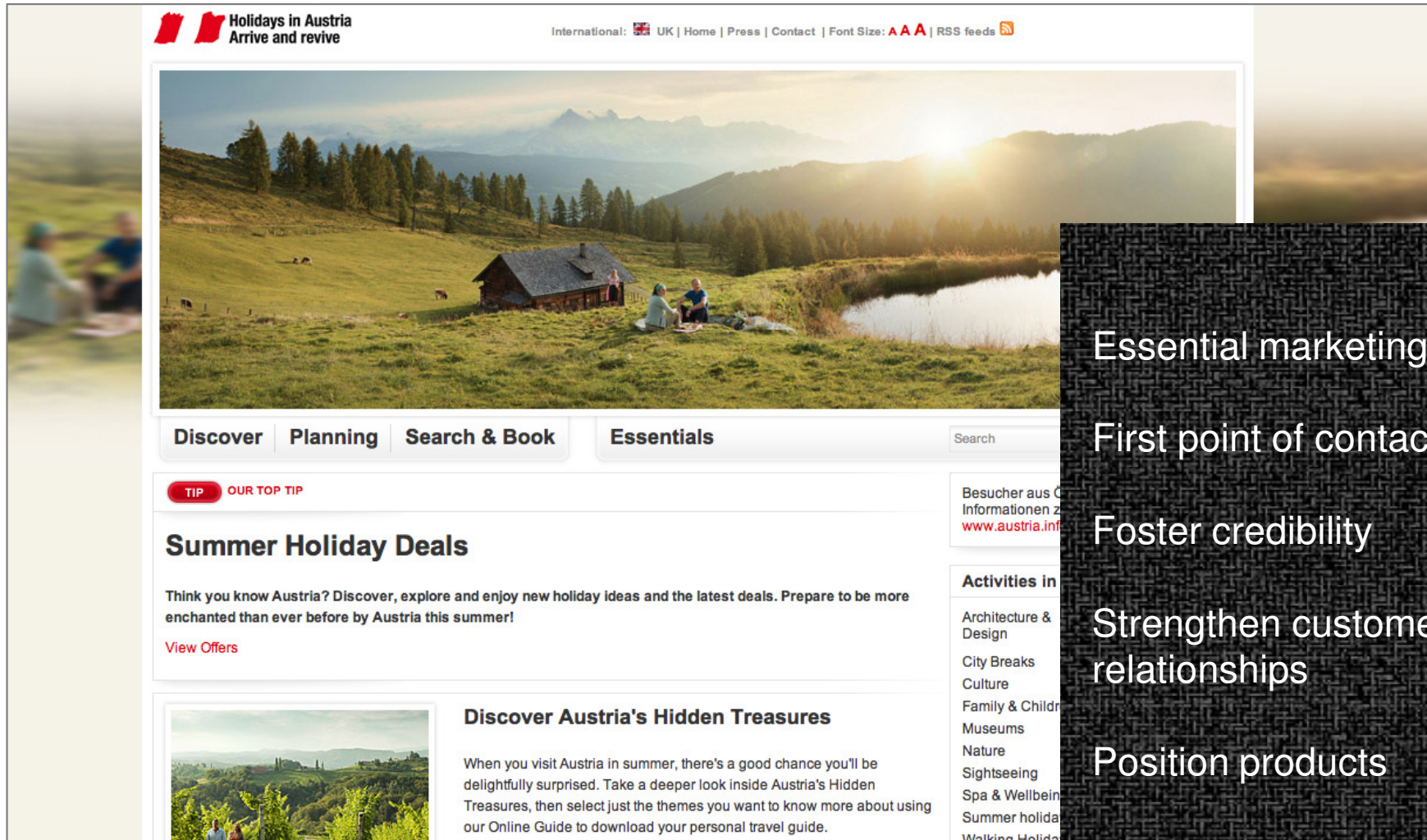# An Evaluation of Success Factors on European National Tourism Organisations' Destination Websites

