2011

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Publication details


Published version available from:  
http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1356766710392414
The better mousetrap fallacy: A case study of the Bali Pathfinder tourist map

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‘Build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door’ is a slogan originating in the USA in the 19th century that could be applied to the Bali Pathfinder tourist map which is, in its utilitarian and artistic features, superior to other maps intended for tourists in Bali – and its price is lower. However, it is ‘a better mousetrap’ which relatively few tourists are beating a path to buy. Other maps are selling in larger quantities. Thus the case study illustrates what critical thinkers – skeptics – call ‘the better mousetrap fallacy’. A map of excellent quality – designed, published and distributed by a small-scale Balinese-owned business, has a minor share of its market. The weakness is in its method of distribution. In contrast, multinational publishers have a strong method, enabling them to capture a larger share. The strength of the multinationals cannot be matched by the small-scale local publisher.

Keywords
Bali, maps, consumer, customer, distribution, multinationals

Introduction

‘Build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door’ is a slogan that originated in 19th century USA. Ralph Waldo Emerson, who is credited with devising the slogan, was not worried about plagues of mice disdainful of faulty traps. ‘Better mousetrap’ was a clever metaphorical expression, conveying the belief that any inventor or manufacturer who produced better goods of any sort would succeed in business.

The case discussed in the present article involves a map for tourists in Bali, demonstrably the best map on the market and selling for a lower price than others. Since its first publication in 1984 it has been updated and presented in similar style in eight editions, most recently in 2004. However, other brands of maps have larger and growing shares of the market while Bali Pathfinder’s share has decreased in recent years. In this context it can be described as a failure since, if it is ‘a better mousetrap’, it should be the market leader and tourists wanting maps should be beating a path to the door of retailers where it can be purchased.

The first aim of this article is to report on research about a small-scale enterprise in Bali. Another is to demonstrate, via the case study, ‘the better mousetrap fallacy’. A third aim is to discuss distribution as an element in the marketing mix of tourism-related businesses whose outputs are goods. A fourth aim is to describe a case where a multinational company entered a country and, via its economies of scale allied with its methods of

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distribution, captured market share from a small-scale local business.

With those aims the article can make a contribution to the literature on marketing in tourism, and on tourism in Bali. First, the extant research literature about tourism in Bali is very largely about socio-cultural issues; there is little about specific businesses involved with tourism. The present article is about a Balinese business enterprise. Second, the ‘better mousetrap fallacy’ has been discussed in general terms by a number of marketing theorists; the present article discusses it in a tourism context. Third, although there are many publications about tourism marketing, almost all focus on the marketing (in many instances merely the promotion) of services and destinations; the focus is appropriate, for tourism marketing in practice is largely about services and destinations. However, diverse kinds of goods are purchased by tourists and there is scope for research on this topic. Finally, there are many discussions in the literature about the effects of multinational companies on socio-economic environments of tourist destinations. One such discussion is by Rodenburg (1980) which, incidentally, is set in Bali. The present article adds to that theme by discussing another Balinese case.

Research methods

On vacation in Bali, one of the authors of this article took advantage of an opportunity that arose during a casual conversation with the proprietor of Bali Pathfinder who agreed to be interviewed about his business. Two interviews were conducted, on successive vacations three years apart. Each interview lasted almost two hours and took place at the house in Ubud where the proprietor lives and manages his business activities. The interviews were semi-structured in that the researcher used a checklist of topics to guide the conversation. A digital voice recorder enabled the interview to proceed without the need to write notes.

A second component in the research involved visits to 22 retail outlets in Bali where maps are sold to tourists: they included bookshops, supermarkets, travel agencies, foreign currency exchange offices and traditional markets. The purpose was to observe (i) which brands of maps were on sale, (ii) prices, and (iii) how various brands were being presented to prospective buyers. At several outlets, sales personnel were asked about alternative brands. This research was conducted in Kuta, Legian, Seminyak, Sanur and Ubud, locations that have, in combination, at least 80 per cent of Bali’s tourist accommodation. A third component of the research was a survey of tourists, seeking opinions about Bali Pathfinder compared with other maps of Bali. The survey method is described later. A fourth component was a literature review, conducted back home after the visits to Bali, in libraries and via searches of scholarly databases.

