

Trade and Tourism Sector Report

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Activa

Abstract

Trade and Tourism

Trade and tourism are two economic activities that feed of each other.

Trade is the **purchase and sale of products** and includes different modalities and formats of commercial transaction, including proximity trade, wholesale trade and online trade. As a complement, the core of tourist activity is **travel**, the journey to a destination that has a particular interest (such as leisure, nature, sport, culture, shopping, business, among others), which requires the market to provide services to welcome and satisfy

people who practice tourism (hospitality or accommodation and specialised services, for example).

Both sectors are **strategic activities** for the cities and territories that host them and are closely related, both because of the attractiveness they generate and the employment they create. On the other hand, from the professional point of view, trade and tourism have **quite similar professional profiles** in terms of professional qualifications and functions.





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Get to know

the sector

Introduction to the sector

Trade is an activity as old as humanity, in the sense that people have always sought the **exchange** -that is, the purchase and sale- of goods and services that they possess for others that are not available or that they do not produce. In older cultures and civilisations, there is evidence of commercial activity to supply **first-need products** or **valuable products** for one reason or another (for example, jewellery trading has always existed: although not a first-needed commodity, it has always been granted symbolic values and attributes that makes it an attractive product).

In contrast, **tourism is a modern, contemporary phenomenon**. For example, in recent centuries, the British upper classes in Europe included in the education of their (male) youth a final stage which consisted of a tour or journey through different places that were considered interesting and needed to be known. Over the years and the advent of mass society, travelling to distant and attractive destinations in the summer or during holiday periods has become popular, to the point that from the second half of the 20th century a new economic sector linked to tourism developed.

Tourism and trade are now two **economic activities that link and feed off each other**: the arrival of tourists to a destination will be more successful if there is also a good commercial offer, and places with a commercial offer are always interested in attracting tourists. This interaction takes place in cities and territories, both in their **economic development** and in their **labour market**. In the case of Barcelona and its metropolitan area, there are certain shopping centres and hubs located between the destinations that are most visited by tourists.





Barcelona and the Trade and Tourism sector

Commercial activity is at the origin of the **creation of cities**: they are the point of reference where the exchange of goods and services takes place in a given area of influence. And cities have always been the centres of ideas, processes, knowledge, innovation and economic activity. In addition, Barcelona has had the ability to become a **global referent**, a space where tourist flows also take place due to its recognised **cultural, artistic, scientific and business attributes**. In this tourist offering that makes the city attractive, **trade is also an appealing factor**. In particular, the city of Barcelona has emerged in recent years as one of the main tourist attractions on an international scale, which has helped to change the composition of its economic structure (the economic activity linked to trade and tourism has been strengthened) and has projected its image into the world as an attractive city for tourism.

On the other hand, Barcelona is a medium-sized city, with a powerful centre, but also with a lot of neighbourhood life that is articulated **along commercial roads** that modulate citizen life and make it civic and human-sized. **Proximity trade**, which serves the daily needs of neighbours, is a key factor in the briskness and vitality of cities. In the case of Barcelona, it should be mentioned that there is also a network of **forty-three food markets** (apart from other non-food markets) that gives it character. Once again, the synergies between Trade and Tourism appear since, in the case of Barcelona, some of the city's traditional markets are attractions for tourism, such as the Boqueria Market and the Concepció Market.

Both tourism and commercial activity were severely affected by the 2020-2021 pandemic period, which at times saw its activity reduced to zero. However, **by 2022**, the city offered 21,280 tourist homes and 883 hotels. **Hotels alone accommodated 10.7 million tourists**. On the other hand, the arrival of cruisers exceeded 2.3 million visitors. Furthermore, Barcelona has been consolidating a **commercial model based on the values of proximity, responsibility and sustainability**. Thus, trade is structured in large centres and commercial axes — such as Avinguda Diagonal or Passeig de Gràcia — which attract tourist flows, and in the proximity trade, which serve the needs of the citizens, with more than 61,558 shops and 43 municipal markets.

Fields of activity

There are two great trends that have marked the development of the sector over the last few decades. Firstly, **diversification of commercial structures** and, secondly, **productive specialisation in tourism** in the face of the consolidation of Barcelona and Catalonia as a global tourist destination.

