

Tourism Issues Work Shop 19th June 2013 – Raw Notes

Session 1.1

Marketing and Communications

Brand

Current brand is over 5 years old

Tag line too long – 2/3 words, easy to remember short and sweet

Happy with logo

Slogan needs to align with TDP – to tell a story of our culture

Change image of tourist / tourism – authority needs to be more friendly

Treasured Islands

Current market don't like being called tourists – market has changed

STA to advertise a competition to create a new slogan

Suggestion – remove 'of the south pacific'

Marketing Activities, industry involvement and leverage.

People visit STA website but book other countries. Create an expression of interest link for people to put their contact details STA to follow up. Find out what they are after and target it. Collect Data and website visitor statistics.

Industry needs to work together

STA to create and STA / industry group – a marketing informing group

STA are doing too many things – outsource marketing

Can industry know what the marketing budget is and have an input into where and how it is used?

STA is to market Samoa, not individual establishments.

Ask government for more money for STA with a greater focus on marketing.

STA booking engine

General consensus that there should be one one booking engine.

Can SHA run the booking engine?

STA ensure commission gathered goes to industry?

50/50 of group think there should be one booking engine not 2.

Access to market research and information

The information sought is to the point

Industry seem unsure how to obtain statistics – what is the distribution by STA?

Arrivals are too small to assess who they are – move focus to getting people here rather than assessing who they are.

Countries doing well are focusing on driving their holiday arrivals

VFR stay in hotels only late in their stay]

Re-defining arrivals / departure card

Hotels to get on top of reporting occupancy

What are other countries doing to increase arrivals?

Airfare

Distance

Lack of flights

Find out what Australians want – tap into this market
STA to report to tourists who the 'new tourist' is – instead of just giving numbers

Marketing Mix

Destinations to focus on MICE not just individual establishments

Determine niche markets

Romance / weddings

MICE

Student

Culinary

Sports / Adventure

Wellness

Asian market with focus on China

Take national ownership of tourism

Obtain more flights – LAX priority

Prioritise the marketing division of STA – a think tank

Determine who target market is and what they want

Session 1.2

Marketing and Communications

Brand

What is Samoa's brand positioning?

What is our point of difference? And what is the commonality of our tourism industry?

Suggest brand remove from last 20 years of Samoa brand history

Current brand not modern enough

Ensure brand encapsulates overall experience

Ensure proof points of brand

Industry acknowledges money constraints in re-brand

How does the industry use / interact with the brand?

Suggest style guide – brand proof points/ images and copy

Solution – Fa'a Samoa – 'The Samoan Way'

There is industry fragmentation in marketing messages to tourists

There needs to be more cooperation with STA / SHA and industry to be consistent in internal and external marketing messages.

Marketing Activities

Not enough opportunity for operators to participate in national marketing campaigns

Improve co-operative marketing to ensure 'whole' of Samoa experience is communicated eg. Tours and activities

Marketing Mix

More focus on direct consumer marketing

More partnerships with airline carriers to promote Samoa to consumers

Can STA provide feedback on what marketing activities are very successful and have good ROI?

Does STA know what international trends are occurring and therefore can they tell industry?

Suggest: redefining STA's role? With the aim to focus only on marketing?

STA Booking Engine

50 / 50 split between good and bad

Good because it's free

Why is there two? Can they work together?

Solution

Keep using STA's website to communicate information but send all booking through SHA.

Smaller properties need support of the booking engines

Concern about Expedia and booking.com also taking away traffic and bookings

Solution

STA subsidise SHA booking commissions to lower cost

Comment – bookings did drop from SHA when STA introduced their booking engine.

Reporting

How much STA budget is used to attract holiday visitors? And what is the ROI?

How valuable is the short haul market?

WE need more information on what and who our visitors are.