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Salzburg University of Applied Sciences

www.tourism-student-conference.com

Destination Websites

- Essential marketing tool
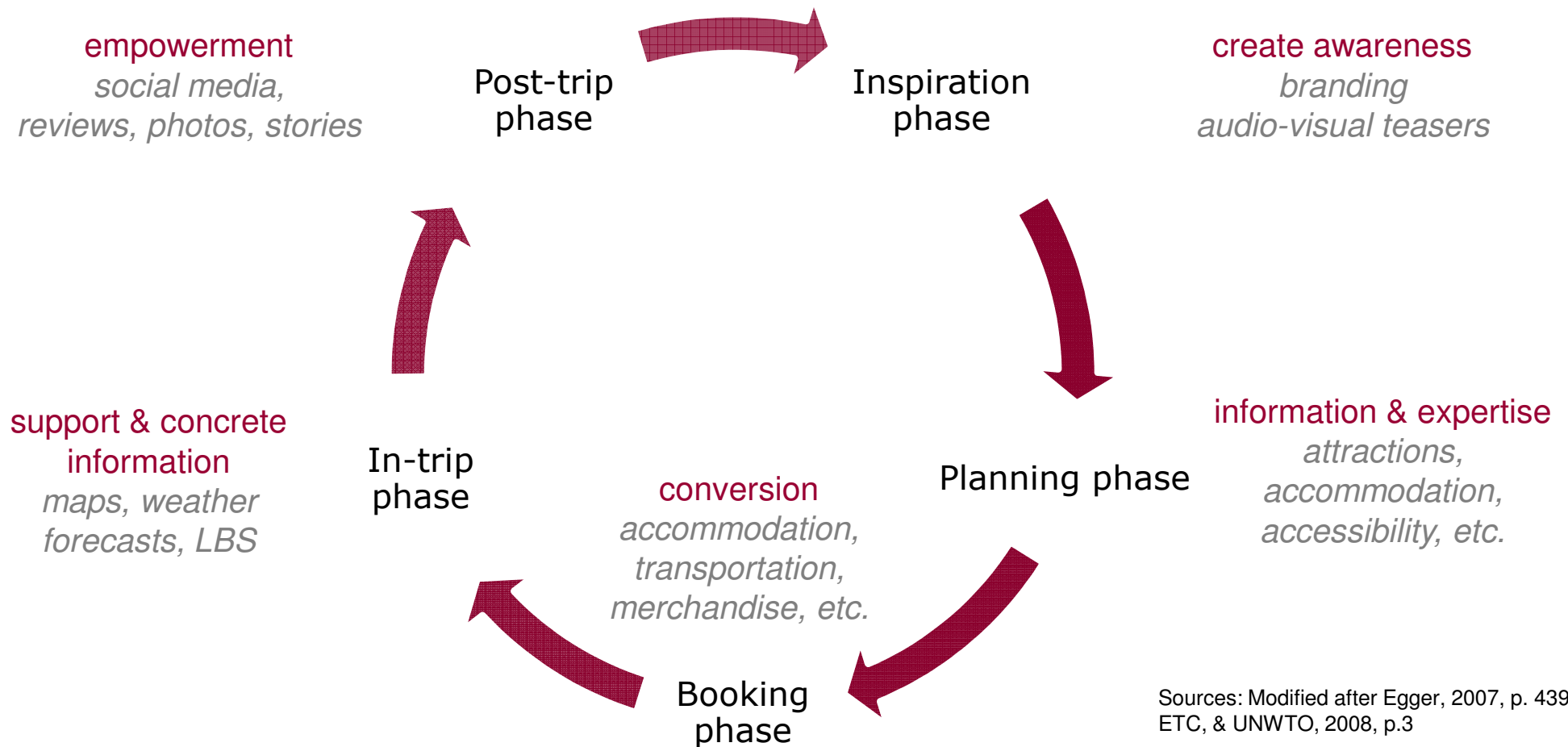- First point of contact online
- Foster credibility
- Strengthen customer relationships
- Position products

Customer Journey

- A defined number of touch points between the customer and the service provider (Stickdorn & Zehrer, 2009).

empowerment
*social media,
reviews, photos, stories*

Post-trip phase

Inspiration phase

create awareness
*branding
audio-visual teasers*

support & concrete information
maps, weather forecasts, LBS

In-trip phase

conversion
accommodation, transportation, merchandise, etc.

Planning phase

information & expertise
attractions, accommodation, accessibility, etc.

Booking phase

Sources: Modified after Egger, 2007, p. 439; ETC, & UNWTO, 2008, p.3

Quality & Usability

Information architecture → content organisation → labelling → search function

Navigation design → Where am I? → Where have I been? → Where can I go?