Trade

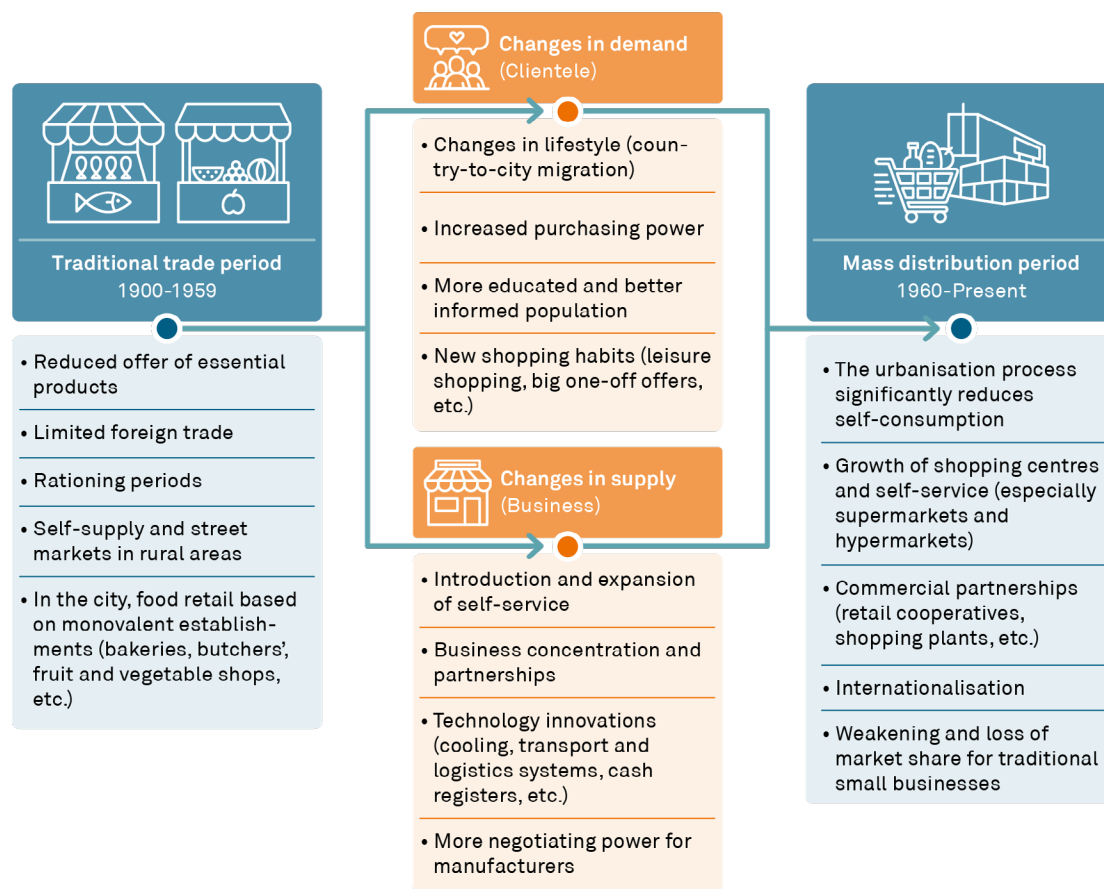
Traditional trade structures were linked to ownership (a single owner, just one commercial establishment) and, most commonly, to family tradition. The process of accelerated urbanisation broke the **self-consumption** model -generating the food they consume- which was until then predominant in the rural world. In parallel, beginning in the second half of the 20th century, large business groups were formed that were engaged in retail. These **business corporations** or **commercial chains**, as they gained volume -due to the competitive advantages of this business model- were implemented throughout the urban fabric from medium-sized establishments and also in specific commercial areas (the popular 'shopping centres') or on large streets and commercial avenues (see Figure 1).



This trend includes both **general business chains**, which market any product, and **commercial companies focusing on a specific product type**, such as food, sports articles, bricolage, consumer electronics, and others. In this way, the population's structure and consumption habits have also changed, and this new reality raises a question mark over traditional, local and small-shop trade, which articulates the vitality of the city's neighbourhoods and streets. The players involved in trade point to the need to find a **balance** between the two trade realities.

With regard to the specialisation in the production of trade in its **link to tourism**, it is worth saying that this is a fairly recent fact in the city of Barcelona, but it has had an impact in **urban transformation and employment**. The most emblematic fact of this trend is the transformation seen in Passeig de Gràcia as a shopping hub for luxury products, which attracts shopping tourism. There is also the Boqueria Market, an attraction for tourists visiting the city.

Figure 1. Evolution of trade in the 20th century: from the traditional model to mass distribution



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the report *Evolución de la distribución comercial en España: ¿De dónde venimos? ¿Adónde vamos?* by Pedro Cuesta et. al.

Some parts of the city concentrate a **commercial offering exclusively for visitors**, such as the Ramblas or the Sagrada Família Temple. Finally, it should be mentioned that the main destination for tourists that visit Barcelona is precisely a shopping centre located in the metropolitan area of the city. Overall, this commercial specialisation aimed at tourism also raises a question mark against the traditional, quality and proximity trade, aimed at the citizens of Barcelona.

The subsector of trade has always had two components, **wholesale trade** -or **business-to-business**- and **retail**, which serves the end customer and is also called business-to-customer. In recent decades, **e-commerce** has emerged, allowing all kinds of online items to be bought, and is bringing about profound changes in distribution and consumption habits.

More specifically, the subsector of commerce can be structured as follows based on the professional profiles it hosts:

- **Customer support:** it corresponds to the professional activity of attending to the customer in shops or delivering orders. It also includes customer service in online trading.
- **Specialised trade:** it refers to commercial activity for which specific knowledge is needed, such as tattoos or knowing how to prepare meat or fish products. It is a specialised trade, requiring the accreditation of a specific knowledge or professional qualification.

