

The Importance of Tourism Security as a Marketing Tool for Hawai'i

Dr. Peter Tarlow



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Dr. Peter Tarlow

1218 Merry Oaks, College Station, TX, 77840-2609

(+1 -979) 764-8402

E-mail ptarlow@tourismandmore.com

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OVERVIEW

What is Tourism Security?

How tourism security differs from other forms of security.

The proactive and the reactive.

Places outside of Hawai'i where tourism security has paid off:

New York

Charleston, SC

Jerusalem, Israel

Places facing challenges:

Rio de Janeiro

Mexico City/Acapulco

The Caribbean

Some tourism basics we all need to remember:

- No one needs to take a vacation
- Leisure travel is expendable
- Business travel can be cut back

- Travel and tourism are about attitudes. The more positive you are, the better service you provide and the better the chance for innovative thinking
- People have both long and short memories

Some basic marketing principles

1. Tourism Surety must be maintained in an industry that sells magic and enchantment. The tourism industry can ill afford any act of violence that destroys a place's image. In an interlocked world, tourism security is one more major selling point.
2. Tourism surety requires a cooperative effort. There is a need for interagency cooperation. Visitors know little about, nor care little about, interagency rivalries or disputes. Instead the tourist expects and has the right to expect a safe and secure vacation experience.
3. Tourism surety requires credibility. From the perspective of the consumer there is no difference between issues of safety and security. For example, a tourist's vacation is ruined if he/she drinks contaminated water or is a crime victim. In both cases the visitor will most likely not return. Tourism officials need to warn visitors of real situations and have the data to support their assertions .

4. Tourism officials need to fight this year's battles and not last year's battles. All too often tourism officials are so fixated by a crisis from previous years that they fail to note a new crisis that is brewing. Tourism safety experts need to be aware of the past but not prisoners to it. For example, if in a certain location identity theft crimes have replaced crimes of distraction, then officials need to be aware of the new situation and take measures to protect the traveling public.
5. Tourism surety requires a vision and an overall plan. This shared vision must belong not only to law enforcement and city and state government but also to the judiciary and legal system. Visions must be both practical and realizable.
6. Tourism industries that choose to ignore tourism security are opening themselves up to not only financial loss but to major lawsuits and liability issues. In a nation that loves to sue, issues of liability not only pertain to places of lodging, but also to attractions and transportation centers. Tourism safety and security rather than subtracting from the bottom line adds a new marketing dimension to a tourism product.

History of Hawaii and Security

The Birth of HVISA and VASH

Some of the critical issues facing Hawaii

- Property crime issues against the industry's visitors can have a highly negative impact on Hawaiian tourism. Although Hawaii has a relatively low crime rate, it has a high rate of property crime especially in relationship to its foreign and often non-English speaking visitors.
- The use of high tech has had positive results in the lowering of property crime rates against visitors.
- Beach safety is a problem across the state. Hawaii attracts numerous visitors who tend to downplay ocean safety. This lack of ocean knowledge may be one of the reasons for the state's high rate of drownings.
- Drug usage is not necessarily a tourism issue, but locals who use drugs often see visitors as easy targets to gain money to feed their drug habits
- Geographic density. Because each island is relatively small, there is little separation between the less than desirable neighborhoods and tourism areas. Visitors can easily wander into places in which they ought not to be and the state's criminals are never far from the tourism areas

- Hawaii is a leader in aiding tourists who have suffered a loss, be that loss due to an act of crime, a natural phenomenon or purely natural causes. Hawai'i's VASH program is a model program that serves the needs of people from around the world.
- Maintaining tourism surety without losing the state's aloha spirit.

Strategies for meeting these critical issues:

- Develop educational tools to inform tourists about taking care of themselves.
- Advocate for tourism security programs throughout the state. This includes educational institutions, first responders, and private industry such as hotel associations.
- Work to make Hawaii's citizens fully aware of tourism's importance to the state's economy and that each citizen is a tourism ambassador.
- Work with partner agencies to increase passive protections so that visitors can be safeguarded without being intruded upon.
- Help to develop interagency cooperation and clear delineations as to which agency's responsibility particular safety and security issues belong.

- Use Hawaii's excellent tourism security and safety procedures as a marketing program.
- Develop comprehensive statewide standards for all surety issues, be they safety or security issues.
- Continue to build on Hawaii's aloha spirit and by supporting tourism advocacy groups and care groups, such as VASH.

The above material provides a clear rationale for the following actions plans as outlined in this study.

Key Action Plan for implementing these strategies.

- Determine what critical information related to tourism surety should be provided to visitors.
- Develop a visitor tourism surety communications program to make available and distribute this critical information to visitors.
- Seek opportunities to educate visitors both before they arrive and during their arrival at state's ports and post-arrival. Segment program by visitor types, communicate in country dialect where possible. Consider:
- Emphasize and publicize the state's tourism surety website: Travelsmarthawaii.com.
- Market the state's emphasis on tourism security and hospitality.

- Make sure that travel markets are aware of how much emphasis Hawaii places on visitor security.
- Identify and recommend new opportunities to maximum exposure.
- Develop recommended communication programs, including website and online content, collateral pieces, in-room video and others.

