



The strategic marketing analysis of Moses Mabhida stadium as a major tourism destination in Kwazulu-Natal: an action research

Nduduzo Andrias Ngxongo* (Ph.D Candidate)
Durban University of Technology
Faculty of Management Sciences
Department of Ecotourism, Riverside Campus
South Africa
Email: 20823410@dut4life.ac.za

and

Nsizwazikhona Simon Chili
Durban University of Technology
Faculty of Management Sciences
Department of Ecotourism, Riverside Campus
South Africa
Email: nsizwazikhonac@dut.ac.za

Corresponding author*

Abstract

This analytical exploration illustrates how the non-existence of a proper marketing strategy for a tourism destination may have resulted in a radical decline in both financial outputs and visitor arrivals. The marketing strategy is considered the foundation for any tourism destination's marketing tactics. As such, tourism destinations ought to have dynamic and adaptive marketing strategies that will develop a promotional approach to help the destination gain market share, identify its target markets, stay relevant to its existing clients, attract new visitors, and increase revenue. Accordingly, the Moses Mabhida Stadium [MMS], one of the prominent tourism attractions in KwaZulu-Natal; boasting a world-class architectural design, several international prestigious awards, and vibrant adventurous activities, has in recent years suffered a gradual slump in both visitors and profits. The research advocates that the present complications facing MMS are directly interconnected to the present condition of its marketing and promotional activities. Therefore, the heart of this paper is to thoroughly establish precisely how the present MMS marketing circumstances may be the foundation for a decline in the number of visitors and profits-earned in recent years. The study adopted a qualitative research strategy, with 45 participants. The study respondents consist of MMS employees, representatives from the tenants, tour guides/operators, and clients. The outcome of the study suggests a number of costly disparities in the marketing strategy of MMS which has led to poor performance and a loss in tourism market share. In consequence, the outcome further suggests that the non-existence of market research analysis and destination marketing tools contributed vastly to the in-progress dilemma. This fact-finding exploration provides a bird's-eye view of MMS marketing strategy, and based on the results, the study recommends the introduction of a more far-reaching and revitalising marketing strategy through; constant and persistent market research initiatives, minimal political interference in the administration of state funded organisations, strengthening the relationship with tourism stakeholders, particularly tourists guides and operators, reassessment of the feasibility study, vigorous sourcing of proficient personnel.

Keywords - Tourism, Destination, Marketing, Marketing Strategy, and Market Research

Introduction

The opportunities in the tourism industry are endless; this is due to a constant increase in tourist arrivals. World Tourism Organisation (2017) estimate that the global number of arrivals across the world is just over one (1) billion every year, and development is only expected to



amplify, the opportunities are everlasting. According to Bolan and Williams (2008), a number of tourists' destinations and organisations are failing to achieve success due to various factors. They further state that "the underlying principle of such a struggle for many tourism destinations is due to their marketing activities". Conversely, for the struggling destinations; marketing is a basic component of the solution.

This study is set to explore Moses Mabhida Stadium, Durban. For several major cities such as Durban, one of 7 wonder cities of the world (New7Wonders 2017); the tourism industry represents a momentous potential for massive development in terms of employment opportunities, economic self-sufficiency and the social well-being of the locals. The earnings from the tourism industry can be used to provide fundamental infrastructure and amenities to the local community, which in totality enhances the living standard of a region. However, it should be mentioned that for tourism destinations to succeed in tourism ventures; dynamic marketing strategies and knowledgeable personnel have to be in place (Ngxongo and Chili 2016). Therefore, the Moses Mabhida Stadium (MMS), which is considered to be Durban's iconic and majestic tourist destination, is no exception to the rule; long-term success in tourism requires a strong marketing strategy. UShaka Marine World, Durban Beach Front, Wilson's Wharf, Sun Coast Casino and Umhlanga Tourism are some of MMS direct and indirect competition, these tourism attractions are well-established, some with superior international exposure. The long-term operational and financial sustainability of MMS is fundamentally reliant on the willingness of the executive management to develop a solid, long-term and flexible marketing strategy that will be equally proficient in adapting to the ever-changing nature of the tourism industry and to take MMS back to what it was few years ago.

