

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION TO DEVELOP THAI CULTURAL TOURISM.

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the most important industries that bring foreign exchanges and jobs to Thailand. The growth of competition in tourism from ASEAN nations and international nations every year forces Thailand to offer new ways of tourism. It is imperative for Thailand to create an important Strategic plan for marketing and communication to develop Thai cultural tourism. The objectives of this study were to examine the strategic plan for marketing and communication to develop Thai cultural tourism effectively. This research employed qualitative technique. The focus group consisted of three main groups: public sector, private sector, and community. The research started at the first quarter of the year 2019. The findings of the research revealed that there were some weakness of the strategic plan for marketing and communication to develop Thai cultural tourism which were the lack of cooperation of information and work collaboration among public sector, private sector, and community. However, the focus of the strategic plan should include the cooperative of three main groups, the exchange of information to benefits all partners, create a strong network, effective communication between the groups, and enhance the standard quality of the tourism destinations and stakeholders of the tourism destinations.

Keywords: Strategy, Communication, Marketing, Cultural Tourism

INTRODUCTION

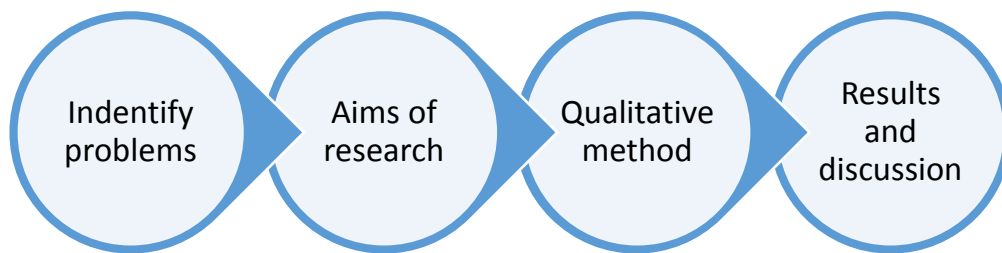
Thai cultural tourism is tremendously influenced by religion, local traditions, and local sub-culture. With about 90 percent of Thailand being Buddhist, the Thai cultural tourism is deeply influenced by the historic Buddhist temples, Buddhist values and way of life. Thai tourism offered many different selling points to different groups of international tourists and local tourists. However, the Thai cultural tourism is becoming more and more important with the high level of the competition from ASEAN nations who may offer similar line of cultural tourism.

Strategic plan for marketing is vital to the success of many different business including tourism in Thailand. In fact, the strategic plan for marketing must include some important things such as goals, tactics, objectives, and plans. The goals and objectives often provide the future direction that the organizations require to achieve or would like to achieve such as the increase of market share, the increase in sales revenues, or to increase the awareness or some understanding of some particular information or some issues. For the Thai culture tourism segment is now becoming more and more important segment of the overall picture of Thai tourism. There are, in fact, many variety of segments of Thai tourism and some segment seems to be more successful than other segments. For example, the night entertainment segment and natural beauty segment are more successful and have more international tourists visiting with a large number. However, some segments of tourism such

as eco-tourism may have only a specific small group of international tourists who are interested in this special segment of tourism. Therefore, the use of strategic plan for marketing is crucial tools to help set up the understanding and implement proper plan for Thai cultural tourism to obtain competitive edges in this particular tourist segment. The researcher, however, is interested in investigating the use of strategic marketing plan in the specific tourism segment of Thai cultural tourism.

METHODOLOGY

In order to obtain the findings, there are four vital steps of conducting this study: identify research problems, set up research aims, utilize the qualitative method, and obtain results and discussion. The aims of this study were to examine the strategic plan for marketing and communication to develop Thai cultural tourism effectively. This research employed qualitative technique. There were 30 sample group that were selected randomly by the pools of three groups. The focus group consisted of three main groups: public sector, private sector, and community. It is important to ensure that these three groups were selected the representatives from those who involved in the Thai tourism for a long time and have sufficient knowledge and experience to offer the useful information for this study. The research conducted about three months, at the first quarter of the year 2019.



FINDINGS

Based on the in-depth interview of 30 sample group, it was found that the majority of respondents concurred that there would be a good future for Thai culture tourism segments directly and indirectly with other tourism segment. This particular tourism segment actually is very popular and interested by senior tourist group and academician group who have more time and more budget to have a long visit and attentively study historic cultural destinations all over Thailand. Therefore, the target group of this segment should be informed about the useful information of tourist destination. However, the success of this tourist segment must come from the strength of cooperation of three groups: private sector, public sector, and local community.

There are seven steps of strategic marketing planning process. First, is to have a meeting, discussion with many possible partners from public and private sector and together with community and to develop a well-understanding of strategic marketing plan. Second, is to agree upon the marketing goal of Thai cultural tourism and set up both short term plan and long term plan. Third, is to conduct a marketing research to identify target audiences and to investigate what would be the needs and wants of target group of this tourism segment and items to survey for their the level of satisfaction. Then, conduct the research analysis. Fourth, is to determine the budget needed for Thai cultural tourism and scheduling the implement of

budget in each process. Finally, is to develop an implementation schedule for Thai culture tourism as well as to monitoring each process working according to the plan or not.

From the discussion with sample group, it revealed that there were, in fact, some weakness of the strategic plan for marketing and communication to develop Thai cultural tourism. The weakness included the lack of the strengths of cooperation of information, networking, and work collaboration among public sector, private sector, and local community. Moreover, the strong teamwork to achieve the same objectives are required. Therefore, there must be an open talk with both informal meetings and formal meetings among three groups. More importantly, the focus of the strategic plan and marketing plan must include the network and cooperative of three main groups, the exchange of information to benefits all partners, create a strong network, effective communication between the groups, and enhance the standard quality of the tourism destinations and stakeholders of the tourism destinations.

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