

Moving Toward Environmental Friendly Tourism in Tourism and Hospitality Business

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This article shows the relationship between sustainable development, business ethics and environment focusing on the tourism and hospitality industry. It begins with considering the role of the sustainable development concept and business ethics in business operation in general and then emphasizing on the tourism and hospitality businesses. The review on how well the tourism and hospitality industry is performing in reaching sustainable development is then presented. Problems in achieving sustainability among tourism and hospitality organizations particularly hotels are also revealed and how to operate this type of business successfully by employing sustainable concept, is recommended at the end of the paper.

Key words: sustainable tourism development, business ethics and green marketing

Introduction

It is increasingly evident that business and industry's current patterns of consumption and production are not sustainable. The enormous economic and population growth worldwide have driven the impacts that threaten the health and well being of all communities and nations (Canadian Universities Consortium, 1999). A sustainable development concept is widely discussed as a solution for the said circumstances. In business operation perspectives, it is found that environmental concerns are spreading in business organizations as can be seen from approaches in business operations such as green and societal marketing as well as environmental friendly business products and programs. However, doing so is still problematic as those business organizations including tourism and hospitality-related business organizations need to have capacity strengthened in many areas. It is even more difficult as while they have to be more environmentally concerned, they have to maintain a level of profits.

Sustainable Development and Business Ethics

Ree (1989, p.13, quoted from Gunn, 1994, p. 85) indicates that "sustainable development is a positive change that does not undermine the ecological and social system upon which communities and society are dependent. Its successful implementation requires integrated policy, planning and social learning process; its political viability depends on the full support of the people it affects through their governments, their social institutions and their private

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activities". This statement can be analyzed that to reach sustainable development, all environment-related agencies including business sector must have high continuous commitment and sincerity to implement this so-called environmental friendly development approach.

To enhance the vision of sustainable future, including that of a sustainable future for tourism, the followings are recommended by Canadian Universities Consortium, (1999) to be practiced in all agencies: 1) Prudent use of the earth's resources within the limits of the planet's carrying capacity 2) Devolution of top-down decision-making responsibilities and capabilities to a broader range of the destination's stakeholders 4) The abatement of poverty and gender inequalities, and respect for fundamental human rights 5) Enhancement of quality of life through improved health care, shelter, nutrition, and access to education and income-generating skills 6) Preservation of bio-diversity and life support systems for all natural habitats 7) Preservation of indigenous knowledge and ways of living and respect for the spiritual and cultural traditions of different peoples.

In fulfilling the above, all agencies must struggle to find an appropriate balance between different, sometimes apparently conflicting needs and value systems. Sustainable development must meet three fundamental and equal objectives, namely: 1) Economic: production of goods and services 2) Environmental: conservation and prudent management of natural resources 3) Social: the maintenance and enhancement of quality of life.

Being in a very similar circumstance as other business, the tourism and hospitality industry is also facing the challenges to reach sustainability. Canadian Universities Consortium (1999) says that the tourism industry must be profitable and environmentally sustainable if it is to provide long term benefits. This clearly shows that to achieve this goal, all business organizations need a new and different approach to industrial planning and development. At present, it is found that many tourism and hospitality organizations have employed business and marketing ethic approaches such as green and society marketing concepts, aimed at reaching sustainability.

Green marketing is a set of belief and a concomitant lifestyle that stresses the importance of respect for the earth and all its inhabitants, using only what resources are necessary and appropriate, acknowledging the rights of all forms of life, and recognizing that all that exists is part of one interconnected whole (Kennedy et al, 1994). The societal marketing concept says that the organization should determine the needs, wants, and interests of target markets and deliver the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors in a way that maintains or improves the consumer's and society's well being (Kotler, 1999). Lovelock et al (1998) shows the examples of what business organizations should do according to ethical commitments which include that cigarettes and liquor should not be sold to children; hotel chains should establish no smoking floors and no smoking sections in their restaurants; and airlines should make all international flights smoke-free.