According to MMS Big Three Annual Report (2016), Moses Mabhida Stadium has been faced with hard-hitting economic times as this Durban-based grand tourism destination has recorded a constant decline in both domestic and international visitors, which in turn has led to a gradual decline in profits recorded. Surprisingly, the MMS has been showered with a number of domestic and international tourism awards for its design, significance and attractiveness to draw heaps of visitors from all corners of this planet; however, it appears that there is something lacking as the stadium has not yet been able to reach the full tourism potential that it is capable of accomplishing. In disparity, the popularity of MMS as a mega tourist destination is slowly taking a sloppy route. Additionally, the number of mega events that are staged by MMS continues to decline drastically compared to previous years. Amid all the probable challenges that might have led to such a decline, the principal investigator hypothesis is that the apparent disregard of market research and the inefficient marketing strategy are the central grounds of the problem. As such, this paper will argue and establish that the MMS marketing strategy that is in use (that is if there is any) employed in the past 6-7 years (2011-2017), has contributed negatively to how the stadium has performed with reference to tourism. Moreover, the study endeavours to advocate a number of remedial strategies that will form the groundwork for a better-quality marketing strategy that will take MMS to new heights as far as tourism activities are concerned.

The significant facet of the tourism industry in the economic sustainability of the Moses Mabhida Stadium and the eThekweni municipality district is substantial and can never be overlooked. As aforementioned, for many countries and destinations, tourism is a great source of employment, an important element for foreign exchange, enhances visitor spending, and thus contributing immensely to the destinations and country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Banskota 2012). Similarly, in Durban, tourism is currently providing permanent employment opportunities to over a hundred and fifty (150) employees at Moses Mabhida Stadium. Therefore, the economic and social sustainability of MMS as a major tourism destination that is able to provide jobs for locals and generate income for the city is largely dependent on the marketing strategy of the stadium. According to eThekweni Local Municipality (2016), Moses Mabhida Stadium forms part of, contributes to the wider economy of business tourism in Durban, and should be strategically utilised to enjoy more benefits from its development.



Consequentially, the development of MMS as one of the mega tourist destinations in the province of KwaZulu-Natal is strongly correlated to its marketing and promotional strategy.

Marketing strategy is the overall business plan of action for accessing the visitors/tourists and influencing them strategically into customers or consumers of the products and services that are offered by the company (Middleton, 2005). The most significant function of the marketing strategy is to inform the direction of a marketing plan, which is an overall blueprint of all company marketing and promotional activities. In the tourism industry, such documents must be reviewed at least twice a year depending on various factors that includes global market, domestic market research, destinations long and short-term objectives, and targets (profits, audience, and numbers of visitors). As such, the importance of a vigorous marketing strategy in the tourism sector cannot be over-emphasized. Marketing without a comprehensive plan is risky, and a destination business strategy without an accompanying marketing strategy is regularly useless. Previous research studies have unequivocally confirmed that purposeless and ineffectual marketing strategies and the absence of thorough market analysis has proven to destroy several global tourism destinations.

According to Malachovský and Kiralóva (2015) in his study of invigorating the destination marketing strategy, he pointed out that the decision of not conducting a market research analysis by organisations; particularly in the tourism, space is undoubtedly suicidal and counter-productive. He further asserted that such decision could lead to poor decision-making, alienation of existing customers and potential visitors, decline in service delivery, failure to achieve destination objectives, and ultimately missing profits targets. Hassan (2002) further states that, "the ripple effects of a fragile marketing strategy can be terrible and disastrous to the overall performance of a destination; hence, conducting a market research in level-headed intervals may well be an extremely favourable business move". In essence, the overall success of any tourism business lies in its marketing and promotional activities, as most aspects of the operational plans are largely dependent on successful marketing strategies. Thus, without a strong marketing strategy, the destination may offer the best activities, experience or services, however, none of the prospective visitors/consumers would know about it. The use of a good quality marketing strategy in promoting the destination and its offerings will offer a prospect of being discovered by other potential visitors, which can possibly lead to more profits, more visitors, and a good reputation. In addition, the use of market research instruments can be particularly advantageous to the destinations as it allows for a better understanding of what the exact customer expectations are, how the destination can meet such expectations, and a clear-cut understanding of the target market and the audience.

