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# Marketing communication plan for the Cameroon Ministry of Tourism (MINTOUR)

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# Marketing communication plan for the Cameroon Ministry of Tourism (MINTOUR)

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Cameroon has much potential as a tourist destination, but lack of prioritization of the industry by the government has hampered growth and development of the sector. The government has decided to invest in the sector, and ordered the Ministry of Tourism (MINTOUR) to create a Cameroon Tourism Board in 2010.

The purpose of this thesis is to assess the present situation to identify problems facing the industry and the current market situation. The proposed solutions focus on branding and creating awareness of the Cameroon tourism industry abroad.

The research was conducted using qualitative methods and information was collected through interviews with industry experts and data relating to the tourism industry. Interviews were conducted with tour operators in Cameroon, employees at the ministry of tourism, staff from the Cameroon tourist office in Paris and Montreal, and Cameroon honorary consulate in Essen, Germany.

The empirical section of the thesis examines a marketing communication plan for the Cameroon Ministry of Tourism, and investigates how it markets itself abroad, especially in the UK.

From the research findings, it was observed that the main problems facing the industry are the lack of a national tourism board, low market awareness, no marketing plan and no branding strategy for the industry. These findings are discussed in the later sections of the report with analysis, conclusions and recommendations for the Cameroon Ministry of tourism.

Key words     branding, marketing communication, marketing plan, positioning, segmentation

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	8
1.1	Background .....	8
1.2	Purpose of the study.....	8
1.3	Limitation of study.....	9
1.4	Outline of the thesis.....	9
2	Theoretical Review .....	10
2.1	Marketing .....	10
2.1.1	Marketing process .....	10
2.1.2	Marketing plan .....	10
2.1.3	Marketing planning .....	10
2.1.4	Marketing Mix.....	11
2.2	Branding .....	11
2.2.1	Purchase decisions based on brands.....	11
2.2.2	Factors influencing Brand selection in B2B marketing .....	11
2.2.3	Brand knowledge.....	12
2.2.4	Brand image .....	12
2.2.5	Brand awareness .....	13
2.2.6	Brand imagery .....	13
2.2.7	Brand resonance .....	13
2.2.8	Creating brand loyalty .....	14
2.2.9	Brand Retention and loyalty .....	15
2.2.10	Branding challenges and opportunity .....	15
2.2.11	Building Brands .....	16
2.2.12	Strategic Brand Management process.....	16
2.3	strategic marketing .....	18
2.3.1	Market segmentation.....	18
2.3.2	Segmenting customer markets .....	20
2.3.3	Major segmentation variables .....	20
2.3.4	Market Targeting.....	22
2.3.5	Positioning .....	24
2.3.6	Tactical Marketing.....	25
2.4	Tourism marketing mix.....	26
2.4.1	Product .....	27
2.4.2	Price .....	28
2.4.3	Place .....	29
2.4.4	Promotion .....	30
2.4.5	People .....	31
2.4.6	Process.....	33

	2.4.7	Degree of tangibility .....	33
	2.4.8	Direct recipient .....	33
	2.4.9	Place and time .....	34
	2.4.10	Customization versus Standardization.....	34
	2.4.11	Consumer relationship.....	34
	2.4.12	Demand and Supply .....	34
	2.4.13	Physical evidence .....	35
3		Marketing communication .....	37
	3.1	Marketing communication mix .....	38
	3.1.1	Advertising .....	38
	3.1.2	Point of sale .....	38
	3.1.3	Sponsorship .....	38
	3.1.4	Public relations .....	39
	3.1.5	Direct Marketing .....	39
	3.1.6	Exhibition and trade fair .....	39
	3.1.7	Personal selling .....	39
	3.1.8	Sales promotion .....	39
	3.2	Marketing communication strategy .....	39
	3.2.1	Push strategy .....	40
	3.2.2	Pull strategy .....	40
4		Research Methodology .....	41
	4.1	Methods .....	41
	4.1.1	Primary data.....	41
	4.1.2	Secondary Data.....	41
	4.1.3	Tertiary data .....	42
	4.2	Validity and Reliability .....	42
	4.3	Research Process .....	42
	4.4	Analysis of questionnaire .....	43
	4.4.1	Demographics .....	43
	4.4.2	Marketing channels.....	43
	4.4.3	Support .....	43
	4.4.4	Authorities .....	44
	4.4.5	Challenges .....	44
	4.4.6	Observation .....	44
5		Empirical studies .....	44
	5.1	Cameroon tourism industry.....	44
	5.2	Cameroon tourist attractions .....	45
	5.2.1	National parks .....	45
	5.2.2	Discovery safari .....	46

5.2.3	Flora .....	46
5.2.4	Arts and culture.....	46
5.2.5	Ecotourism .....	46
5.3	Cameroon inbound tourist data.....	47
5.4	Cameroon tourism trend .....	48
5.5	Economic importance of tourism .....	48
5.6	Problems facing the Cameroon tourism industry .....	49
5.6.1	Non prioritization of the travel and tourism industry .....	49
5.6.2	Absence of a national tourism board.....	49
5.6.3	Absence of a marketing plan .....	49
5.6.4	Poor and undeveloped ICT IN Cameroon .....	49
5.6.5	No branding.....	50
5.6.6	Corruption and abuse of Power .....	50
5.6.7	Lack of education.....	50
5.6.8	Limited Financial resources.....	50
5.6.9	Poor infrastructure .....	51
5.6.10	Lack of national tourism .....	51
5.7	SWOT analysis.....	51
5.8	Strength.....	52
5.8.1	Huge natural endowment .....	52
5.8.2	Cheap labor .....	52
5.8.3	Increase government interest .....	52
5.8.4	Political stability.....	52
5.8.5	Friendly population.....	52
5.9	Weakness .....	53
5.9.1	Corruption and abuse of power .....	53
5.9.2	Poor infrastructure .....	53
5.9.3	No marketing campaign .....	53
5.9.4	Slow development of ICT in tourism .....	54
5.9.5	Hostile neighbors .....	54
5.10	Opportunities.....	54
5.10.1	Development of ICT networks in west Africa.....	54
5.10.2	Revival of the national airline .....	54
5.10.3	Football success .....	55
5.10.4	Growing population of ecotourism .....	55
5.10.5	Education in tourism.....	55
5.11	Threats .....	55
5.11.1	Lack of information.....	55
5.11.2	Economic crisis .....	56

	5.11.3	Competition .....	56
	5.11.4	Media .....	56
6		Competitors analysis' .....	56
7		Findings .....	57
8		Conclusion .....	58
	8.1	Recommendation/ communication plan .....	59
	8.2	People strategy .....	60
	8.3	Place strategy.....	60
	8.4	Promotion strategy .....	61
	8.5	Price strategy .....	61
	8.6	Process strategy .....	61
	8.7	Products strategy.....	62
	8.8	Physical evidence strategy .....	62
	8.9	Segmentation strategy .....	62
9		Suggestions.....	63
	9.1	Placing more importance to the tourism industry by the government .....	63
	9.2	Creation of a national tourism board.....	63
	9.3	Implementation of a brand strategy .....	64
	9.4	Sensitizing officials in the travel tourism industry .....	64
	9.5	Emphasis on ICT in marketing tourism .....	65
	9.6	Tourism education .....	65
	9.7	Target destination markets with a marketing plan .....	66
	9.8	Promote national tourism.....	66
		References .....	67
		Figures .....	70
		Tables.....	70
		Appendices .....	71

## 1 Introduction

Tourism is the movement of people from their usual environment and work to other places for not more than one consecutive year for business leisure and other purposes. While this is widely considered as the definition for tourism, it explains only the demand side of tourism which made experts in the field of tourism to provide a definition for supply tourism. Supply tourism consists of all the organisations, firms and facilities intended to facilitate and serve the needs and wants of tourists. (Cooper et al., 1998 9)

Tourism has become the world's single largest industry according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), exceeding over 900 billion dollars in 2009. Thus, the search for new tourist destinations is inevitable, leading to emerging tourist destinations like Africa, Asia, Middle East and Latin America. The marketing of tourism in these emerging tourist destinations has become a very big business which brings lots of economic changes to nations in need and is very evident in countries such as China, India, Brazil and Vietnam.

Africa is the second largest continent in both population and size after Asia, with a collection of different people, culture, countries and one of the most amazing geographical features nature has to offer. These natural endowments have made Africa one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in the world growing more than the world's average in 2005 of 5.5 per cent according to report by UNWTO. Since the late 90s Africa had experienced a steady growth in tourism, recording over 7 percent in 2008, 2009 during the peak of the economic downturn when the developed countries saw a drop in their tourist arrivals.

Despite this growth and lots of natural endowment Africa accounts for about 9 percent of the world's tourist arrival, thus the government of Cameroon through the Cameroon tourism board or the ministry of tourism, is carrying out different development projects to facilitate growth of the tourism industry which is part of her developmental plan to become an emerging economy by 2035.

The Cameroon tourism board has been carrying out series of studies to market her tourism potential to Europe particularly Britain. There are many reasons for choosing Britain; the country has one of the highest tourist spenders in the world, it has one of the highest diverse potential tourists, less tourist arrival from Britain to Cameroon as compared to other European countries and both countries share a colonial history.

Cameroon tourism industry has witnessed a positive growth in recent years. In 2010, it receives 572,728 and 604,052 tourists in 2011 which is more than the (UNWTO) limit of 500,000 tourists to be considered a tourist destination.



## 1.1 Background

The tourism industry is very vital for socio-economic development of Cameroon and her goal of becoming an emerging economy by 2035. Often refer to as “Africa miniature” because of her diversity in geography, climate, culture and wild life, Cameroon touristic potential is still to be discovered by the west particularly Britain. The Cameroon ministry of tourism which carry out the marketing of the Cameroon tourism industry has made some progress since her creation in 1974 which has been very slow in promoting tourism both in the supply and demand side of the industry probably due to poor planning and marketing strategy which has led to the creation of the Cameroon tourism board in 2010.

Despite being branded as a trouble-free country by the British foreign and common wealth office, the Cameroon tourism industry has had little success in attracting British tourists to Cameroon in the recent years. Cameroon has a small market share in the British market which has suffered some difficulties from competitors in the continent such as Kenya, South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. For the Cameroon tourist board to gain more success in the British market it has to open an office in London and a marketing plan is needed to understand the complexity of the market, and consumers’ behavior so as to understand consumers’ needs and wants. This marketing strategy will help the Cameroon tourist board to understand the different customer groups and choose which one she can best serves and attract thereby increasing turnover and investment in the tourism industry of Cameroon. This thesis will develop an effective marketing communication recommendation with segmentation, diversification, positioning and branding thus given Cameroon the reputation of alof Africa in one country.

## 1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this thesis is to help the Cameroon tourism board to develop an effective marketing communication plan to promote and brand the Cameroon tourist industry before it can launch her products and services to the United Kingdom.

After many years of slow growth and difficulties by the Cameroon ministry of tourism in promoting Cameroon as a tourist destination it finally achieved that status in 2010 when it received over 500,000 tourist, but the newly created Cameroon tourism board is faced with a critical task to market, position and brand Cameroon as a tourist destination for experience, adventure, wildlife, safari and ecotourism. At the moment, the Cameroon tourism board provides information about Cameroon touristic potentials, organize trips and provide basic information about Cameroon to potential tourists thus, it is more of information office without any marketing agenda. For the Cameroon tourism board to succeed in the highly competitive

tourism market of today, it needs for a marketing plan to communicate her products and services to the outside world particularly the United Kingdom which is what motivated the writer to carry out this research.

The writer also felt the research is very important because if properly carried out it can help evaluate the British market to avoid marketing risks, understand customers, position Cameroon tourism, open the country for foreign investment, trade, and job creation

### 1.3 Limitation of study

The thesis mainly focus on marketing communication planning for the Cameroon tourism board and offers marketing plan suggestions but does not include the actual budget which would have been more specific for proper implementation

### 1.4 Outline of the thesis



Figure 1: Structure of the research process

## 2 Theoretical Review

### 2.1 Marketing

Marketing is a system that attracts customers by promising superior value, maintain existing customers and attract new customers by delivering satisfaction in return for profit. (Kotler et al 2008:6)

#### 2.1.1 Marketing process

Marketing process is the life cycle organizations take to understand consumers, create customer value and build strong customer relationships. This process present a five step model the first four focuses on customer relationship and the last on customer return as in figure 2.

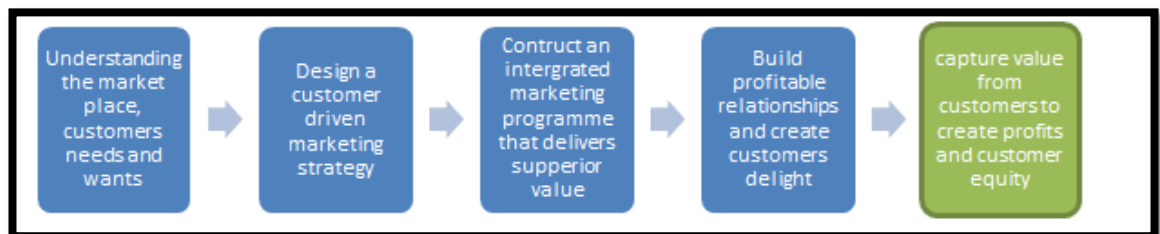


Figure 2A simple model of marketing process

#### 2.1.2 Marketing plan

Marketing plan is an organization tool for directing and coordinating marketing process, which operates at two levels: strategic marketing and tactical marketing. The strategic plan focuses on target markets and customer value offerings the firm will deliver base on the analysis of market potentials while tactical plan specify the marketing strategies including product features, promotion, channels, pricing, sales, merchandising and service. (kotler et al 2009: 86)

#### 2.1.3 Marketing planning

Marketing planning is very important for any organization as it summarizes what the marketer has learned about the market and also indicates how the company intends to achieve its marketing objectives. Marketing planning is a tactical guide line which helps organizations to meet their objectives through marketing programs and financial allocation. It is very important and specific because marketers develop a plan for individual products, brands, channels, sub-brands, or customer groups.