Interface design → Simple or complex? → Website elements → Arrangement

Persuasiveness

- Persuasiveness - "… diluting the intangibility associated with the tourism product" (Morosan, 2008, p. 217).

Hygiene Features

- Information quality
- Usability
- Credibility

Motivational features

- Branding
- Reinforcement
- Involvement
- Inspiration
- E-Commerce

after Morosan & Fesenmaier, 2007

Various evaluation frameworks

- ## A growing number of website evaluation studies
  (Hashim et al., 2007; Ip et al., 2001; Law et al., 2010; Park and Gretzel, 2007)

6 A concept
- Buhalis, 2003

AIDA Concept
- IZT, 2003

2QCV3Q Model
- Mich, Franch, Cilione, & Marzani, 2003

Destination Web Watch
- World Tourism Organization, 2005

eFitness Check & Update
- as in Duerr, Küng, Schegg, & Stangl, 2013

Research Questions

Customer Journey

Which stages of the customer journey are significantly fulfilled by European NTO destination websites?

How well do NTO websites integrate technologies and tools associated with the customer journey?

Quality & Persuasive-ness

How do NTO websites perform on website quality and persuasiveness dimensions?

Methodological Approach

Literature
Review

Website Audit

Results

136 assessment criteria

Customer Journey
Website Quality & Usability
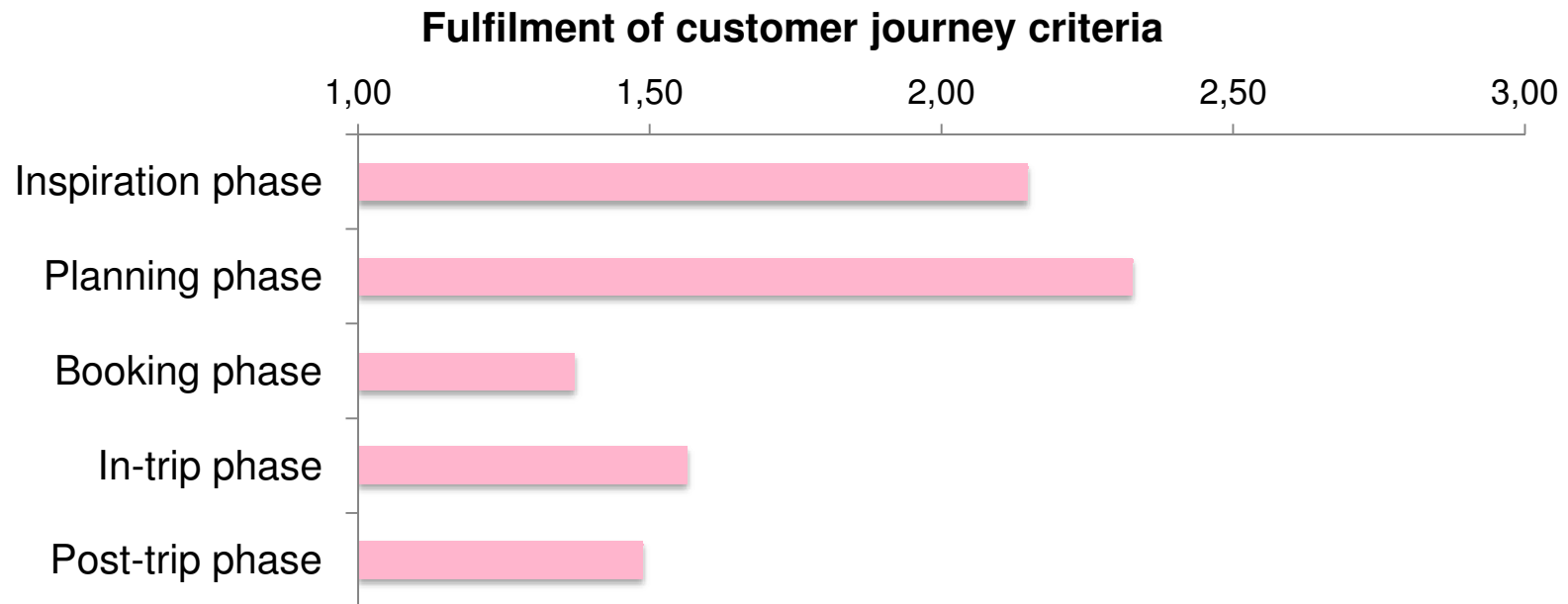Persuasiveness