Sweepingly, the fundamental intention of this study is to investigate the influence of the marketing strategy of MMS in relation to the decline in visitor numbers and profit. The significance of this study in the local context is exceptionally imperative to the realisation of MMS in reaching its full tourism potential. The outcome of the study will form the groundwork for some counteractive plans that will position the stadium to new heights as far as tourism is concerned. Through categorising and comprehending the strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis of MMS marketing strategy, the stadium might possibly be able to amend their strategy in line with the expectation of their customers which will, in turn, attract more visitors, increase competitive advantage, and exploit all the available tourism opportunities and beyond. Hence, this paper contributes to the existing literature on tourism and marketing by identifying factors that generally lead to the decline in profits and visitor numbers for many tourism destinations.

Justification of the study

The overall significance of this research project cannot, under any circumstances, be disregarded as it offers multifaceted benefits to various stakeholders including the industry of



tourism, academia, government (local and national), tourism authorities and private sector. The outcome of the study will clearly unpack the current marketing situation analysis of MMS, which can be utilised to strength the MMS product, and services through formation of new affiliations with other tourism destinations around the city of Durban. Particularly, this research study is first and foremost of assistance to Moses Mabhida Stadium; the outcome will form a foundation for a formulation of a solid marketing strategy that will be aligned with the strategic direction of the stadium. The results will also afford MMS executives to make informed decisions regarding the prospect of the stadium based on reliable market research analysis. The study further presents an excellent opportunity for MMS to establish appropriate guiding principles and strategies that will work to improve their marketing activities to attract more visitors and increase their financial output. For tourism authorities and government, the study outcome will help them identify the existing gaps in the marketing direction of tourism destinations hence appropriate resources can be allocated to address the challenges. For the private sector, the recommendations from the study can be adopted by other tourism destinations across the globe to address challenges and consequences that are directly and indirectly associated with marketing strategies. Lastly, for academicians; the study offers a different narrative about MMS, which to many persons is unknown, and presents a number of educational prospects for further exploration into the subject matter of marketing strategies for tourism establishments. The subsequent section of the study provides the physical and spatial attributes of the study area to bring a perceptive between the study variables and the MMS.

Background and spatial settings of Moses Mabhida Stadium

Moses Mabhida Stadium, also known as MMS or Durban Stadium, is a multi-functional sport facility with a maximum seating capacity of 86 000, initially constructed to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, located South-Easterly of Durban Metro. The stadium is named after one of the country's beloved former freedom fighters; Moses Mbheki Mncane Mabhida who dedicated his life to the struggle against apartheid. Born in KwaZulu-Natal in Thornville (14 October 1923), and died in Mozambique (8 March 1986), In December 2006 Moses Mabhida's body was returned home and laid to rest in the Heroes Acre in Slangspruit, Pietermaritzburg. His life and work is an inspiration to all who live in a free, united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. Moses Mabhida along with many other struggle heroes helped to forge and maintain the powerful united front that eventually saw the creation of a democratic and non-racial South Africa (Moses Mabhida Stadium, 2014). The stadium has transformed from being a plain soccer stadium to being a mega tourist destination that the city of Durban and the rest of South Africa has come to infatuate with exceptionally. The stadium is characterised by a pretty distinctive attractive look as a result of a 106m staggering arch that arises from the north side to the south side, modern design, cultural and architectural significance, the arena is also home to some of the most daring and adventurous activities. MMS has been voted on the country's online poll as the most popular and elegant stadium in South Africa, seven years running. MMS epitomises the architectural innovation on display in South Africa and takes its design inspiration from the South African flag, with its grand arch representing the unity of the sport-loving nation. The two legs of the arch on the southern side of the stadium come together at the centre to form a single footing on the northern side symbolising the new unity of a once-divided nation.

