costs and legal fees.

Cost of revenue covers payments to the organizer. Differently from STH, the host makes a profit from the event and is required to pay traditional income taxes with respect on the country where the service is undertaken.

Marketing costs include the expenses related to the creation of media content and includes the payment to professionals for filming, editing and producing digital content.

Lastly, legal fees are paid to experts to design the required contracts such as the declaration of self-responsibility for participants.

6. What's Next

This paper was written to design the strategy required to attract an initial set of customers. STH is looking forward to having its event featured in POW Italy website and social medias to invite people to propose experiences and to collaborate with Glacier Optics to further engage the skiing community. A draft of the message that will be shared with POW's community can be found in Appendix 8.

To continue to build momentum, the brand aims to expand the variety of its events, moving to new places and activities. This allows the mission to spread to different outdoor communities and strengthens the market position of the brand. Climate change is affecting nearly any ecosystem from glaciers to forests, from oceans to rivers. As long as it remains a big challenge for society, there will be endless opportunities for STH to drive people to these ecosystems.

STH believes in implementing a for-profit social enterprise business model where social impact is measured alongside financial return. Just like for the event in the Alps, revenues are a percentage of every transaction. For the sake of the first event, revenues are intended to cover operational costs. But with the incremental business activity, the project intends to exploit economies of scale and brand extensions to generate profits and reach financial sustainability.

The project believes in investing in growth. It aims to seek investments, engage in brand collaborations and use the profit generated to facilitate the exchange within the communities and design effective customer retention strategies. To do so, it will be important to implement a platform business model through which customers can engage with the brand's ecosystem and be allowed to see experiences, make bookings, write reviews and stay in touch. The data collected from customers' activity will be crucial to improve the service through a better understanding of customers' needs, to boost decision making and to measure analytically the quality of previous investments.

7. Limitations

Outdoor activities are highly dependent on many factors that cannot be controlled. For example, they are always conditioned by weather forecasts and stakeholders need to be flexible on changes on the characteristic of the events. This insecurity can lead people to choose more reliable activities, especially if they have a specific range period for the experience.

Moreover, the dangers associated with playing outdoor expose STH to scandals and incidents that can lead to the loss of security for participants. It is thus important to put safety first and make bold decisions about when to hold off an experience.

Lastly, the selecting process for the event increases quality but decreases quantity, leaving people with a small list of alternatives and decreasing potential profits for STH.

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SEE THE HONEY: AN INITIATIVE TO BOND COMMUNITIES AND
PROTECT THE WILD PLACES OF EUROPE

APPENDIX

ALESSANDRO PEDERZOLI

Work project carried out under the supervision of:

Euclides Filipe Ferreira Major

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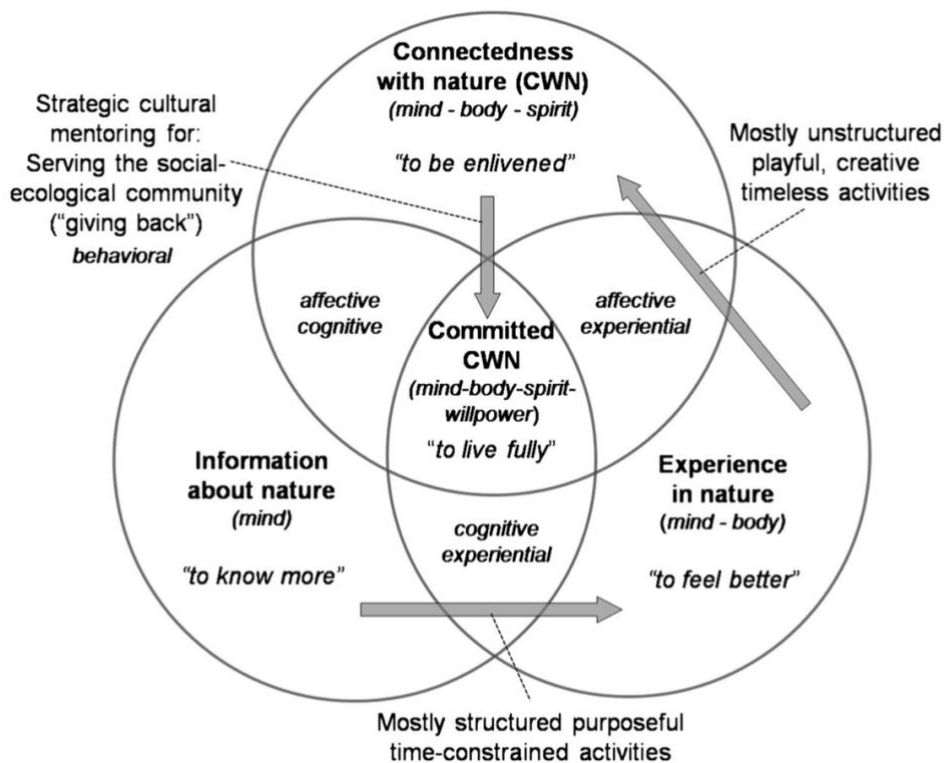
Appendix