- **Commercial management:** it encompasses the activity of professionals who do not work directly with customers and who deal with issues of support and preparation for the sale process. This professional activity takes place more often in commercial chains or companies that engage in e-commerce.

Tourist Experience

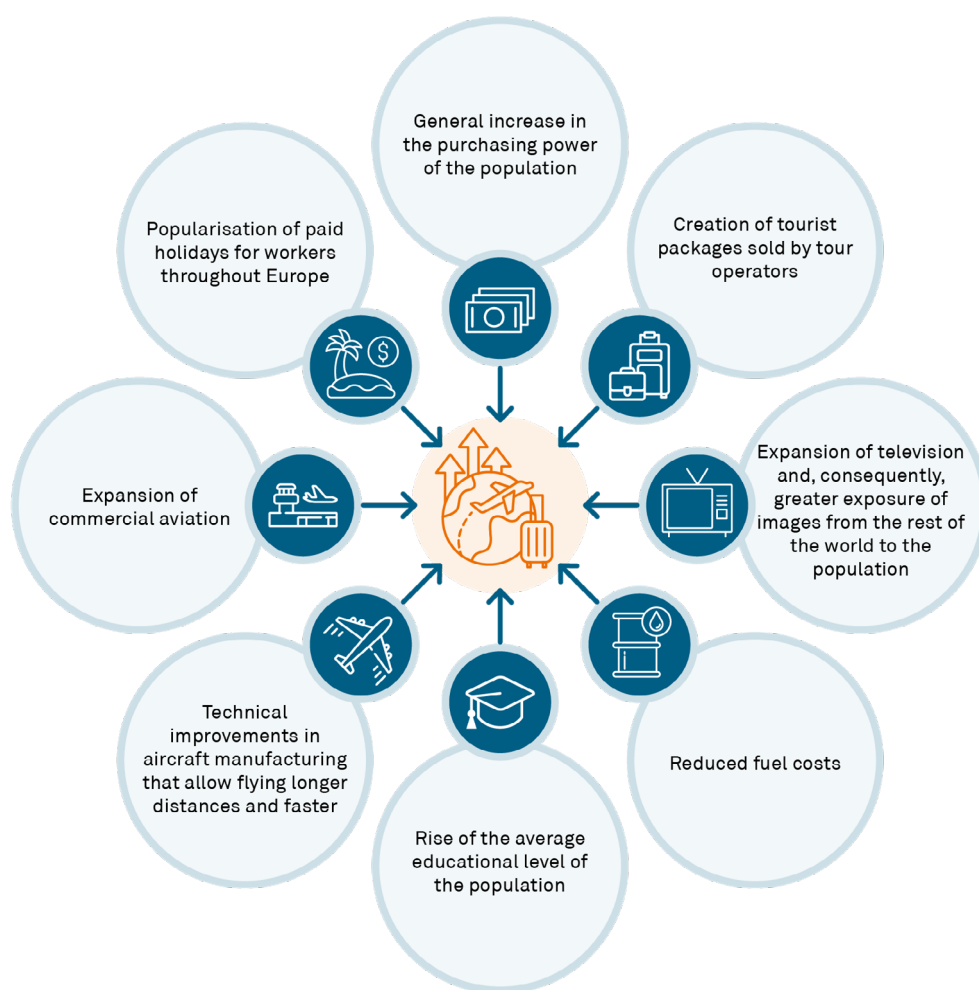
Productive specialisation in tourism has a double starting point and deepening. Thus, from the second half of the 20th century onwards -in most countries of southern Europe- there was a bet on **sun and beach tourism** that mostly received flows from Northern Europe. This model involved the transformation of the coastline, the definitive change in the structure of coastal towns and villages and the growth of a tourist economic sector that only created employment a few months a year at best. Be that as it may, this is a reality that is now fully consolidated. The second starting point was the **urban transformation of the city of Barcelona due to the 1992 Olympic Games**, which led to the city being placed in the global focus: since then, the flow of tourists to the city has continued to grow.



These two realities have been deepened by the fact that **travelling** and tourism are a reality that **has been popularised to levels never seen before**. There are several reasons for this, such as the arrival of low-cost airlines and the increase in student mobility at European level. In any case, the need to combine leisure time with travel has also had an impact at a local level, with the redirection of tourist flows from urban areas to rural areas (the rural tourism phenomenon) and also with mountain tourism, which seeks to become less seasonal beyond the practice of winter sports.

Tourism as a mass phenomenon is being subject to the application of new **information and communication technologies**, both in providing services (for example, buying tourist packages over the Internet) and in analysing it quantitatively and generating new knowledge through artificial intelligence. This allows creating new business models, providing better services to customers or managing tourist intelligence in the cities and territories that host tourists.