Below are some suggestions to help you use security to market Hawaii:

- Think conservation. When the environment is safe, the visitor is also safe. Tourism surety is more than merely protecting the visitor; it entails protecting:
 - The visitor
 - The local population
 - The actual site
 - The area's environment
 - The area's reputation
- Recognize that there is a fundamental paradigm shift in the travel industry. Old assumptions will no longer hold. From a business perspective these old assumptions are very dangerous. Those

parts of the travel and tourism industry that emphasize security will have a good chance of surviving no matter what the economy may hold in store for us. The venues that provide good security mixed with good customer service will flourish. Those parts of the travel and tourism industry that hold on to old ways of thinking will fade away.

- Invite specialists to help train people and to set a paradigm shift in motion. The worst thing you can do is to bring in someone who is not a specialist in both security and travel and tourism.
- Do not create a false sense of security. Gas masks will do nothing in case of a biological or chemical attack, while sealed rooms may be very useful. Do not panic people, but deal with safety and security issues in the most professional manner possible. People begin to panic not when you take precautions in a professional manner, but when you fail to take precautions.
- Develop security coalitions with all components of the community. Make sure that law enforcement is trained and understands tourism; make sure that you work hand-in-hand with hotel and attraction employees.
- Get over denial, it can happen to you. Recognize that no part of the world today is immune from a terrorist attack. Too many parts of the travel and tourism market simply do not believe that an attack can happen to them and this includes federal agencies. It can! Furthermore, as the media often devotes a great amount of coverage to an attack against a tourism area, the fear factor

spreads from one locale to entire regions, nations, and even continents.

- Know what is unsafe in your community and work with local governments to improve these security concerns. How safe is your local airport? Are cab drivers' backgrounds investigated? Who has access to a guest's room?
- Start with small successes and build up. Take each step with care and build your security plan on a solid foundation.
- Create cooperation between the public and private organizations. The example of the Bureau of Reclamation Museum in Yuma Arizona is a good example of how security can lead to economic development.
- Make sure that all police personnel and security personnel are aware of how important tourism security is to the economy. Most police have never been trained in good tourism security. It is essential to have a person work with your local police who can "translate" between tourism and security issues.
- Develop a tourism task force. People who should be on this task force are local officials, tourism officials, and transportation officials. The key to this task force is the quality of your facilitator.
- Security and Safety may have different meanings to scholars and government officials, but in the world of travel they are one and the same. In the new paradigm shift recognize that poison water and gunfire have the same results: the destruction of a business.

Dr Peter Tarlow

1218 Merry Oaks, College Station, TX 77840
(979) 764-8402/email <ptarlow@tourismandmore.com>

Begin to see the relationship between risk management and security. They are two sides of the same coin.

- Fix rather than market. Tourism needs a lot more than mere cosmetic changes in order to beat the threat of terrorism. The tourism industry will need upgraded surveillance equipment, used in conjunction with good tourism sociological understandings. Simply upgrading security will not work if it is not done in a way that fits into the sociological patterns of visitors.
- When it comes to travel we need to solve such problems on the federal level such as:
 - employ duplicate checks of baggage
 - scan all bags including those which are checked
 - remove all potential weapons from gift shops that are beyond the security barriers
 - check all workers who have access to airplanes while it is at the gate.
- Check and recheck all ventilation systems. No one should be allowed to approach a ventilation system that does not have a full clearance. Make sure that contract labor is kept far from areas that can be used as delivery systems for bio-terrorism.
- Get beyond the fear that too much security will scare the public. The public is more frightened of security breeches than it is of

security methods. The old paradigm of hiding security professionals is no longer valid. Visible security is the best marketing tool that you can develop.

- Know who is studying at your local university, especially in engineering courses.
- Most visitors do not travel smart. In a world of crime and terrorism, it is best that our guests learn to avoid displays of wealth, vary their daily routines, and keep low profiles. Often terrorists strike people who are in easy range, thus avoiding aisle seats may be helpful.

Terrorism will target the tourism industry. This includes:

- Airlines
- Cruise Ships
- Buses
- Restaurants and outdoor cafes
- Major events, sporting or festivals
- Places where people congregate

Wherever people are carefree and happy

Finally ask yourselves:

- Have you developed a plan that has immediate action steps and unique considerations for such travel and tourism crises as:
 - Airplane crash?
 - Act of terrorism at a hotel?
 - A biochemical attack?

- Civil unrest?
 - Earthquakes?
 - Fires?
 - Floods?
 - High profile kidnappings?
-
- How will you be notified of a crisis?
 - How will you notify others?
 - Is there a plan to take immediate actions?
 - Is there a tourism crisis team in place?
 - Is there a plan to deal with special tourism needs such as foreign language issues, notification of relatives abroad, shipment of bodies to a foreign destination?
 - Have you developed a set of crisis guidelines, and review these guidelines with every employee? Do you have guidelines to cover almost every aspect of the guest's visit including security? Look at details:
 - Type of lighting used in parking lots and along paths;
 - Policies as to single women travelers and or travelers who need extra security;
 - Employee background checks;
 - Special security instructions for those working at ticket booths and entrance to festivals.
 - What to do, should a crime or accident take place.

- Do a regular review of fire safety procedures. For example, it is important for all employees to know what to do in case of a fire.

Questions? Comments?