Pitching Your Tourism Story To Mainstream Media

ATTRACTION MEDIA ATTENTION TO ZIMBABWE'S TOURISM INDUSTRY
INTRODUCTION
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- Veteran Broadcast Journalist (since 1992)
- Travel and Tours Journalist
- BBC Trainer since 2009
- Corporate Communications Specialist
- Assistant General Manager Operations with Channels Media Group, owner of Channels Television
- Provost, Channels Academy
WHAT IS THE MEDIA
The media is that entity where people come to

• Search for and understand information and rely on to help shape the current prevailing currents of thought in society

FUNCTIONS
• Educate
• Inform
• Interpret
• Entertain
• Cultural Transmission
• Surveillance
• Mobilization
IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA COVERAGE TO THE TOURISM SECTOR

- Tourism needs media coverage for effective visibility.
- Tourism is highly dependent on media coverage because the vast majority of travel decisions are made by people who have never seen the destination first-hand for themselves.
CUE RICHARD QUEST
Some Of The Most Popular Media Outfits In Zimbabwe
PRINT MEDIA

- Print media is a form of publishing that relies upon paper as its medium.
- Magazines, newspapers, flyers, and books are all examples of print media.
- Oldest form of mainstream media

AUDIENCE

- Print reaches all types of people
- It has a considerably growing niche
- Intensive coverage of specific geographic market
- Wide range of editorial material aimed at a broad audience
Broadcast Media

Broadcast media is the inclusion of different mediums such as audio-visual materials as well as electronic or electro-magnetic mediums to share news, information, entertainment

Audience

• large national audience reach (network)
• As broadcast media that includes audio and visualized content, people get influenced by the content it delivers
• It provides high knowledge on various topics such as fashion, travel, photography, politics, education, food, lifestyle, etc.
• The prime source of news
• messages are personal
Online Media

This form of media is encoded and can be viewed, distributed, or stored on digital electronic devices.

Audience

• Global reach
• Highly segmented audience
• The best media to reach the younger audience
• The lowest rate of credibility due to emerging technologies
WELL DEFINED AUDIENCE SELLS

• The mainstream media has evolved into a selective realm where trying to reach every place and everyone is no longer feasible.

• The modern audience values unique experiences and your stories need to accommodate these specific niches.

• Make sure you’re trying to tailor your pitch to someone who will listen.

• Building trust and credibility with your target audience is the crucial element of success at the end of the day. For someone to want to read your content, they have to trust that you’re providing valuable information that they can rely on.

Know your Target Audience
Crafting the ideal tourism story is an art and it requires certain elements and to do this, you need to:

- Define your theme (main idea or message that you want to convey to your audience)
- Use your setting (Showcase the uniqueness and beauty of Zimbabwe)
- Include your voice (It should be consistent, authentic, and appealing to your audience)
- Choose your plot
- Define your Characters
- Include a little bit of conflict if necessary
What is a tourist element? ... The five vital components of tourism system are

- Attraction
- Accessibility
- Accommodation
- Amenities
- Activities
Those 5 C's of Luxury Travel are:
• Culture
• Cuisine
• Community
• Content
• Customization

5 C's of Luxury
Media relationship management is the process of building and maintaining positive relationships with media outlets and journalists.

It involves strategically communicating and interacting with the press to enhance coverage of a brand, promote positive public relations, and garner goodwill.

Effective media relationship management involves a proactive approach, with brands reaching out to media outlets and journalists regularly, and responding promptly to requests for information or interviews.
Challenges of media relationship management

• One of the biggest challenges in media relationship management is managing multiple media channels at once

• Additionally, the 24-hour news cycle and the prevalence of fake news make it easier than ever for a company’s message to be misinterpreted or misrepresented

• Another major challenge is maintaining transparency and building authentic media relationships
Strategies for effective media relationship management

- Develop a media relations plan: This plan should outline key objectives, target audience, messaging, and tactics that will be used to engage with media outlets and journalists.
  - Build and maintain relationships with journalists: Good relationships with journalists can lead to positive media coverage, increased exposure, and improved brand reputation.
- Create compelling content
- Leverage social media
- Monitor and measure results
Creating A Media Kit

- A media kit is a package of information assembled to provide basic information about itself to reporters and journalists.
- A media kit should demonstrate your creativity and value while being informative and easily understood.

It should include:
- high-quality photos
- press releases
- fact sheets
- Contact information
- Audience Profile
Visit Greece

Examples of Best Press Kits

https://www.visitgreece.gr/media-kit/brochures/
It’s becoming increasingly important to take the time to send each reporter a personalized, tailored media pitch that is unique, relevant and credible.