Figure 2. Causes of the tourism boom in the second half of the 20th century



Source: Prepared by the authors based on 'Golden Age of Mass Tourism: Its History and Development', by Erkan Sezgin and Medet Yolal

More specifically, the tourism subsector can be structured as follows based on the professional profiles it employs:

- **Local development:** area of activity that caters to service companies that offer tourist and cultural services in a given geographical area, that monitor the quality of tourism within private companies or that engage in promoting tourism from the local administration.
- **Tourist dynamisation:** it employs professional profiles that prepare and promote tourist activities, including tourism guide activities, event managers or managers of design and promotion of tourist products.

Accommodation & restaurant industries

The economic subsector of accommodation and restaurant industries is of great importance in the city's economy. Halfway between subsectors of trade and as tourist experience, this subsector **generates a lot of employment** as it **includes bars, restaurants and hotels**. This offer caters to the population of the city and also visitors who come to the city for leisure or professional reasons, such as business tourism, conferences and medical or health tourism, poles of attraction in which the city of Barcelona is well positioned.

The structure of the economic subsector of accommodation and restaurant industries is as follows, based on the professional profiles it hosts:



- **Kitchen:** area of economic activity that includes professional figures characteristic of a bar kitchen, restaurants or restaurants located in tourist centres or hotels.
- **Establishment management:** in hotels, apartment residences and other types of tourist accommodation there are professional profiles that take care of everything necessary to make the customer's stay pleasant.
- **Restaurant dining room:** it refers to professional profiles that directly cater for the customer in the restaurant floor, taking orders and serving the meals made in the kitchen.
- **Customer/tourist service:** in establishments where tourists are housed offer support or complementary services to make it easier for tourists to stay, such as booking managers or chambermaids.

Trends

In both trade and industry, **trends have been affected by the COVID-19 crisis**, in the sense that it has accelerated or delayed them, given that this sector received a major impact during the period 2020-2021. Thus, some of the trends in the sector are the following:

Established trends

- **The use of digital technologies has increased in tourism and in the travel and accommodation business.** In fact, the use of ICT was already a reality, but it has now gone from being an option to being a requirement. The global health crisis has accelerated innovation within trade and the purchase and sale of travel. Contactless payment technological solutions, check-ins made from mobile devices and digital menus have become the norm. As an example, hotels must re-evaluate their use of technology to adopt digital emergencies and welcome applications when needed to improve the experience of their guests. As a consequence, new digital applications must be developed and the digital skills of workers should be strengthened. At the same time, more attention will be paid to sensitivity and human connections: this will be the personal touch that can drive the sector's digital transformation or help expand the offer to reach new customers and increase their loyalty. It is not a matter of providing hotels and shops run by robots, because **digitisation will have to be combined with the human factor**. However, experiences will increasingly have a digital component.
- **The Trade and Tourism sector will continue to focus on customer experience.** Not only with long-distance travels or meals in restaurants, but also when one walks into a shopping centre to purchase any product, the customer's experience must be fully satisfactory, given that competition is high. **Customer loyalty** must be sought by achieving customer satisfaction in the experience.



Thus, establishments already go beyond providing accommodation, a meal, a purchase or a visit to a museum: they anticipate the needs of their customers by ensuring that, taken together, they have unique experiences because the era of “copy-and-paste” mass tourism is over. Visitors are no longer attracted to mass tourist or commercial destinations, as they are the antithesis of a unique experience.

- **There is a rise in the concept of ‘proximity’, both in trade and tourism.** It is linked to a greater environmental awareness as well as the fact that during the COVID-19 pandemic spaces and proximity products were upgraded due to the impossibility of moving and the increased dependence on local products. Thus, there has been an increase in demand for products such as rural tourism, proximity products and national tourism, reinforced by the fact that the pandemic also revealed the enormous **environmental impact** of activities such as tourism or international supply chains, as well as their **fragility** and the **enormous dependence** -and insecurity- that they create.

Emerging trends

- **The personalisation of purchasing and travel experiences** is a trend to which businesses in the sector will have to pay attention. It is based on the assumption that customers take a positive view of companies that provide a custom purchasing and travel experience by sending them **offers based on their past behaviour, personal preferences and choices**. Therefore, the priority is to provide customer-oriented services, and this begins when the products are advertised on social media or on websites. It is necessary to suggest offers using specialised marketing tools and advertising platforms, such as sales and advertising strategy, as well as contacting the buyer persona to learn their preferences, characteristics, behaviour and individual needs. Besides, consideration must be given to the assessment of the experience (in a shopping centre, in a trip to a far-away destination or in a sports shop) to distinguish the tourist offer from that of competitors.
- During the 2020-2021 pandemic, faced with the impossibility of travel, **virtual travel became one of the best ways to view and experience the world**. There are now entirely virtual travel platforms on which travellers around the world go through online sessions where they can share their passion with travellers anywhere. This reality is combined with -and reinforced by- the tourist trends of **virtual reality**. Thus, through online virtual reality visits, customers can experience hotel interiors, restaurant interiors, outdoor tourist attractions and much more -and do it all from home. It is crucial that they are able to do so at the decision-making stage before they book their trip.