Appendix 1 | Sustainable Development Goals



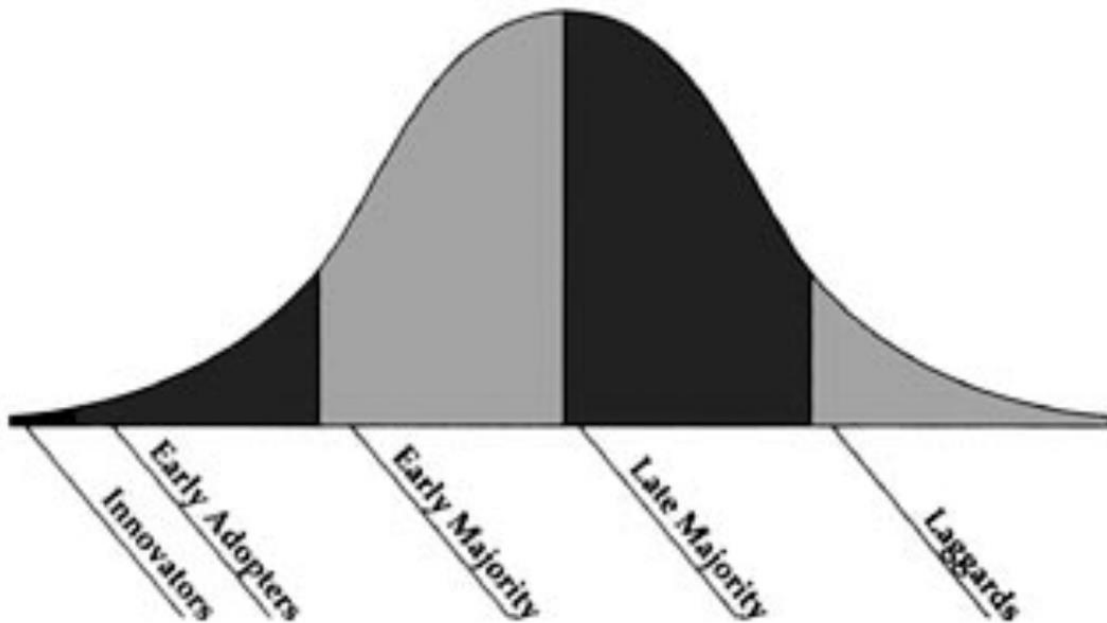
Source: <https://investiresponsabilmente.it/glossario/sdgs/>.

