Developing a Risk Management Strategy for a Tourism Destination

SESSION 1
Welcome & Introduction

Introduction
• This is the start of a learning process
• Establish and maintain tourism risk management networks
• Share knowledge, lessons & experiences.

Tourism
• Generates incomes
• Creates & sustains jobs
• Encourages investment
• Facilitates trade

KEY POINTS
• The start of the learning process
• Establish & maintain tourism related crisis management networks
• Share knowledge, lessons and experiences

SESSION 2
Risk Management

The Tourism Risk Management Process
Provides a generic framework to identify, analyse, assess, treat and monitor risks to tourism destinations or businesses/organisations

The Tourism Risk Management Process
A proactive process which enables tourism destinations to minimise losses and take advantage of opportunities

The Tourism Risk Management Model
Developing a Risk Management Strategy for a Tourism Destination

Disaster
A serious disruption to community life which threatens or causes death or injury in that community and/or damage to property which is beyond the day-to-day capacity of the prescribed statutory authorities and which requires special mobilisation and organisation of resources other than those normally available to those authorities.

Crisis
Any situation that has the potential to affect long-term confidence in an organisation or a product, or which may interfere with its ability to continue operating normally.

Crisis for a tourism destination may arise from:
- Internal (organisational) sources
- External (community) sources

For example
Hurricane Katrina and the Bali Bombings
Affected confidence in tourism and interfered with its ability to continue normal operations
So these community disasters produced crises for tourism destinations to address

Community Disaster
Loss of confidence by visitors
Visitor numbers fall
Crisis for tourism destinations

Key points
- Tourism risk management is an important process for destinations
- Crises and disasters are different things
- Community disasters can cause crises for tourism destinations

Session 3
Prevention & Mitigation

Swot
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
Provides a structure to identify a destination's internal strengths & weaknesses and external opportunities & threats

Swot should focus upon:
- Strengths – resources and support available for crisis
- Weaknesses – which will affect your destination's ability to cope with crisis
- Opportunities – to enlist support for tourism
- Threats – risks to the destination and tourism
Occupational Health and Safety

- Identify OH&S requirements consistent with national laws which will protect visitors
- Advise operators on plans and procedures

Common elements of OH&S:

- Employers & employees liable for their actions
- Penalties for non-compliance
- Requirement for a safe workplace
- Provision of adequate facilities
- Safe access & egress
- Absence of risk in plant & substances
- Emergency procedures
- Training and testing regimes
- Information in different language

Emergency Plans (SOPs):

- Evacuation
- Fire
- Bomb threat
- Civil disorder
- Armed intruder
- Hazardous materials
- Gas leak
- Building collapse
- Medical emergency
- External emergencies

Identify & comply with national requirements
Which agencies can advise you.....?

A multi-agency approach to tourism health and safety is your aim
A multi-agency approach to tourism is fundamental to its viability

KEY POINTS

- A SWOT analysis is a valuable tool
- Destinations should identify national OH&S requirements to protect visitors
- Emergency plans are essential for tourism facilities
- Develop multi-agency partnerships

SESSION 4 Preparedness

Tourism Crisis Preparedness

Development of plans & program, systems & procedure, training & testing to ensure that when crises do occur, resources are used to best effect to reduce the effects of the crisis

Preparedness includes:

Establishment of networks and liaison with government and community agencies.

You need a multi-agency, integrated approach to ensure the viability of tourism operations.
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Preparedness:

Networks and liaison with government and community agencies…
Those you will need to cooperate with during a crisis – those who can provide support and assistance

Tourism Crisis Planning Committee

• Representatives of your tourism operators
• Government and community agencies

An integrated, multi-skilled committee….!

The tourism crisis planning committee will base its plans on the sources of risk (hazards) identified in the tourism risk management process

Tourism planning committee responsibilities:
– Plans & procedures
– Allocation of roles & responsibilities
– Training needs & programs
– Exercises
– Monitoring, evaluation and amendment

No two crises will ever be the same…..each one will present different problems needing different solutions

So….?

You need a GENERIC tourism crisis management plan

One plan to apply to all crises…..