Marketing plans are becoming more essential for the success of any organization because they are becoming more customer and competitor oriented. The process of marketing planning brings members from different departments of the organization together, and it is a continuous process mostly in the short term. (Kotler and Keller 2006)

#### 2.1.4 Marketing Mix

Marketing mix is set of tactical marketing tools that a firm use to create the response it needs in a target market. The combination of these marketing tools gives firms the opportunity to influence the demand for her products. These tools are normally referred to as “Four Ps”, which represents Product, Price, Promotion and Place. Products try to appeal to customer needs and wants, price equates the value for money thus the cost to the consumer, promotion helps in bringing the producer and the consumer together via communication and place serve the convenience of the customer. (Kotler et al 2008)

### 2.2 Branding

Branding is one of the most important tools of a marketer as it represents a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of them intended to differentiate the goods and service of one producer from the other. The key to branding that most marketers have is that it helps consumers perceive a sense of difference among brands in products of the same category thus helping consumers create a mental structure that affects buying decisions. (Kotler et al 2008)

#### 2.2.1 Purchase decisions based on brands

Purchase decisions by consumers in relation to brands are based on the different effects the brand knowledge has on consumer response to brand marketing. The more appeal a brand gets from customers the more equity the brand gets in return. Brand names can be classified as a product or the generic version of a product which helps to differentiate products of the same category or similar products, thus convincing customers of a meaningful difference among brands thereby creating a brand image, knowledge and awareness in the memory of the consumers which affects the purchase decisions of consumers' base on brands. (Kotler et al 2008)

#### 2.2.2 Factors influencing Brand selection in B2B marketing

Brands provide several important functions to retailers such as generating consumer's interest and loyalty. Retailers can also create their own brand image by improving their service, pric-

ing, merchandising, aftersales services and credit policy. This improvement in services can improve sales volume, price margin and profit. (Keller 2003)

Companies should market products in a way that affects the rational thinking of the consumer, for example, consumers feel more comfortable buying from amazon because of her reliable delivery, good price and reputation. When consumers are purchasing a new product there is always the fear of delivery reliability, personal information, product quality and technical services, thus influencing brand selection. (De Chernatony and McDonald 2003)

B-to-B marketing has a variety of attributes which are more important than the price of the product and is more evident when a buyer stay loyal to a supplier during higher prices, but if some of the attributes that made them loyal such as delivery reliability becomes inefficient, the buyer will perceive the value of the brand has diminished and will likely bargain the price or consider competitive brands. (De Chernatony and McDonald 2003)

Pricing and delivery becomes very important in branding when competing brands are similar. Late deliveries often translate to the buyer that he or she is not taken seriously or important thus they look for a new brand. Buyers take lots of risks when switching to a new brand, therefore marketers need to present these products as a risks reducer, which is often proved by information of present satisfied customers, thus, verifying the quality of the product or service. (De Chernatony and McDonald 2003)

Customers buying B-to-B brands evaluate competing marketing brands on their personal messages therefore, personal message has a great effect on purchase decisions. Companies often use their sales representatives to provide information when approaching a new company, which is the most effective method of marketing brands followed by advertising and trade shows. (De Chernatony and McDonald 2003)

### 2.2.3 Brand knowledge

Brand knowledge is the customer's knowledge about a brand, its features, values and their likely response to marketing activities as a result of the knowledge. Brand knowledge has two main characteristic; brand awareness and brand image. (Kotler et al 2009)

### 2.2.4 Brand image

“Brand image is the visual or verbal expression of a brand which leads to the psychological or emotional association that the brand aspires to maintain in the minds of consumers”. For consumers to perceive the right image, marketers must convey the brand identity through

every marketing mix and also through all the activities of the company like staff behavior, brochures, catalogues, packaging, business cards and design of annual reports. (Kotler et al 2009)

#### 2.2.5 Brand awareness

Brand awareness is the ability of customers to remember and recognize a brand's products and services when exposed to it. Brand recognition is very important because it is easier for customers to recognize a brand rather than recall it from memory, for example, when purchase decisions are made in a supermarket brand recognition is more physically evident thus, increasing familiarity of a brand via exposure can create brand recognition and awareness. (Keller 2008)

Brands should be recognized through a brand name, symbol, logo, character, slogan or packaging in order to increase familiarity with customers. The advantage of creating familiarity is to register the brand in the minds of consumers which makes them recognize the brand when they see it and thus affects their buying decisions. Consumers are not always loyal to one brand thus consider many brands when purchasing products and services. Brand awareness can affect consumer choices when they have many brands to choose from, thus consumers often choose products they do not have any experience and knowledge of it but are familiar with it through advertisement. (Keller 2003)

#### 2.2.6 Brand imagery

Brand imagery refers to the intangible aspects of the brand which is the way consumers think about the brand, rather than what the brand actually does. Brand imagery depends on the extrinsic properties of a brand's product and services, consumers form brand imagery through direct experience or indirectly through advertisement or other source of information such as 3<sup>rd</sup> parties. There are many types of imagery that can be linked to a brand, but there are four main ones: user profiles, purchase and usage situations, personality and values, and history, heritage, and experience

Brands are seen to have personalities by customers and often customers choose brands that represent their personality so as to represent who they are, thus, when branding products it should reflect the image or personality of its core customer. (Keller 2008)

#### 2.2.7 Brand resonance

Brand resonance is the relationship and level of identification that consumers have with a brand, thus, describing the extent to which consumers feel they are “in sync” with the brand. Brand resonance is characterized in two dimensions; in terms of intensity or depth of psychological bond that customers have with a brand and the level of engagement by loyalty. These two dimensions of brand resonance can be divided into 4 categories: behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community and active engagement

Behavioral loyalty concentrates on the customers repeat purchases, and the amount or share of category volume attributed to the brand. Behavioral loyalty is necessary not enough for resonance to occur some people buy out of necessity, but they must be an attitudinal attachment to the brand. Customers should go beyond having a positive attitude towards a brand to viewing it as special.

Brands can also show their consent to customers through a sense of community. Identification with a brand community reflects social affiliation with the brand via connecting with fellow brand users, employees, partners and representatives of the company.

The last category is the strongest affirmation of brand loyalty. When customers are actively willing to engage in a brand by investing their time, money, energy and other resources besides purchasing the brand, thereby, making them not only loyal to the brand but part of it. (Keller 2008)

#### 2.2.8 Creating brand loyalty

Brands should keep their customers satisfied so as to retain them and make them loyal to the brand. New customers are essential for the growth of the brands, thus, companies should heighten brand awareness and convince customers of the benefits of the brand’s offerings over their competitors. (Davis and Dunn 2002, 90)

Brand management has four main objectives: gaining new customers, keep existing ones, increase customer loyalty and create a strong customer relationship. In order for the brand management to succeed in these objectives, it has to assess the customer experience in relation to customer behavior; for example, the purchase of a company’s particular product may be because of the salesperson. Thus, whether the purchase decision is influenced by rational or emotional motives it has to assess the success of brand management. (Marks 2007, 12)

Customer experience is the most important tool in building customer loyalty basically because it facilitates the exchange of value and communication with customers. This tool helps companies to understand customers’ rational and functional needs thus being able to differenti-

ate what motivates customer loyalty in B-to-B (Business to business) and B-to-C (business to customers) marketing. (Crosby and Johnson 2007, 23)

#### 2.2.9 Brand Retention and loyalty

Existing customers are very important for the existence of any company; the quest for new customers should not be done at the expense of existing ones. Companies should reward their loyal customers because losing them will be very negative to the company's image and reputation which can easily be damaged with adverse word-of-publicity. (Peck, et al. 2004 45-49) Marketing strategies are inevitable for customer acquisition and retention, but there is no need to develop a strong customer relationship with all customer groups because not all customers are suitable for investment. Marketing strategies for acquiring and retaining customers should be based on the profitability of different customer segments and micro-segments. (Peck, et al. 2004 45-50)

Customer profitability is the strongest determinant for building customer relations, companies should choose customers with the ability of becoming high performing clients in terms of profitability. There is a high correlation between customer retention and profitability which are the bases for long term collaboration and interaction between customers and companies. Customers who make repeated purchases cost less to the company because of their long relation and familiarity, moreover satisfied customers are less sensitive to price and easily recommend the brand. (Peck, et al. 2004 46-50)

Loyal customers can be achieved and retained via reward which can be managed in 3 levels: the first is via financial incentives for example, club cards, the second is via social or financial bonds which view customers as clients not numbers and finally structural bonds which attempt to make the consumer more productive for example linking consumers computer system to the suppliers' so the customer can easily make orders and receive an invoice. (De Chernatony and McDonald 2003, 31-32)

#### 2.2.10 Branding challenges and opportunity

Globalization has made the world evolve quickly into a global village and this evolution has made branding ever difficult, marketers of today have to think evolutionally to manage the needs of brands. Marketers must master all the fundamentals of marketing but apply them with vision, very dynamic and proactive to the market demands. To achieve these goals marketers need to understand the cultural diversity of the customers, fluency with design techniques and designers, good knowledge of information technology, e-business, appreciating new branding models, creativity to design holistic marketing solutions. Despite these enor-



mous challenges branding has a lot of opportunities for companies to benefit from if they master the different concepts.

Companies can take advantage of information technology to reach its customers globally without moving to overseas market. Brands now have the opportunity to cut their costs through getting rid of long term strategy for short term tactics. Brand managers get to know the customers and can proactively predict their future needs and wants thus, adopting higher standards in brand management excellence. (Keller, K. 2011)

#### 2.2.11 Building Brands

Branding is very important for any business of today, and the importance is increasingly felt as businesses grow more competitive every day. Branding differentiates products and service from competitors, therefore, it has to be unique and transmits the message companies intend to pass to consumers.

Successful brand building has to create added value that entices customers to buy and should be susceptible to improvement, expansion and service innovation. Building strong a brand is about portraying a sense of commitment to customers by satisfying their needs and providing alternative service which makes the customer feel special.

Furthermore, brands should communicate a sense of relationship unique to particular goods or services which goes beyond naming a product. For example, men often give fragrance to women as a gift on different occasions because they communicate men relationship to women. To achieve the uniqueness needed to building a successful brand entails the combination of marketing concepts that does not focus on one element of the marketing mix but coordination of activities across the entire concept of the marketing mix directed towards making the buyer recognize the unique added values compared to competitors. (De Chernatony and McDonald 2003)

#### 2.2.12 Strategic Brand Management process

Strategic brand management process is a set of marketing tools used to design, build and measure, and manages brand equity. Brand management process has four main steps as in figure 3.

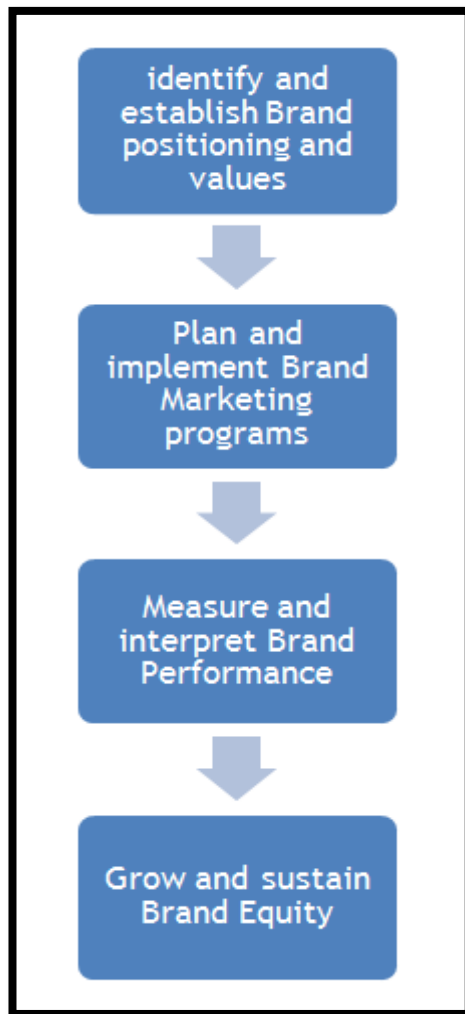


Figure 3: Strategic Brand management process

Identifying and establishing brand positioning start with a clear understanding of the brand, what it represents and how it should be positioned with respect to its competitors. Brand positioning design the image the companies wish to put in the minds of target customers so that consumers view it more distinct and valued thus, maximizing for the firm.

Establishing the required position brands wish consumers to perceive, requires implementation of brand marketing programs. These programs build strong brand awareness and create positive brand associations and image. This knowledge building process is enhanced by three main factors; how brand elements or identities are mixed and matched, integration of marketing activities and branding, and indirect association or leverage with the brand.

After identifying and implementation brand performance need to be evaluated so as to manage and improve profitability. Brand audit is a comprehensive assessment of the health of the brand and its source of equity and suggests ways to improve and leverage that equity. Im-

plementing a successful brand audit, managers need to design a comprehensive brand equity management system which is normally facilitated by brand tracking.

Growing and sustaining brand equity is very challenging to managers as brand equity management process takes broader and more diverse perspective of brand equity. Understanding how branding strategies should reflect corporate values and adjust with time to suit market segments and geographical locations are the key to growth and sustainability of brand management process. (Keller, K. 2008)

### 2.3 strategic marketing

The success of every business depends on marketing. To survive competition companies need to have a good knowledge of the market and be able to make precise decisions in order to outperform competitors. They are three main process in strategic marketing; segmentation, targeting and positioning.

#### 2.3.1 Market segmentation

Segmentation is identifying different groups of buyers in the market in order to target specific products and services to meet the needs of the segments. By satisfying different groups of customers companies are more precisely able to meet the needs of more customers and consequently gain a higher overall quantity of share in the market

Segmentation helps companies to develop different marketing strategies to communicate their offerings to different customer groups or segments. Segmentation identifies the heterogeneity in the market thus, grouping customers with similar buying behavior and developing marketing strategies to meet their unique demand. (Hollensen, S.2010)

Every customer has different needs and wants which makes segmentation a fiction, but business-to-business experts Anderson and Narus have urge marketers to create flexible marketing offering to all members of a segment. Flexible market offering consist of two main parts; naked solution of product and service that whole segment value and discretionary options that some members value. (Kotler and Keller 2009)

Brand growth strategy is usually based on segmentation, but developing strategies to communicate with different segments often shape the decision making of companies which in many occasion goes contrary to the objectives of the business. Segmentation that determines the growth of a brand should start by defining the brand's business objectives and develop

segment marketing strategies that correspond to the brand's business objectives. (Singleton, D. 2010)

The fundamental way to carve market segments is to identify preferences for example, tourists can be asked how much they value nature and infrastructure, as two attributes of touristic services. Three different preferences may arise as in figure 4.

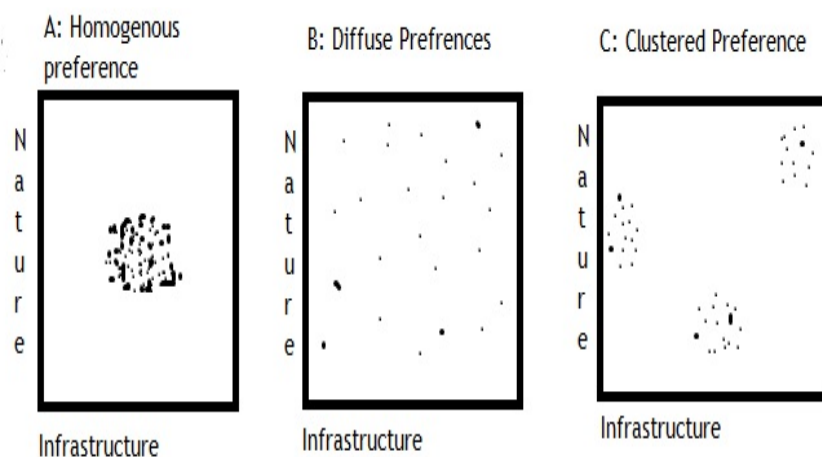


Figure 4: Basic Market Patterns

The homogenous preference as seen in figure 4(a) shows a situation in the market where consumers have roughly similar preferences without any distinctive segments. There were probably similar brands or few options clustered in the middle between nature and infrastructure. However in figure 4(b) consumers' preferences are scattered all over the box indicating varying consumer preferences; thus, the first brand is likely to position itself to target all customers while the second will do the same and fight for market share or satisfy a segment. When many brands enter the market they will locate themselves throughout the box and offer real differences to match differences in consumer preferences.

As brands offer different products and services to match consumers' preferences, distinct clustered preferences will emerge in the market as seen in figure 4(c). The first company in the market has the option to position itself at the center to appeal to all customers, or it can concentrate on the largest segment or develop several brands to focus on different segments. Thus, if the firm does not meet the needs of the segments competitors will come in and introduce new brands to those segments. (Kotler and Keller 2006)

Furthermore as markets grow new brands come into the market and consumers' preferences grow more complex and diverse, segments further divided into sub-segments given way to the

emergence of niche marketing. Niche marketing seeks to satisfy customers with a distinct set of needs who are ready to pay a premium to companies that best satisfy their needs. Niche marketing gain certain economies of scale via specialization with little competition and the ability for potential growth and profitability thus given new comers into the market of tourism like the Cameroon tourism board the opportunity for specialization. (Kotler et al, 2006, 242)

### 2.3.2 Segmenting customer markets

After understanding the importance and different levels of segmentation as a marketing tool, organizations should also consider criteria for segmenting consumer markets as it is important for success. Shoeman in 2006 introduced an approach with 4 main steps to successful segmentation.

### 2.3.3 Major segmentation variables

Variable	Variables included	Examples
Geographic	Region, country, city, climate	Europe, Cameroon
Demographic	Age, gender, income, ethnicity, social class	Males, Education, high income
Psychographic	Personality, lifestyle, psychological traits	Adventure holidays, ecotourism
Behavioral	occasions, loyalty, status, benefits, attitude, profession	Business travel, vacation, adventure holiday(wild life)

Table 1: Segmentation variables

As seen in table 1, geographical segmentation divides the market into different geographical units such as countries, cities, regions. Brands can operate in one, few or all the geographical units paying attentions to segments that suit their strategies.

For companies to choose segments in a wide geographical region they further divide the market into demographic units such as age, sex, income, occupation, nationality and social class. The importance of demographic segmentation is that it is often associated with consumer's needs and wants, and moreover easy to measure.