37 NTO websites

current and former ETC*
members

3-point rating scale

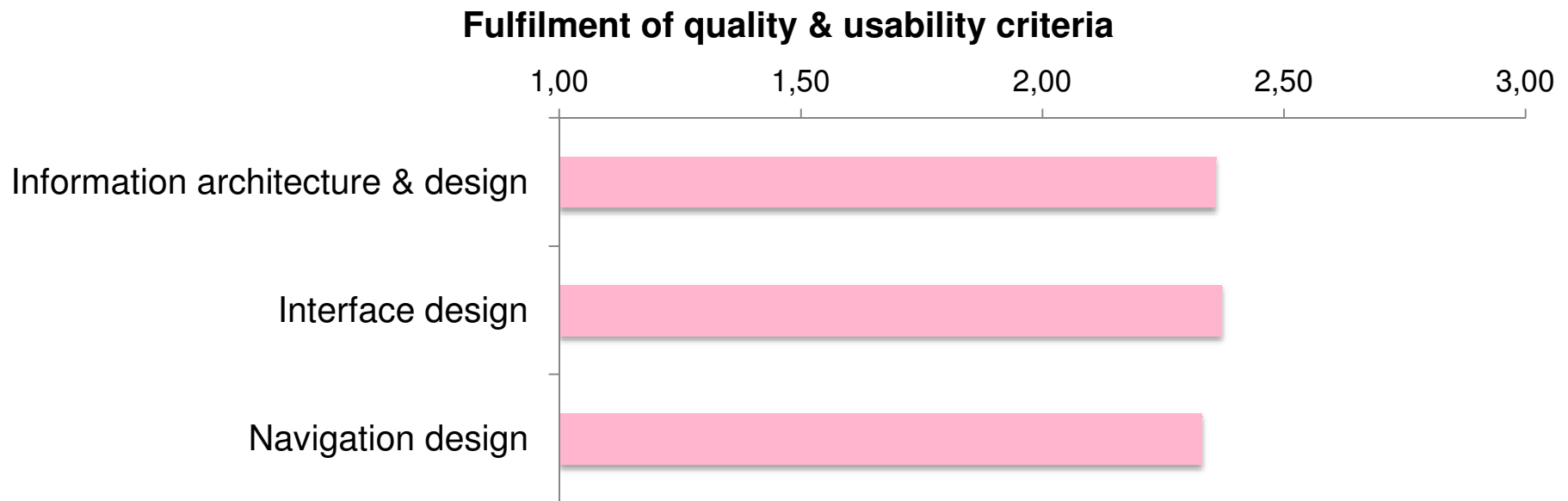*European Travel Commission

Results (1)
Customer Journey

Fulfilment of customer journey criteria

| | 1,00 | 1,50 | 2,00 | 2,50 | 3,00 |

- Inspiration phase
- Planning phase
- Booking phase
- In-trip phase
- Post-trip phase

KEY FINDINGS

- highest fulfilment of planning phase criteria
- focus is on branding and visual teasers
- provision of information is significant but fragmented
- least significant are the booking and the post-visit phases

Phase	High fulfilment	Low fulfilment
Inspiration	destination brand (2,95) image carousel (2,92) audio-visual content (2,84) image gallery (2,65) newsletter (2,46)	advertising (1,68) testimonials (1,59) virtual tours (1,57) entertainment (e.g. games) (1,41) webcam (1,30)
Planning	practical information (2,95) local information (2,95) themes (2,92) leisure activities (2,92) local attractions (2,86),	seasonal information (1,59) FAQ (1,57) itinerary planner (1,54) packages (1,41) user stories and itineraries (1,27)
Booking	search engine for travel booking (2,11) prices (1,92)	sightseeing tours and packages (1,19) merchandise (1,11) events (1,03) gift vouchers (1,03) restaurants (1,00)
In-trip	attraction opening times (2,27) weather forecast (2,16)	location-based services (1,49) e-postcards (1,22) currency converter (1,16) transportation schedules (1,16) itinerary diary (1,05)
Post-trip	social media widgets are integrated (2,32)	user ratings (1,59) photo-sharing platform (1,57) complaints (1,49) video-sharing platform (1,32) itinerary sharing option (1,27) blogs (1,19) forums or chat (1,14)