Moses Mabhida Stadium as a tourism destination

MMS has come to enjoy a prestigious status as one of the country's most prominent tourist destinations, mainly due to the capacity of the stadium in attracting visitors (Tourism KwaZulu-Natal 2015). The MMS is one of the few, if not the only, stadium around the world that operates 364 days a year (except on December 25). The demand to open the stadium on daily basis is



because of the number of people that visit the stadium daily to partake in some of the activities that are offered by the stadium. MMS arena is capable of attracting between 4500-5000 visitors daily during the off-season period as well as the festive season, 2100-3500 during school holidays, 800-1900 during weekends, and an average of 420 visitors on normal days. In excess of 1000 schools visit the stadium annually with an average number of 76 learners per school; more than 50 corporate organisations use the stadium for team building events every year (MMS Big Three Annual Report, 2016).

The magnificent MMS is affiliated with all major tourism and events authorities in South Africa including; Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN), Durban Tourism, Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA), eThekweni Municipality and more. According to the provincial government of KZN, in the near future, the MMS together with Drakensberg Mountain are set to become the iconic facades of the provincial tourism. This multifunctional destination is home to a variety of attractions that catches the attention of families, couples, adults and pensioners, business people, kids, sport and adventurous enthusiasts. Particularly, tourists' attractions at MMS take account of a multi-use kids playground, stadium tours, school tours, sky car, adventure walk, big swing, Segway's tours, picnic sites, human performance and sports facilities, gymnasiums, restaurants and coffee shops, sports clothing and equipment shops and museums.

Interrelationship of marketing strategy and tourism destinations

In the service industry, a compact marketing strategy is necessary in developing a product; attract new clientele and maintaining allegiance amongst existing customers, the tourism sector is no different as customer loyalty is imperative. Tourism and Marketing managers' need to invest a fairly reasonable amount of resources in diversifying the offerings, creating awareness of their offerings and to conduct market research so that they remain relevant to the market. Such marketing efforts normally consist of digital and print media that normally enhances the visibility of an attraction (Tsiotsou and Ratten, 2010). Lately a number of challenges has struck the industry, and the competitive nature of the industry makes it difficult for some attractions to remain functional. However, for managers to understand the significance of marketing strategies can in fact assist attractions like MMS to stand out and emerge victorious in dominating the industry. Generally, the sustainability and continuation of many tourism attractions in such a competitive economic environment does not only depend on quality service delivery and efficient personnel but on their capacity to tactically adapt to current challenges. Consequently, the marketing strategy becomes an essential plan of action for modern-day tourism attractions to gain market share and succeed.

Hudson (2008) states that "A consistent brand name identity is also especially important for tourism as each destination desires to make certain that their brand name recognition subsists so that the destination can enjoy plentiful repeat business, frequently". In the context of tourism, tour guides, tour operators and holidaymakers constitute some of the valuable regulars. They bring in lots of customers, they sell your products and bring in a substantial portion of profits, as such, and the marketing strategy and plans of a destination must adopt a twofold approach that will seek out new clients while maintaining the already existing clientele. In this sense, tourism destinations adopt marketing strategies for various reasons including, to enhance their effectiveness in the market, to achieve competitive edge, and to redress the existing market challenges.

In addition to its benefits and rewards, marketing strategy for tourism destinations is progressively becoming more significant, from both theoretical and practical points of view. Conversely, slow progress in addressing marketing strategic correlated matters in tourism has



been previously identified by various scholars (Riege and Perry, 2000; Tsiotsou and Ratten, 2010). The notable justifications for such a lack of enthusiasm is that, until recently, the focal point of many tourism destinations was more on the destination itself rather on the customers. William (2006) supports this view by asserting, “Marketing strategies in the past were all about products and services offered and not about clients that will make use of the products and services”. Nowadays, marketing strategies of tourism destinations ought to be resourceful and adaptive to satisfy the different aspects of the business requirements.