Appendix 2 | Connectedness with Nature



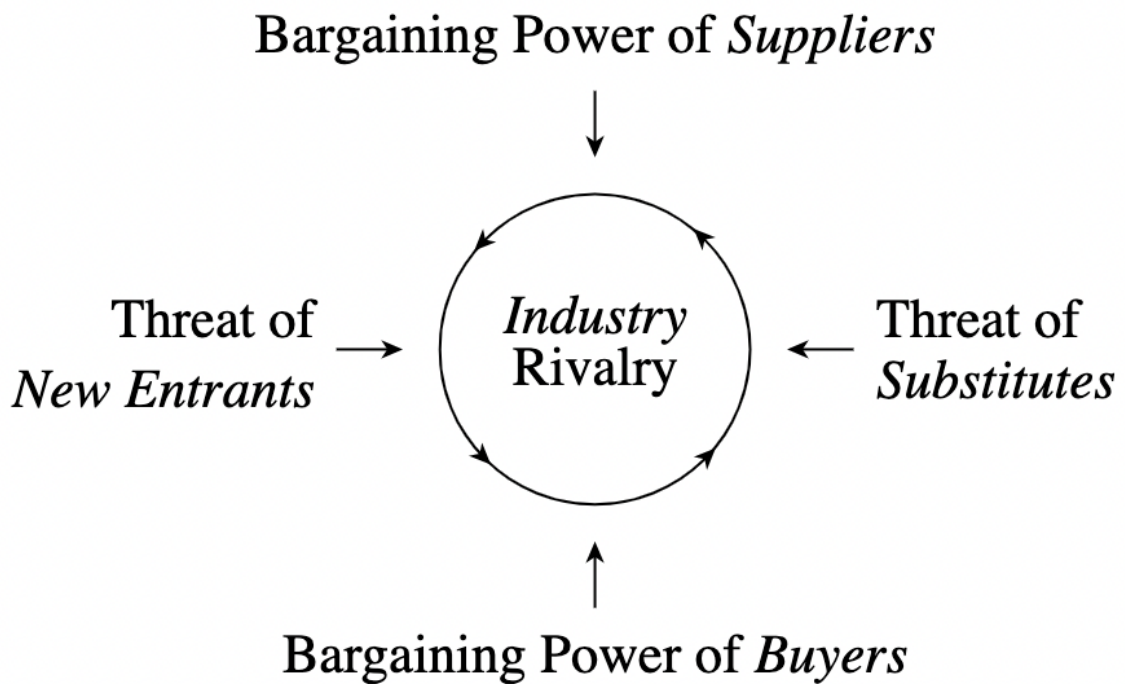
Source: Matthew J. Zylstra, Andrew T. Knight, Karen J. Esler, Lesley L. L. Le Grange (2014).

Appendix 3 | **Law of Diffusion of Innovation**



Source: Geoffrey A. Moore (1991).

Appendix 4A and 4B | **Porter's Five Force**



SEE THE HONEY: An Initiative to Bond Communities and Protect the Wild Places of Europe

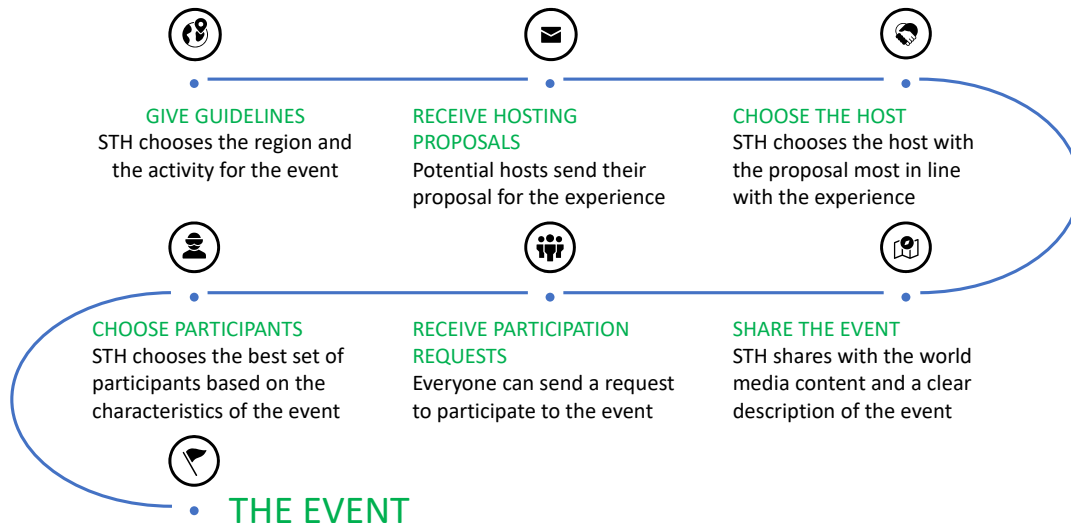
	LEVEL	FACTORS	PORTER 5 FORCES	INCREASE / DECREASE FACTOR
THREAT OF NEW ENTRANTS	HIGH	TIME OF ENTRY	FEATURES	INCREASE
		COST OF ENTRY	SHORT TIME REQUIREMENTS	INCREASE
		SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE	PLATFORM SET UP	INCREASE
		ECONOMIES OF SCALE	NETWORK OF SUPPLIERS, KNOWLEDGE OF LOCATIONS AND ACTIVITIES,	DECREASE
		LEGAL AND REGULATORY BARRIERS	ABSENT	INCREASE
		TECHNOLOGY PROTECTION	MODERATE	DECREASE
BARGAINING POWER OF BUYERS	MODERATE	NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS	HIGH AND EXPANDING	DECREASE
		PRICE SENSITIVITY	PEOPLE ARE INVESTING IN EXPERIENCES MORE THAN THINGS. RELATIVELY LOW	DECREASE