Results (2)
Website Quality & Usability

Fulfilment of quality & usability criteria

| | 1,00 | 1,50 | 2,00 | 2,50 | 3,00 |

Information architecture & design

Interface design

Navigation design

KEY FINDINGS

- no significant difference across criteria fulfilment
- Detailed scores reveal great differences in basic and innovative web design

Results (2)
Detailed Results

Phase	High fulfilment	Low fulfilment
Information architecture & design	search function available (2,95) consistent labelling (2,92) uniform label style (2,89) explorative information search (2,81) consistent information organisation (2,73)	images have alternative text (1,70) iconic labels (1,65) persuasive labels (1,62) iconic labels are clear (1,57) advanced search is supported (1,46)
Interface design	header contains expected features (2,89) global navigation bar is consistent (2,89) navigation easily identifiable (2,78) typography is consistent (2,76) site layout is structured (2,70)	local navigation is consistent (2,32) anchor text is clear (2,32) fonts are adjustable (1,38) follow accessibility guidelines (1,32)
Navigation design	exit points (i.e. home link) (2,84) navigation is consistent (2,81) navigation design is balanced (2,73) navigation is easy to learn (2,73) orientation cues are integrated (i.e. breadcrumb trail) (2,59)	'read on' links are provided (2,19) navigation options are duplicated (2,11) contextual links to internal content (2,03) contextual links to external content (1,70) alternative navigation features (1,46)

Results (3)
Persuasiveness

Fulfilment of persuasiveness criteria
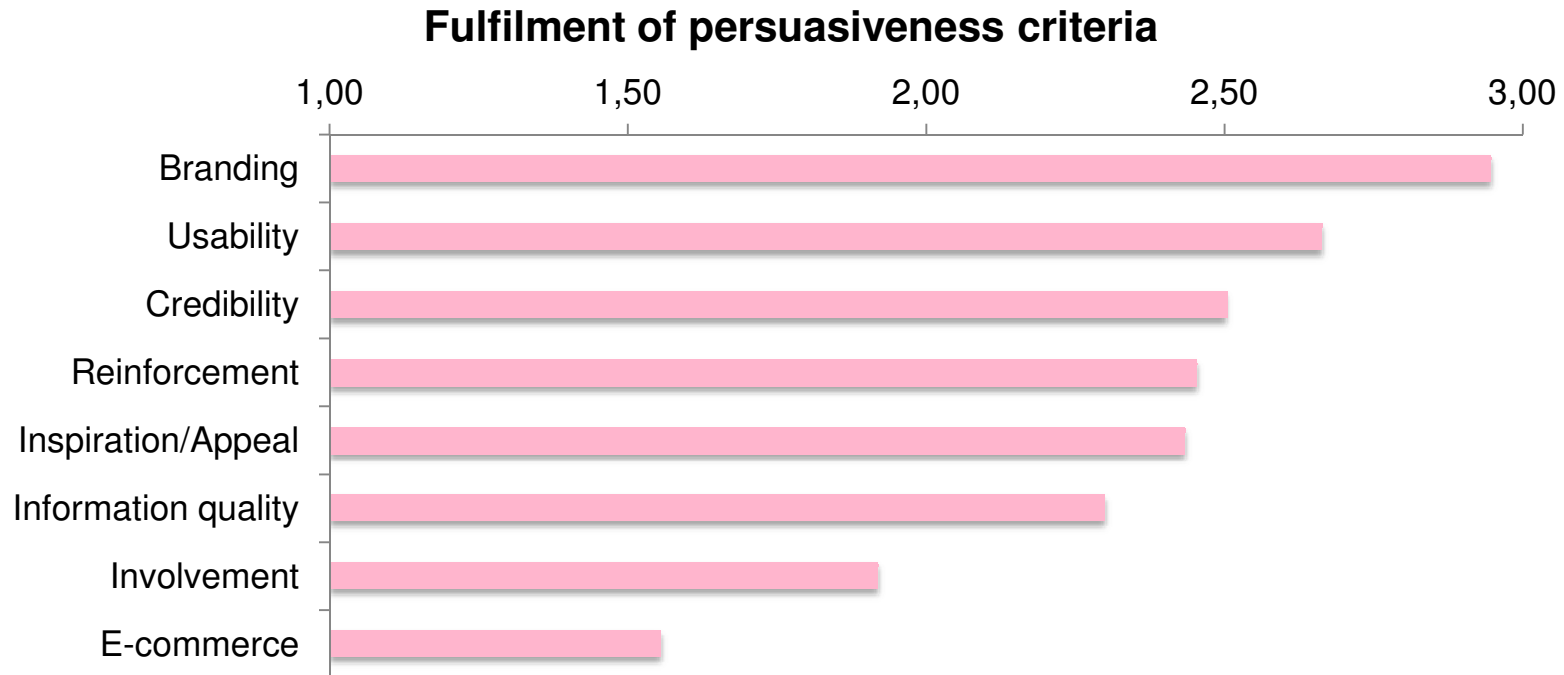
KEY FINDINGS