A best practice crisis plan is a starting point

Managing a crisis needs knowledge, skill and flexibility to adapt to the needs of the situation

A tourism crisis management plan should:
• Describe activation procedures
• Allocate roles & responsibilities
• Identify control & coordination
• Include standard procedures
• Identify information requirements
• Establish communication methods
• Describe PR & media arrangements

Tourism crisis management arrangements should ensure:
– Safety of all persons within, at or visiting a destination
– Minimal disruption to tourism operations
– Compliance with laws & regulations
‘What if’ questions….

• What if…happened here…what would it mean to us?
• What are the implications for tourism and the behaviour of travellers?
• What must we do to protect our tourism destination and to restore confidence?

Training and exercising (testing) is fundamental to a high level of preparedness. Crises require staff to carry out unfamiliar tasks in a stressful environment, so they need training and to PRACTISE.

The fundamental purpose of training & exercising is to improve your destination’s capacity to respond efficiently and effectively to crisis.

**Tourism crisis management exercises can:**
- Reveal planning weaknesses
- Expose resource gaps
- Clarify roles & responsibilities
- Improve performance
- Build confidence
- Develop proficiency
- Test plans systems & procedures
- Foster cooperation between agencies

**Importantly**

Exercises provide the opportunity for personnel to work together and to develop an effective working relationship

**Two forms of exercises:**
- **Discussion exercises**
  - Present a situation and problems to be discussed
- **Functional exercises**
  - Test a crisis management centre and decision-making

Informal exercises problems which occur at other destinations….

• What would we do if it happened here?
• What would be the implications for our destination?
• How would it affect potential visitors?
• What problems would we face?
• How would media & PR be managed?
• Do we need additional training, equipment, etc?
• How would it affect us if it happened near by?

Crisis planning is an ongoing PROCESS

Planning continues during tourism crisis response & recovery.

**SHORT-TERM TACTICAL PLANS** and
**LONGER-TERM STRATEGIC PLANS**
(24 – 48 hours)

**KEY POINTS**

• Preparedness includes plans, training & testing
• Networks & liaison with Government and community agencies
• Need a tourism crisis planning committee
• Develop generic tourism crisis response & recovery plans
• Training & exercising is essential
• Conduct multi-agency exercises
• Use informal exercises regularly
• Crisis planning is an on-going process
SESSION 5
Response

Tourism crisis response includes actions leading up to and immediately after the impact of a crisis to:
- minimise its effects
- manage the consequences

In a disaster, disaster management agencies are responsible for lives and property.

Tourism destination personnel may be part of an integrated multi-agency response to disasters.

• Maintain visitors’ confidence:
  – Don’t neglect normal services
  – Least disruption possible

The key to effective response is trained, experienced, flexible personnel.

Initial information needs:
- How has it affected:
  – People – visitors & staff
  – Facilities
  – Infrastructure
  – Tourism operations

Specific Information needs:
- For decision-making purposes:
  – Effects upon visitors
  – Damage to property & infrastructure
  – Disruption to services
  – Consequences for tourism
  – Resources needed

Tourism crisis management team:
- Responsible for:
  – Briefing & management of staff
  – Processing operational information collecting, collating & evaluation, making decisions
  – Planning

Keep a record of all actions taken and decisions.
You may need to justify your actions later.....
You need a crisis management TEAM
One person can’t do it all alone.....

In tourism crisis response operations information is a tool which allows people to make timely, critical decisions.

**Operational information**

- Must be:
  - Collected and recorded
  - Collated
  - Evaluated
  - Decided upon
  - Disseminated
  - Monitored

**Core Questions:**

- What does this mean to us?
- What must we do as a result of this to protect visitors?

Information has to be put together (collated), checked and assessed (evaluated) to establish relevance and reliability and to identify gaps.

Then it can be used for decision-making purposes.....

This is what we know..... now, what do we have to do about it?

Decisions then have to be disseminated via the media to those who need to know:
- Visitors
- Government agencies
- Community agencies
- General public

**Business Continuity Issues**

- Identification of visitor’ needs
- Priorities for restoration
- Resources & budgets
- Business issues
- Media management
- PR issues
- Consultation with government and community
- Alternate sites of operation
KEY POINTS

- Response tasks depend upon the nature and extent of a crisis
- Most important objective is maintaining visitors’ confidence

SESSION 6
Recovery

Establish what’s left:

- How has affected our destination?
- What must we do to return business to normal?