Bali Pathfinder

Bali Pathfinder was created in 1983 by Silvio Santosa, a Balinese entrepreneur who had been involved with tourism-related businesses since the 1960s. He launched the first edition of his map in 1984, the eighth in 2004. Santosa owns the copyright and the business known as Bali Pathfinder. Managing it is a part-time venture for him. He chose the name from a link he recognized between maps for tourists and a specialized type of aircraft. During the Asia-Pacific War (1941–5), ‘Pathfinders’ in the US and allied air forces were aircraft responsible for finding routes to be followed by other aircraft carrying bombs to attack military bases of the Imperial Japanese Army in the islands of the western Pacific, the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), Malaya (Malaysia) and, ultimately, Japan. The original Pathfinders plotted routes for aggressive aircraft, Bali Pathfinder guides people whom Santosa describes as ‘peaceful tourists’.

A functional map and a work of art. Bali Pathfinder is a functional map that many persons would also regard as a work of art. Its design is utilitarian, detailed, creative and artistic. Each edition has a theme for the coloured illustrations that occupy spaces between the functional details: Bali’s fishes in the seventh (2000) edition, Bali’s birds for the eighth in 2004. Santosa occasionally travels around Bali to collect information for up-dates, such as road changes or new hotels. He designs each edition, drawing roads, streets and hand-printed information on an original for printing, but does not draw and paint the thematic illustrations; these are created by a colleague. The maps are printed in Surabaya; Santosa said that no printery in Bali has suitable technology for the high quality he requires.
**Bali Pathfinder** is not one map but a set, printed on two sides of a sheet measuring 740 by 560 cm. It folds to fit into a small backpack or handbag. Of 18 maps in the 2004 edition, five are relatively large: (i) Bali – the whole island (ii) Denpasar – the provincial capital (iii) ‘Ubud for cyclists’ – probably used more by pedestrians, (iv) ‘the central part of Bali’ and (v) ‘Kuta from Seminyak to Jimbaran’. Three mid-sized maps are: (vi) ‘the busy part of Ubud’, (vii) Nusa Dua and (viii) Sanur. Ten small maps are mostly of smaller towns: (ix) Candidasa, (x) Gianyar (xi) Negara, (xii) Lovina (xiii) Bangli, (xiv) Amlapura (Karangasam), (xv) Semarapura, (xvi) Singaraja and (xvii) Tabanan, plus (xviii) a map of Indonesia, dozens of islands. There is detail regarding roads, streets, lanes, rivers, mountains, temples, hotels, restaurants, shops and diverse facilities. Only one map of Bali has more detail than **Bali Pathfinder**, but only for streets in towns. It is a street atlas in book format that contains dozens of maps and costs five times as much. Published by Periplus, it is intended for residents rather than tourists.

A survey to discover opinions. To investigate tourists’ opinions about **Bali Pathfinder** compared to other maps of Bali, an informal survey was conducted. Persons who were seemingly tourists were approached in shops and restaurants and asked if they ‘could spare two minutes, to give an opinion about maps’. They were selected haphazardly, as a convenience sample, not randomly. Several persons declined the invitations and when the number of completed interviews reached 20 the survey was concluded. The exercise was completed in under four hours, much of that time spent in soliciting respondents. Four maps were offered for comparison: **Periplus Travel Map Bali**, **APA Bali**, **Nelles Bali** and **Bali Pathfinder**. Only one question was asked: ‘Which of these four maps would you say is the best map for visitors in Bali?’ Of the 20 respondents, two glanced at the maps and indicated that they had no opinion; having agreed to look at the maps, they apparently were not sufficiently interested to offer an opinion. The other 18 persons said, or indicated by pointing and by brief remarks, that **Bali Pathfinder** was the best of the four.