- While online trade is already a consolidated reality, it opens up new possibilities. In fact, there is an **unavoidable hybridisation between traditional trade and online trade** -independent retailers can connect with customers at local level and can also expand their scope by selling online in addition to maintaining their local presence. Besides, omnichannel tools are creating more significant purchasing experiences, but getting customers to make use of this type of resource is key (it is taken for granted that tourism and trade professionals are already using them). At present, it is still a challenge for the entire sector to have an **omnichannel strategy** to offer strong purchasing experiences through physical and online channels. In this context of evolution of purchasing habits, the importance of incorporating the available omnichannel sales solutions into customer shopping habits will increase.

Professional profiles

In the economic sector of trade and tourism there are many jobs available -trade is present everywhere and tourism is a global industry. But what is it that defines trade and tourism today and that facilitates the creation of more jobs? The fact is that consumers want something more, something extra and new, to add to their purchase spending. The popularisation of tourism and the huge commercial supply that exists mean that consumers are more demanding in their experience and in the personal satisfaction of their expectations. We need to experience something new, linked to concepts such as adventure, culture or authenticity. Similarly,



there is a new impact on the sector in relation to job creation: customers are more aware of sustainability-related aspects, and people are asking to travel and buy based on certain ethical principles. Finally, **digital technology** is improving efficiency and **opens up many new job opportunities**, ranging from virtual tourism, online shopping and the application of artificial intelligence in the management of tourist flows as well as purchasing and selling processes.

The **jobs with the highest demand in the sector** are:

Online travel agent

This professional profile is an update of traditional travel agencies, which used to sell tourist trips and stays in person. The online travel agent **creates original tourist packages dynamically**, while relying on online ticket and booking platforms. The constriction of the demand and the global economy, together with the impact of digitisation, have led to the emergence of this professional profile, who deals both with individual customers and large companies that manage thousands of travellers.

Online travel agents offer their services to a **digital clientele**, which is looking for a very particularised journey that may differ from the intended one. They also offer the possibility of working with small businesses and local suppliers.

Rural tourism manager

This is the professional who organizes, brings together and coordinates the implementation of tourism activities in the rural environment with the aim of achieving **sustainable development of the territory**. Thus, this is the figure in charge of the organization and coordination of the different actions to be carried out for the promotion of a specific area, creating a rural tourism product with its own identity (a brand) and designing models for the promotion of the territory, always under sustainability criteria.

In some cases, they may also be in charge of managing the procedures necessary for the establishments in the area to obtain the **Q certification**, which accredits quality tourism products, services and establishments.



Chef

Chefs are the hospitality professionals responsible for the **preparation, conservation** and **presentation** of all foods that make up the gastronomic supply of an establishment. Their work must take into account the quality of products, the agreed economic profitability and the application of the required safety and hygiene standards in any food establishment.

These professionals can work in the kitchen of all types of catering establishments (restaurants, bars, educational centres, hospitals, cruise ships, etc.) and depending on the number of people working within their team, will perform more **planning and supervision**, or **manipulation** tasks. Often, chefs **specialise in a particular type of cuisine**, either by style (fusion, avant-garde, traditional), origin (Asian, Mediterranean, Italian) or other characteristics depending on the type of food or service (pastries, halal, groups, buffets, etc.).

Waiter / Waitress

Waiters are in charge of **serving food** in the form of prepared dishes and beverages in a restaurant establishment. They must take due account of customer orders, ensure quality in all service details and respect the safety and hygiene standards of their work. Waiters **can perform different tasks depending on the type of establishment they work in** (restaurant, cafeteria, bar, etc.). They are responsible for setting the tables, organising them, adequately distributing the furniture in the room and preparing the table service, as well as taking orders from the clientele and charging the payment at the end of the service. They provide advice and information about the menu and solve possible questions regarding the establishment's offer.

The functions of a waiter can vary greatly depending on the size of the establishment, ranging from a small bar (where they may also make small, simple meals such as tapas or sandwiches) to a large restaurant, where their functions will be defined by the needs of the service.

Shop assistant

Shop assistants are **responsible for hosting, serving and selling directly to walk-in customers** the products or services offered and most suited to customer demand. They always seek customer satisfaction and subsequent loyalty with the aim of expanding and consolidating the amount of customers.

Depending on the size of the business and the type of product sold, the tasks they carry out may vary. In small establishments, they may handle the entire process -from product reception, through local distribution and the management of promotions and discounts, to daily cash closure and commissioning of new stocks. In larger premises they will usually specialise only in part of this process. The product or service to be sold will also determine the functions to be performed, which will vary depending on whether it is a food service, a cultural event or an electronic product, for example. Whatever the speciality and size of the business, a **specialisation** and a **high level of knowledge of the product** are expected from the shop assistant in order to be able to give expert advice to the clientele.

Customer service manager

The customer service manager **provides information about products and services and solves the problems and doubts that appear in the clientele**. They provide assistance and aid in the planning, installation, maintenance and updating of the commercial establishment and its offer, and also solve any kind of problem related between products and customers. A customer service manager must have a service **vocation and willingness to help, empathy, passion for communicating**, and a **determined attitude** to suggest alternative solutions to solve customer claims. They must ensure an efficient response to customer queries and maintain standards of excellence in the service to ensure a high level of satisfaction.