Psychographic segmentation is the science of understanding consumers via psychology and demographics. Psychographic segmentation divides consumers into personality traits, life style, or values. Consumers are influenced by 3 main motivations which help to shape their purchase behavior; ideals, achievement and self-expression. Those motivated by ideals are guided by knowledge, logic and principles while those motivated by achievement look for products and services that demonstrate success to their peers. Psychographic segmentation identifies other personality traits such as self-confidence, leadership, innovativeness, intellectualism and novelty seeking, which when in conjunction with demographics influence purchase behaviors.

Behavioral segmentation goes further to identify customers on the basis of their knowledge of, attitude towards, use of or response to the use of a product and service. These identifications are influenced by two main factors; decision roles and behavioral variables. Decision roles outline the process of initiator, influencer, decider, buyer and user in a buying decision while behavioral variables such as occasions, benefits, user status, usage rate, loyalty status and attitude are the basis of buying decisions thus should be the starting point for market segmentation. (Kotler and Keller 2009)

In 1997 Best discovered that the segmentation process involves several variables, in an effort to define smaller target groups, he came up with a seven-step segmentation process as seen in figure 5. (Best, 1997, 115)

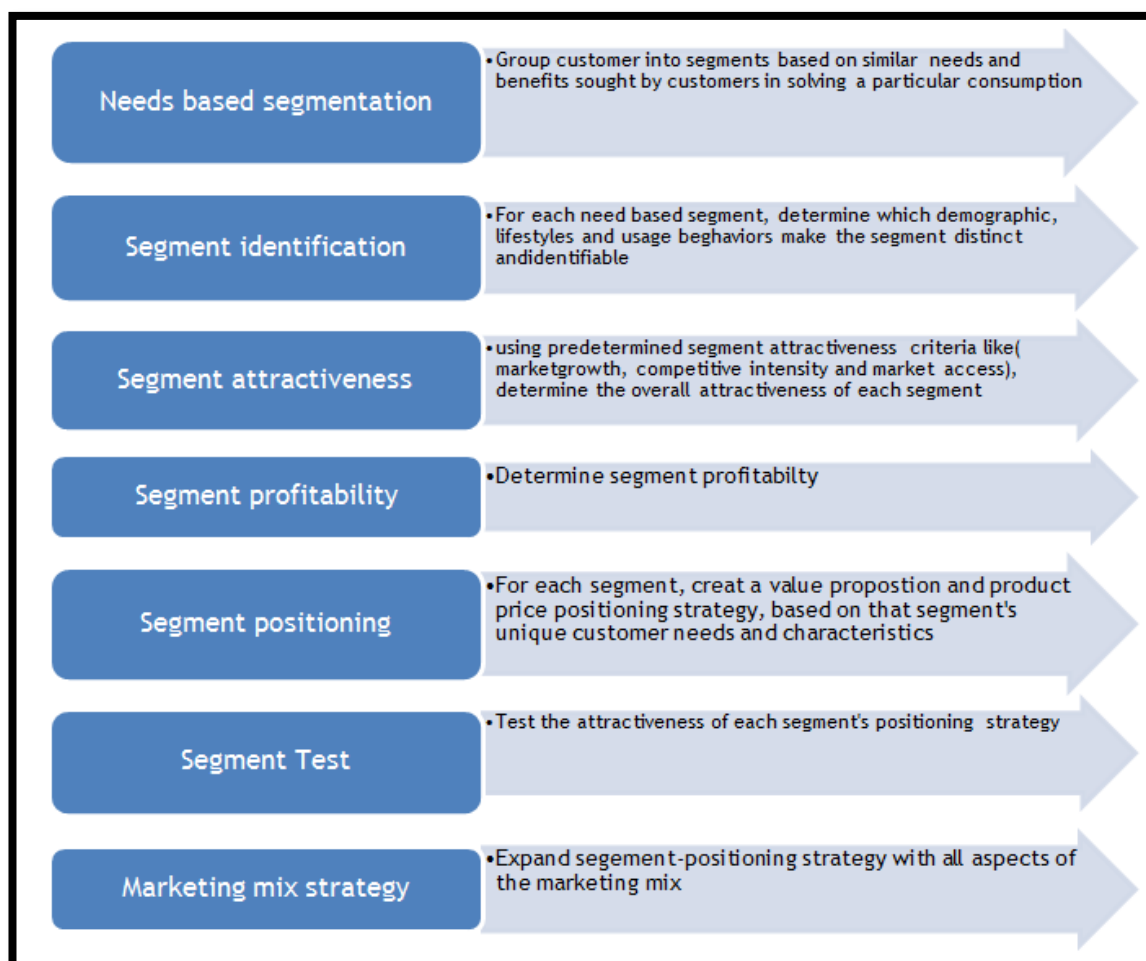


Figure 5: Segmentation Process

#### 2.3.4 Market Targeting

After segmentation, the company is exposed to different consumer groups and has the opportunity to evaluate the various segments and decide which they can best serve. Identifying which group of customers to target is market targeting. Market targeting is influenced by 3 main factors; segment size and growth, segment structural attractiveness, and company resources and objectives. (Kotler, et al. 2008)

Companies need to ask themselves critical questions based on measurability, substantiality, accessibility, differentiability and action-ability before targeting any consumer segments so as to make good marketing decisions. The size, purchasing power and characteristic of the segment should be measurable so as to be able to make both logical and financial conclusions.

Also, segments should be large and profitable enough to serve, possibly the largest homogeneous group worth serving with strategic marketing programs. The segment should be reach-

ble and accessible. The companies should also be able to differentiate customer segments so as to allocate different marketing mix and programs, thus formulating effective campaigns for serving and attracting segments. (Kotler, et al 2009)

After examining the different segments, companies evaluate them for selection base on the segment's attractiveness and the company's objective and resources. The diagrams below show the five patterns of market selection.

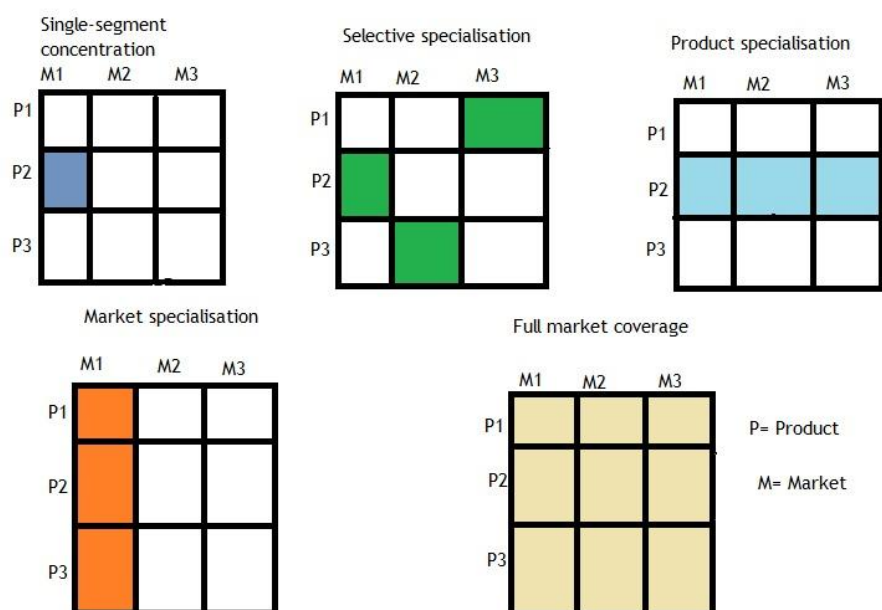


Figure 6: Five Patterns of Market selection

In figure (6) single-segment concentration is when a firm concentrates on a small market for example; Fiat on the small-car market and gain strong knowledge of the segment needs thus, gaining a competitive advantage through specialization, production, distribution and promotion. If companies can capture leadership in their small market concentration they can earn a high return on investment, but it is risky because if new competitors invade the market or a breakthrough in technology the leading company risk going to bankruptcy for example, the invention of digital cameras has seen the immediate fall of the earnings of kadak film.

A firm may decide to select a number of segments which looks objectively attractive and has potentials for growth. These segments may have little or no similarity amongst them but promise to be profitable, given the firm the opportunity of diversifying its risks.



Some other companies may choose to make a product that serve the needs of different market segments, for example, microscope manufacturer sells to schools, hospitals and laboratories customizing the product for different customer groups and building a reputation for product specialization. The main risk of product specialization is that it can be put out of business by a new technology.

Furthermore, some companies can decide to serve many needs of a particular customer groups for instances universities. The company builds a strong reputation in this customer segment and becomes a channel for additional products the segment need. The downside of market specialization is that the customer can suffer budget cut or shrink.

Full market coverage is when some firms decide to serve all segments with the products they might need. This is only possible with large multinational companies like Microsoft, Coca-Cola and Toyota. Full market strategy can only be possible in two ways; undifferentiated marketing and differentiated marketing. (Kotler et al. 2009)

#### 2.3.5 Positioning

Brands can decide to follow different segmentation strategies as seen in figure (6) to meet their target customers, but whatever strategy a firm chooses it has to create an image in the minds of its target customers, thus, positioning the desired perception of your products and services within your target group relative to competition. Brand positioning process is establishing and managing the image perceptions, and association that consumers applies to your product based on its values. (Hiebing and Cooper 2003)

Creating a positive image in the mind of the target market usually involve four main concepts of positioning. Firstly positioning lies ultimately in the eyes of consumers, in the case of tourism it is how the destination is perceived. Secondly, brand positioning should provide one simple consistent message in relation to the brand. Thirdly positioning should differentiate its products and services from that of its competitors which can be possible via; physical attributes, personnel, services, location or image and finally brands should focus on their strengths and not serve everything to its customers. (Lovelock and Wirtz. 2004, 64)

From the concepts above Lovelock in 2004 suggested that companies should develop an effective positioning strategy by combining market and competitors analysis to internal corporate analysis.

Successful positioning consists of three main steps. The first task involves identifying a set of competitive advantages to select from, for the case of tourism its normally price, image, accommodation and hospitality which make significant differentiation.

The second task involves selecting the right competitive advantages. For instance Kenya has promoted its tourism industry by promoting wildlife also known as the “The Big Five” to compete with competitors from abroad. Therefore, brands should select a set of competitive advantage they can best serve.

The last step involves companies communicating and delivering their chosen position strategy to their target customer groups. (Kotler and Keller 2006, 281)

### 2.3.6 Tactical Marketing

Meeting the goals of a target market and delivering a firm’s offerings to this target group involves careful planning. Segmentation, market targeting and positioning are all carefully planned marketing strategy, but these strategies are useless when the company does not execute and implement follow up. Tactical marketing is the medium in which your message is being delivered to your target customers.

In relation to marketing mix, tactical marketing involves developing and offering marketing stimuli directed at target markets to influence their behavior. The traditional marketing mix referred to as 4Ps that is product, price, promotion and place are used by organizations to achieve their tactical marketing objectives. The 4Ps have different marketing variables which are controllable within marketing activities to stimulate different customer response as seen below. (Peter et al. 2005, 12)



Figure 7:4Ps of marketing mix

The above figure (7) shows all variables under each P in the traditional marketing mix. An organization has to create an integrated strategic marketing that involves combining all the suitable marketing activities in a way that best serve the needs of the customer and reflect the business objective of the organization.

However, many critics maintain that the traditional marketing mix that is 4Ps is too limited when it comes to services especially tourism. In 2006 Zeithaml et al., came up with 7Ps adding 3 more Ps to the traditional 4Ps which are People, Process and Physical evidence. These additional Ps make up the service marketing mix and gives greater flexibility in service marketing especially in marketing tourism. (Zeithaml and Bitner. 1996, 26)

#### 2.4 Tourism marketing mix

Tourism marketing mix is an extension of the traditional marketing mix which is known as 7Ps to suit the demand of tourism marketing. The overall principles of marketing apply the same for both the manufacturing industry and the service industry however marketing operations in tourism is more complex and has unique features which require an extension of the traditional marketing mix. (Kotler and Keller 2006, 11)

In addition, tourism is a mix of various products and services offered by different organizations in different areas some of the tourism products are accommodation, attractions, food and beverages, transport and arts. Tourism marketing requires cooperation and combination of different organization and services respectively for a positive outcome. Tourist demands are very elastic and emotional, subjective to factors such as motivation, attitudes, preferences and perception. The Table below shows the 7Ps of tourism marketing and its variables. (Jooste. 2005, 213)

Product	Place (distribution)	Promotion (communication)	Price	People	Physical evidence	Process
physical features Quality level Branding Packaging Warranties product line	channel type intermediaries exposure outlet locations transaction storage	promotions advertisement sales people internet publicity	flexibility terms price level discounts allowances differentiation	employees communication customers	facility design signage equipment employee dress other tangibility	activity flow standardized customized reception level of customer involvement

Table 2: Tourism marketing mix

#### 2.4.1 Product

Tourism products and services have to be designed to adapt to the changing needs, expectation and budget of target customer groups. For organizations to meet the needs of its target customers in the highly competitive tourism industry it has to understand its customers' needs and wants in relation to their competitors so that it can differentiate its offering from

competitors and create a product positioning that consumers will find it unique compare to other products. (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007)

For an organization to successful create a unique product or service it has to assess its competitors, the market and make significant changes in services, quality and range. The firm should think about the level of the service it is about to offer with an improved cost effective content of the tourism product.

Quality strengthens a product or service offer with a high level performance of facilities and assurance, which makes customer willing to pay more for tourism products. Quality management has become very important in service marketing since it's crucial in creating a good reputation of goods and service on offer and giving consumers a positive image of the company. Service delivery is very complex and intangible, higher service level and good relationship between the customer, employees and the company sets a higher standard and distinct differentiation in the market.

Creating service and products levels and setting standards involve time and money. Some service levels are more expensive to offer than others, a firm should be able to differentiate its services and set a range for customers to choose their preferences in relation to their demands, and money they are willing to spend. For example, airlines companies have economy packages, flex packages and business packages. (Cooper. C et al. 1998)

After creating a unique tourism product or service branding adds tangible cues to tourism which is largely intangible. Branding helps differentiate tourism products and creates a positive image in the memories of consumers. It also helps companies to pass the message to their target consumers and develop on the international scene. Successful branding of tourism products brings trust, security, assurance and quality which are very important associations with intangible goods. (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007)

#### 2.4.2 Price

Pricing is a key principle in marketing of products and services by any company. Companies charge a price that strikes a balance between the company's financial ambitions and the needs and wants of the consumer. Organizations pricing decisions are affected by pricing objective, legal and regulatory issues, competition and costs.

The most important determinant of price is the consumer's perception of price in relation to quality and value for money. Consumers always try to see the correlation between price charge and product quality thus, paying attention to special features and design. Tourism be-

ing a service industry sells products that are intangible and perishable, making companies work hard to achieve maximum usage in a short period of time.

To achieve maximum usage of service many organizations have implemented a competitive advantage tool in tourism to influence consumer purchase behavior as shown in table 3. (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007)

PRODUCTS	CONSUMERS	CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS
First class Highest prices	High socioeconomic group customers with high status	-high level of personal service -rapid check in -large amount of space on board
Business class Medium prices	Business traveler medium/high socioeconomic class	-some personal service -reliable and quick check-in -good space allocation on board -business service on board
Economy class Lower prices	Families low/medium socioeconomic class students/single people	-little personal service -limited menus -little space on board -services for children

Table 3: Relationship of price to consumer perception of quality for major airline

Table (3) shows the relationship of price to consumer perception of quality for major airline companies. Since consumers have different demands, expectations and status and also different views on price in relation to value for money. The tool best help airline companies to categorize consumers' expectations in relation to value for money and also maximize their costs by carrying the passengers in the same carrier thereby saving time and achieving maximum usage of their service.