Also, employing ISO 14000 for effective environmental management is an outstanding example showing environmental responsibility for business organizations. Tibor and Feldman (2000) and International Organization for Standardization (2002) show that the reasons of implementing ISO 14000 are 1) to increase use of voluntary standards 2) reduce multiplicity and duplication such as the number of environmental audits 3) de facto requirement 4) government adoption 5) satisfy stakeholder interests 6) lower insurance rates and better access to capital 7) internal benefits. ISO 14000 is therefore greatly employed due to all these mentioned factors.

In addition, with closer examination to the hotel industry, Green Leaf Eco-Rating program has been often practiced to improve hotel environmental management. Green Leaf Foundation (2003) reveals that the program is mainly to encourage and improve the efficiency of hotels and related businesses in the tourism industry to respond to

environmental development and protection. It has been found that many hotels around the world are the members of Green Leaf.

The above information signifies that ethical action by business organizations is not easy, as it requires more than just commitment but managerial skills, effective production, financial assistance and integrated planning and policy (Norman, 2000). However, it is possible to say that there are an increasing number of business organizations implementing green business ethics with a belief to reach sustainability particularly in the tourism and hospitality industry.

How Well Tourism and Hospitality are performing in the Quest for Sustainability?

Although it is very difficult to answer the above question, it is possible to say that under many pressures such as globalization concept, development of global business management ethics and customers' attitudes towards environment, all business organizations, particularly in tourism and hospitality businesses are in a transitional period to change their production processes toward greater concern with the environmental. It has been found that there are more and more tourism and hospitality-related organizations are taking care of environment and utilizing it sustainably (Ciulla, 1998).

There are many examples of hotels implementing many approaches to reduce the use of environmental resources. Ramada Renaissance Hotel, Melaka, for instance, has used solar energy for power lighting and ceiling fans. In tropical areas, sliding doors and windows are fitted with connectors so that they are opened, the air-conditions automatically switch off. Timers are used to turn off lights and equipment when they are not in use. Inter-Continental Hotel group has installed gas, electricity and water meters in individual departments. L'Hotel, Toronto has changed its 40w fluorescent tubes to 34w tubes, resulting in a pay-off in energy saving in the first year of \$25,000. Le Meridien, San Diego has a policy to replace classic light bulbs and fluorescent tubes by compact low-density light bulbs. Hyde Park Inter-Continental, London, has replaced incandescent lamps in emergency stairs, corridors, etc. with low wattage energy-efficient fluorescent lamps and also installed a smaller air-compressor for night operation (International Hotels Environment Initiative, 1996).

For water management, it is found that Spring Hotel, Banff, has collected non-refundable cans, which are shredded in the hotel's new recycling machine. L'Hotel, Toronto has changed the guestroom laundry bag which is made of plastic, has used retired bed sheets which are reusable (Ciulla, 1998).

With a focus on water quality, Ramada International Hotel has replaced chlorine bleach in its swimming pools with a non-toxic ionization process. At Ramada Hong Kong, salt water is used to fill tanks and sewage, and laundry water is recycled for irrigation purposes. Regency Inter-Continental, Bahrain, has substituted chlorine bleaches with oxygen bleaches based on perforates, which are harmless to the environment and degradable without affecting marine life. Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Bangkok, has invested a large amount of money to modernize its waste water treatment unit, so that it can treat every single drop of water before it is discharged to the Chao Phya River (Joel and Werhane, 2000).

The above information would provide indicators whether the tourism and hospitality industry has performed well or not, and whether they are moving toward greater environmental concerns in business operation. However, many argue that to reach sustainability, the tourism and hospitality industry has to face several difficulties (Sternberg, 2000; Rosenthal and Buchholz, 2000).

What are The Impediments to Achieving Sustainability?