A customer service manager is always available to care for the customer -from answering questions about products to showing them a product that meets their needs-, always with the dual objective of **increasing both sales and customer satisfaction**. They can also manage received orders and at-home deliveries, putting the customer's experience at the centre. Likewise, they usually take on the role of keeping the store clean and organised and setting up product exhibitors.





Head of Loss Prevention

Basically, in trade, in product management, there are always **losses of goods due to deterioration** or **crushing**, which must be managed to maintain the profit margin. There may also be shortages in the merchandise available for sale due to **small-scale thefts, vandalism** or **accidental damage** at the time of inventory. The manager aims to curb this type of loss by reviewing the causes and events that caused damage to the product, even when the damage is unintentional.

Often, basic tasks include training staff in the best way to manage merchandise and dispose of it in stores or stores, security, implementation of technological solutions for tracking stores and investigating incidents after they occur. This professional also designs product replacement protocols in the store and analyses incidents. They promote the concept and **philosophy of loss prevention** throughout the organisation by improving personnel recruitment and training processes, as well as limiting the risks to which certain products may be exposed.

Shop Coordinator

The shop coordinator is in charge of directing and coordinating the activity of a group of shops, integrated or franchised, within a geographical area (which may be local, national or even international), in order to adapt the operation of each point of sale to the commercial policy set by the company's management. He/she is the person who ensures the **cohesion of the distribution network** in his/her area and ensures that the company's image is respected, as well as the visual presentation and merchandising standards.

Therefore, these professionals are in charge of supervising several sales outlets, particularly in relation to the **sales teams**. Furthermore, they monitor the sales budgets of the shops and may also be responsible for training the sales teams. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring cohesion in image, sales strategies, etc. for several sales outlets of the same brand.

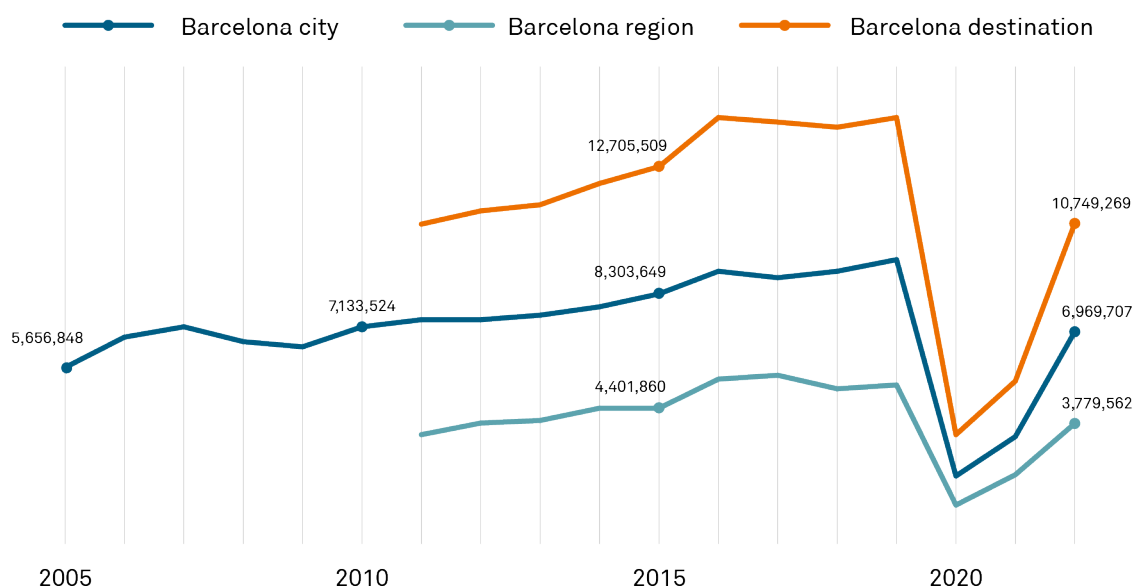
In short, trade and tourism make up a dynamic sector that is creating professional profiles linked to **digitisation** (as in the case of online sales) and **environmental issues** (as in the case of proximity trade and sustainable tourism).

The sector in figures

In the case of Spain, the tourism subsector has a strong presence. **Spain is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world** and in 2022 it hosted **71.6 million international tourists**, recovering pre-pandemic figures, while **Catalonia** attracted **14.8 million** visitors that same year. These prominent figures translate into substantial contributions to the country's GDP: in fact, in 2022, the sector's contribution to Spain's economy grew by 44.7% compared to the previous year, reaching nearly €179 billion, which is **13.6% of the GDP**.