#### 2.4.3 Place

Place (distribution) is very important in tourism because services are either rented or consumed. Tourism products are not own or transfer but have to be available and accessible at the time of exchange and consumption; thus, a distribution system is needed to access potential consumers. (Cooper, C et al. 1998)

Choosing a distribution channel is a very difficult decision for marketing managers as distribution decisions affects the compatibility of other elements within the marketing mix. However, marketing managers select their distribution channel based on the following analysis; analyzing the product, determining the nature and extent of the market, analyzing the channels by sales, costs and profit, determining the cooperation you can expect from the channel, determining the assistance you will have from the channel and determining number of outlets to be used

These analyses help marketing managers to choose their channel of distribution in relation to the market, customer and their business objectives. The diagram below shows different distribution channels in a distribution process. (McIntosh, R et al. 1995)

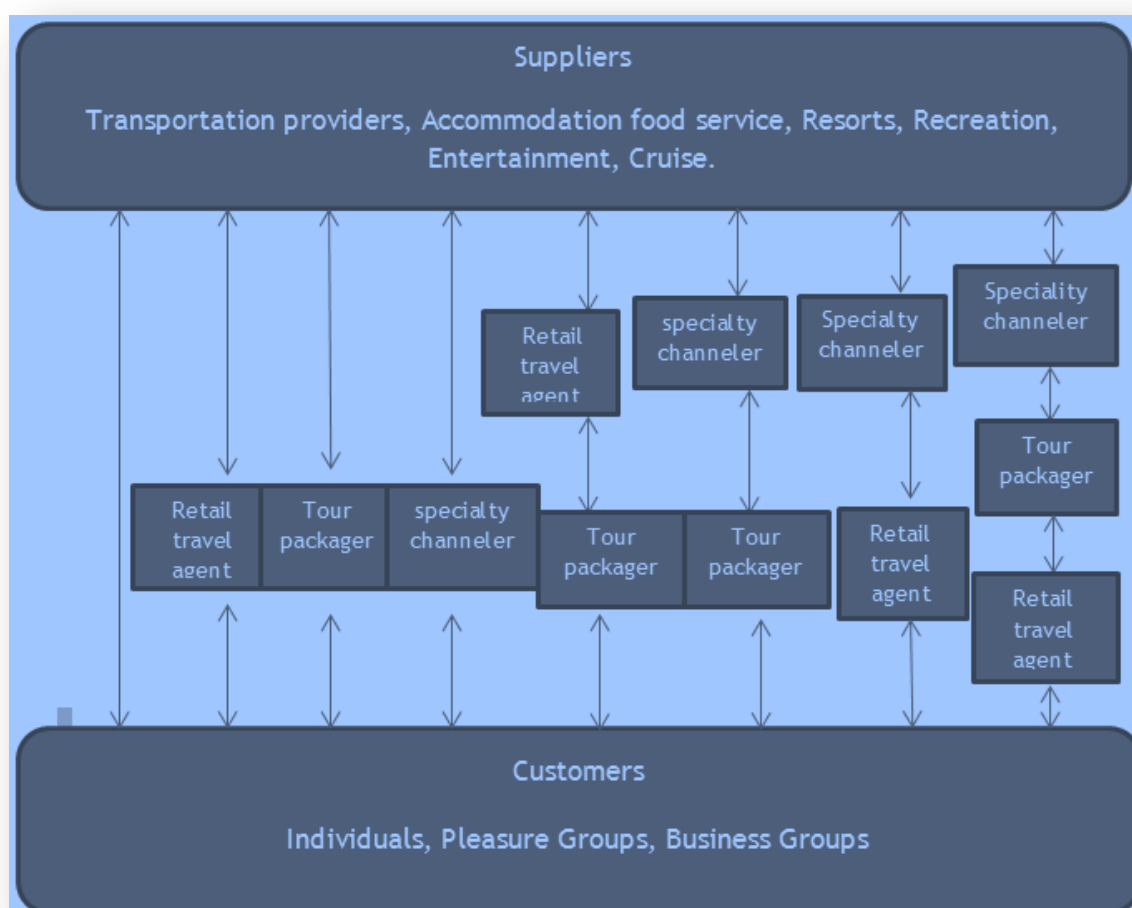


Figure 8: Tourism Distribution Channels

#### 2.4.4 Promotion

Promotion is the combination of communication activities that tourism organizations implement in order to influence the public to whom their sales depend. The target groups and potential customers are not the only point of focus but also the channel of distribution or suppliers, the press, politicians and professional groups, so as to build mutual trust, respect and a good reputation. (Cooper, C et al. 1998)

The tourism industry has employed different promotional campaigns to influence the behavior of its target customers, but before tourism organizations decide on marketing communication method it has to check the type of product, the aim of the campaign and the market situation. There is a variety of communication techniques which have different effects on consumer behavior. Some of the communication techniques are; advertising, brochures, press or public relation, sales promotion, personal selling, direct mail, point of sale material and sponsorship.

The above techniques help organizations to create awareness in the target audience about products and their benefits, improve the image and positioning, and increase in demand. Advertising and sales promotion are the most widely use form of promotion because of their intrusive nature. Advertising is often used to appeal to a large audience because it usually carries the marketing communication message and each repetition of advertisement creates a positive effect on the consumer. (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007)

Marketing experts Booms and Bitner suggest that marketing mix of Ps is not comprehensive enough for the tourism industry because of the intangible element of human behavior, quality and control is of great importance for marketing tourism. Incorporating the intangible elements that make up the tourism marketing, they came up with the 7Ps of tourism marketing mix.

#### 2.4.5 People

People are very important element of the tourism marketing mix. Services are not tangible, and as such no transfers, thus, they are either rented or consume at the point. During the exchange of services, people management is very important because the process builds the link between employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction and profitability. (Jauhari and Dutta 2009)

For a company to be successful in the service industry, it needs to develop a highly committed workforce through strategic human resource management process so as to gain a competitive edge in the market. Employees are the face of a company, and as such are to be treated like internal customers because in return they will treat the customers well. If employees are



not satisfy, consumers are likely to have a negative experience which can lead to negative word-of-mouth feedback, sending customers away from the company. To understand people management in the tourism industry companies should try to examine the following issues; whether external supply of labor will impact people management, the culture of the firm, relationship between the firm's culture and other cultures, impact of service culture on people management in cross cultural firms, achieving service culture excellences, improving service offering with team work, motivating employees and making employees in service firm feel secure.

People management in the tourism industry is very generic, and a company cannot have all the challenges that confront the industry, but each company has certain unique challenges to deal with, finding answers to the questions above helps a company to build a healthy employees relationship. (Jauhari and Dutta 2009)

Every successful company has a distinct culture which influences customer behavior, mutual respect between employers and employees, and respecting the values of the company. Culture defined by Hofstede (1980) as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" is the root of service culture for organizations. Customers and employees behavior are being influence by beliefs, traditions, values and expectations, for an organization to successfully build a link between the two groups it has to understand the cultural dimensions of the people, who exist on different level such as national, industrial and local. (Pizam 1993)

In 1980, Hofstede carried out a study into different cultural dimensions and suggested that the following cultural dimension can have an impact on the employee performance and work values in an organization; power distance, individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. These dimensions help companies to understand their employees, consumers and build a successful relationship between both groups as in figure (9).

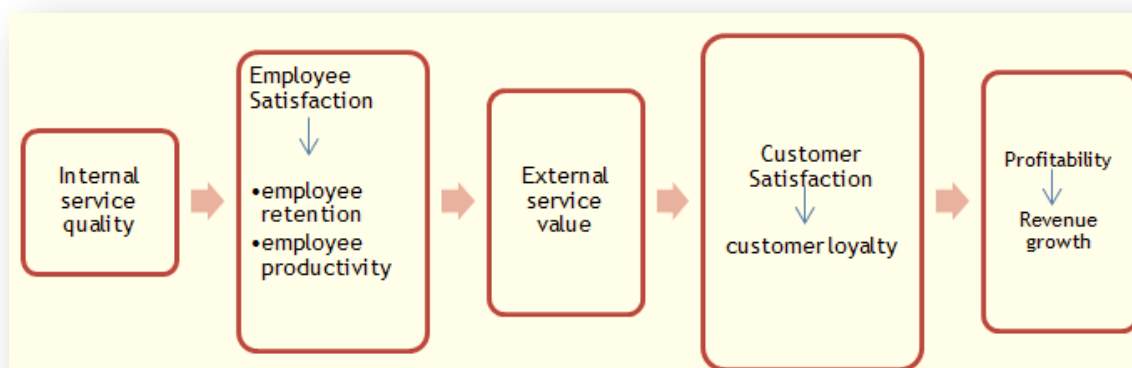


Figure 9: Link between employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction and profitability

The framework in figure (9) by Heskett, et al in 1994, shows that customer loyalty increases profitability and growth for companies. Customers can become loyal only when they are happy with the company after a positive experience. Employees are the integral part of the whole experience in the service industry, their behavior will contribute to make consumer experience enjoyable. When employees are happy and with the right attitude and training, they will be productive and increase profitability of the company through repeat business.

#### 2.4.6 Process

Positive customer experience is the key to profitability in the service industry but for companies to be profitable they have to provide an efficient service offering to create a unique customer experience. Managing service process is very significant in the tourism industry as it is believed to be the moment-of-truth which is the point of contact between customers and services employees or self-equipment. (Lovelock and Wright. 1999)

Service process delivery is a very complex and dynamic operation due to the ever changing demand and supply in the industry and the evolution of technology. The choice of service process delivery depends on many factors but understanding the context and nature of the service will give companies an insight into the classification process and operation. (Jauhari and Dutta 2009)

Service classification process helps determine the nature of operation of the service which is affected by different service processes;

#### 2.4.7 Degree of tangibility

The degree of tangibility has an impact on the way the service is operated, for instance a highly intangible service such as counseling will need to have some form of tangibility around it, such as physical evidence to create a feeling of trust in the consumers.

#### 2.4.8 Direct recipient

Depending upon whether the service user is a person or thing or both the process of service delivery will vary. For example a restaurant will target its offering to a person while a car service center will focus on repairs, pickup and guarantees.

#### 2.4.9 Place and time

Place and time also determine the service operation. For example in many developed countries where labor is expensive hotels and restaurants use food vending machines with different combination of food on display to serve its customers.

#### 2.4.10 Customization versus Standardization

The service also has to decide whether it wants to have a standardized offering for its customers or customization. Many service firms especially hotels and restaurants offer standardize service across different outlets worldwide while automobile companies offer customized services such as interior designing and molding of the external body of the car.

#### 2.4.11 Consumer relationship

The nature of the relationship between the service provider and the customer in relation to the amount of time spend also determine the nature of the service operations. A hair dresser would prefer to offer personalized service while a bank would prefer to automate its offerings wherever possible.

#### 2.4.12 Demand and Supply

In a marketing situation where there is equilibrium and fair competition, service companies are very careful with their offerings and the way they treat existing customers because the tendency of customers switching is very high. Firms have to be very flexible on how they manage their process. (Jauhari and Dutta 2009)

Service process increase and decrease simultaneously with profitability thus a positive customer experience is very important for profitability. Research has shown that many businesses across the service industry rely heavily on word-of-mouth recommendation for example hotels, Restaurants, parks, banks, automobile mechanics and insurance. To meet customer expectation companies need to implement a customer service process model for analyzing customer expectation and designing customer service. (File at al. 1992)

Developing an effective and successful customer service entails implementing a service blue print that documents the flow of services. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) "service blueprint visually displays the service by simultaneously depicting the process of service delivery, the point of consumer contact, the role of customers and employees, and the visible element of services". To build a service blue print the following steps are to be outlined; identify the

process to be blue printed, identify the customer or segment targeted, map the process from the customer's point of view, map contact employee actions onstage and backstage, link customer and contact person activities needed to support the functions and ask for evidence of service at each customer action step.

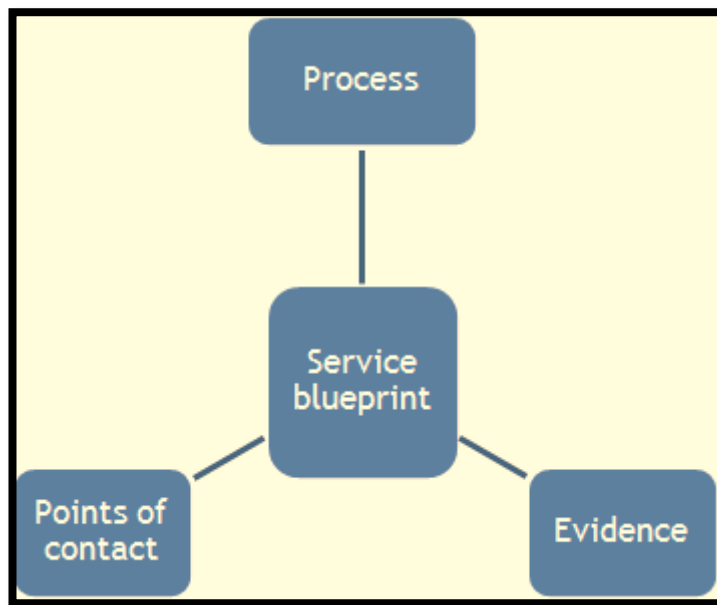


Figure 10: service Blueprint

The diagram above (figure 10) shows the relationship between the elements in the service blueprint process for a school restaurant. If the service blueprint is effectively implemented it brings clarity to the service delivery process, identify critical problems that can damage customer experience, provide hints on areas employees need to be trained, and put activities in their right perspectives. Thus, implementing an effective process and enhancing company's profitability. (Jauhari and Dutta 2009)

#### 2.4.13 Physical evidence

Services are produce and consume at the same time thus convincing customers of the quality of service prior to purchase is a difficult task for companies because of the intangible nature of service and the simultaneous production and consumption. The physical environment around services incorporates tangibility into services and can affect the perception of the consumer at the time of delivery especially in leisure and entertainment services such as restaurants, leisure parks, theatres and hotels. (Wakefield and Blodgett. 1994)

Customers are constantly looking for elements to determine a firm's capability to overcome the intangibility of services, therefore the environment in which the service is delivered, the point of interaction between the company and the customer and the performance or commu-

nication of the service represents the tangible context of service. The environment is very important because the experience you get from one source can create multiple and unexpected sensations, image and ideas which can be transmitted to the same brand in other areas. (Greenland and McGoldrick 2005)

Physical evidence comprise of many factors each of which has a different effect on consumer perception. Service are intangible but in many case require a physical object to verify it existence or completion for example when traveling with an airline the ticket confirms the service that the airline is going to provide and serves as an evidence of the service thus, making it very important for the tourism industry. Physical evidence in tourism helps to communicate message about differentiation, positioning, quality, and organizational values. The diagram below shows the relationship between physical evidence, customers and company.