Better co-ordination with industry to provide detailed data

Solution:

More private sector representation on STA Marketing committee

Issue: Lack of representation of tours and activities in marketing and stakeholder consultations

Session 1.3

Marketing and Communications

Issues

Destination awareness

What is our product

Understanding of distribution and channels

Tourism Experience (Quality experience / value for money)

Lack of shared vision

Safety and health issues

National tourism marketing plan (STA)

STA budget – industry want to be able to provide input

Brand recognition internally and externally

Solutions:

1. Destination awareness

Brand awareness
What is our product
Shared vision

Define the brand and the shared ownership of the brand with the whole community of Samoa. "Samoa Pride."

Method is to use nationwide consultation

2. Tourist experience (safety and health issues)

Community involvement in identifying tourist experiences such as:

Public toilets
Education and public awareness training
Signage
Talofa Campaigns
Specialising in licensing and standards plus recognition of what these are
De sex dogs
Incentivizing
Feedback loop
Industry awards

3. Marketing Plan and Budget

Consolidation of all issues through nationwide consultation

SMART goals and regular review

Leveraging of assets

Manu Samoa
Food to plate
Culture
Samoans overseas
Conference centre
Our people / us / individuality

Session 2.1

Human Resource Development

Issues

Lack of community awareness for tourism as a career
Language barrier (English)
Community Education
Tourism Training / awareness starts too late in education
Career path / development is not understood
Cultural barriers - older people won't do service jobs, church and village commitments can be difficult to manage)
High turnover of staff
Overseas migration of workers – out of Samoa
Accessibility of training (cost etc)
Pay rates in the industry – double time very high and benefits

Strategies for Community Awareness

Community education and involvement
Everyone to promote Samoa (Pulenuuwomens committee)

- Start from Primary school
- Promote success stories particularly at local level and mass media
- Tourism awards (eg. Best cab driver)
- Visits to schools as well as school visits to tourism operators
- Focus on human strengths of the Samoan people / personalities
- Educate not to ask for money

Training Strategies

- Tourism awareness programs to start in schools (include in curriculum)
- Ensure fluency of English
- School leavers are educated about career paths in tourism
- Accessibility to training to include
 - Short term training
 - Follow up visits
 - Site visits
- Develop a training module from primary to tertiary level
- Business training for owner / operators
- More scholarship to tourism higher education
- Govt. to establish a training fund which could be used to send workers overseas in low season for work experience
- Employer incentives

Cultural Barriers / Strategies

- Better Pay if they perform well
- Meet all government entitlements
- Community education
- Roster rotation (particularly for Sunday shifts)
- Use an internal hierarchy
 - Similar to the Matai system
 - Educate staff and ensure communication at orientation
- Interaction between industry and the education system

Strategies to combat high turnover

- Honesty
 - Cultural awareness of impact
 - Reduce pressure from home and family
 - Increase tourists awareness for their responsibilities
 - Manage cash well – not visible thereby removing temptation
- General performance
 - Orientation
 - Remove staff mobile phones
- Birth Control
 - Discuss family strategies for dealing with sick children / family members
 - Create long term career paths for employees
 - Risk – owners will hire labour from overseas
 - Stricter consequences for poor performance such as stealing
 - SHA – suggest communication in naming and shaming (requires legal advice)

Build employee / employer relationship to improve loyalty both ways

Sessions 2.2

Investment, Business Enabling Environment and Product Development

1. Investment

- Need More Investment – list activities
- More investment with local counterparts
- Don't copy overseas – learn and incorporate into Samoa brand
- Activities must have ROI
- Government investment to maintain eco-environment such as shorelines and proper supermarkets
- Identify type of investment – unique to Samoa
- Optimise cultural activities – Experience Samoa, Omu, Hiking, Plantations
- Need to understand Model eg. ???
- PUMA to be involved – Air / Land / Sea (Village)

2. Business Enabling Environment

- Feasibility study
 - Operators
- Accommodation costs
 - Elementary services high
- Infrastructure
 - Water catchments, Variable rates for water and electricity
- Forms
 - To be simplified by government for operators
- Incentive TCRP
 - 20% not achievable for operators
- Banking Interest rates
 - Too high, DBS need to do more, grace period suggested
- Waste Management
 - Pay
 - Provide Service
 - Review of cost structure
- Health Department
 - Not good for Samoa representation (not doing a good enough job?) – enforce hygiene
 - Suggest media control for sensitive issues so that they are not broadcast internationally – such as rape

3. Product Development

- Govt and private sector partnership
 - Incentives / interest rate terms (for product investment?)
- Accommodation Standards

Not currently in line across all government agencies eg.
 Distance between each beach fale

Flooding
 Clean up after flood - Trash from non-organic products

Pricing / Packages
 Make more attractive (operators?)