Given that the survey was based around a small sample and that the respondents were selected haphazardly rather than randomly, it was more akin to a pilot study. However, since there was wide agreement that **Bali Pathfinder** is the best map, the result is plausible and quite possibly the same result would come from a large-scale survey of randomly chosen respondents. None of the persons interviewed said they owned a **Bali Pathfinder**. Four said they had purchased other brands and now wished it had been **Bali Pathfinder**.

The survey did not ask respondents why they judged one map better than the others. Probably **Bali Pathfinder** stood out for its three features that create product benefits for users. It contains more component maps about towns and districts in Bali than other maps. Secondly it has much more detail, of roads, streets, hotels and so on. Third, along with those utilitarian features are its artistic features: it is printed from a hand-drawn original and, as noted earlier, it has thematic illustrations in spaces between the practical details.

**Marketing by tourism-related businesses**

Marketing activities by most component business organizations in tourism industries (travel agents, tour operators, airlines, hotels, national and regional tourism organizations, theme parks, etc.) are about services, or phenomena similar to services such as experiences of places visited and facilities such as hotel rooms. Accordingly, theories and practices for marketing in tourism revolve around a widely perceived set of characteristics about the marketing of services. Central in those perceived characteristics is that services are said to be different from goods; for instance services are said to be intangible while goods are tangible. (The point is debatable, but that issue need not be explored here.) In any event, ideas about services permeate books on tourism marketing (e.g. Burke and Resnick, 2000; Davidoff and Davidoff, 1994; Holloway, 2002; Kotler et al., 1993; Lovelock, 2000; Makens, 2005) and also articles in publications such as the **Journal of Vacation Marketing** and the **Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing**.

Despite its wide suitability for understanding marketing in tourism, the literature generally ignores the several kinds of goods that are distinctive to tourism, such as travel luggage, duty free goods, souvenirs, and maps designed for tourists. The bias is reasonable because even in combination, all such goods are minor in value compared to services within the spectrum of touristic consumption and expenditure.
However, the goods are important for the tourists who buy them and for the business organizations that produce and sell them.

The marketing of tourism-related goods has not been overlooked entirely by researchers, for there is a body of literature regarding tourist shopping (Hobson, 2000; Hobson and Christensen, 2001; Jansen-Verbeke, 1991, 2000; Timothy, 2003) which is an activity that mostly involves goods. However, researchers interested in tourist shopping typically give little or no attention to distribution. For example, Hobson’s (2000) research about shopping at Heathrow Airport discusses fascinating topics but not how goods are distributed from manufacturers to retailers at Heathrow.

Discussions about distribution in tourism markets have focused very much on the Internet as a channel for distributing information and booking arrangements for airlines, hotels, tour operators and other suppliers of services or promoters of places. Examples of research in this category include Moon (1994), Buhalts and Laws (2001), Burke and Resnick (2000), Hanai and Ogouchi (2008) and Hatton (2004). While many kinds of goods can be purchased via Internet sites, most purchases of goods by tourists occur in a traditional manner, when goods are seen while travelling (e.g. duty free goods in international airports) and while visiting destinations. Some shopping is, for many tourists, one of the experiences that provides satisfaction while travelling and visiting places away from home; other shopping is convenience shopping, for items such as routine food-stuffs and newspapers.

The market for maps of Bali

Markets comprise more than consumers. A misleading idea implicit in some academic writings on tourism is that ‘the market’ comprises merely tourists, consumers. The idea seems to have been picked up from hearing sales or marketing personnel refer to ‘the market’ when referring to patterns and trends in the activities of consumers. In practice, for a market to exist, suppliers are necessary as well as consumers. Often there are also intermediaries, such as wholesalers and distributors, active in distribution channels.