This consolidated reality suffered a sharp decline as a result of the 2020–2021 pandemic, as domestic and international displacements were limited. Thus, in the case of **hotel overnight stays** -which are the majority in Barcelona- the following graph expresses its evolution:

Figure 3. Evolution of tourists in hotels in Barcelona (2005-2022)

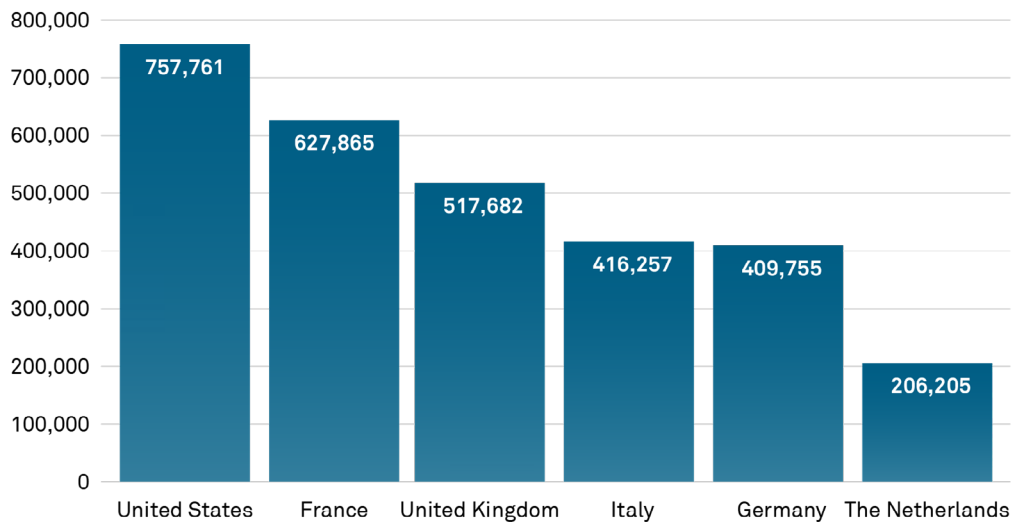


Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data by the Observatory of Tourism in Barcelona.

The line '**Barcelona city**' refers to visitors receiving the city within its municipal boundaries. The line '**Barcelona region**', refers to the surroundings of the city of Barcelona, which may include tourist attractions located at varying distances (Port Aventura, La Roca Village, Museu Dalí, Montserrat...). Finally, the line '**Barcelona destination**' includes the sum of the previous two.

With regard to the **country of origin of international tourists in Barcelona**, the distribution is as follows:

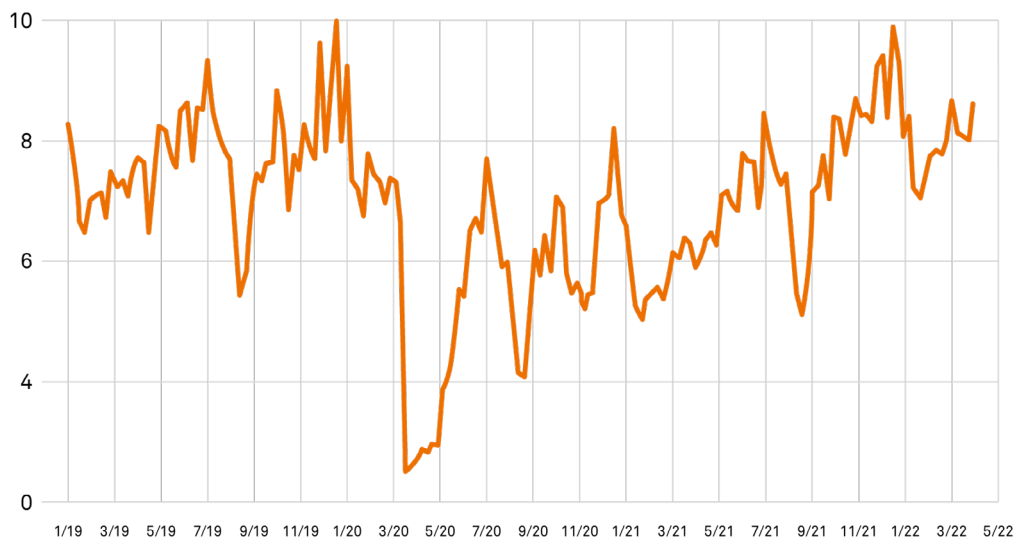
Figure 4. International tourists by country of origin (2022)



Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data from the Barcelona Tourism Observatory.

Regarding **trade in the city**, the impact of COVID-19 was also remarkable, as shown in this graph of the evolution of private consumption in Barcelona:

Figure 5. Average value of transactions in Barcelona
(weekly data January 2019 – May 2022, in millions of euros)



Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data by the Barcelona City Council (private consumption in Barcelona).

The graph in Figure 5 makes it clear that there are **trade behaviour patterns** in the city. Two major specificities can be seen. Firstly, the **maximum consumption** takes place in the **summer months** and the days of **Christmas festivities**. It is therefore clear that the increase in the city's trade spending in the summer months is linked to the phenomenon of tourism, while the peaks in the consumption of Christmas days respond more to traditional consumption patterns (around Christmas, New Year and Three Wise Men families make the highest expenditure).

