

1. The Role of the Black/Diaspora Media

- A role of the media is to educate on what the Caribbean is about and where our product comes from.
- People are the most important entity of the Caribbean. Politicians have a responsibility to act on behalf of the people. Another role of the media is to monitor the actions of the politicians to ensure that the people's interests are best served. The media therefore has a major role, in that they communicate directly to the people. The media has to reform and take up investigative journalism to better serve the people.
- Education is critical, particularly where stereotypes are concerned. Caribbean media should report properly on the Black tourism market instead of seeing African-Americans as "suspects not prospects." These stereotypes need to change. Facts and research combat myths about cultures. This social responsibility extends to discussing such issues as tourism and HIV/AIDS.
- Caribbean tourism authorities ought to connect with National Newspaper Associations that represents hundreds of Black newspapers from throughout the US.
- In speaking about governance, one should include the opposition party because they officially constitute the government in waiting.
- Media should support small hotels because they can best cater to Black tourists.
- The Black media is not effectively utilized to market the Caribbean as a tourist destination. Why don't tourism boards or major travel companies advertise in the Black media? Whatever the partnership, the Black media must be supported and not used.
- Media training needed – perhaps distance learning collaboration with Diaspora, to further develop regional media.
- Increase contact between media in Caribbean and the Diaspora.

2. Targeting the African-American Market

- Challenges are many, including not recognizing the importance of targeting the minority market, stereotyping, and hiring marketing, public relations and advertising firms without minority staff and who lack awareness.
- The Caribbean tourism industry must recognize how demographics have shifted in the US (i.e. in New York, there are arguably more people of colour (i.e. Latino, Black and Asian) than there are White. If we're not directly speaking to these groups, we're losing out.
- Caribbean marketers may be hindered by preconception of marketing to African Americans, but top companies are doing so and seeing big returns. Multicultural marketing is huge. Even when household income is lower, African Americans spend more money on goods.
- Research and analysis a must! What do Black Americans want when they travel to the Caribbean? Use this information to shift from the European and North American paradigms and develop a model that satisfies the needs of the Black American market.
 1. Factors to consider: differences between Black and other tourists: Blacks want cultural experience, so market beaches and cultural tourism together.
 2. Language: African Americans who do not speak another language will be more comfortable coming to the region where English is the first language.
- Educate ourselves about each other. Actively address the cultural divide – do they understand us and do we understand them? And combat cultural chauvinism. For example, promoting educational exchange programs through colleges, so we can understand each other's culture and history.

- There needs to be more pressure on the tourism sector to involve Black media. Tourism sector needs to budget for Black media to promote awareness of Caribbean destinations.
- Awareness and accountability have to start with tourism industry, both in the public and private sectors. Invite government officials to be part of CMEx to take ownership and implementation to their respective countries, with substantive follow-up.
- **CTO initiative:** CMEx reception for tourism ministers at 2006 CTO conference, presenting a collective presentation on the necessity of multicultural marketing.
- Add executive position, in each country, which will be charged with the education and development of multicultural tourism in different markets because the Caribbean is in competition with exotic destinations.

3. Involvement of Diaspora in the tourism niche market

Over 4 million documented Caribbean people live in the US, translating into an enormous opportunity for this strategically placed group to be advocates and developers in Caribbean tourism, as a bridge between the region and the wider world.

- When Caribbean people travel, they should always be ambassadors for our region; there is a distinction between being proud and being an ambassador for one's country. For example, bringing artifacts from home countries to share aspects of culture/heritage with friends – thus, building interest in others to come to the Caribbean.
- Access to universities, professional groups and associations can be used to draw tourist groups to the Caribbean.
- The Diaspora offers opportunities to assist the region in accessing funding for development and business projects. *Proviso:* Governments must develop an enabling environment for investment.
- The Diaspora is in a good position to do studies: for example, tourism threatens the environment and the Diaspora has resources to do studies on the impact of tourism activities.
- Products as a Tool to Draw Tourism & Business: how do we market the products tourists encounter in the region to markets in the US and Europe? Tourism should promote local products, and those products marketed back in the US – should draw repeat tourists (or new ones) back to the Caribbean.
- Foundations of Diaspora: What about foundations that protect and advance the rights of their people? Working at building business connections and interest is only a part of the picture.
- Accountability and Government Barriers: Governments sit on huge pension and other funds that are not made available to business. Diaspora remittances are a huge influence on the country, yet the value and benefit of those remittances are not made available to business in the country.

4. The Caribbean Brand

- The Caribbean is the “Best Known Unknown Brand.” An identifiable Brand must:
 1. Arouse the senses
 2. Present a strong identity
 3. Create a platform for deepening relationship
 4. Provide a definable product
 5. Remove barriers to selling
- The Caribbean is a single region with diverse elements so an overall identifier would be more powerful than individual territories. The region would benefit from emphasizing common denominators and looking for unknown, overlooked gems (culture, history).
- Think about resort/accommodation types – play into desire of tourists not to feel like strangers in a strange land, developing and widely publicizing people-to-people programs so the individual tourist can interface with the local population.

- Make sure there's a genuine culture of hospitality or people won't come back.
- Using heritage aspects and sports as vehicles to have people connect to the region.
- Linkages in the Caribbean tourism product (i.e. ecotourism in Guyana with beaches in Bahamas as one vacation package or a shopping trip that traverses the region). If linkages are marketed properly, multi-destination tourism could have tremendous benefit for the region.

5. Targeting Other Niche Markets

- Plethora of markets to cater to: eco-soft adventure (hiking trails, off-the-beaten-track tourism); romance market (weddings), diving market, religious market, etc.
- Access research on what visitors are interested in and be ready to conduct more research. Look at what's been studied and what needs to be done, so islands can assess whether they are ready, willing and able to provide services.
- Based on research, identify niche markets (ethnic, geographical, interests, etc.) and figure out which countries offer aspects these groups are inclined towards.
- Determine interest groups within these groups (interests that cut across lines, jazz festivals for example).
- Prepare people who have to offer services for the change. Recipient of service needs to be involved in the design of the service as well as those who will provide the service – how can these two parties be brought to the table while designing the product?
- Islands should assess what niche attractions they can offer before worrying about how to package and market the product.
- Cultural tourism is a recurring idea as a niche attraction, but beware of diluting culture to make it more palatable for tourism. There's a fine line between *cultural tourism* and *touristic culture*.
- Look into option of unusual niches, for example Germans in Kansas because of their affinity for cowboy culture; or Japanese women who flock to certain locations because they featured in Anne of Green Gables.
- Returning nationals, reconnecting tourists: nationals who live abroad and want to reconnect with roots. Sensitivity in accommodating them: don't want to be treated as regular tourists.
- Offering incentives to certain travelers based on their needs; for example, European markets spend longer traveling, so spend longer vacations. Find these examples and replicate them (i.e. Germans in Tobago and Irish in Barbados).