Very often consumers are described as ‘customers’. Strictly speaking these expressions are not synonymous. Customers are a sub-category of consumers, they are repeat buyers, the consumers who make a custom of patronising a particular supplier or brand. Proprietors of certain shops in a number of countries are known to instruct sales personnel to ‘serve the customers first’ when regulars and strangers are present in the shop. The strategy’s aim is to make the regulars feel that they are special, in order to keep them loyal. The term ‘customer’ is not used much in that sense in tourism but the principle is widely apparent via other expressions such as ‘frequent flyers’, ‘members of loyalty programs’ and ‘regular guests’. Discussions about vacation marketing would be more precise if the indiscriminate use of the generic term ‘customer’ was abandoned and replaced by ‘consumer’. There is a significant difference, salient in the present case; it is noted later.

To review the market for maps of Bali, two major dimensions must be described: consumers and suppliers. Once this is done, issues such as market shares and marketing methods can be discussed.

Table 1. Arrivals of international tourists in Bali

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrivals ('000)</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1413</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1357</td>
<td>– 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1286</td>
<td>– 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>– 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1458</td>
<td>+ 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1386</td>
<td>– 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1330</td>
<td>– 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1666</td>
<td>+ 25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Consumers in the map market in Bali

The number of consumers in the market for maps in Bali is unknown and cannot be estimated with confidence. Table 1 shows the numbers of arrivals of foreign tourists each year from 2000 to 2007, peaking at 1,666,000 in 2007. In addition, smaller quantities of foreign tourists come to Bali via other islands in Indonesia (e.g. flying into Jakarta where an arrival is recorded and then on to Bali). Large quantities of domestic tourists visit Bali, mostly residents of Java. Institutions such as the Bali Tourist Board have no data about the total number of tourists who visit. In total, as a very rough estimate,
almost two million tourists visited Bali in 2007 and various informal sources indicate that the number was higher in 2008.

However, to say that there are two million consumers in the market for maps in Bali would be an exaggeration. Many tourists are not in that market because they do not need or want to purchase maps. Most hotels provide guests with simple maps showing nearby streets and facilities, and this reduces the number of tourists who might otherwise purchase a map. Tourists whose only trip is a day tour for sightseeing might have no desire to buy a map. Furthermore, many tourists own guidebooks which contain maps, although some persons buy maps as well as guidebooks. The number of tourists in Bali in the market for maps is probably less than 100,000 annually, perhaps as few as 20,000.

**Suppliers in the map market in Bali**

In Bali, six brands of maps intended for tourists were observed during the research. Four brands (Periplus, APA, Nelles and ITMB) are owned by multinational companies. There are two local brands, each with just one map: Bali Pathfinder and Ubud and Environs Road Map and Topographic Guide, the latter owned and published by Studio Saktumata. It shows landforms and rivers but no detail of streets in town and none about locations of hotels and other facilities.

Hundreds of retailers in Bali have maps for sale. The precise number of these retailers is probably in the thousands, for maps are for sale in many retail outlets where the main items for sale are clothes, food, souvenirs, etc. Maps are sold in bookshops, minimarkets, supermarkets and also in the traditional markets that tourists visit in significant numbers (e.g. the Ubud market), also in foreign currency exchange offices, travel agencies, tour operators and the lobbies of some hotels. Observations indicate that the largest quantities are sold in bookshops.

Prices of maps for tourists ranged from 64,000 to 35,000 rupiah in 2008. Periplus Travel Map Bali was 64,000 rupiah (approximately US$5) while APA Bali was 55,000 rupiah. Bali Pathfinder was advertised at different prices in different retail outlets, most commonly 35,000 rupiah (US$3) but 45,000 and 55,000 rupiah in a number of locations. Ubud and Environs Road Map and Topographic Guide was seen in very few outlets, always at 50,000 rupiah (US$4). Periplus Street Atlas Bali, aimed principally at the residential and business market, was 145,000 rupiah (US$12).

