TOURISM IN TUSCANY

How the sector operates

The actors involved in the regional tourism system are a numerous and diversified set of operators, not entirely represented in our focus group; among them, local and national authorities play a leading role as both regulators and infrastructure providers. The main changes occurred in the sector are due, on the one hand to the effects of crisis that reduced many firms to mere subsistence levels, and the emergence of new international flows (from Asia and Latin America), and on the other to the more and more pervasive role of social networks and travel-related web applications, that have radically altered travel modalities from both the supply and demand sides.

Notwithstanding the advantageous position of being located in a very much attractive region, competition has enormously increased – although with different local degrees – and, as a result, transparency and quality have become preconditions to survive in the marketplace. Also, Internet has paved the way for new entrepreneurial ventures, rewarding innovative actors who, by the way, also established new market practices.

The response to the crisis has often taken an individual character, whereas a collective response from areas sharing a common identity would make easier to customize the services offered, detect emerging demands, coordinate tourist information policies and efficiently advertize the variety of proposals and actors involved, always keeping hospitality as the cornerstone of strategic promotion.

Obviously, the trends briefly described above call for a reassessment of professional and training needs.

Skill needs: strategic competencies and job profiles

The shortage of continuing and vocational training constitutes a hindrance to the improvement of supply for both traditional and new jobs. As regards the traditional profiles, careers in cooking (especially cook pastry chef) are attractive to the new generation and constitute a strong point at national level, with some specialized schools internationally recognized as centres of excellence. In the case of the **hospitality professions**, **porters** in particular, the recruitment difficulties are mainly due to their low attractiveness for young people and to a training system lagging behind the business needs (management software systems, online booking platforms).

In the in-demand list, we find **executive housekeepers**, who are not even mentioned in the Regional classification of professional profiles, or at least not under the tasks currently needed, i.e. overseeing and directing the cleaning activities and supervising the staff. Other profiles of medium-high level are the area-specific managers: the **hospitality managers**, who are in charge of customer care, also through information delivery about the hotel, the city or the territory; the **social media managers**, who are capable of understanding the trends and steering future supply strategies; the **back office managers**, who are responsible for managing the sales channels, for market analyses and price plan evaluations. Also required are the **catering tutors**, whose core competency derives from a wide knowledge of local foods and wines.

As regards the new profiles, today the sector offers opportunities for innovative start-ups specialized in advanced business-related services, that clearly need experts of hospitality, tourism and IT solutions: **IT developers**, **designers**, **user experience experts**, **marketing** and **distribution managers**, **data analysts**.
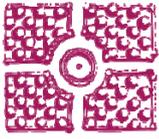
A general requirement in recruitment, but also in employee – and even entrepreneur – lifelong learning is the use of the most widespread software applications, Internet and social media, the knowledge of languages, and the ability to communicate a vision of the local typical products, and cultural and landscape heritage. In what concerns the transfer of competencies, a – possibly long – period of first-hand experience is seen as fundamental, maybe in the form of early access to the labour market, though accompanied by updated teaching practices. In this respect, the availability of competent trainers in the use of the Web and social media is today rather limited.

A taxonomy of the required professional qualifications

The table below combines data from three sources: the mandatory employment notices from firms to job centres, introduced in 2008; the IRPET survey on the training needs of the Tuscan firms having recorded higher-than-average turnover and employment rates after the crisis; the focus groups with firms belonging to strategic sectors for regional growth. The quantitative and qualitative data collected were used to classify occupations by employment capacity (number of newly employed), and job stability (combination of days worked and contract type).

Overview of the most sought-after and in-demand tourism jobs

		Job stability	
		Medium-high	**Medium-low**
Employment capacity (number of newly employed)	**Medium-large**	Bartenders and related workers Hotel and restaurant cooks Food preparation, cooking and serving workers	Waiters and related workers Unskilled catering workers Reception clerks in accommodation and catering services Unskilled cleaning workers in accommodation and cruising Lifeguards and related workers Porters, deliverers and related workers
	Medium-small	Reception and front-desk clerks in businesses and public authorities Artisan confectioners, ice-cream and preserve makers Managers of catering facilities Owners or managers of small hotels, lodgings, camping grounds, small caterers Farmers, horticultural, nursery, flower and ornamental plant growers, specialists in protected horticultural and market gardens Catering and accommodation managers and general directors	Food production and preparation technicians Doorkeepers and related workers Non-qualified industrial workers and related workers Civil construction labourers and unskilled workers, and related workers

The analysis of recruitment capacity resulted in two occupation groups (medium-large and medium-small), depending on the number of newly employed (larger/smaller than the median value). The analysis of job stability resulted in two occupation groups (medium-high and medium-low), depending on the value of the composite indicator (higher/lower than the median value).