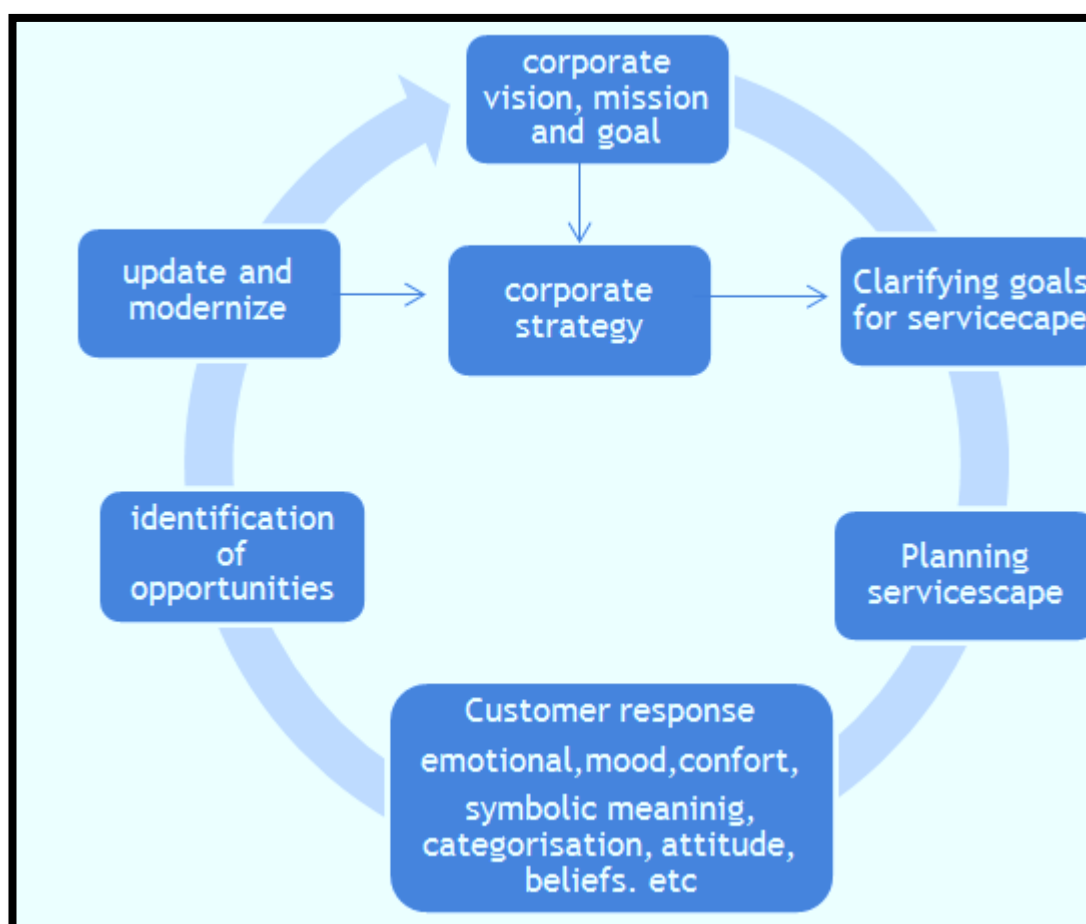


Figure 11: Strategic management of physical evidence

Service being intangible constantly creates problems for consumers who are consistently looking for clues to overcome it, and providers consistently try to achieve a positive customer experience thus, bringing together the location, atmosphere and image, consumer use, operations and the contact personnel perspective for designing the physical evidence. These ele-

ments within the physical evidence make it very significant as it communicates with customers and other marketing mix of the 7Ps. Strategic management of physical evidence allows the management to efficiently upgrade and modernize their facility with evolution and thereby effectively managing the service scope and influence consumer perception, decision, and satisfaction. (Jauhari and Dutta 2009)

### 3 Marketing communication

Tourism marketing strategy cannot be successful without an effective marketing communication program. To achieve a high level of customer response marketers need to constantly create awareness of their products, its benefits and advantages so as to create interest from their target market.

Effective marketing communication is the combination of different promotional activities and it is the core aim of promotion decisions. Companies combine various forms of promotional activities to effectively communicate specific message about the company and its products to targeted customers, channel partners, shareholders and the public. This communication mix consist of a blend of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and Public relation tools as seen in figure (12). (Hollensen, S. 2010)



Figure 12: Elements of marketing communication mix

### 3.1 Marketing communication mix

Marketing communication tools also referred to as “promotion mix” traditionally regarded to be sales promotion, advertisement, direct selling and public relation use to communicate with target audience. But the dynamism of the business environment has compelled companies to change their method of combination of the marketing mix from a mass communication campaigns to a more direct and highly targeted promotional activity using the marketing communication mix. (De Pelsmacker et al., 2001)

#### 3.1.1 Advertising

American marketing association defines advertising as “any paid non-personal presentation of ideas, goods or services to a targeted audience by an identified sponsor”. The definition explains three main features of advertising. It is non-personal implying the use of media to access large audience, secondly segmentation and target precedes advertising and finally identified sponsor which implies the brand name evident in the communication. (Middleton and Clarke, 2001)

The main objective of advertisement is to create awareness, inform, persuade and remind existing and potential customers about products and services. Therefore, comprising of two basic elements; the message(what a company want to say) and the medium(how the company want to get the message across). (Hollensen, S. 2010)

#### 3.1.2 Point of sale

These are any promotional materials that are displayed on company premises; it can be window display, printed materials, store broadcast and screen demonstrations. Many companies use point of sale materials to improve their brand image but these materials are short term and require being change periodically depending on the company and nature of the business. (Jobber and Fahy 2004)

#### 3.1.3 Sponsorship

It is a financial investment in some activity for example sport, in return for access to commercial potentials connected to with the activity. Companies promote interest for their brands by associating them with meaningful events or causes, to create awareness and promote positive message about the company and products. (Jobber and Fahy. 2004)

#### 3.1.4 Public relations

Public relations are various programs design to protect and promote the image of a company or its individual market offering. In the tourist industry public relation demonstrate goodwill between the tourist company and its stakeholders. The tourist industry makes use of public relation tools such as press release, press conference, newspaper, magazines and exhibition to keep in touch with its stake holders. (Kotler et al... 2010)

#### 3.1.5 Direct Marketing

Direct marketing target individual customers in a bit to build personal relationship with personalize message through the use of mail, telephone, fax, email or the internet. It is different from other forms of marketing because it attempts to build one-to-one relationship with customers by communicating with customers on a personal and direct basis. (Jobber and Fahy. 2004)

#### 3.1.6 Exhibition and trade fair

Exhibitions and trade fairs give companies the opportunity to bring their target audience from customer and business-to-business sector together in a competitive forum. These forums give companies the opportunity to network, sales lead, image building and information gathering. (Swarbrooke et al., 2001)

#### 3.1.7 Personal selling

It is a direct interaction between one or more prospective buyers either through face-to-face or video conferencing for the purpose of product presentation, answering question and procuring orders. (Kotler et al. 2010)

#### 3.1.8 Sales promotion

Sales promotions are set of short term incentives to encourage trial and purchase of a product or service. These incentives ranges from discounts to vouchers, and can be use independently or collectively to stimulate demand in the short term. (Kotler et al. 2010)

### 3.2 Marketing communication strategy



Combining the marketing communication tools within the marketing communication mix for a successful marketing campaign often varies with organizations and industries, leading to development of a push and pull strategy.

### 3.2.1 Push strategy

A push strategy embarks on a promotion campaign to stimulate distributors demand for a product, making use of internal sales force of the company. The producer promotes the product to the wholesaler, the wholesaler promotes to retailers and the retailers promote to the customers. Nokia is a good example they promote their mobile phones through retailers such as Giganti and Dna who intend promote to consumers. Push strategy most likely use the following promotional tool; personal selling, sales promotion and trade promotion.

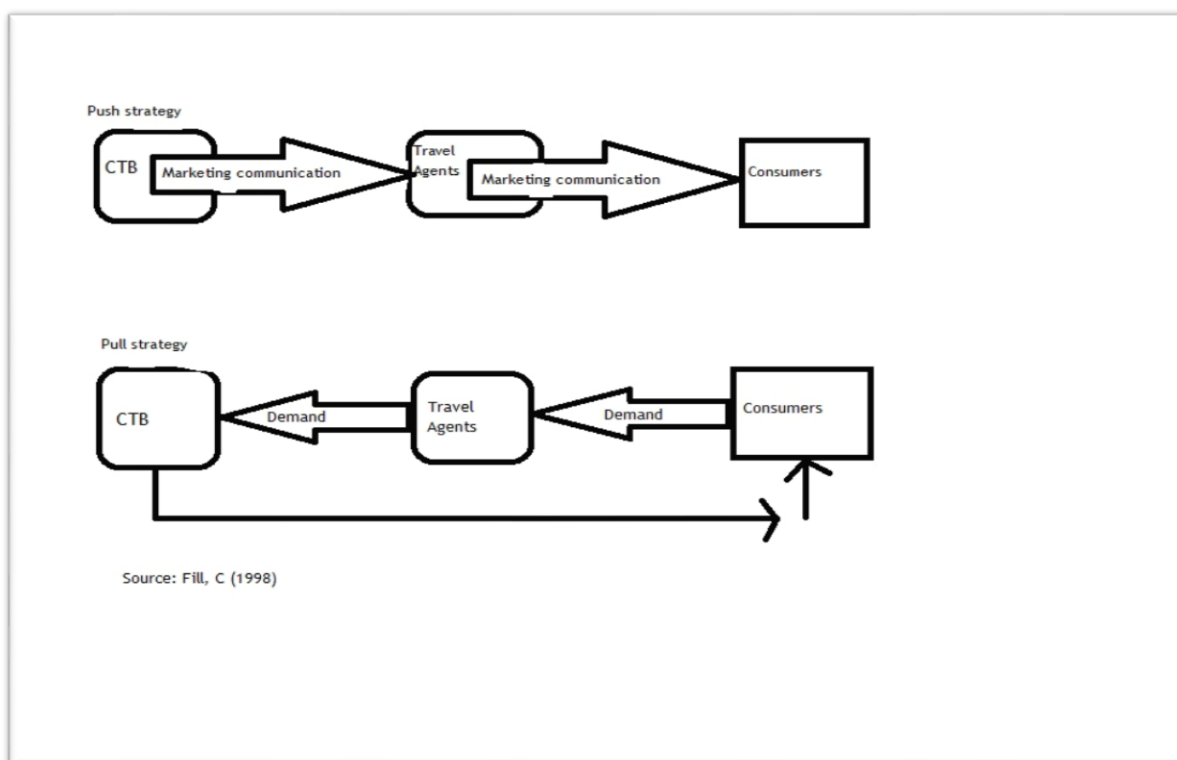


Figure 13: Push and Pull strategy

### 3.2.2 Pull strategy

Pull strategy is consumer focus the company is require to spend on advertisement and consumer promotion to build consumer demand for their products for both the short and long term. If this strategy is successful the consumer will ask the retailer for the product, the retailer will ask the wholesaler and the wholesaler will ask the producer.

## 4 Research Methodology

The study focuses on marketing which has become very essential for the growth of the Cameroon tourism industry. The tourism industry has failed to grow in recent years due to lack of promotion, neglect of tourist sites, infrastructures and poor services. The government of Cameroon has made a commitment of revamping the tourism industry in Cameroon as one of her top priority which will not only benefit the tourism industry but also the economy as a whole.

In this research, the researcher use qualitative research because the topic is more theoretical and focus on the main players in the industry rather than final consumers.

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the marketing situation of the Cameroon tourism industry, branding and define prospective opportunities in overseas markets.

### 4.1 Methods

The research was qualitative in nature and the information was mainly collected through interviews, observations and documents (previous research). Observation and interviews are usually collected in the form of field notes and audio recording and later transcribe into data analysis. (Morehouse and Maykut 1994, 46)

#### 4.1.1 Primary data

The primary data was collected through interviews with the main players in the industry. The research process begins by sending e-mails to the respondents to give them brief information about the subject to be discussed and a request for a convenient date and time for the interview.

#### 4.1.2 Secondary Data

The researcher makes use of materials that have been put together for other purposes but related to the research problem. The researcher made use of the library, books, business reviews, newspapers, magazines, computerized data, journals, reviews, articles and Cameroon ministry of tourism. The researcher had a vivid understanding of data collection and their limitations.

To keep in touch with up-to-date information the internet was used. Internet data collection was easy, fast and cheap, making the research flexible and convenient for the researcher. Despite the advantages of internet data retrieval, there is often the risk of validating the in-

formation received, thus, only formal websites from known organizations and newsgroups were used in the process of the research.

#### 4.1.3 Tertiary data

Tertiary data was got from dictionaries, Wikipedia, Cameroon tourist guide and statistics Cameroon. The tertiary data provided the research with general understanding of the facts, terminologies and concepts that are related in the field of tourism.

#### 4.2 Validity and Reliability

According to Collis and Hussey, 2009 a research is reliable when the researcher or someone else repeats the research and obtain the same results. It can also be validated by an external body for example a third party to whom the conclusion of the research can be applicable. Validity is very important in research because it represents what is happening in the real situation thereby given a clear understanding of the research. (Crestwell. 2004)

#### 4.3 Research Process

During the research four different groups of respondents were targeted for the thesis notably, Tour operators in Cameroon, tour operators in the UK, Cameroon tourist board and the Cameroon embassy in the UK. The researcher initial intention was to develop marketing communication plan for the Cameroon tourism board to the United Kingdom. The presumed Cameroon tourism board which is to be functional since 2010 is the Cameroon ministry of tourism. During interview with the officials from Cameroon tourism office in Paris and Quebec the researcher discovered it was the ministry of tourism's information office in Europe, thus the no independent tourism board. The researcher decided to focus the research on the ministry and tourism industry as whole because the lack of a tourism board, no branding and the unprofessional behavior of official is one of the main factors the industry is underdeveloped.

This change of course urges the researcher to focus on the main stakeholders within the industry in Cameroon thereby narrowing down the group of respondents to Tour operator, members of Cameroon diplomatic missions abroad and ministry officials charged with promoting tourism in Cameroon.

Through the website of Cameroon tourism office in Quebec Canada the researcher was able to get contact information and websites of tour operators in Cameroon. Emails were sent with background information about the research and request a date for interview. Out of 30 emails

sent only 20 replies were received, with no confirmed date for interview, but opted to answer via email which took 3 weeks on average after about 2 reminders from the researcher.

The researcher also contacted some of the tour operator via phone who did not reply to the emails. 2 respondents confirm they will answer the questionnaires and return them through email but did not do so before the end of the research.

Officials of the ministry of tourism were difficult to get on phone but through their secretaries I was able to secure an appointment and the interview was conducted via VoIP and immediately put into writing to avoid information loss.

All but one of the respondents decided to be anonymous, and the main challenges faced during the research was the difficulty to get in touch with stakeholders and the slow pace with which they responded to the questionnaires.

#### 4.4 Analysis of questionnaire

All the tour operators who answered the questionnaire gave very similar response without any contradictions, thus, the researcher decided to analyze the questionnaire on a general basis.

##### 4.4.1 Demographics

All the tour operators receive tourists from all over the world particularly Europe, Asia and North America. The main age groups are between 30-60 years of age with men constituting about 60% and women 40%, Thus signifying middle age, working class and probably families with very few coming from UK and majority from North America

##### 4.4.2 Marketing channels

All the tour operators rely on recommendation from former visitors and online marketing, thus no major partners in Europe, Asia and North America.

##### 4.4.3 Support

No financial, technical or human resource assistance has been given to any of the tour operators from both the public and the private sector. This asserts the fact of the insignificance of the industry in Cameroon.

#### 4.4.4 Authorities

Abuse of power by the police, customs and immigration officers, through bribery, corruption and harassment of tourists was a common experience by all the tour operators. This justifies the unprofessionalism of officials in the travel and tourism industry.

#### 4.4.5 Challenges

The main challenge facing the tour operators was competition especially from international tour operators who have partners in Africa. This justifies their lack of resources to compete with international tour companies.

#### 4.4.6 Observation

National marketing campaign, discount from national airline, opening of tourist office in destination countries and signing of contracts with foreign tour operators.

These points listed above indicate the need for government support for the growth of the industry.

### 5 Empirical studies

#### 5.1 Cameroon tourism industry

The tourism industry of Cameroon has been in existence since the 1970s instituted by the government to develop and market the tourism potential of Cameroon. Since its creation the industry has been growing slowly but relatively a minor industry.

Often referred to as “Africa in miniature” Cameroon has a rich diversity of culture, nature and wildlife. Located between west and central Africa in the Gulf of Guinea with a surface area of 475442 kilometer square, the country is home to 300 mammalian species, 849 bird species, 143 reptilian species, about 200 amphibian species, 542 fish species and about 9000 plant species. (Stuart et al., 1990)

In this regard the World Bank in 1997 ranked Cameroon as one of the 13 countries worldwide with the highest amount of biological diversity, while travel and tourism competitiveness report (TTCR) rank Cameroon 15 out of 130 countries in terms of concentration and number of total known fauna species.

Furthermore the rich biodiversity, varied topography, diverse cultural heritage, blend of traditional and colonial architecture, cuisine, music and football makes Cameroon a potential tourist destination. Politically stable since independence as compared to other African countries coupled with the friendliness of the people are primary factors that facilitate the development and growth of the tourist industry in Cameroon.

## 5.2 Cameroon tourist attractions

### 5.2.1 National parks

Cameroon has many national parks located all over the country

**Waza National Park:** Located in the far north of the country it is home to elephants, lions, giraffes, cobs, ostriches, antelopes, leopards, waterbuck and many varieties of bird species. It is the most famous in Cameroon and very popular in French Africa.