- branding is the most frequent persuasive element
- usability, credibility, reinforcement and information quality
- websites lack adequate involvement and e-commerce features

Best Practice Example

Key Conclusions

- ## Fragmented fulfilment of customer journey trip phases
  - Strong emphasis on inspirational and planning phase
  - Booking and post-visit phase are particularly neglected

- ## Few truly interactive components
  - Low number of engagement and personalisation tools
  - Majority of NTOs do not capitalise on UGC

- ## Quality and persuasiveness gap
  - Focus on conventional design criteria
  - Lack of consideration of motivational factors

Limitations & Further Research

constraints

singularity

consumer research

usability tests
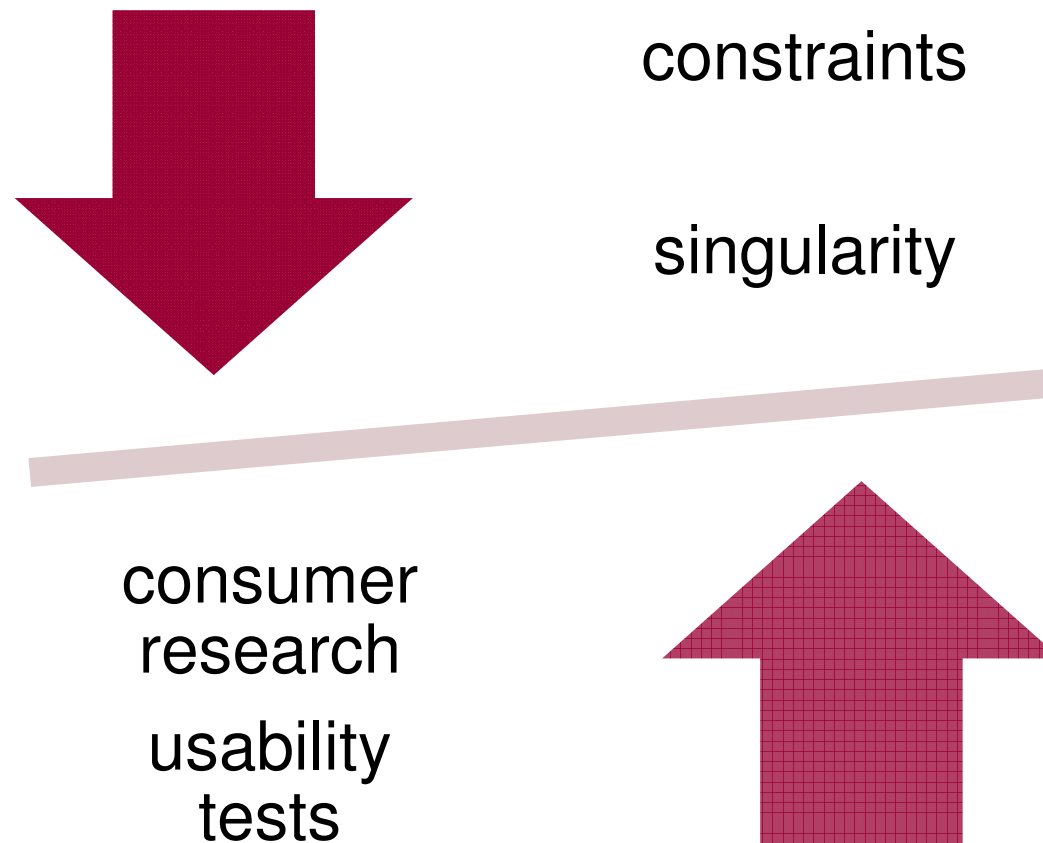
Thank you very much!

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