Signage
 Better communication of locations

Sunday Swim signage

Educating our nation
 Tourist friendly generation
 Suggest starting within schools

Enforce Litter Law
 Dogs

Promote Samoa products
 Such as organic soap and food

Focus on Authenticity of products

Revisit costs of cruise ships
 Suggest airport tax and percentage to go to industry

Additional Comments

- Advisory board for proposed investments to be industry led
- Incentives refurbishments and update of properties every 4-5 years – research the tax act 2013 to understand grant for renovating.
- Improve review of background checks for proposed international investors
- International investors to ensure they have 100% of capital to start with and not lend from Samoa banks
- Incentives local investors
- Insurance – Update on beach fale insurance through TCRP. There is an issue of quality of local insurance providers.
- Local banks have too strict credit policies – SHA and STA to consult / negotiate with local institutions.

Session 2.3

Infrastructure, Access and Route Development

Issues – In order of priority

1. Aviation access – Number of flights, diversity of routes, airport capacity, LAX Flight (potential solution to subsidise flights but ensure ROI) frequency, cost, airline / hotel capacity, no competition between airlines.
2. Access to Information – sites, transport and activities, including navigational signage
3. Public Facilities, toilets and access to beaches and cultural sites, conference centre
4. EPC – Sanitation, SWA, EPC is very unreliable, inconsistent, not available
5. Cycling Pathways – Dogs and Bus issues, lack of police support
6. Internet Access– Cost, breadth, reliability

Priorities

1. Aviation and Access

Frequency of Flights:

Marketing and product development, proof of ROI, determine market / segment then determine target airline, include branching out to Asian Airlines, Revisit LAX flight and present a business model to attract that flight again. Promotions to include standby prices and \$1 campaign – leverage off National Airline.

No competition between Airlines:

More active involvement with Aviation guys.

Use departure tax to support subsidizing aviation carriers

Industry wants a better understanding of what are the obstacles to improving the flights paths and aviation access to Samoa

Move the marketing budget to subsidise the European flights.

2. Access to information / Navigational Signage and Access to Sites

Maps

More detailed and up to date national map

Internet / Website

Up to date information

Calendar of events

Public holidays – more notice needed from government

Sporting activities (more promotional information)

Events – Ironman, Swim Series, Fishing, Concerts (more promotion / information)

3. EPC / Sanitation / SWA / Public Facilities

Constants and Consistent quality supply (Pumps)

Flat rates for the industry

Zero rating

On generators, pumps and other equipment to lower price

Accessibility of public toilets

Working with womens committee to maintain

4. Cycling Pathways

Lobby with transport in target areas

Wheelchair access

Sector to design

Enact the Law (enforcement)

Dog issue – Enforcement of police management and licensing of dogs / owners

Police acceptance of bike riders

SHA to write a proposal to transport to create bike paths

5. Internet Access - (create a communication strategy)

Cost

- Reduce costs
- Negotiate hotel rates

Speed

- Increase speed

Availability

- Install fibre optic cable quickly
- WiFi installation – reliable and accessible to all

Reception

- More reliable service

Improve knowledge of Internet operators

- Increase training for operators – on the job

6. Airport Facilities

Information Desks

- Working with STA – share booth with industry
- Partner with existing booth holders?
- Computer station and free phone available for tourists

Discounted Operator Parking Fee

- Half yearly rate sticker

Upgrade toilets and facilities

- Suggested Business Lounge on a user pays system

Institutions and Partnerships:

Comment

STA to coordinate better communication and business with private sector such as supermarkets