




Tourism Branding and Communications

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Brief about Myanmar & Tourism Timeline

- **Brief about Myanmar**
- Location-*lies between two populous countries* , geography-*snow capped mountains to unspoiled beaches and archipelagoes*, climate-*3 seasons*, population-*over 60m*, made up of *135 ethnic groups* religion- *80% Buddhist* Language- *Myanmar & regional dialects*
- **Myanmar Tourism Timeline**
- 1962-1988 Socialist Economy
- (state monopoly, small industry, backseat, limited stay & visitation)
- 1989-2010 Military Ruled Government
- (Market oriented economy, 1993 Myanmar Tourism Law, Visit Myanmar Year 1996, Extend Tourist Visa Stay, Political unrest & crisis, 2008 cyclone Nargis)
- Civil Government
- (Relaxation and Reform Process)

How has your destination brand evolved? Has your destination brand changed over the years and if so, why and how?

Myanmar has branded over the past years: "Myanmar, the Golden Land" as Myanmar is known as the Golden Land not only for its golden pagodas but also its rich land and the wealth of agriculture, minerals and natural resources.

Myanmar's tourism sector is currently experiencing rapid growth as a result of recent political and economic reforms.

- . In response to the need to establish a guiding framework for the responsible development of tourism in Myanmar, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MOHT) is working for Myanmar Tourism Master Plan Technical Assistance project, which is financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and will be implemented by the Asian Development Bank.

- The draft working master plan has recently come out. This master plan includes developing branding of Myanmar Tourism.
- Identifying the official brand name is still in the process.
- In coming June 2013, Myanmar will host World Economic Forum on East Asia 2013. Our Ministry in collaboration with Image Diplomacy, we are in the process of preparing the nation-branding campaign for Myanmar which will be launched at the World Economic Forum. Meanwhile, "Let the journey begin" is temporary on the list.
- To promote tourism, national brand name will be introduced at World Economic Forum by media and the preparation has been made to hire branding agency and filming team from abroad. Myanmar brand identity will be aired in renowned channels.

In what ways does your destination brand reflect the DNA of your country?

- **Destination essence / set of values of Myanmar are describe as-**
- Pristine, undiscovered, pure Buddhism, charming people,
- The land of pagodas, warm hospitality of Myanmar People
- **Sub –National brand are describes as-**
- *Yangon*: The heartbeat of Myanmar's economy
- *Mandalay*: Exploring the cultural and royal heritage of Myanmar
- *Inlay Lake (Taunggyi)*: Experiencing the beauty of nature, an escapade to paradise
- *Naypyitaw*: Discover Myanmar's new capital
- *Bagan*: Understanding the rich history of Myanmar
- *Ecotourism and Beaches*: Uncovering the beauty of pristine and unblemished beaches and natural sites

Do the various stakeholders in your destination promote the destination brand in a concerted manner?

- The various stakeholders will promote Myanmar by participating in International Travel Shows, overseas marketing and respective Workshop, seminars and FAM Trips.
- Distribution of Myanmar Information (Maps, CD, Booklets, Brochures) through Myanmar Embassy Abroad.
- Marketing Myanmar Destination through International and Regional cooperation in tourism such as ASEAN, GMS, CLMV, BIMSTEC

How do you think the traveling public perceives your destination?

- The findings from the survey show that over 90% of visitors want to visit again to Myanmar and will recommend to others.
- Strict policies of the military regime which ruled over 22 years affected the image of Myanmar. However, Myanmar becomes hot destination and chosen as best travel spot (for example- Lonely Planet, Wanderlust) in the world due to the following reasons;
- The ruling of the new civilian government and reform process
- Promulgation of New foreign investment law, easing and lifting unnecessary restrictions, rules and regulations
- Improvement in communications such as travelers can access mobile phone and internet
- Improvement in tourist transport facilities (aircrafts, bus etc)
- Abolishing of Foreign Exchange Certificate System
- Introducing money exchange system, use of credit cards
- Official remittance and transition from abroad
- Easing visa procedures
- Lifting restrictions / regulations / limitations of travel destinations
- Myanmar News on worldwide media (eg-overseas official visits of Myanmar leaders and top leaders from powerful countries' visits to Myanmar, etc)

- **What sort of resourcing is available to promote your brand?**
- Government had a limited budget for tourism development.
- Lack of funding for marketing and promotion.
- Unable to open overseas travel offices.
- Master Plan recommends to use the part of revenue gained from tourism business such as zone fee, and taxes for preservation and conservation of cultural heritage, regional development and destination promotions and advertising.
- The plan will be implemented with the coordination of Tourism Ministry, Local Government and representatives from respective zones across the country.
- Fund raising will be led by Tourism Ministry. Through the support of donor countries, INGOs, and private sector, If the ministry wants more funds for development, it should have a well-prepared and reasonable plan to convince the parliament to approve the increase.

Is your brand communicated internally and if so, how?

- People have lack of awareness on the key role of tourism such as the vital of tourism in rural poverty reduction and income from tourism flows to people in many different ways.
- Lack of tourism education, it is hard to coordinate even among government bodies and airlines
- Launching the Responsible Tourism Policy in Myanmar and distribution of booklets namely do's and don'ts in Myanmar with the support of Hans Siedel Foundation in Germany.

What is the respective role of the public and private sectors in developing and communicating your destination brand?

- In the past there were only three organizations namely Myanmar Hotelier Association, Myanmar Travel Association , Myanmar Marketing Committee . Now Myanmar Tourism Federation has been formed comprising 11 committees of relevant tourism stakeholders.
- Public sector With the initiative of Ministry, making awareness campaign to the people, National TV Channel, media, Advertisement.
- Private sector Overseas marketing, International Travel show.

Recommendations and Lesson learned

Due to reform process, political stability, increase in foreign investment led to sudden boom of tourism (high volume of international travelers (the arrival peaked from 0.4 million to 0.6 millions).

The sudden booming of tourism has both positive and negative impacts to the country. As Myanmar Tourism is on seasonality basis, complaints received from the tourists for not having enough accommodation facilities and high hotel prices during the peak season.

Some travelers cancelled their trips due to unavailability of hotels. The unnecessary arguments and issues rose over the hotel price and rooms availability between travel agencies and hoteliers.

As Ministry was giving priority to tackle out these problems, developing Master Plan and Myanmar Responsible Tourism Policy, we were unable to prioritize for destination branding. We will study and observe the experiences, lessons learnt from other countries and implement tourism branding in near future.