**Bouba Ndjida National park:** Situated in the north of the country it is home to Rhinos, lions, antelopes, elephants.

**Benoue National Park:** Located in the Centre of the northern region of the country, Contains lots of hippopotamus, antelopes, hyenas, panthers and it is the favorite location for the largest antelopes such as Lord Derby Eland.

**Faro National Park:** Located in the North of the country it is the best destination to spot a rhino, buffalo, elephants and giraffes.

**Kalamaloue National Park:** Situated in the Far North of the country is a perfect destination for botanic enthusiasts.

**Korup National Park:** Located in the south west region, it is a forest reserve known all over the world. Believe to have survived the ice age because of her wealth of flora and fauna makes it an ecological treasure.

**Lobeke National Park:** Located in the East of the country is a forest and animal reserve and is one of the gorilla sanctuaries in the country

**Campo Ma'an National Park:** Located in the south of the country boasts a rich variety of animal species such as elephants and chimpanzees taking advantage of the natural forest.

Mzoko Gokoro National Park: Endowed with exceptional varieties of plant and animal species. It is situated in the far north of the country.

#### 5.2.2 Discovery safari

The savanna in the north of the country favors the accommodation of the most wild and varied animal species in Africa, coupled with six national parks it is a perfect destination to discover African fauna. The dense forest in the south with long rivers that transverse the country makes it favorable to habit gorillas thus, this area represents the richness of Equatorial Africa.

#### 5.2.3 Flora

Cameroon is endowed when it comes to African botany from the forest in the south to the savanna in the north and desert in the extreme north gives the country the potential of harboring different kinds of plant species.

Furthermore the rich soil in the southwest region and the coastal areas of littoral is home to agro-tourism with large plantations of banana, tea, oil palm and sugar cane that dates back since the colonial era.

#### 5.2.4 Arts and culture

Cameroon is a cross road of African arts and culture, it is composed of 200 ethnic groups which makes up the unique art and cultural heritage of the country. Pygmies, Bantu, Sudanese, Arab-Berbers and others contribute to the mixture of the population with each group contributing its tradition, art, music and cuisine.

The craft industry derives its variety of sources from the numerous ethnic groups and large array of culture and tradition, thereby producing handy products such as masks, figurines, chains, bangles, statuettes, leather goods. The palace of the sultan of Bamoun famous throughout the world has a variety of rich and interesting collection which reflects the history of the Bamoun people. (Mbohoun, 2010)

#### 5.2.5 Ecotourism

Cameroon is blessed with lots of natural topography, and has conserved many sites such as mountains, lakes, waterfalls, caves, archaeological remains and many other projects to develop ecotourism.

Ebogo tourist site located in the Mbalmayo forest reserve is a good ecotourism destination with many activities such as canoe excursion, recreational fishing and discovering of various tropical species with a famous example of the over 300year old tree.

#### 5.2.6 Sports and Leisure

With 400km of coastline Cameroon is a favorable destination for seaside holiday and water sport. Having a considerable climate throughout the year, with black and white sandy beaches, availability of seaside resorts and well stocked water for fishing enthusiasts provides an interesting beach holiday.

Sport lovers have the opportunity to engage in golf, tennis, swimming which have well developed facilities in major cities in Cameroon.

#### 5.3 Cameroon inbound tourist data

<b>Arrival by country of origin: 2004-2009 '000 people</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Canada</b>	4.0	4.3	4.8	5.3	5.0	4.8
<b>Congo-Brazzaville</b>	8.3	9.5	11.3	12.4	12.8	13.0
<b>France</b>	52.8	58.2	62.2	65.2	67.3	68.2
<b>Germany</b>	7.8	8.2	8.7	9.1	9.3	9.4
<b>Italy</b>	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.1	5.7	5.2
<b>Netherlands</b>	7.1	7.6	8.1	8.7	8.2	7.8
<b>Russia</b>	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.7	1.9	2.0
<b>Sweden</b>	2.9	1.0	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.5
<b>Switzerland</b>	7.1	7.5	7.9	8.1	7.7	7.4
<b>United Kingdom</b>	8.3	8.9	9.3	9.8	9.5	9.3
<b>USA</b>	10.0	10.7	11.1	12.5	11.2	10.5
<b>Others</b>	105.0	123.5	141.2	158.7	165.7	169.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>217.9</b>	<b>246.3</b>	<b>273.1</b>	<b>299.0</b>	<b>305.7</b>	<b>308.1</b>

Table 4: Arrival by country of origin



Arrival by purpose of visit '000 people	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Business	87.2	98.6	109.8	121.6	123.8	125.1
Leisure	130.7	147.7	163.2	177.4	181.9	183.0
Total	217.9	246.3	273.1	299.0	305.7	308.1

Table 5: Arrival by purpose of visit

#### 5.4 Cameroon tourism trend

The Cameroon tourism industry has been a minor source of income for the economy since independence and has been neglected with slow growth and lack of investment. For the past decade the industry inbound tourism has been growing on an average of 1.5% despite the setbacks, but the industry inbound tourists surprisingly grew to about 45% in 2010 to pass the 500,000 limit set by the UNWTO to become a tourist destination probably due to the Pope visit and the campaign by the government to revive the sector.

There is great prospect for growth of the industry due to the fact that the government has realized the importance of the industry and has made it one of the pillars of the economy. With her enormous potentials, investment, promotion and continues peace and stability, will project the industry as one of the leading players in the African continent in the nearest future.

#### 5.5 Economic importance of tourism

Despite being a minor industry with low level of investment and promotion, the tourism industry of Cameroon still play a major role in the economy. In 2012 World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) ranked Cameroon 122 out of 181 countries in terms of absolute contribution to GDP, 139 for relative contribution, 160 for growth and 49 for long term growth. Even though the rankings are not encouraging for the industry but the 49 position out of 181 countries in terms of long term-growth show sign of optimism for the future.

WTTC estimates that travel and tourism contributed 2.6% (XAF 302.7bn) to gross domestic product (GDP) and 100,500 direct employments that is 2.2% of total employment. These contributions are expected to increase by 5.2% and 2.7% respectively by 2022.

Given that travel and tourism is linked to other sectors WTTC estimates that its total contribution to GDP in 2011 was 5.8% (XAF 675.4bn) generating 231,500 jobs amounting to 5.1% of

total employment. It is forecast that both contributions will increase by 5.2% and 2.6% respectively by 2022.

Furthermore investment in the tourism industry was estimated at 2.3% of total investment in 2011 and is expected to rise by 8.5% in 2012 and 4.6% over the next 10years. Visitors also played a big role in the growth of the sector, with their exports estimated at XAF 8.4bn amounting to 3% of total exports and is expected to grow by 7.9% in 2012 and by 5.9% in 2022 (XAF 162.8bn). (WTTC 2012)

## 5.6 Problems facing the Cameroon tourism industry

### 5.6.1 Non prioritization of the travel and tourism industry

The travel and tourism industry of Cameroon has always been a minor industry with the government actually recognizing the sector with a ministry status in 1989, 29 years after independence in 1960. Even after becoming a ministry it has always had one of the smallest budgets allocated to by the government. This neglect of the sector has adversely affected the industry by discouraging investments and lack of promotional campaign thereby, preventing growth of the sector.

### 5.6.2 Absence of a national tourism board

At the moment the marketing and promotion of Cameroon tourism is the responsibility of the ministry of tourism in corporation with other ministerial duties. The absence of a national tourism board for marketing and promoting Cameroon tourism product at home and abroad has hindered the growth of the industry because the ministry has no clear goals, mission, vision, plan, or any set target to achieve within a time frame.

### 5.6.3 Absence of a marketing plan

The ministry of tourism in Cameroon at the moment has no marketing plan in place, they have set goals but have no plan to reach them, and their tourist office in Europe and Canada are more of an information office with no plan in place, tour operators in Cameroon have to rely on recommendation from tourists who have visited Cameroon before and with little capital they cannot carry out marketing and promotional campaign in an industry which is not organized and coordinated thereby hindering the growth of the industry in Cameroon.

### 5.6.4 Poor and undeveloped ICT in Cameroon

Information technology has brought many innovations into the travel and tourism industry thereby making them complementary and difficult to succeed in the tourism industry with ICT. ICT development in Cameroon has been very slow with her facilities not up to date couple with poor and expensive telecommunication networks which most Cameroonians cannot afford. This slow development in ICT has hindered the growth of this industry because the incorporation of ICT and tourism in Cameroon is very poor, companies who are on the web have very poor websites, some are not functioning and others are not updated. the transport and accommodation sector is even the worst, over 80% of hotels and transport agencies are not on the web and tourist need all this information before making a decision on their long haul trips, and with trip advisor estimating that about 40% of Europeans who travel abroad book their trips online helps to explain why the industry receives fewer visitors from Europe despite her enormous tourism potentials.

#### 5.6.5 No branding

The ministry of tourism in Cameroon has not brand the tourism industry in Cameroon which is very essential for attracting tourist. In Africa if you talk of safari the thing that come in mind is Kenya, beach tourism we think of Gambia or Senegal but Cameroon cannot be associated with any feature, thus not good for attracting and marketing the industry thereby hindering the growth of the industry.

#### 5.6.6 Corruption and abuse of Power

Most of the tour operator's interview during the course of the research sited police harassment of tourists mainly for bribes, and also custom treatment of tourist at the airport on arrival, tarnish the reputation of the country and the industry as a whole. Many tour operators rely on word-of-mouth recommendation from their former customers and with such attitude from authorities will only hinder the progress of the industry.

#### 5.6.7 Lack of education

During the course of the research tour operator sited on lack professionalism of those working in the tourism industry in Cameroon most of whom have no formal training in the sector thus, leaving tourist unsatisfied with service provided which may cause them to hesitate from coming back or recommend the destination to friends and relatives.

#### 5.6.8 Limited Financial resources

Being a young and minor industry in Cameroon the ministry of tourism has to invest a lot in the various sector of the industry so as to be able to compete in the highly competitive tourism industry but an official from the ministry of tourism in Cameroon task with promoting Cameroon tourism said they developed a blue print on how to market the industry in 2002 but the government has not disbursed money to carry out the project and as of now it is still a theory. Lack of huge investment by the government, makes it difficult for the private sector to succeed and thereby preventing growth.

#### 5.6.9 Poor infrastructure

The infrastructures in Cameroon are in a very poor conditions, bad roads, poor communication network, unreliable electricity are some of the factors that plaque the industry making it difficult for tour operators to be on time and tourist to have a comfortable trip.

#### 5.6.10 Lack of national tourism

There is very limited national tourism in Cameroon. Cameroon has a lot of tourism potentials but the nationals have very little knowledge about their country, Standard of living is low with high unemployment making many unable to discover their own country but those who can afford prefer to travel abroad which helps to hinder the growth of the sector.

### 5.7 SWOT analysis

<p><b>STRENGTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Huge natural endowment</li> <li>• Cheap labor</li> <li>• Increase government interest</li> <li>• Political stability</li> <li>• Friendly population</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corruption and abuse of power</li> <li>• Poor infrastructure</li> <li>• No marketing campaign</li> <li>• Slow development in ICT</li> <li>• Hostile neighbors</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of ICT network cable from Europe to Africa</li> <li>• Revival of the national airline</li> <li>• Can build a good image from football success</li> <li>• Growing population of eco-tourists</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of information</li> <li>• Global economic crisis</li> <li>• Competition</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>

Table 6: SWOT analysis

## 5.8 Strength

### 5.8.1 Huge natural endowment

Cameroon is naturally blessed with huge amount of touristic potentials which range from beaches, forests, wildlife, fauna, flora, sports, leisure, ecotourism and arts and culture as explain above (Cameroon tourist potentials).

### 5.8.2 Cheap labor

There is cheap and abundant labor which the industry has at her disposal to grow and sustain the market. Unemployment is about 30% with a minimum wage of 48€ a month and the possibility of hiring labor on short term basis thus, given the young industry the opportunity to minimize cost and maximized profit.

### 5.8.3 Increase government interest

Since independence the government has always shown less interest in the tourism sector which contributed to the slow growth of the industry, but since 2002 the government has embarked on different policies to revival the sector such as setting new laws for the sector, re-evaluating accommodations, ordering the creation of a tourism board, signing diplomatic agreements such as ADS (China approved destination status), attending tourism shows in Europe. These incentives help to boost the industry and encourage the private sector thereby growth in both the short term and the long term.

### 5.8.4 Political stability

Cameroon has witness political stability since in independence in 1961. This stability has led to the development of modern infrastructure and diversified economy which has laid the foundation for growth of the tourism sector thus given investor's confidence for long term investment and tourists guarantee security.

### 5.8.5 Friendly population

Cameroon has diverse population with different ethnic groups, culture, traditions and religion, given her a very unique and colorful blend. These rich cultures and tradition which are greatly influence by religion has instill in the Cameroon people the sense of respect, love,

kindness, hospitality and friendliness thus, given tourists a wonderful time every visit they make to Cameroon and also a great asset for the tourism industry as a whole.

## 5.9 Weakness

### 5.9.1 Corruption and abuse of power

Cameroon is one of the most corruption countries in the world and has once been the most corrupt. Many years of corruption has change the mentality of many Cameroon who believe you have to bribe before obtaining any official document, and officials have seen corruption as a means to enriched themselves and will abuse their power to achieve their objectives especially within the police, custom and taxation officers thereby, discouraging economic growth. This has scared people from investing in the tourism industry which is young and very competitive thereby making the supply side of tourism unable to meet up with tourist expectations, and the tourists on the other hand are frequently harassed for bribes by corrupt officials which tend to give them a bad experiences and also a negative recommendation of the destination, which is the main source of marketing at the moment for the industry, thus, affecting the travel and trade industry in Cameroon as a whole.

### 5.9.2 Poor infrastructure

The tourism industry is being supported by other services such as transport, accommodation, communication, restaurants, electricity which are under develop in Cameroon. The transport networks are in a very bad condition and poorly maintain making it difficult for tourists to easily access touristic sites and meet up with time which is very important for both the tourists and the tour operators, making it difficult to plan and meet up with schedules, and the other sectors facilitating tourism in Cameroon are not reliable, poorly maintain and bad services thus, giving tourists an uncomfortable time during their trip and a negative image for the industry.

### 5.9.3 No marketing campaign

The organization, marketing and promotion of the Cameroon tourism industry is carryout by the ministry of tourism which has until date no marketing campaign for the tourism industry of Cameroon. Tour operators and agents rely on word of mouth marketing from previous visitors making it difficult for them to succeed in the highly competitive industry and from competitors like Kenya, Gambia, and South Africa who are constantly carrying out extensive marketing campaign for their tourism industry thereby affecting the growth and development of the tourism industry in Cameroon.

#### 5.9.4 Slow development of ICT in tourism

ICT has transform tourism and the innovation of service delivery within the industry making it difficult for the tourism industry to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century without ICT. ICT development in Cameroon is slow, unreliable and expensive for average Cameroonians and startups, making it difficult for SMEs within the industry to stay on the web. This has adversely affected the industries since about 40% of tourist from Europe and North America within the past five years booked their trips online and another 40% through agents and tour operators most of whom are online therefore, making it difficult for the Cameroon tourism industry to gain a foot hole in the tourism market with low level of ICT development and integration in tourism.

#### 5.9.5 Hostile neighbors

Cameroon has enjoyed relative peace since independence but is located in a very hostile zone with frequent instability in neighboring countries like Nigeria, Chad and Central African Republic making it a danger zone for tourists and discouraging them from discovering other countries in the region categorizing all of them as hostile. This insecurity has discouraged many visitors to the region as compared to the north, east and southern parts of Africa thereby, affecting the growth of the tourism in Cameroon.

### 5.10 Opportunities

#### 5.10.1 Development of ICT networks in West Africa

Cameroon stands to gain from the development of the WACS (West African cable system) cable which connects Europe, West Africa and ends in South Africa. The new link is a series of submarine cable which are aimed at an internet explosion in Africa a continent where only 9.6% of people are internet users as compare to 65% in Europe. This project will increase access to the web by local people, reduce the costs for telecommunication, and more efficient and reliable services, given the tourism industry in Cameroon the opportunity to innovate and be more competitive

#### 5.10.2 Revival of the national airline

In an effort to boost the tourism industry of Cameroon the government decided to invest in the defunct Cameroon airline which had gone to bankruptcy and is presently showing some positive results for growth and financial solvency. The growth of the airline will help to transport tourists to Cameroon at affordable prices and give the industry the opportunity to

coordinate their services between the travel and tourism sector of the industry to meet customers' expectations.