This pattern of consumption overlaps with the effect of the 2020-2021 **Covid-19 pandemic**, which caused a **sharp drop in consumption levels**, especially during the first half of 2020.

With regard to **employment in the sector** -with the exception of the sub-sector of tourism experience- it is worth saying that it has more than a remarkable power, given that it employs more than **800,000 people** -there is no other economic sector with a similar capacity to generate employment. Retail trade (assistants on small shops and shopping centres) stands out, but also wholesale and intermediary trade. With 228,662 people employed in 2020, the branch of activity of food and drink services (bars and restaurants) also has a more than relevant occupation.

Figure 6. People employed in trade and hospitality in Catalonia, by field of activity (2020)

Sector	Field of activity	People employed by field of activity	People employed by sector
Trade	Sale and repair of motor vehicles	49,029	573,632
	Wholesale and intermediary trade	227,493	
	Retail	297,110	
Hospitality	Accommodation services	41,371	228,662
	Food and drink services	187,292	

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data by the Catalan Institute of Statistics (Idescat).

Projection

and future scenarios

Weaknesses

- This sector has a **high seasonality in recruitment**, in line with times of increased consumption of products and/or increased tourist influx. Advancing towards the deseasonalisation of this recruitment would allow a higher quality of employment as well as customer service.
- Traditionally, professionals in this sector have not enjoyed professional recognition or opportunities for **professional training and qualifications throughout their career**. Enabling professional progress within the sector will allow greater attraction and fidelity of talent.
- The 2020–2021 pandemic made it clear that **Barcelona's economy relies strongly on this sector**. Diversifying and deseasonalising the sector is therefore key to strengthening the economic fabric of the city and ensuring that future crises do not have such a large impact on Barcelona's economic activity.

Threats

- Proximity trade must be digitised to prevent its **replacement by shopping centres and e-commerce**. The combination of digitisation and personalisation will be key to tackling this transition without losing the character of intrinsic proximity to this type of trade.
- **Negative externalities** (mass tourism, noise, illegal accommodation, etc.) that tourism generates can create **friction with citizens**, generate a negative image linked to the sector and thus make it difficult to attract talent.
- Trade and tourism, as economic activities, are **heavily dependent on political, economic, health, social** and even **geostrategic factors** that fluctuate their employment levels.

Strengths

- The tourist phenomenon is fully established in Barcelona, and is an economic factor that **creates wealth and a lot of employment**, as well as a favourable global positioning that impacts and feeds on the other economic sectors of the city.
- Responsible administrations and companies begin to make intensive use of digital technology (**artificial intelligence methods**), opening the sector to increased professional qualifications and new jobs.

- **Online trade** has allowed the sector to be maintained in times of pandemic, and has accelerated its briskness both to buy first-need products and tourist journeys, strengthening it and opening up new business possibilities.

Opportunities

- Attracting **new niche market by segmentation** is the alternative to advancing towards a quality offer that bypasses the traditional model of sun and beach, affected by seasonality in employment and low wages.
- The attraction of **new cultural or sports events** in the city creates new opportunities in the sector. At the same time, Barcelona's **commercial offer** in itself has always acted as a tourist claim.
- The evolution towards **digitisation** and **sustainability** are two vectors that will mark the immediate future of the sector in entrepreneurship, professional requalification and job creation.

In short, the trade and tourism sector is one of the most important sectors in the city and the country's economy and generates a **large number of jobs and professional profiles** ranging from the most basic to the top level. Public administrations **pursue policies** to promote the sector, both because of its enormous economic weight and because of its strong impact on the urban dynamics of the city and the territory.

The **future challenges** of the sector (mass tourism, low professional qualifications, and negative externalities) involve the **management of flows, professional qualifications, the overcoming of old consumption patterns and models, digitisation** (particularly artificial intelligence) and the **call for customers to have quality experiences**. In any case, having a powerful, well-structured and diverse commercial offer and being a centre of attraction and landing for tourist flows are two aims that are targeted by cities and territories because they create activity and employment, although they also have negative externalities that are the subject of controversy and social debate.

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PIXABAY. Skylight inside the Palau de la Música Catalana. Cover image.

EKATERINA TYAPKINA. Bakery shop assistant. Abstract.

FERRAN FEIXAS. Pg. 4 and Abstract.

KORNG SOK. Pg. 5.

RUMMAN AMIN. Pg. 6 and Abstract.

KARSTEN WINEGEART. Pg. 8 and Abstract..

LOUIS HANSEL. Pg. 10.

PROXYCLICK VISITOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. Pg. 11.

STEM.T4L. Pg. 12 and Abstract.

JOSH HILD. Pg. 14.

RENE ASMUSSEN. Cook plating, Pg. 15.

NICOLAS FLOR. Hairdresser and Abstract. Pg.15.

JESSE MCCALL. Waiter,. Pg.15.

AMINA FILKINS. Pg.16.

COTTONBRO STUDIO. Pg. 17.

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