**Market shares**

Periplus Travel Map Bali is the market leader, selling in larger quantities than any other map. Sales personnel in several bookshops, in the Periplus chain and independents, said it was the largest selling map. It is displayed in more retailers in Bali than other maps and was seen being used by many tourists. Managers in three Periplus bookshops were asked but unable or unwilling to give estimates of market shares. APA Bali is probably the second ranking map in terms of sales volumes, with Bali Pathfinder third. Nelles is a German publisher of maps – in German and English. ITMB is based in Canada. These two companies publish maps of many places around the world. Their maps of Bali were seen in only one retailer in Bali. Possibly these publishers have no distribution arrangements in Bali and the maps seen were second-hand; their shares of the market are infinitesimal.

Silvio Santosa said that the retail outlet selling the largest quantities of Bali Pathfinder is a bookshop in a mall in Kuta, but a sales assistant there said, when interviewed by an author of this article, that the shop sells few Bali Pathfinders and rather more Periplus and APA maps. In Ubud, three retailers stocking Bali Pathfinder told the researcher that weekly sales of that map were usually between two and six.

During the period of field research for this article (between 2004 and 2008), Periplus Travel Map Bali almost certainly increased its share of the market. In those years the number of Periplus bookshops in Bali increased from five to eleven: four of the eleven are in the international and domestic shopping malls at the airport. There are two items of evidence indicating that Bali Pathfinder sales have decreased in absolute terms during recent years. Its first edition came out in 1984, its eighth in 2004 and at present (early 2009), a ninth edition has not appeared. Thus between 1984 and 2004 there were eight editions, one every 2.5 years, but five years have elapsed since the last edition. Second, Santosa said...
that the print runs of his map were 4000 copies in the 1990s but only 2000 in recent years. He was unwilling to state how many copies are sold per annum.

**Explaining the small share of the market**

In terms of the classic model of a marketing mix (Borden, 1964), *Bali Pathfinder* has advantages in product features and in price compared to other maps, which means that its small share of the market compared to *Periplus* can be attributed to deficiencies or defects in promotion and/or distribution. Maps are promoted via point-of-sale displays in retail outlets and in those places, especially in bookshops and supermarkets, *Periplus Travel Map Bali* and *APA Bali* have a major advantage over *Bali Pathfinder* for they are in exclusive display stands. They are exclusive in the sense that they only include items distributed by one company, the company that owns the stand. Thus the company that distributes *Periplus* and *APA* maps owns the display stands for maps in the *Periplus* bookshops and these stands exclude other brands of maps. It is the sort of competitive distribution strategy that exists in retail outlets in many countries, for many kinds of goods. The display stands for maps are situated near the payment counters, a strategy designed to entice impulse purchases. Point-of-sale promotion for *Periplus* is boosted by a logo, ‘Asia’s Number 1 Selling Maps’. In contrast, in the retail outlets where *Bali Pathfinder* maps are in a display stand they share it with other brands of maps and with post-cards. In several foreign currency exchange offices and travel agencies, a quantity of *Bali Pathfinder* maps are on counters where tourists will see them.

Linked to weak promotion, *Bali Pathfinder* has weak methods of distribution in comparison to *Periplus* (especially) and *APA*. Distribution of *Bali Pathfinder* is by sales representatives who work on a casual basis. They are paid no wage or retainer, but earn 10 per cent commission on gross sales, so each map sold in 2008 when the retail price was 35,000 rupiah would earn the representative 3500 rupiah, about US 50 cents. Incomes earned by these representatives are quite small. There are ten persons in six teams, assigned to six territories. Three sales representatives are assigned by Santosa to Ubud and surrounding villages, two to Kuta and Denpasar, one to Nusa Dua, two to Sanur, one to Lovina, and one to eastern Bali. Santosa said that most of his sales representatives are students at universities in Denpasar.

In contrast, the two multinational publishers that have larger shares of the market, *Periplus* and *APA*, employ full-time sales representatives responsible for distributing maps and other publications, principally books and magazines, imported from Singapore and elsewhere to be sold in retailers around Bali. Because these sales representatives are distributing several kinds of publications, they generate much more income for their employer and for themselves than the persons who distribute *Bali Pathfinder*.