Lane (1994) indicates that there are many difficulties in implementing the principles of sustainability particularly in a free market economy. It is found that there are at least five difficulties that the tourism and hotel industry are experiencing to reach sustainability. Badaracco (1997) says that to reach sustainability in the business sector is not that easy. Preparation in many aspects would need to be carefully done.

Lack of Support from Related Agencies

Benson (1982) shows that reaching sustainable business relies on many factors and involves many stakeholders. Business sector alone cannot do so; this action must also be supported by government and customers. Lane (1994) supports that the implementation of the sustainable concept is problematic as it involve numerous interested parties with diverse aims and beliefs. Given this, to effectively implement the sustainable development approach, supports from all stakeholders must be received. For example, if a hotel would like to import new technology for more effective environmental management in the hotel but the government still would like to increase import taxes, this may lead to the incapability of the hotel in terms of financial management to afford the machine. Given this circumstance, sustainability cannot be reached successfully. De Kadt (1992) concludes that under strong support of the government, sustainable development can come true.

Lack of Understanding in "Sustainability Concept"

Lane (1994) points out one of the causes that lead to unsuccessful implementation of sustainable concept is the concept of sustainability is fraught with ambiguity. De Kadt (1992) suggests that a good understanding of "sustainability concept" should be fostered among all relevant parties. Bramwell and Lane (1993) add that good understanding on the sustainable concept is a basic requirement for all parties to implement this concept as it encourages greater possibility of success. Take a case of the hotel industry as an example. If the higher executives of the hotel chain headquarters do not have a consensus on sustainability, the management policy toward business sustainability would be vague and without direction. Lane (1994) says that "sustainability" can be interpreted and adjusted differently according to different conditions the users are in.

Lack of Know How and Knowledge

'Know how' is considered another important issue. Although the hotels import a clean technology and they do not know how to operate it, there is no way for the hotels to reach sustainability. Kotter (1996) points out that without the know how sustainability cannot be reached. Take the knowledge on ISO 14000 as an example. EcoVitality (2003) considers that the lack of know how and knowledge of ISO 14000 retard the development of environmental management system (EMS). These circumstances always happen in the developing countries where economy is unstable. It is found that as a result of lack of knows how and knowledge, the industry sector in Thailand tends to rely on consulting firms to do ISO 14000. They believe that if they pay, they can get ISO 14000 certification. Once they pay and they do not get the certification, they give up. This can be considered that having no know-how and knowledge can obstruct sustainability. TISI (2002) shows that in the industrial sector: Hotels and Accommodations, there are only two hotels in Thailand certified by ISO 14000. They are

the Royal Cliff Beach Resort, Chonburi, certified by Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) and Kata Thani Hotel and Beach Resort, Phuket, certified by RWTUV.

Lack of "Quality" Manpower

Provenza (1992) reveals that quality in the tourism and hospitality development can only be achieved with "quality" manpower that has been properly trained. This means not just a specific initial training process but also practical on-the-job experience. It should be agreed that sustainable development approach is closely related to many important issues, which requires quality human resources to integrate those issues to tourism and hospitality environmental management and planning. In Thailand, it is argued that in addition to low-quality manpower in hotel management for ordinary hotel jobs, the situation is even more serious in environmental management for hotels. Gunn (1994) points out that "quality manpower" is considered a very important factor to facilitate sustainability.

Lack of Financial Support and Effective Financial Management

In implementing any approach, financial support and financial management are quite important. Provenza (1992) says that to achieve sustainability, the business sector must get support from all related stakeholders particularly from the government. The support does not mean only in terms of finance but policy, laws and regulations. However, financial support and management are important for all agencies related to the implementation of sustainable development. EcoVitality (2003) says that it is very costly to produce goods and services in an environmentally safe way than in a non-sustainable harmful manner, which, as a result, many companies face financial problems. However, DPIE (1994) argues that good financial management and effective business operation can overcome or lessen the problem. Therefore, it can be argued that to successfully implement sustainable approach, all organizations need to be well prepared in all aspects particularly financial.

