Successful Joint Marketing for the Silk Road

March 2017 – Valencia, Spain
Silk Road Market Size?

- 20 – 50 – 100 – 200 millions?
- THR’s estimated market size for this product category: 120 million
- SR’s potential market share/year: 12-18 million.

Location: Samarkand (Uzbekistan)
Silk Road Marketing
“Food for thought”
30+ Marketing Plans for leading destinations

25% of the total World’s Tourism
Silk Road
Basic Marketing System
Based on
DIGITAL and COOPERATION
Silk Road
Basic Marketing System

1. A Smart Market Strategy
2. Value Design
3. Communication
4. Sales System
5. Cooperation
Silk Road
Basic Marketing System

1. A Smart Market Strategy
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1.1 Define the Silk Road Concept

- What it is?
- Which benefits it provides?
- Unique experiences
- Etc.

Translate it all into 5-page document to be widely distributed
1.2 Agree on the Silk Road Targets

Income: 1st, 2nd and 3rd deciles

Vals profile: Achievers + Experiencers

Behaviour: Discerning Travellers
a. The VALS* model: focus on achievers and experiencers

- Innovators
  - Take-charge
  - Sophisticated
  - Curious

- Thinkers
  - Reflective
  - Informed
  - Content

- Believers
  - Literal
  - Loyal
  - Moralistic

- Strivers
  - Contemporary
  - Imitative
  - Style conscious

- Achievers
  - Goal oriented
  - Brand Conscious
  - Conventional

- Experiencers
  - Trend setting
  - Impulsive
  - Variety seeking

- Makers
  - Responsible
  - Practical
  - Self-sufficient

- Survivors
  - Nostalgic
  - Constrained
  - Cautious

Source: VALS Model – SRI Business Intelligence
b. Discerning travellers profile (7 points)

1. The search for unique experiences
2. Opinion leaders and trendsetters
3. Respect the natural, social and cultural environments
4. Read much, both at home and when travelling
5. Experienced users of all kinds of technologies
6. Open-minded and tolerant
7. Choose destinations with values
A Smart Market Strategy

Value Design

Communication

Sales System

Cooperation
2.1 Make it clear the Customer Value Proposition

- Which are the main cities?
- The 10-15 top experiences?
- The main natural, historical cultural attractions from each stretch?
- Gain producers and pain relievers
- Etc.
2.2 Define the main/basic Silk Road and its extensions (Conceptual)
Responsible Travel Co.

- Offering tours in the following countries:
  - Uzbekistan
  - Turkmenistan
  - China
  - Iran
  - Kazakhstan
  - Kyrgyzstan
This image comes from *Silk Road Trade Routes - The Silk Road Seattle Virtual Art Exhibit* [Project Director: Professor Daniel C. Waugh, University of Washington, USA. Design by Lance Jenott.]
2.3 Structure the route in parts.

Four stages for the Silk Road? (Conceptual)

- Establish the most attractive stages and define its extensions.
- Develop a strong storytelling behind each of them.
2.4 Identify the “top” attractions and experiences

- Select the 15-20 Top Cities with special value
- Rank them (1-3 stars).
- Do the same with great experiences (1-3 stars).
- Publish the most popular destinations/places and the jewels to discover.
2.5 Implement a easy to manage Quality Label

- Use New Zealand as a benchmark.
Silk Road

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3.1 Select the top images and symbols of the Silk Road

- A romantic era
- Marco Polo
- Western notions of Orient
- Legendary trading centres
- A path full of myths
- Semi-nomadic farmers
- Hunting with eagle
- Ancient towns
- Immense landscapes & lowlands
3.2 Develop a world-class website

- Capable of seduce, boost transactions and generate customer loyalty.
- Attract 5 million visitors per year.
- Grand Tour of Switzerland as benchmark
3.3 Create an image bank of exceptional quality

- Produce 20-30 short videos and develop a Youtube channel.
- Produce an exceptional film for each stretch and send them to 300 TV channels around the world and other digital distribution companies.
- Feed with 300 impressive and high resolution pictures the image bank.
3.4 Make an intensive use of Storytelling

- Develop 20-30 powerful stories associated to the different countries and sites.
- Use them profusely on the communication.
- Hire a top Media Relations Agency for 3 years
3.5
Implement some Big Ideas (BI)
a. Attract world class sponsors
b. A “Passage through the Silk Road” image book
c. The Silk Road Challenge (Great TV show)
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4.1 Official public-private website with seductive content

- Public and private stakeholders involved.
- Multimedia content (videos, photos, podcasts).
- “Personalise your Silk Road route” feature.
- Interactive maps with different itineraries proposed.
- “Top Silk Road experiences” recommended.
- Social media integration.
- e-Calendar with festivals & events.

Check “Grand Tour of Switzerland” virtual tour website as an inspirational example.
4.2 Silk Road DMC’s and TOs Directory

- Create and keep updated the suppliers directory, both international and locals.

Abercrombie & Kent
4.3 Develop a world class Tour Planner

- Acquire an excellent tour planning software and use them efficiently connecting all the labelled offer.
- Benchmarks: Australia and NZ
4.5 Create an interactive Google maps tool

- Develop interactive routes within Google Maps.
- Address the different traveller segments with thematic itineraries.
- Integrate these Google Maps on the website and the mobile app.
- Let the travellers share their own Google Map routes with their reviews on sites.

See the different Trans-Canada Highway routes examples uploaded by travelers in Google Maps.
4.6 Develop a world class on-the-road Mobile App

- Detailed descriptions, maps, relevant articles, tips and things to do.
- Recommendations for landmarks, museums, heritage sites, hotels and restaurants.
- Build and track a personal "to do" list.
- Hundreds of photos of locations.
- Search for things to do or find them by categories.
- Directory of major upcoming events and festivals.

Check the Route 66 Travel Guide App.
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5.1 Ways to cooperate

- Hard money
- Soft money
- Generate consensus
Assign an adequate marketing budget

10 MILION USD/YEAR

+ SPONSORING
B. Create the Silk Road Management & Marketing Unit + local MK units in each country
Consensus examples

- SR concept
- Top experiences
- SR Symbols
- Route/s
- SR parts
- Quality Label
- Etc.
Soft money examples

• Contributions to the Image Bank
• Quality System implementation
• Stories creation
• Sponsor search
• Digital marketing implementation
• Etc.
C
Cooperate to achieve a
VISA FREE
Silk Road
Silk Road
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1. A Smart Market Strategy
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5. Cooperation for a joint DIGITAL marketing
THANKS
7th UNWTO Silk Road Task Force Meeting