Although many tourists visit the independent booksellers where *Bali Pathfinder* can be purchased, many more visit other bookshops and supermarkets where only other brands of maps are available. These are the bookstores of the *Periplus* chains, supermarkets such as Bintang and Delta Dewata in Ubud and the Carrefour hypermarket in Kuta. *Periplus* bookshops are located strategically in certain places in Bali for targeting tourists. For example there are no *Periplus* bookshops in Bali’s capital city, Denpasar, a city that relatively few tourists visit, but five are in Ubud and six in other places where tourists congregate.

Employees in three *Periplus* bookshops were asked why their shops do not stock *Bali Pathfinder* but no clear explanation was given. Probably the policy stems from two factors. The major one is the competitive strategy of the distributors of the *Periplus* and *APA* brands, noted above. Allied to that is a policy of giving no help to a competitor’s map that many consumers would perceive as having a higher quality. In contrast, *Bali Pathfinder* is reliant on retail outlets that have become relatively less popular. In recent years several independent bookshops have closed and foreign currency exchange offices are visited by fewer tourists, since automatic teller machines are now the popular source for obtaining cash.

Consumer goods can be classified into convenience goods, shopping goods and specialty goods. Definitions of these classifications are set out in similar manner in textbooks on marketing (e.g. Boone and Kurtz, 1978: 175–178; Kotler, 1984: 465–467). For most tourists in Bali, maps are convenience goods. They are purchased with a minimum of effort and time for comparing what might be on offer in different retail outlets.
Tourists who decide to buy a map go to a retailer where they anticipate maps can be purchased and select one that suits their needs. In many other instances, they go into a bookshop to buy a newspaper or to browse among the books and magazines and notice maps displayed for sale and decide, impulsively, to buy one. In this context, Periplus Travel Map Bali and to a lesser degree APA Bali have a great advantage over Bali Pathfinder, attributable to the much wider distribution of the former two brands, particularly via the Periplus chain of bookshops. Furthermore, tourists buying maps are consumers, not customers according to the distinction between those twin terms discussed earlier, and since no customer relationship develops between buyers and particular brands of maps, the convenience nature of the maps is reinforced, to the advantage of mass marketers.

Conclusion

The case discussed in this article is unusual in the context of the literature on tourist-related marketing, as it is about a map, a category of goods, while most of the literature on tourist-related marketing is about services and destinations. Bali Pathfinder has been a success in certain respects. Since the marketing concept focuses on consumers, one way to assess Bali Pathfinder’s performance is to consider that during fifteen years and eight editions since first publication in 1984 it has been purchased by thousands of tourists who, presumabably, have found it useful to varying degrees. A small-scale survey of tourists in Bali found almost total agreement that it is the best map on the market. Its qualities apparently stem from its utilitarian and artistic features. Another dimension of success is the map as a source of income for several persons, notably Silvio Santosa – its creator, business owner and manager. It is an example of a product designed for tourists in a particular destination that is manufactured and distributed by a locally-owned business in that destination.

Simultaneously, Bali Pathfinder can be regarded as a failure. If it is the best map for tourists in Bali in terms of product features, and one that sells for a lower price than other maps, it should be the market leader, or at least should be holding a substantial share of the market. However, indicators point to the fact that its sales have decreased in recent years while two rival brands have recorded increasing sales. In this context, it is an appropriate case for discussing the ‘better mousetrap’ hypothesis.

The slogan ‘build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door’ has been perceived as meaningful by many persons for more than a hundred years (Klebanoff, 2006; Udell, n.d.) but Bali Pathfinder represents what those two marketing experts call ‘the better mousetrap fallacy’. The fallacy is the assumption that product quality is sufficient for business success. It is a misleading assumption. Product quality might be necessary but it is not sufficient. Also necessary are the other elements in a marketing mix (Borden, 1964). Five defects in the ‘better mousetrap’ slogan are summarized by Klebanoff in a list headed ‘What Emerson forgot’. The comments by Klebanoff and by Udell exemplify critical thinking allied with skepticism (i.e. truth seeking).

