

The Communication of Corporate Social Responsibility: Asian oasis—Mythical journeys in the Hill Tribe Villages of Northern Thailand

Summary

Asian Oasis's mythical journeys are a collection of unique and individual travel experiences which take the audience through the kingdom of Thailand to the northern provinces of Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai on the banks of the Mekong River. The case study and teachers notes hope to explain corporate social responsibility and community-based tourism.

Target Audience

The primary target audience is graduate tourism management students interested in better understanding corporate social responsibility in the tourism industry and community based tourism development.

Teaching Objectives

By the end of this session students should be able to:

- Better understand Asian Oasis's community-based tourism model for tourism development and apply good practices exemplified by Asian Oasis to tourism development in other communities globally.
- Instructors will know their audience received the intended message when audience members can articulate what and how Asian Oasis is preserving, sustaining, building, protecting and delivering.

Teaching Approach and Strategy

The following teacher's notes complement the PowerPoint presentation available in the appendix. It is suggested that the audience prepares by reading the case study and the suggested reading resources and prepare for a discussion regarding corporate social responsibility and the pillars of community based tourism.

Time Required: This case is intended for a 3-hour class or two 90-minute classes, according to the instructors.

Preparation Students are asked to review the accompanying case study and visit the Asian Oasis website and blog to familiarize themselves with Asian Oasis and the topics discussed below. Students are asked to review the suggested reading resources and prepare for a classroom discussion regarding corporate social responsibility (CSR) and community-based tourism (CBT).

20 minutes

Introduction of the terms and concepts; considering socio-cultural, environmental and economic impacts of tourism development. This can be done as an informal discussion or

students can create a chart identifying advantages and disadvantages of tourism development.

40 minutes

Begin with you tube video Asian Oasis 2012 SKAL Sustainable Tourism Award. Present the PowerPoint presentation (excluding Management Dilemmas) available for downloading from slideshare.net (and other open source platforms) using the notes below as a guide.

15 minutes

Show three short YouTube videos; Lanjia Lodge in northern Thailand, What is Lanjia Lodge? Interviewing Lanjia Lodge staff. Review Asian Oasis's pillars of community-based tourism; preserving, sustaining, building, protecting and delivering.

60 minutes

Management dilemmas includes a debate on the merits of corporate social responsibility and animal rights from different perspectives.

30 minutes

Review the key words; corporate social responsibility (CSR) and community-based tourism (CBT), preserving, sustaining, building, protecting and delivering. Specifically, preserving the culture, traditions, nature and community, sustaining the livelihood of the community, building communities, protecting the environment and delivering an authentic experience.

Reading Resources

- A fine line between celebrating tribal culture and gawking at natives (Yong, 2016).
- Homestay tourism and the commercialization of the rural home in Thailand (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen, Duangsaeng, 2015).
- Thai elephants need better care (Ross, 2017).
- The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders (Carroll, 1991).

Notes for PowerPoint Presentation

Slide 1; Founder and Executive Director, Chananya Phattaraprasit built a small lodge in the remote Lisu hill tribe village of northern Thailand in 1995. In 2005, this same model for sustainable development was also adopted when she built a second lodge in the Hmong and Lahu hill tribe villages nearby.

Slide 2; Created by passionate travelers, Asian Oasis has worked closely with local villagers in northern Thailand to create sustainable community-based tourism products while conserving the natural surroundings. Lisu and Lanjia Lodges are located in remote hilltribe

villages of northern Thailand which are remarkably easy to access from Bangkok, Thailand.

Slide 3; Khun Chananya explains, "It has always been my passion to sustain, protect and improve local culture and the environment through economic growth, education and employment opportunities." (Phattaraprasit, 2011).

Slide 4; Asian Oasis promise their travelers a mythical journey and a complete experience with an attention to detail that is sure to create memories that will last a life-time. They deliver on that promise. They promise the communities in which we operate that they will help them with their community development and the co-creation of a traveler experience which aims to promote their culture and protect their environment.

Slide 6-7; Khun Chananya and Asian Oasis are driven by a passion to sustain, protect and improve local culture and the environment through economic growth, education and employment opportunities.