		ABILITY TO SUBSTITUTE	DIRECT SUBSTITUTES AVAILABLE	INCREASE
		CUSTOMERS' COST OF CHANGE	LOW	INCREASE
BARGAINING POWER OF SUPPLIERS	MODERATE	NUMBER OF SUPPLIERS	LIMITED AND CONCENTRATED	INCREASE
		SIZE OF SUPPLIERS	SMALL	DECREASE
		UNIQUENESS OF SERVICE	SUPPLIERS ABLE TO OFFER UNIQUE SERVICES WILL SEE THEIR POWER INCREASE	INCREASE
		ABILITY TO SUBSTITUTE	HIGH AND INCREASING (DUE TO INCREASING COMPETITION)	DECREASE
THREAT OF SUBSTITUTE SERVICES	MODERATE	CUSTOMERS' COST OF CHANGE	LOW	INCREASE
		PRESENCES OF INDIRECT SUBSTITUTES	MAINSTREAM GUIDING, SELF-GUIDING	INCREASE
		SUBSTITUTE PERFORMANCE	DIFFERENT PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY OF THE SERVICE	DECREASE
RIVALRY AMONG EXISTING FIRMS	LOW	CUSTOMERS' COST OF CHANGE	LOW	INCREASE
		INDUSTRY RATE OF GROWTH	HIGHLY FRAGMENTED, EXPANDING INDUSTRY	DECREASE
		PRESENCE OF MARKET LEADER	AIRBNB	DECREASE
		QUALITY DIFFERENCES	VERY RELEVANT AND INCREASING. BUT STILL MODERATE	INCREASE
		FIXED COSTS	LOW	DECREASE
		CUSTOMER LOYALTY	HIGH	DECREASE
CUSTOMERS' COST OF CHANGE	LOW	INCREASE		

