

INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCES THROUGH MEGA ATTRACTIONS ***"The Recreation of the Ancient Wonder of Colossus"***

SUMMARY

Throughout the years of human history our economic society has shifted from the agricultural era, to the industrial era and after that to the information age. As our society is changing, we are entering the "dream society" era where emotions and fantasies are prevailing. Therefore, a modern and proactive tourism system should aim at the development of new tourism products and services in the form of consumable experiences. To do so, it is necessary to structure a stimulating tourism environment where the visitor feels involved and directly participates with true and inspiring emotions.

MOVING FROM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO EXPERIENCES

Customers are no longer happy with the products and destinations they visit. There is a growing mismatch between products offered by destinations and the needs and demands of the increasingly experienced travelers. The "products" that destinations have to offer are not just the physical products such as hotels, restaurants and attractions, but very importantly, the experiences and the innovative services that are important in delivering exceptional experiences for visitors. This is critically important because tourism economic value is increasingly being created through *the staging and orchestrating of experiences* that are relevant to the needs of the customers rather than extracting commodities, making goods or even delivering services.

THE FUTURE OF RHODES AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

Rhodes is today a particularly saturated tourism destination at a stage of its life cycle that already presents intensely evidence of stagnation, since the supply of tourism accommodations and services is considerably larger than the demand.

How can Rhodes be reinvented and re-defined, in order to become competitive in the future? Which should be the mega-actions and mega-events that will lead Rhodes to develop outstanding demand and introduce the destination successfully into the dream society, delivering exceptional experiences to its visitors exceeding their expectations?