#### 5.10.3 Football success

Cameroon is known internationally through her football, with numerous successes in and out of Africa the most significant was the 1990 world cup and has successfully build a reputable image in the world of football which is the most popular sport in the world at the moment. This rich history of football in the country can be used as a platform to market the tourism industry and prove to the world that there is more in Cameroon other than football.

#### 5.10.4 Growing population of ecotourism

Global warming is a serious issue of the 21<sup>ST</sup> century which is very evident in our day to day life. Governments, human right groups and the international community is calling for everyone to participate in the fight against climate change thus, given rise to ecotourism. In a bit to join the fight against global warming, increasing number of tourist prefer to visit natural destinations that have not been exploited by man so as to conserve it for future generation accounting for about 20% in 1998 and an annual growth rate of 4.1% (WTO 2007). Cameroon hugely endowed with nature and biodiversity most of which are still virgin has an advantage to gain a market share in the growing population of eco-tourists.

#### 5.10.5 Education in tourism

The government campaign to boost the tourism industry in Cameroon led to the creation of a department of tourism at the University Of Yaoundé 1, to educate student with professional skills in tourism and hospitality management, aimed at helping the industry to become professional and understanding consumers dynamics to become more competitive in the long term.

### 5.11 Threats

#### 5.11.1 Lack of information

Cameroon is a great tourist destination with huge tourism potentials and relative peace and stability but this information is still to be known in the outside world making it difficult for the industry to succeed in the highly competitive market, thus difficult for the industry to grow with little knowledge about the destination.



### 5.11.2 Economic crisis

The global financial crisis that affected the global economy since 2008 has left many people without jobs, under employment and uncertainty, making consumers to cut on their spending and save for the future. This has affected the Cameroon tourism industry which relies on tourists from Europe and North America most of whom prefer to take short haul trips than long haul trip to Cameroon, making the industry to suffer during these tough economic times.

### 5.11.3 Competition

The tourism industry of Cameroon has as its greatest challenge to face the stiff competition posed by her competitors in Africa, the likes of Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Botswana have a well-established tourism sector which has been branded and market through coordinated and strategic marketing campaigns making them the fastest growing destinations in the continent. For the Cameroon tourism industry to compete with these countries without any branding or marketing campaign will be very difficult for the industry to succeed.

### 5.11.4 Media

The western media is not helping the tourism industry of Africa as a whole and Cameroon in particular because most of the time the media spread only the negative news coming out of Africa, despite the fact that there is the good side and the bad side of Africa. During the research the researcher discovered that most people from other continents have a negative image about Africa but know little or nothing about the continent. To convince tourist about this stigma is a difficult task each and every African country need to go through to market their tourism industry and Cameroon tourism face an even more difficult task because it is new and unknown in the industry.

## 6 Competitors analysis'

The tourism industry has grown rapidly within the last decade with huge investments to meet consumers' expectations and become competitive. This growth has led to major players within the continent like Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Kenya, Mauritius, Botswana and South Africa, and also fierce competition, making it difficult for new comers like Cameroon to face a difficult task to attract tourists. These destinations primary invest directly or indirect in the destination countries of their tourists. South Africa for example invites the press from their target destinations to visit their country, so that they can spread their experiences in the media of their respective countries so as to educate their population about South Africa and attract

visitors from those destinations. The countries of the northern Maghreb Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco are in partnership with international tour operators such as Thomas cook, Thomson. These tour operators market their destination in their home countries and provide package trips to Maghreb in collaboration with the local industry.

To stay competitive most of the governments of these countries adopt policies within the industry to facilitate growth and sustainability of the industry, Tanzania reduce visa processing time by given tourists the opportunity to obtain a visa at the port of entry thus, reducing administrative burden burdening in the industry. Governments also secure and manage national assets in a social and environmentally responsible way so as to protect the long term value of the industry, this can be seen in Egypt where the government is in control of the pyramids and the beaches.

Pricing is the biggest tool for competition especially in the short run and it is not affected only by the cost of the overall tourism package but also by innovation, technology and entrepreneurial management. Looking at the competition of tourism in Africa the top ten ranked countries in tourism are countries that have embrace innovation, incorporate technology in their tourism and adopt an entrepreneurial management approach. These countries design their service flow between their travel, tourism and communication industries which eventually leads to minimization of costs and lower price for offering which their competitors cannot afford, given them an edge in the industry.

For Cameroon tourism entering into this market where her competitors have invested heavily, and pose some difficult challenges. The Cameroon ministry of tourism should use a niche marking strategy with product differentiation and targeting to give her a competitive edge since she cannot compete with the top tourist destinations in Africa at the moment.

## 7 Findings

The Cameroon ministry of tourism and leisure (Mintour) is under the slogan “All of Africa in one country”. The main activities of the ministry are; setting up tourism strategies and development plans, identifying and promoting touristic sites, training in the area of tourism and hotel trade, setting standards in hotel trade and catering as well as controlling tourism establishments, promoting internal tourism, drafting bills related to tourism and creating relation between the government, national and foreign tourist organizations. (MINTOUR)

The marketing of Cameroon tourism is handled by the department in charge promotion of tourism and touristic sites at MINTOUR. Marketing and promotion is done national and international. Internationally MINTOUR has 2 offices abroad, one in Paris France and another in

Quebec Canada with the responsibility of creating awareness, providing necessary information for prospective tourists, distribute flyers and provide information of tour operators in Cameroon. Nationally tourism is promoted through the regional offices of MINTOUR.

MINTOUR promote tourism by negotiating agreements with foreign organizations, sponsor foreign tour operators in destination countries to Cameroon and attend trade fairs and conferences abroad.

The private sector is control about 70% of the supply tourism. They market their services through word-of-mouth recommendation and the internet. Majority of the service providers have no professional training in the field of tourism and hospitality management; thus, poor coordination of services across the sector. Most of the established websites for tour operators in Cameroon are not constantly updated, emails are not replied in time or at all and some telephone numbers are not valid.

Public officials like the police, customs and embassy officials are not helping to promote the industry. Police and customs harass and collect bribes from tourists and tour operators, while the embassy is slow with visa procedures.

## 8 Conclusion

Based on interviews conducted and information gathered during the research, Cameroon tourism is growing at a very slow pace of about 2%, because of lack of a tourism board, no marketing plan, no branding and unprofessionalism within the sector.

For the Cameroon tourism industry to create awareness and market its touristic potentials broad, the need for a tourism board which will be mandated with certain tasks within a period of time is inevitable, while the ministry should play a supervisory role. The role of MINTOUR is too wide and not specific making it difficult for the industry to record positive results.

As part of a marketing process, Cameroon should promote cooperation with overseas travel agents and tour operators. To strengthen this cooperation, foreign tour operators, agents and the press should be invited to Cameroon, so as to give them a good knowledge and familiarity of the offerings; thus, establishing strong relationship and trust. The future growth of Cameroon tourism depends on awareness of touristic potentials and offerings, marketing materials should be produced in languages of destination countries for easy flow of information.

## 8.1 Recommendation/ communication plan

Recommendations are based on theoretical review and analysis of questionnaire. MINTOUR can implement different growth and communication strategies to formulate a good marketing communication plan. MINTOUR should create a Cameroon tourism board to oversee the marketing and promotion for her tourism products. Potential destination market should be identified, and followed with effective marketing and communication plan. Cooperation should be established with international tour operators like Thomas Cook and Thomson. Regional cooperation with other neighboring countries will be very exciting for potential tourists.

As Cameroon has 2 tourist offices abroad, Cameroon will need more tourism and promotion offices abroad especially in potential destination country. This can be achieved by opening new tourist offices, using the cultural and tourism section of embassies and consulates, chamber of commerce abroad or using intermediaries. To minimize cost Cameroon should entrust some firms in destination countries to develop marketing and promotion strategy at the first stage of entering the market. The diagram below divides the potential markets in 2 major groups.

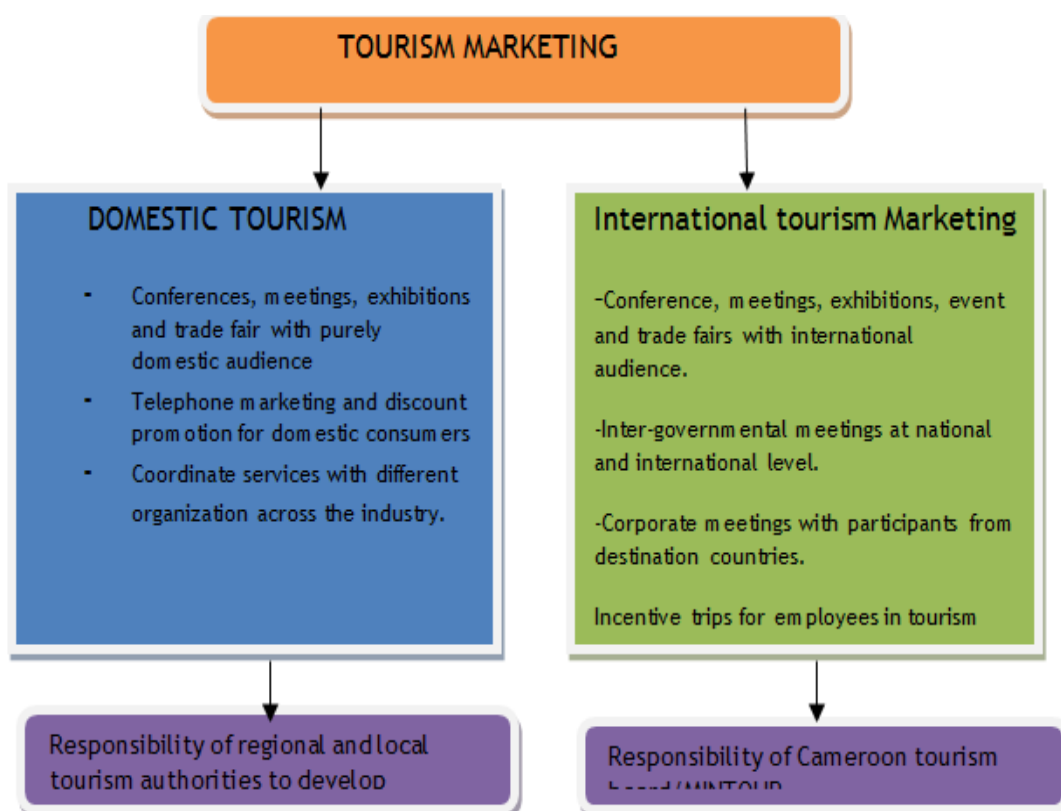


Figure 14: Cameroon tourism markets

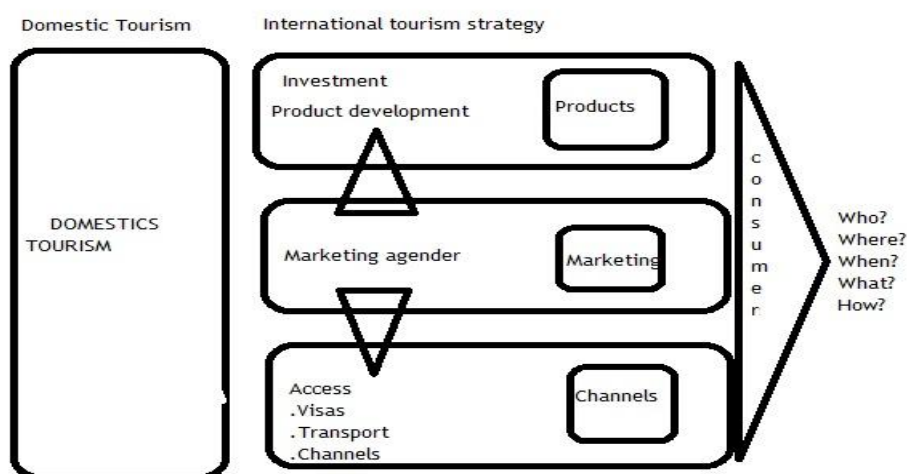


Figure 15 Cameroon tourism marketing plan

## 8.2 People strategy

People management is very essential for tourism marketing mix especially those involve with direct encounter with the tourists. The Cameroon ministry tourism should regulate the industry such that workers are cater for by their employers in addition to having job security, thereby motivating them to put their best performance for the good of the industry as a whole. Tourism products are either rented or consume during production therefore a bad interaction between the service provider and the tourists will significantly affect satisfaction and experience. Staffs satisfaction and motivation determines the degree to which tourism products are either accepted or rejected in the host country.

## 8.3 Place strategy

Place or distribution channels in tourism are the medium of exchange through which tourist book, reserve and pay for their tourism product. The nature of tourism products provides the need for intermediaries such as tour operators, agents and internet since the point of sale is not necessarily the point of consumption thus, being redundant in terms of marketing. However the Cameroon ministry of tourism should market Cameroon through the listed representatives or tour agents abroad with printed brochures and materials about Cameroon tourism and service providers. (Rowey, 1998)

#### 8.4 Promotion strategy

Promotion in tourism is the way organizations effectively communicate with their target audience. Promotion can be in different form such as advertising, brochure, public relation, sales promotion, direct mail, point of sale materials and sponsorship. Most of the tour operators in Cameroon do not have the financial resources to carry out promotion campaign so the ministry of tourism in Cameroon has to promote the industry with a combination of different forms of promotion.

Tourism is a complex service and choosing a method of promotion will depend on the type of product, aim of the campaign and marketing characteristics but for the Cameroon tourism industry, press and public relation can be the most favorable technique to create awareness and increase demand while given the individual service providers opportunity to market their specific products to the new customers.

#### 8.5 Price strategy

Pricing is a very important feature in any organization when marketing products and services. In tourism companies charge a price that strikes a balance between their financial ambitions and the needs and wants of their target customers. But pricing is affected by many factors some of which companies have no control over such as, legal and regulatory laws, competition and costs. Therefore, government and the ministry of tourism in Cameroon have to step in, to assess how they can assist the industry to reduce costs through regulations, policies, subsidies and investment.

Consumers in the tourism industry are very price sensitive and will like to see a link between price and service quality. This put the Cameroon tourism in a difficult situation since flights from outside the continent are very expensive making package trips more expensive in Cameroon than Tunisia, Egypt and Kenya. The ministry needs to examine the industry so as to help the local service providers to compete in the market.

#### 8.6 Process strategy

Positive customer experience is the key to profitability in tourism, making the process a very significant part of the service. Service process is very significant because it offers the process of delivery of the product or service and gives the customer the chance to interact with the service employees or self-service equipment.

Since the Cameroon ministry of tourism does not provide the final services it can regulate the industry by setting standards that service providers need to follow, issue licenses and routinely check if the standards are maintained, by so doing the ministry can maintain high standards and long term value for the industry which will provide positive customer experience and profitability.

### 8.7 Products strategy

Tourism products are not tangible they are either rented or consumed during production, thus service providers need to keep changing and updating their service to meet customers' needs. Cameroon has much tourism potential and different tourist attractions making it difficult to brand her industry. Branding defined by American marketing association as "A name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from competitors".

Cameroon tourism having different tourism products without focus on any particular product which the industry can be identified with makes it difficult for the industry to attract tourists. The Cameroon ministry of tourism should examine the different tourist attractions in the country and focus on one to create a brand image so as to build an element of trust with customers.

### 8.8 Physical evidence strategy

Physical evidence in tourism is the physical environment around the service which is owned by different organizations. Services are intangible, physical evidence makes the offer tangible away from the place of consumption especially at point of sale to help influence purchase. Beautiful hotels, parks, museums add tangible value to tourism which influences price and demand. (Middleton and Clarke, 2001)

Physical evidence in tourism is used to communicate message of differentiation, positioning, quality and help in the service delivery process. The Cameroon ministry of tourism needs to regulate the industry such that consumers are not deceived with non-existing or low quality physical evidence so as to preserve the reputation and image of the industry.