The principal weakness in the marketing of Bali Pathfinder is in distribution. In contrast, two other maps – Periplus Travel Map Bali and APA Bali, have strong methods of distribution. Periplus in particular has been increasingly dominant in Bali’s map and book retail market in recent years, via the growth of a chain of bookshops, increasing from none 15 years ago to 11 in 2008. Periplus bookshops sell large quantities of maps, Periplus and APA brands, but do not stock Bali Pathfinder. And since maps for tourists in Bali are generally convenience goods, not shopping goods, normally tourists do not shop around to compare the maps on sale in different outlets. In rebutting the ‘better mousetrap’ notion, Udell wrote:

We live in an economy in which mass merchandising has become the major retail force. Mass marketing has created substantial economies of scale at the retail level and we as consumers benefit through lower prices. However, we pay a price. Innovation is impeded. Mass merchandising requires mass promotion . . . consumer products must be very skilfully packaged, promoted, priced and distributed in order to gain the attention of consumers. (Udell, n.d.)

The quote reflects the trend in the marketing of maps for tourists in Bali where the condition is now predominantly mass marketing by international brands that have captured a large share of the market. However, in the context of maps in Bali, Udell’s remark on the effects of mass marketing is astray in two ways. Consumers do not always benefit through lower prices: the prices of Periplus Travel Map Bali and APA Bali are higher than Bali Pathfinder. Secondly, mass marketing can enable goods of lower quality to capture larger shares of a market that comparable goods of higher quality
that can be sold at a lower price. The higher prices of Periplus and APA maps are required to cover the considerable costs of their distribution and promotion, and also the overhead costs of their administrative offices in other countries.

The effects of Periplus and APA on the market for maps in Bali are similar in type, but much smaller in scale, to the effects of other much larger multinational companies that distribute various types of goods in countries such as Indonesia, Thailand and others in Asia. In the context of tourism, the effects of multinational hotel chains are an example of these types of effect. Other examples, with much wider effects on local economies and societies, are the multinational large retail chains that stock supermarket items and also household durables. Prominent in this category are Tesco Lotus (British owned) and Carrefour (French), giant chains that began setting up distribution channels for their ‘hypermarkets’ in Asia in recent years.

Carrefour’s hypermarket at Kuta opened in 2006 and quickly became popular with tourists and substantial numbers of locals. It is vastly larger, and stocks a much wider range of goods than the supermarkets that had opened in Bali in the recent past. Carrefour’s presence has probably resulted in less money being spent, by locals and tourists, in the locally-owned mini-markets and supermarkets that are located in Kuta and other places in Bali. The reach of Carrefour extends far beyond Kuta. In 2008 while an author of this article was in Ubud, 90 minutes drive north of Kuta, several Balinese and several tourists were heard remarking about going to Carrefour. To date, Tesco-Lotus has not set up in Bali, but the company’s strategists are probably considering the prospects. In Thailand, where Tesco-Lotus has more than a dozen retail outlets and where Carrefour has at least four, their effects on locally-owned retailers has been problematic. Owners of market stalls, small shops and mini-markets have suffered falling incomes because of the arrival of Tesco-Lotus and Carrefour, and this has become a political issue. So far as is known, that has not yet happened in Bali.

In summary, Bali Pathfinder’s competitors, Periplus and APA, have capitalized on strong distribution channels, notably the Periplus chain of bookshops, supported by full-time sales representatives, to make their brands of map (Periplus and APA) available in many retail outlets in places convenient for consumers. In contrast, the publisher of Bali Pathfinder uses distribution channels that are being increasingly abandoned by consumers, foreign currency exchange offices for example. The strength of the multinationals cannot be matched by the small-scale local publisher. This case study therefore served to emphasize the importance of the ‘place’ element in the marketing mix.

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