**Elements of a good pitch**

- Start with the lead. An enticing lead that is relevant to their beat will ensure they continue through your pitch.
- Next is your call to action, it’s important to make your intention here as clear as possible.
- Value proposition, this is where you can showcase the value of what you are offering and why they should be interested in it.
- The last piece of the puzzle is your conclusion.
Do’s and Don’t’s Of Pitching

- Keep your pitch concise, compelling and personalized
- Show that your pitch has value
- Tell journalists that your content is visual
- Give Journalists plenty of lead time and consider their workload
- Don’t use another publication’s coverage as a news hook
- Follow up, but don’t be pushy
- Don’t rely on the shotgun approach.
Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp, allow people without professional journalistic backgrounds to create stories and cover events that news agencies might not cover.
Examples: Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), Threads

Used for: Connecting directly with customers in specific areas, communities, or interest groups.

They are a great way to amplify your voice and connect with your audience. These flexible platforms are designed to help you share both text and visual content with whomever you like.

They share features like networking, event organizing, and advertising.

Traditional social networking sites
Image-based social media

- Examples: Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok (photo mode)

- Used for: Visual storytelling, brand-building, and social commerce.

- Almost all image-based social media platforms are great for social commerce.
Key performance indicators (KPIs) are a great way to make goals more tangible and quantify what works.

- Social engagement (the level of interaction you’re getting on social media platforms)
- Media coverage (the number of times your content appears in the media)
- Geographical presence
- Potential reach
- Web traffic (This measures how many people are accessing your online content at any given time)
- Conversions (This measures whether or not that traffic is completing a desirable action)
Why track results?

Tracking Metrics Alerts You to Problems Ahead of Time

It also helps you

• To know what networks you should focus on

• To see where the audience comes from

• To set, meet, and exceed your goals
Media Outreach Tips

• **Build media lists** Become familiar with the publications and media outlets your ideal audience frequents.

• **Develop the story** The best pitches outline the story relevant to the writer’s unique audience clearly and concisely.

• **Prove your value** Your content’s value should be newsworthy, credible, and relevant.

• **Do not fail to email your press release**

• **Gather contact information.**
Social Influences have become crucial in shaping the ideologies of certain segments of the population.

In the tourism sector, where visuals and experiences play a pivotal role, social influencers can bring different benefits, such as:

- Trustworthiness
- Wide reach
- Authenticity
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Tourism Potentials of Zimbabwe

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The Victoria Falls National Park is one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World and is one of the eight main National Parks in Zimbabwe, the largest of which is Hwange National Park.
Mount Nyangani

The picturesque mountain is home to three rivers these are the Nyamuziwa River, the (Kairezi) Gairezi River and the Pungwe River. It is also a hotbed for hikers.
International tourism accounted for 22.3% of Zimbabwe’s exports in the last 10 years and generated a revenue of US$827m for the country.

The Victoria Falls and the Zambezi River account as the most sought-after sightseeing places by tourists visiting the country.

Although Zimbabwe holds unmatched natural beauty, the sector accounts for only a small portion of the country’s GDP.
WHAT INTERESTS THE MEDIA?
Real Human angle stories

Real Life situations
and the UNKNOWN
How do all of these fit into Zimbabwe's tourism industry and pitch to the media?
Challenges In Reporting the Zimbabwe Tourism Sector

- Reportage on the sector has been challenging and the skill gap has not broadened owing to the limited expertise in various fields of tourism.

- The challenge of resources also comes to bear as independent views are needed to assess and ascertain the tourism sector.

- The sector has been populated with PR materials that do no justice to critical coverage.

- Media Polarisation also hampers the sector as perception of the true situation has been altered.
There is a need for partnerships with both the public and private sectors that facilitate the creation of a guide that can help journalists appreciate the nuances, policies and economy of tourism within the country.

Take journalists on tours to experience travel locations, gastronomy, culture and serve as ambassadors of the tourism industry.

Journalists should be seen as major partners in this sector and not just entities from the sideline.

Incentivising journalists through awards or opportunities for upskilling in sub-areas of tourism could improve the sector.

Tackling These Challenges
Role of Technology in Promoting the Tourism Sector

- Technology has come to stay in the Tourism sector and journalists and various stakeholders are getting a unique view with improvements to Virtual reality
- Being able to capture tourism destinations in such a memorable and immersive way can help journalists better appreciate the impacts on economic growth
- Virtual tours for journalists can have a positive relationship needed to bolster the sector
HOW TO WOO THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA WITH YOUR TOURISM STORIES
It's all in the visuals
WHY?

It is one thing to have a great story you wish to publish or aired but it is another to have your story solve a tourist pain point.

Your story should empower readers or viewers to plan better, spend smarter or fix a common travel problem.
FINDING THE RIGHT BLEND

It's all in finding the right balance between critical elements such as Voice, Premise, Characters, Plot conflicts and settings.

Most preferably, your story should cut across all spheres of tourism in such a way that it has never been done.

PITCH STORIES AND ANGLES, NOT DESTINATIONS ONLY
CONCLUSION

The media is a vital part of the Zimbabwe tourism sector and plays a major role in cultural promotion and preservation at all levels.

Media training on Tourism is critical.

For this sector to thrive it entails that the media transmit and showcase the cultural heritage of a people as well as Zimbabwe’s spectacle to others such that those who are not aware of it become fully aware and also acquaint the incoming generation with it.
CONTACT INFORMATION

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THE END