



Case Study: Creating Peru's "Dig Deeper" Adventure Tourism Plan

Situation

For many people, whether they have visited Peru or not, the country has become synonymous with Machu Picchu. However, Peru has many cultural treasures to offer beyond this singular archeological wonder. In the largely undiscovered North and Central regions, Peru's rich culture combines with extraordinary opportunities for adventure sport activities, as well as more gentle nature and wildlife experiences.

Most travelers to Peru visit only Lima and the Southern areas of the country, where Cusco and Machu Picchu dominate. Fewer than 5% of visitors currently venture into the North and Central regions, presenting an important window of opportunity for sustainable tourism development. Broadening Peru's image to promote its cultural and natural diversity within Latin America and internationally, could advance what is already a healthy and growing tourism economy.

Challenge

PromPeru, the agency responsible for marketing Peru tourism, recognized that the North and Central regions could play a larger role in the country's tourism industry but wanted to find ways to develop and market these areas with sensitivity.

PromPeru's primary question was: "What is the best way to encourage more people to see these under-explored regions while being sensitive to issues of capacity and local community involvement?"

Solution

Between May and June 2008, PromPeru and Xola Consulting worked together to develop new itineraries to support sustainable adventure tourism development in the North and Central regions. Xola focused on identifying Hotspots that could be developed as multi-theme destinations by balancing the three core aspects of modern adventure tourism: Adventure, Nature, and Culture. Using the Adventure Tourism Development Index (ATDI) approach to conduct its analysis, Xola examined destination assets according to the ATDI's 10 Pillars of adventure tourism market competitiveness.

The team rapidly discovered that in addition to showcasing its cultural and environmental attractions, these regions could be effectively marketed and developed by taking advantage of traveler demands for "authenticity" and the continuing trend to avoid overexposed and overdeveloped destinations.

Xola's recommendations for development and marketing focused on low-impact interventions and coordination among

stakeholders to create new itineraries and an overarching theme for travel to the North and Central regions. One significant finding from the Xola study focused on how PromPeru positions itself in comparison to key competitors: Xola suggested that Peru should not only market itself as a competitor to destinations with historic cultural icons, but also more strongly assert itself against locales known for world class nature activity and wildlife opportunities.

Xola also offered guidance on engaging policymakers and the private sector to collaboratively develop new tourism products in a sustainable manner, ensure local communities were involved and educated, and safeguard the natural and cultural resources on which a healthy tourism market depends.

Results

Three Hotspots, Trujillo, Huaraz, and Chachapoyas, were selected for their mix of resources to appeal to adventure travelers — each with a compelling mix of natural, cultural, and adventure sporting resources. Additionally, these Hotspots were found to have a good base level of infrastructure and community support for tourism development.

Itineraries for each Hotspot were suggested, as well as a unifying marketing theme for the three regions called "Dig Deeper — Travel the Pre-Incan Footsteps of the Moche."

Next steps to support short and long term success of the proposed adventure tourism plan in areas of marketing, product development, political action, and community collaboration were also recommended.

As a result of this project, Peru is well-positioned to:

- Develop products geared to consumer demand: the itineraries recommended deliver experiences to adventure travelers on multiple levels, engaging them intellectually and emotionally. Product development recommendations were based on current research of consumer interests and trends, and take into account the expanding consumer definition of "adventure."
- Gain international marketing exposure as an Adventure Tourism Development Index "Feature Adventure Destination." As a Feature Adventure Destination, Peru will be showcased to more than 450 international adventure tour operators and adventure and mainstream travel media through Xola's partner, the Adventure Travel Trade Association. Peru also gains access to resources and the professional network of the prestigious George Washington University for International Tourism Studies, a third partner in the ATDI adventure tourism development program.



For More Information on ATDI Feature Adventure Destination studies, contact Christina Heyniger at info@xolaconsulting.com