You will need information on:

- Residual effects on tourism
- Damage
- Causes of service disruption
- Consequences for tourism and the community
- Resources needed

Tourism crisis recovery management tasks include:

- Setting objectives
- Identifying priorities
- Identifying needs and assistance
- Communicating with tourism operators
- Liaising with government and community agencies
- Briefing media & agencies
- Monitoring restoration of services
- Planning
- Decision-making

MONITOR AND EVALUATE COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF THE CRISIS

Purpose of debriefing:

Lessons should be shared so that all tourism destinations can benefit.

Debriefings

Community support is essential to restore tourism

Government and community agencies should be part of the recovery team

To gain the information necessary to improve plans, procedures, systems and training of personnel.
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What happened?
- Type of incident
- What did we do?
- Sequence of actions by personnel

Was that what we planned?
- Reasons planned systems & procedures weren’t followed or implemented.

How can we do better?
- Can our plans be improved?
- Do we need different or more training?
- Do we need improved liaison with Government and community agencies?
- Was our media management effective?
- Did we identify & meet visitors’ needs?
- Do we need better communications?
- Do we need a different tourism crisis management system?
- Was our tourism risk management process effective?

Aide-memoire

• After the debrief the planning committee should:
  - Analyse findings
  - Identify planning, training & operational needs
  - Identify timelines
  - Allocate responsibilities
  - Revise the tourism crisis management plan
  - Organise training
  - Test & evaluate revised plans & procedures
  - Identify lessons and act upon them.

Maximising the benefits

How can we share the lessons with other tourism destinations?

Send debriefing reports
- Guest speakers at conferences
- Observers at crisis exercises
- Newsletter dedicated to tourism crisis management
- Workshops, etc.

KEY POINTS

- Need information on how the crisis has affected the destination
- Community perceptions should be monitored
- Debriefing is essential to identify lessons
- Share lessons with other destinations

SESSION 7

Media & Communications

Why is the media interested?

Disasters are usually:
- Spectacular
- Action Oriented
  - Focused on human suffering or courage or both

From a media perspective they are:
- Relatively easy to cover
- Guaranteed to attract an audience and sell newspapers, etc.

Principles

- The media will always be there!
- The media should be managed rather than controlled
- Cooperation with the media is better than confrontation
- The media is a vital communication medium

Stages of media reporting of disasters

Stage 1
- Nature and extent of crisis or disaster

Stage 2
- Heroes and hardships

Stage 3
- Scare-got and fault finding - who’s to blame?
Crisis Management of Media and Communication

The goal is to have visitors returning to the destination as quickly as possible after a crisis

1. BEFORE A CRISIS
Preparing for the worst

• Designate a spokesperson
• Establish media & communications section
• Communicate regularly with the media
• Pay attention to local media

2. DURING A CRISIS
Minimising Damage in a Crisis

• Be honest and transparent
• Don’t impose a news blackout
• Establish a media centre
• Act fast
• Remember the victims
• Avoid speculation
• Put the crisis into context
• Challenge untrue media statements

DURING A CRISIS (cont.)
Minimising Damage in a Crisis

• Highlight positive aspects
• Place information on destination website
• Network with other media liaison officers
• Seek increases in promotional budgets
• Establish hotline
• Monitor safety & security
• Coordinate with agencies for media access
• Communicate to staff

3. FOLLOWING A CRISIS
Restoring Visitor Confidence

• Be proactive in communications
• Increase trips for journalists
• Remember anniversaries
• Create news outlet on destination website
• Increase trips for tour operators

What other measures can you implement to restore the confidence of visitors in your destination?

Which other agencies can assist?

KEY POINTS

• Work cooperatively with the media
• Anticipate media focus & needs during crises
• Develop media & communication strategies for before, during and after a crisis

KEY POINTS FOR THE WORKSHOP

• Tourism is vital to the economic viability of all countries
• Tourism risk management is an on-going process
• Share information & experiences in tourism crisis management
• Tourism operators share the responsibility for the safety of visitors

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