

Business case ID Card

Name of the company: Due Papaveri - Agriturismo - gourmet resort

Country: Italy

Size of the business: 2 owners and 2 seasonal employees

Website: www.duepapaveri.com

Background

After many years running a diving boat in Egypt, the owners of Due Papaveri settled down in the beautiful Italian countryside, in the Emilia Romagna region, with the dream to create a unique agri-tourism company. They renovated an old farm to create a facility fully dedicated to agri-tourism activities, including 5 rooms, a small restaurant, as well as special cooking class, and other options for guests looking to discover the region.

Main activities

14 years after its creation, Due Papaveri is a 5-star rated agri-tourism facility (Agriturismo trademark in Italy), comprising five luxurious guest bedrooms and two separate four-bed apartments. In addition to the well renowned restaurant and the provision of cooking classes, the facility started producing and selling local specialties. The facilities can also be rented for a wide variety of local events, from weddings to professional meetings. The company sell local products harvested and cooked on-site, that are also being served at the restaurant.

Market

From hotels to rural cottages, there are lots of options available for tourists in Italy, so why do they choose Due Papaveri? Rather than price, a warm welcome for every guest, luxury rooms, original activities such as cooking classes, a gourmet restaurant on-site, as well as relaxation facilities are essential ingredients to outshine local competitors.

Thanks to an effective online marketing strategy, including active use of social media channels such as Facebook, combined with 'word of mouth' recommendations and referrals from previous guests, the company manages to attract guests from all over the world, from Japan to the United States.

Since the creation of the official 'agritourismo' trademark (Agriturismo Italia) by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture in 2013, Due Papaveri is certified as such. This certification gives future guests an idea of the level of comfort, the variety of services and the beauty of natural landscapes they can expect at the farm.



Challenges and solutions

Finding a suitable farm and gathering enough capital and manpower to build the site represented the owners' first challenges when they started this adventure. But the research finally paid off after some years, and once launched, the site quickly became very successful in the area. Italian agri-tourism facilities are expected to include a significant amount of own production for its operation. This was a challenge at the beginning. But once the owners managed to improve quality of own production, meeting this requirement was no longer an issue.

Funding

Developing a facility like Due Papaveri required a significant amount of time and effort from the owners themselves. Besides this personal investment, the owners estimate their financial investment was between 300,000 and 500,000 Euro, primarily funded via personal savings and retained earnings.

What makes this case innovative?

Due Papaveri acted as an early mover in the field of 'luxurious agri-tourism' in Italy. Similar businesses are started to emerge in the region, but keeping the balance between expansion, luxurious facilities, original services, and hospitality is of primary importance to keep guests satisfied and safeguard the company's place on the market. The ability of Due Papaveri to offer all of those services with only two to four employees on-site differentiates the company from larger facilities in the area.

Lessons learnt

Besides the location, constant upgrading of facilities and services is needed to keep the place attractive for the guests and maintain the company's ranking in the regional certification scheme for agri-tourism facilities. As the place is nothing like a classic hotel, special attention has to be paid to the way guests are welcomed on site. To this end, seasonal workers receive a special training, enabling them to understand what really makes the difference between a local agri-tourism facility and a classic hotel.

Due Papaveri is an interesting example of business drawing on the growing attraction for sustainable tourism to support growth and job creation in rural areas. Their success has already been followed by others in Italy and keeps inspiring future entrepreneurs all over Europe.