How to Improve Environmental Performance and Contribute to Successful Business Operation?

There are three factors that organizations are required to improve environmental performance and to succeed in business operation. Firstly, they have to change practices in their workplace. Secondly, attitudes toward environmental practices for all employees should be positive, and thirdly environmental friendly activities should provide profits to organizations that employ sustainable concept (Kirk, 1997).

Basically, implementing sustainable concept requires the willingness and positive attitude of all people that are involved. When the human resources are ready, environmental friendly practices are effectively implemented. Finally, when environmental friendly programs function, they can reduce wastage from production processes, save energy production costs and provide more profits. The followings are environmental friendly practices the tourism and hospitality organizations should do. First, water supply in the hotels should be used carefully. Stanley (1997) says that many environments have finite fresh resources, which must be conserved carefully. Although there is a demand from tourists for clean water for drinking purposes, the hotels should find a way of minimizing chemical treatment to serve their need. In addition, hotels should find ways of using raw water (including sea water, brackish artesian water and untreated rainwater) for toilet flushing and other purposes, so that fresh water supplies are used more sparingly.

For sewage disposal, Harley (1998) points out that conventional sewage system is often expensive and inappropriate to the natural environment. Consideration needs to be given to separate 'black' and 'grey' water system, so that there is less sewage to deal with, and total evaporation becomes an option. This avoids the release of nutrients into the environment, which is important in many habitat areas. Also, Middleton and Hawkins (1993) suggest that the use of composting toilets, where clean compost is removed on a yearly basis, grey water is separately treated, and can be potentially recycled for irrigation or other purposes. Use of low phosphate, low fat soaps and cleaning chemicals are appropriate. Regarding disposal of solid wastes in hotels, recycling of wastes is obviously a good practice (Harari, 1997). Guests should be encouraged to separate rubbish at source. There are possibilities for recycling cardboard and paper, crushing glass, cans, cooking oils and waste lubricant oils. The hotels should create environmental awareness programmes to guests to realize the recycling programmes.

With regard to controlling weed and pests, the hotel operators may cooperate with government agencies in identifying local weed and pests, seeking control or eradicating using sound control practices rather than simply dosing them with chemicals (Stanley, 1997). For energy management, the hotel operators should have a sound climatic design of buildings. It is demonstrated that even in the hottest and stickiest of climates, air-conditioners are unnecessary (Kotler, 2003). However, in colder climate, wood stoves about common for intermittent use, but sometimes a charge is made to raise consumer awareness of the energy consumption. Therefore, to prevent more energy consumption, the design of buildings should incorporate environmental friendly concept (Kleiner, 1991).

With an emphasis on landscaping, it is agreed that hotels' landscaping needs to use plant species endemic to the local environment (Various, 1994). This is not only for local plant spicity conservation but doing so can save money for hotel maintenance. Use of material is one of the factors affecting the state of environment. Use of natural materials in buildings and other structures is inappropriate because it would destroy nature. However, Stanley (1997) argues that hotels can serve client's need by using nature-based materials, e.g. furniture made of timbers. According to Stanley (1997), hotels, in an attempt to demonstrate environmental best practices, can do so by using plantation timbers instead of rainforest timbers and avoid the use of toxic glues and varnishes.

Conclusion

The above discussion shows that, at present, business organizations are more environmentally concerned because it has been considered a business ethic via societal marketing. It can be argued that business organizations particularly in the tourism and hospitality industry are moving toward achieving sustainable development. However, there are at least five obstacles to sustainability, which are lack of support from related agencies, lack of understanding in "sustainability concept", lack of know how and knowledge, lack of "quality" manpower, and lack of financial support and management. It is also found that besides implementing environmental friendly practices, business organizations should create positive attitudes towards environmental practices to the public so that the practices can be successfully implemented and profitable.