- Preserving of culture, traditions, nature and community
- Sustaining the livelihood of the community
- Building strong and vibrant communities
- Protecting the environment
- Delivering the authentic experience to the visitors

Slide 8; Preserving of culture, traditions, nature and community. With the commitment to maintain their uniqueness, Asian Oasis has purposely not taken the attitude that 'more construction equates to bigger gain'. Lisu lodge grew from 1 house with 4 bedrooms to 4 houses with 24 bedrooms over 14 years. The expansion processes included careful studies of market demands and consultations from the community. The lodges work with the local villagers to preserve their culture, revive local customs and celebrate traditions such as New Year celebrations, birth rituals, wedding ceremonies and auspicious days. Regular health checks are provided for all members of the community and vaccinations are sponsored by the lodge.

Slide 9; Sustaining and creating long term opportunities & economic prosperity. 16 years ago, there were only 16 households, today there are over 300 households. Generations of villagers receive greater economic benefits for local people, enhancement of the well-being of host communities and improvement of working conditions. The traveler is encouraged throughout the Lisu Lodge experience to take steps to protect and improve the natural environment. For example, travelers routinely collect seeds on their guided treks to be used later in the tree planting activities organized by the Himmapaan Foundation.

Slide 10; Building strong and vibrant communities. Lisu Lodge team members are comprised of local village members whom are compensated with a monthly salary, a share of the guest service charges, a yearly bonus and contributions to social security. Local villagers are encouraged to sell their craftwork to travelers during the

village tour and keep all of their sales. This encourages villagers to participate in the production and sales of their unique products. The Lisu Lodge works with various officials and governing bodies to improve roads, provide health care, improve access to clean water and provide electricity for the community.

Slide 11; Protecting the environment. Education and training programs are constantly being developed to meet the needs of the community by linking environmental and community based projects with the travelers. To have any significant success it is essential there is a balance between business and local community. The Lisu Lodge strives to minimize the environmental impact to the surrounding area, continually engaging in studies and seeking professional advice on how they can improve.

Slide 12; Delivering authentic experiences to visitors. The Hmong, Akha and Lahu hilltribe's participate in all aspect of delivering this unique experience which is sure to leave the traveler with a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, these unique communities. Visitor activities include interacting with local villagers and making merit with the monks. Exit interviews of the tourist include these activities as the highlight of their trip. This is a good example of how Asian Oasis creates the space and time for guests to make their own memorable moments.

Slide 13; Management dilemmas explore topics in A Path to Community Based Tourism; Asian Oasis Mythical Journeys in the Hilltribe Villages of Northern Thailand case study. The accompanying PowerPoint slides may serve as a backdrop on debate, discussion and opportunities for further exploration on the degree of corporate social responsibility appropriate for responsible tourism development. Animal rights should be considered from various stakeholders' perspectives. Students may be asked (individually or as a group) to defend positions regarding social responsibility and animal rights from different perspectives of stakeholders.

Slide 14; Considering CSR. A percentage of the income earned at the lodge goes towards the village fund to support educational, cultural and economic projects to improve the quality of life of hundreds of villagers. What percentage of income would you suggest Asian Oasis contribute to the village bank? Consider the following opinions from different perspectives and defend the positions below.

- 0% should be allocated for CSR efforts. Companies have no social responsibility, only people do. Return 100% of the profits to the investor and allow them to decide what to do with the return on investment.
- 10% of revenue should be allocated to CSR efforts.
- 100% of profits should be allocated for CSR efforts.

Slide 16-17; The challenge of elephant rides is that many customers expect elephant rides and see them offered throughout their visit, yet Asian Oasis does not provide elephant rides with their tour

packages. Using a stakeholder perspective allows students to debate the merits of providing elephant rides considering perspectives from;

- The international tour operators that supply customers
- Local tour operators such as Asian Oasis
- The business providing elephant rides
- The local community
- Animal rights activists

Slide 18; A short answer review may serve to conclude this case study and lesson plan. Complete the following passages regarding Asian Oasis's community based tourism development efforts.

Preserving _____?

Sustaining _____?

Building _____?

Protecting _____?

Delivering _____?

Slide 19; Students should also be able to provide evidence of how Asian Oasis preserves culture, traditions and community, sustains the livelihood of the community, builds strong and vibrant communities, protects the natural environment and delivers authentic experiences to visitors.

Teaching Note References

- Asianoasisvideo. (2012, October 12). Lanjia Lodge in northern Thailand [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgctBIDLAKs>
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