### 8.9 Segmentation strategy

The Cameroon tourism industry is still a new comer in the tourism business and as such, should try and avoid direct competition with major players in the market. For her to succeed in potential tourist destination markets, these markets need to be segmented into different

segments such as, age groups, income, and sex. The segments should be examine in relation to costs, competition, channels, competence and availability of resources, after which the best segment will be targeted with different marketing and promotion campaigns. Niche marketing will be the best option for Cameroon with limited resources and development. Specializing in beach and safari tourism will not be a good idea for Cameroon tourism because of competition, ecotourism will be a better niche strategy for Cameroon tourism and a will give MINTOUR a better idea to segment its potential market.

## 9 Suggestions

The Cameroon tourism industry is lacking behind compared to her competitors in Africa and other industries in Cameroon. During the process of the research some of the challenges facing the industry were examined, which led to these proposed suggestions and recommendations.

### 9.1 Placing more importance to the tourism industry by the government

The tourism industry of Cameroon is very insignificant as compared to other industries with one of the smallest budget when compared to other ministries in the country (MINTOUR 2012). Thus with limited financial and human resources neither the ministry of tourism or the private stakeholders were able to attend international tourism fairs on a regular basis until 2008 which are proven to be very effective environment for networking and partnership for countries like Kenya, Tanzania, and Senegal (Mintel Report, 2007a, 2007b). Placing more priority in the industry will see the government and the ministry takes an effective leadership and branding of the industry giving the private sector the opportunity to expand the industry and create more jobs and contribute more to Cameroon GDP.

### 9.2 Creation of a national tourism board

The creation of the Cameroon national tourism board that was announced by the prime minister in 2009 is yet to go functional (prime ministry of Cameroon, 2009). The national tourism board should be responsible for destination marketing, promotion and networking for the private sector since most of them do not have the financial resources and reputation. The tourism board will be more effective as compared to the ministry because they will be focus on marketing, promotion and branding the destination since most local tour operators do not have the capability to internationalize. In addition to the national tourism board the defunct regional and divisional tourism board which were functional until the late 1980s responsible for organizing tourism in different regions, should be reinstated. When established the national tourism board with offices in target destination markets and the regional offices should



be fully empowered, independent from the government and provided with the necessary financial and technical resources necessary for marketing and managing Cameroon as a destination.

The national tourism board will be responsible for strategy planning, product development, information collection, R&D and development of infrastructure and support services for tourists in the various regions and over sea target markets. (Fyall and Wanhill, 2008)

### 9.3 Implementation of a brand strategy

Cameroon tourism industry has no brand image or association as compare to some of her competitors in Africa. In sub-Sahara Africa, when safari is mention Kenya and Tanzania come in mind thereby making them unique, but apart from football Cameroon cannot be identify with any tourism association despite her unique advantage of being Africa's "miniature" (Kimbu, 2010b). Aaker's 1991 salient observation that "people will often buy a familiar brand because they are comfortable with the familiar" (P. 19)

The ministry of tourism should assess Cameroon tourism potentials and identify what makes Cameroon unique, followed by sensitizing stakeholders about the importance of the brand and their involvement in making it a success. The brand should be represented by a logo that encapsulates some of the main qualities of the country. After the logo is successfully created the ministry should appoint officials probably from the Cameroon tourism board to develop, manage and coordinate relation between the brand and stakeholders. The brand should be promoted by respected individuals from the society with enough recognition from both the private and public sector thereby giving the industry the necessary patronage it needs. (Kotler and Gertner, 2004).

### 9.4 Sensitizing officials in the travel tourism industry

All the tour operators interview during the research were dissatisfied with the poor behavior and unprofessional attitude of most officials in the travel and tourism industry notably police, customs and immigration officers. These officials who are at the airports, checkpoints and border crossings represent the nation and abusing their powers, tarnishing the image of the country and the tourism industry that rely mostly on recommendations.

The government and the ministry of tourism should organize sensitization campaign to educate officials of the negative effects to the image of the country and the tourism industry. Tough punishment should be drafted for those who go against the law and the government

should installed video surveillance cameras on public places such as airports, border crossings, and check points so as to limit the unprofessional behavior of officials.

#### 9.5 Emphasis on ICT in marketing tourism

During the research, the researcher found little information about Cameroon on the internet and particularly for the tourism industry. Most of the private stakeholders are not on the web and those who are present are still on the primary stages, their information is not regularly updated, thus living potential tourist with very little information about the destination. This is very bad for Cameroon since according to IPK International's (European travel monitor) in 2006, 45% of European outbound travelers used the internet as the main source of information, 20% through travel agencies and 17% through recommendations from relatives and friends.

This slow development is a major setback for the industry as a whole. The ministry of tourism should develop a national web portal for tourism in Cameroon, organize workshops to train private tour operators on how to use and incorporate ICT in tourism marketing, encourage tour operators to upgrade their websites and provide basic information about Cameroon travel and tourism industry. This will provide more information about the industry and will attract more tourists and investors to the sector.

#### 9.6 Tourism education

According to Albert Kimbu 2011, 50% of those employed in the travel and tourism industry had no formal training and most of the trained staff got their training in house. It more evident with MINTOUR confirming that about 80% of tour operators were former ticketing agents who switched to the tourism operation business. Thus, their services are bound to be of low quality.

Furthermore, with respect to few professional institutions offering tourism management the government until 2009 had no course or program in tourism in all six state universities and professional institutions across the country. The government should institute programs in tourism across the country with the curriculum focused on the tourism industry of Cameroon and also shift from the focus on hospitality management to destination management, marketing and promotion. For the short run the ministry should organize forums and conferences to educate industry stakeholders on hospitality, management, marketing and promotion of the industry.

### 9.7 Target destination markets with a marketing plan

The Cameroon ministry of tourism has two offices abroad one in Paris France and the other in Quebec Canada. These offices provide information about Cameroon tourism and tourist guides to potentials tourists. With no marketing agenda, mission or vision, these offices are more of an information centre rather than a promotion tool for the industry.

The ministry of tourism should identify target markets in the Europe, Asia and America. Segment the market, choose a target group of customers and develop products to suit their needs in collaboration with local stakeholders. To make this possible the ministry can start operating with Cameroon embassies in those target destinations so as to minimize cost and speed up visa procedures for potential tourists and private investors. This will best be carry out by the Cameroon tourism board which is still to be operational.

### 9.8 Promote national tourism

Cameroon is endowed with lots of tourism potentials. Making her a great natural tourism destination but Cameroonians are still to discover their own country. National tourism is very limited, with high unemployment and low incomes most Cameroonians cannot afford to visit other parts of their country. But this is often contradictory because the relation between the lower incomes and the consumption of alcohol which according to WHO (world health organization) is 7.57 liters per capita amongst adult age 15+, does not demonstrate a correlation.

The ministry of tourism in cooperation with the local community should sensitize the people of the importance of tourism to their health, advise them of the dangers of alcohol to the body and urge them to divert their leisure time from drinking to tourism.

If national tourism is successful the industry will be more interesting and will attract more investment thereby, leading to competition and increase in quality of service provided by the industry thus, becoming more competitive in the international tourism market.

Finally the tourism industry in Cameroon is lacking behind when compare to her competitors in Africa but the industry is growing slowly but steadily with the recent government interest in the sector. Implementing the suggestions explain above is not going to an easy task, and they cannot be implemented overnight. The government and the ministry should take a step by step approach to implement these policies but focus should be concentrated on branding the industry, incorporating ICT technology in tourism, creating of a tourism board and educating officials in the travel and tourism industry. These majors will project Cameroon as an attractive tourist destination and make her competitive in both the short and long term.

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## Figures

Figure 1: Structure of the research process.....	9
Figure 2 A simple model of marketing process .....	10
Figure 3: Strategic Brand management process .....	17
Figure 4: Basic Market Patterns .....	19
Figure 5: Segmentation Process .....	22
Figure 6: Five Patterns of Market selection .....	23
Figure 7 4Ps of marketing mix .....	26
Figure 8: Tourism Distribution Channels .....	30
Figure 9 Link between employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction and profitability	33
Figure 10: service Blueprint .....	35
Figure 11: Strategic management of physical evidence.....	36
Figure 12: Elements of marketing communication mix .....	37
Figure 13: Push and Pull strategy .....	40
Figure 14: Cameroon tourism markets .....	59
Figure 15 Cameroon tourism marketing plan .....	60

## Tables

Table 1: Segmentation variables .....	20
Table 2: Tourism marketing mix .....	27
Table 3: Relationship of price to consumer perception of quality for major airline.	29
Table 4: Arrival by country of origin.....	47
Table 5: Arrival by purpose of visit .....	48
Table 6: SWOT analysis .....	51

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Qustionnaire.....	72
Appendix 2: Responses to Questions.....	73
Appendix 3: Email from tourism bureau .....	76
Appendix 4: Pictures .....	78



## Appendix 1: Questionnaires

Research for the Cameroon tourism board on how to market Cameroon tourism to UK

### Questions for **Cameroon Tour operators**

1. What are your inbound tourist demographics (sex, age, region and others)?
2. What are the main interest of your incoming tourists (tourist attractions, leisure, sun, nature, wildlife, art and culture and others)?
3. What are your main marketing channels/partners abroad (and why, any in UK)?
4. Do you receive any support from the government or private sector for the growth of your business?
5. How do the authorities like the police, embassy, customs etc. affect your work in Cameroon?
6. What are the factors that can make tourists not to return or not come to Cameroon?
7. What are some of the challenges you face in the tourism business in Cameroon?
8. What changes will you like to see to promote the tourism industry of Cameroon to UK?

#### 1. The **Cameroon embassy**

- Does the embassy or consulate in anyway promote the tourism industry of Cameroon in Germany?
- How do German nationals obtain visas to Cameroon (via agents, tour operator, by themselves or other)?
- What are the visitors demographics to Cameroon from Germany (age, sex, leisure, business and others)
- Is there any cooperation between stakeholders in Cameroon, Germany and the embassy or consulate in promoting the Cameroon tourism industry in Germany?
- What changes would you personally like to see from both the public and the private sector for the growth of the tourism industry in Cameroon?

Appendix 2: Responses to Questions

## **GLOBAL BUSH TRAVEL AND TOURISM AGENCY**

### **DOUALA CAMEROON**

1. Our Tourist demographics are Men and Women of ages 30 – 60 years with Children as well. We mostly get our Tourist from almost all the continents especially; Europe, America, Asia and Africa but rarely from Australia.
2. Their interests are; Cameroons Arts, Cultures and Traditions, Safari, Nature and Wildlife, Ecotourism, Beach Vacations (Leisure).
3. Our marketing channels are, Representatives and Partners Abroad (with none in the UK), networking/online communications, Brochures, Posters and Fliers.
4. We do not have any support either from Government, Private sectors or Sponsors we depend only on our Opening up Capital.
5. With the Police they don't make Tourist comfortable because they are not well cultured, well coming and lack polite manners. They collect bribe and that makes Tourist to complain and criticize them.  
Customs too do take bribe and ask most Tourists to pay huge amount of money for things that are not payable and at the end the money collected those not go into Government coffers.  
With the Embassies there are neither difficulties nor problems for the tourist when demanding Visas to Cameroon.
6. Tourists might decide not to come back either because on their first Tour they fell into the Hands of Bad or Fake Tour Agents who did not offer them the tour products as desired or proposed. Equally the Police can cause a Tourist not come back for a visit in Cameroon. Bad Roads as well in some regions can be a cause.
7. Our one and main challenge is Competition with other Tour operators in the country and even international tour operators.
8. We would like the government to promote the tourism industry in the UK by opening branch offices and having representative who can facilitate our work by getting and signing contract with other tour operators which will go a long way to facilitate and assist our work.

Research for the Cameroon tourism board on how to market Cameroon tourism to UK

Questions for X

1. What are your inbound tourist demographics (sex, age, region and others)?

**Our tourists are about 60% male and 40% female**

**The most represented age-group is between 30 – 50 years**

**They mainly come from northern America (U.S. & Canada), and France**

2. What are the main interest of your incoming tourists (tourist attractions, leisure, sun, nature, wildlife, art and culture and others)?

**Our tourists are mainly interested by (in order of preference) wildlife, arts & culture, tourist attractions, nature and leisure**

3. What are your main marketing channels/partners abroad (and why, any in UK)?

**Our main marketing channels are our former tourists, and marketing on the internet. We are still in the process of developing partnerships, but none is in sight at this time in the UK.**

4. Do you receive any support from the government or private sector for the growth of your business?

**We receive commissions from the hotels with which we work.**

5. How do the authorities like the police, embassy, customs etc. affect your work in Cameroon?

**Embassies usually do their work, but tourists are always complaining that the process is very slow.**

**The police has been for long very embarrassing, I could not help laughing each time police officers will stop our bus, collect passports from our tourists then complain that the stamp is fake or something of that sort. But nowadays, things are improving with the suspension of police control.**

**We have not encountered any problem with the custom yet.**

6. What are the factors that can make tourists not to return or not come to Cameroon?

**First time comers are usually very concerned about safety, and Cameroon's position in central Africa, which "is not often" stable, tends to discourage first-time comers.**

**The great majority of tourist who have visited Cameroon show their desire to come back someday, unless they have gone through some very bad experience like robbery (armed or unarmed).**

**Another factor which we have found to be very "traumatising" for tourists, is begging. The poverty in which most cameroonian live make them believe that tourists are so rich and will solve their problems. And they go on begging, and they beg for everything. It is of course, a very uncomfortable situation for tourists which may be their first time to encounter and may cause them not to want to return to Cameroon.**

7. What are some of the challenges you face in the tourism business in Cameroon?

**Tourism in Cameroon today is only marketed online, and the competition is stiff with the outbound tour operators in the UK and US for example.**

**Hotels tend to think that we make so much money that they do not want to help us cut down our prices which is determinant factor for tourists when they have to choose which destination to go to.**

**Roads are bad, traffic is unpredictable, thus keeping to time is very difficult which is something people from the west find it hard to tolerate.**

8. What changes will you like to see to promote the tourism industry of Cameroon to UK?

**The visa application process should be very quick.**

**All forms of transportation should be improved.**

**The living standards of cameroonians should be improved, or at least, cameroonians should be sensitised to stop begging.**

**For an “unknown” destination like Cameroon, it is the travelers recommendations which matters most to potential tourists. People from UK who have visited Cameroon before are the best to market cameroonian tourism to their country-men. And from experience, we know that they are almost always satisfied when they come. I think we just need to get many come and let them do the advert for us. I will think about something like a big campaign with discount on air-tickets from our national airline and discount on accommodation. But then, everybody will need to participate.**

Appendix 3: Email from tourism bureau

Dear Mr Doublex,

More information about the Ministry of Tourism can be found on [www.mintour.gov.cm](http://www.mintour.gov.cm)

More information about the Cameroon Tourism Office in Paris (for Europe) can be found at [www.cameroun-infotourisme.com](http://www.cameroun-infotourisme.com)

Hoping these informations will help you. For your information, the Ministry of Tourism is in charge of tourism promotion. There is no national tourism board in Cameroon.

Sincerely,

Denis Dionne

for

Jay Vom Vadiveloo  
Director, North America  
Cameroon Tourism

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Bureau d'Information Touristique du Cameroun en Amérique  
Cameroon Tourism Information Office in North America

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Hallo back, Mr-.Moumbeh

auswer to your questions:

I inform interested persons about Cameroon; there are documents from the Ministry of Tourism YDE.

Visa are issued by the cam amssay and the cam.honorary consulates

no information about age sex leisure etc; we just know the numbers of visas issued per year

no specifiqu promotion of the tourisme industries -except in Berlin, Tourismus börse;

If you send me your tel-nr. we could also talk more.

Best regards

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**Von:** moumbeh doublex [mailto:moudoblex@yahoo.com]

**Gesendet:** Mittwoch, 23. Mai 2012 01:22

**An:** Dr. Hans Walter

**Betreff:** Re: Betreff: INFO TOURISME

Good day sir, i will be very grateful if you answer my questionnaire. Thanks for your time

Appendix 4: Pictures