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TOURISM EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION OF MALAYSIA (TEAM)

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been and will continue to be a key economic activity in Malaysia in the coming decades. However long term success of the tourism and hospitality industry in the country hinges on the recruitment of a quality workforce, retention and retraining. Institutions and hospitality and tourism organizations can work together on these areas to their benefit.

Although formal hospitality training began in the late 1960s there has never been an attempt to form an Association of educators in this area of specialty. It was in response to the need amongst the relevant training and teaching professionals to meet and discuss issues of common interest that the Tourism Educators Association of Malaysia (TEAM) was formed in June 2001. It was formally registered with the Registrar of Societies (ROS) on 3 March 2003.

TEAM will enable the academic community to develop meaningful partnerships amongst themselves and with the industry. Building relationships between industry and institutions will encourage hospitality and tourism professionals to participate in curriculum development, professional development and cross exposure programmes.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of TEAM are:

- To provide forums for discussion of current and future issues impacting the hospitality and tourism industry, with a view to contributing effectively to the industry and the government's aim to establish Malaysia as a tourism destination;
- To identify and to study problems arising in hospitality and tourism education and training and to discuss these problems with, and/or bring them to the attention of relevant ministries, government agencies, professional bodies and the industry at large;
- To protect the legitimate interests of members, in particular, to discuss with government ministries, agencies, institutions and organizations on matters pertaining to policy, legislation standards in training and education and other matters deemed relevant to members;
- To seek representation on committees/councils/boards set up by government and non-government organizations concerning hospitality and tourism education and training;
- To encourage the improvement of teaching methods and the use of technology, and to encourage the exchange of best practices;
- To create a culture that facilitates open exchange of curriculum ideas and experiences throughout the continuum of education;
- To promote and disseminate relevant, high quality research;
- To collaborate in the promotion of hospitality and tourism careers and use communication for public

relations to enhance the image of hospitality and tourism education;

- To facilitate networking and contacts among groups of common interest (special interest groups) in the field of tourism and hospitality;
- To encourage assessment and enhancement of quality hospitality and tourism education;
- To extend knowledge pertaining to hospitality education.

SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

In pursuance of the aims and objectives defined above, the Association shall be entitled to:

- Purchase, build, hire, lease or otherwise acquire any land, premises and properties for the use of the Association and to manage, improve, develop or utilize any such land, premises and properties, and/or to sell, mortgage, let out or otherwise dispose of such land, premises and properties or any part thereof.
- Accept any bequest, gift or donation made to the Association by a member or members of the Association and other donors or patrons.
- Undertake and execute any trust and/or fund that the Association deems to be conducive to the attainment of any of its objectives.
- Arrange for and/or secure finance and/or financial aid in any other form from all and any available legitimate source for use by the Association in the attainment of its objectives.
- Organize seminars, symposiums, exhibitions, education fairs, workshops and conferences and carry out studies and research in accordance with the objectives of the Association.
- Represent, at the Association's discretion, any member or members, upon legitimate request, in negotiating, bargaining or otherwise in dealing with all and any kind of organizations, institutions, associations, companies, guilds or otherwise any public bodies, municipalities, boards, committees, commissions in all matters of common interest relating to hospitality and tourism education.
- Print and disseminate materials, such as guide books, career books, text books and periodicals relevant to the hospitality and tourism education industry and other activities pertaining to the promotion of the objectives stated above subject to the prior approval of the relevant authorities.

MEMBERSHIP

There shall be two categories of members:

- **Ordinary Members**, who shall be registered educational institutions which have an interest in or offer hospitality and/or tourism programmes and individual members who shall be persons interested in hospitality and/or tourism and support the objectives of TEAM and pay dues.
- **Associate Members**, shall be businesses/companies, agencies, associations and other organizations, which have an interest in hospitality and/or tourism, support the objectives of TEAM.