Source 4A: Wikipedia – Porter’s Five Forces

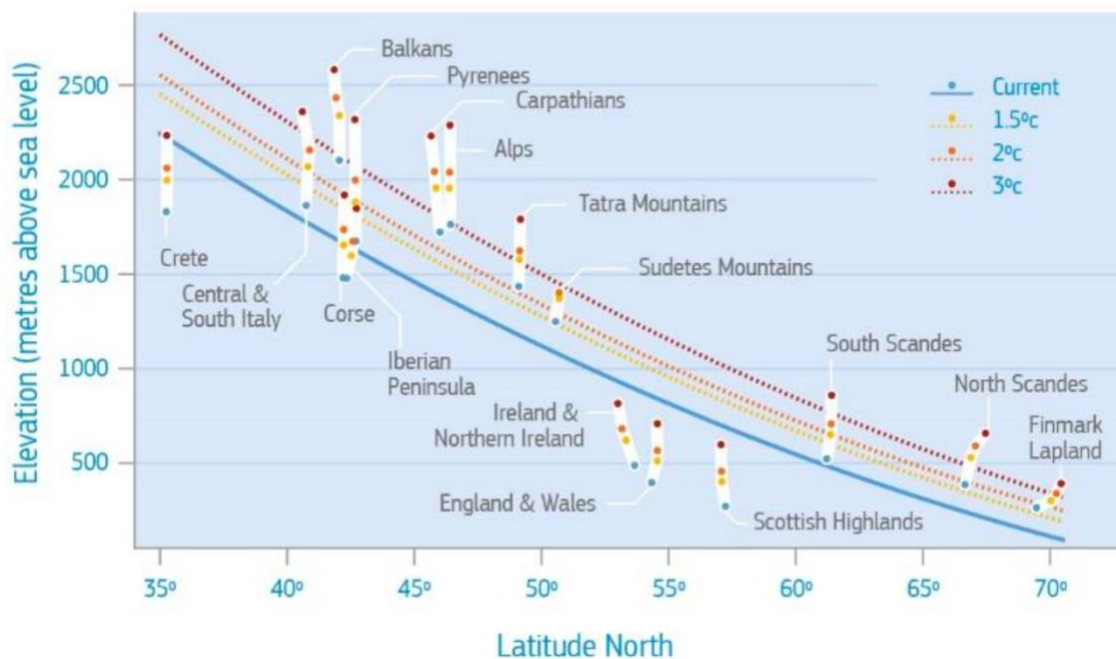
Appendix 5 | Competition

COMPETITION				
NAME	ACTIVITIES	LOCATIONS	RELEVANT MARKET SHARE	
AIRBNB	ALL	WORLDWIDE	6%	
VIATOR	ALL	WORLDWIDE	55%	
GETYOURGUIDE	ALL	WORLDWIDE	20%	
MUSEMENT	ALL	WORLDWIDE		
TOURRADAR	ALL	WORLDWIDE		
PLACEPASS	ALL	WORLDWIDE		
KLOOK	ALL	WORLDWIDE	4%	
HELI	SKIING, SURFING, BIKING, FISHING, DIVING	WORLDWIDE		
ADRENATINE HUNTER	ALL	WORLDWIDE		
MUCH BETTER ADVENTURE!	HIKING, KAYAKING, BIKING	WORLDWIDE		
LUEX	SURFING, SKIING	WORLDWIDE		
CHECK YETI	ALL	WORLDWIDE		
POWDER HOUNDS	SKIING, SURFING, BIKING, FISHING, DIVING	WORLDWIDE		
BIKEHIKE TOURS	MOUNTAIN BIKING, HIKING	WORLDWIDE		

Appendix 6 | Steps for Designing an Event



Appendix 7 | Climatic Tree Elevation in for 16 Mountain Regions in Europe



Source: Feyen L., Ciscar J.C., Gosling S., Ibarreta D., Soria A. (2020)

Appendix 8 | **The Message on POW website**



Technology is great. It has allowed the human species to surge forward through raising societies out of poverty, accelerating understanding and innovation.

In some cases however, society's evolving nature has created crisis of identity for many of us. Companies today are allowing instant access to any information, product or service. But is excessive comfort leading to better lives? Are we really happier today than we were in the past? Research shows that today's society is experiencing an increase in pain problems, depression and anxiety. And the reason might lie in the progressive elimination of the friction or resistance that allow humans to thrive and evolve. Innovation is substituting grinding tasks, once undertaken by millions of people, with machines that think for themselves. And these machines require exponentially increasing amounts of energy in order to perform. The excessive energy consumption is causing one of the biggest challenges we are facing today: climate change. The same climate transformation that is causing ice sheets to shrink, oceans to warm up and the snowpack to retreat. And the cause behind the increasing extinction rate that threatens our biodiversity and the decline in our local businesses.

SEE THE HONEY is a hunt for change and an invite for people to pursue curious and bold lifestyles. It is believed that when someone dreams of honey, he must go on a spiritual journey because something is hidden from the physical eye. Our mission is to make people see the honey and design journeys for a rebirth of their relationship with nature and a rediscover of what it is like to be human.

STH exists to build a community of outdoor enthusiasts driven to protect Europe's wild places against climate change. We seek happiness by getting back to the basics, in the true spirit of adventure rather than comfort, and we believe that experiencing wild places ultimately leads us to preserve them.

To do so, STH gathers communities and empowers passionate people living connected to the outdoors to share their ways of life. These experiences become the platforms that allow like-minded individuals to get together, tell stories and share knowledge.

The first event takes place in the Alps, and it is thought to engage the free skiing community to celebrate one of Europe's last wild places through backcountry skiing.

To get a meaningful connection to the place, we want people from the Alps to design the ski touring proposal, to think the experience, to share the lifestyles, the places they love and the traditions with an international free skiing community. No requirements, no rules.

If you are a passionate backcountry skier, we'd love to get to know you and how you think others can see the honey in your local ground.

The proposer that best fits with our mission will be selected to host the event this winter. STH will coordinate and cooperate with the host on the implementation of the event and all the necessary operational details.

So... just email us or PM us on Instagram.

Organizers will have to provide a price proposal for their package, considering that they will take care of all the expenses related to the event implementation. If you are not sure what the price for your package should be, just say so in your message and we will be happy to we are happy to find the best proposal with you.

For this event, 20% of the revenues will be retained by the platform, 5% will be donated to POW to make sure we contribute to the sustainability of our environment and passions, while the rest will be earned by the organizer.

P.S. Every participant is accountable for his/her own behavior. Neither STH nor the host will be responsible in case of incident.

For the sake of the project, we believe that the duration of the event should be between 1 and 5 days.

Once we have the host, we'll get right back with all the information about the adventure.