Currently, customers are more informed and attentive when making decisions about which destination to visit hence satisfactory visibility of a destination in both digital and printed marketing platforms is rather important. According to Tsiotsou and Ratten (2010), the development of global technology has created a condition where tourism consumers are now co-producers of tourism services; they are practically able to conclude about a destination before they even make a visit. The idea to provide interactive and informative digital and printed marketing tools to potential clients is the thus first step to attracting customers for any tourism destination; tourism destinations must appreciate and recognise the realism that they need to transform their marketing strategies to efficiently act in response to any marketing and financial challenges. With no proper blend of marketing tools, modern technology, and marketing strategy, the destination will miserably fall short in sourcing, attracting and maintaining potential clients, and even more essentially, those prospective customers will not be adequately informed about the destination.

A flourishing marketing strategy requires a thorough understanding of large-scale business challenges. A marketing strategy should make the most of the destination’s competence and use those capabilities to satisfy client’s value expectations. In order to successfully respond to the requirements and wishes of customers, and the current challenges facing the tourism industry; the marketing strategy must be flexible and economical. In that case, the marketing strategy may possibly lead to repeat business, competitive advantage, and greater output in terms of profits and the number of visitors. Every tourism business needs a strong marketing strategy in order to remain viable.

Analysis of marketing strategy concept in the tourism context

Kotler (2003) defines marketing strategy as a concept, or rather a set of methods that seeks to address the marketing direction and activities of destination. Such activities include market research, concept development, and product development, pricing strategies, promotion, sourcing of clients, distribution and selling of the product. Tsiotsou and Ratten (2010) further define marketing strategy as a collection of promotional activities aimed at meeting the short and long-term marketing objectives of a destination. In essence, the aforementioned description of a marketing strategy simply illuminates that a marketing plan is certainly a strategic commitment that a tourism destination can never overlook in today’s competitive environment. The importance of a promotional strategy in the context of tourism is that it allows a destination to devise a good competitive strategy against industry rivals. Well-established and profitable tourism destinations are more to be expected to have a solid and prescribed marketing strategy than smaller destinations. Buhalis (2000) in his study of “marketing the destination of the future” discovered that many tourism destinations that exists without a proper marketing plan are critically struggling to remain in business and some are even closing down. Venter and Jansen Rensburg (2009) concur with the aforementioned view, and further asserted that the idea of not developing a marketing plan by tourism & hospitality firms is non-operational and financially suicidal. Marketing strategy is in fact a master plan of a destination’s marketing activities and it presents a number of advantageous benefits, which are subsequently illustrated in figure 1.1 below.



Figure 1.1: Justification why every tourism business needs a marketing strategy

Justifications	Explanation
New Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism destinations usually spend loads of capital marketing their products/services to clients that are not necessarily interested in what they have to offer, as such, a well-structured marketing strategy has the capacity to identify ideal customers & opportunities for the business.
Aligning your marketing goals and identifying the plan of action (POA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying short and long-term goals of a destination is a major component of capitalizing on your marketing activities. Clear and concise goals are easily achievable given that the marketing strategy of a destination clearly defines the steps, personnel and resources that are to be employed in order to achieve the goals. The marketing POA of a destination is a blueprint of what tools and strategy a company plan to exploit in order to accomplish short and long-term objectives, which are chosen to concur with the marketing goals.
Awareness Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most frequent and efficient approach for a tourism destination to remain relevant in the marketplace is to carry out constant responsiveness campaigns. A strategic marketing plan of a destination will outline the plan of action for such activities, and the nature of marketing campaigns is directly linked to the overall marketing activities of a destination.
Value Proposition & Competitive Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A marketing strategy defines that particular characteristic that makes a destination more attractive than the others. Such a unique feature is usually an incredibly influential marketing instrument and communicating this in an approach that 'speaks' to a destination's client is a major component of maximising visitor arrivals and sales.
Understanding of Marketplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A marketing strategy allows a destination to assess the industry's competitive environments, consumer trends and demands and provide a prospect to re-evaluate the service/products to go with the ever-changing marketplace and the ideal clientele.
Return on Investment (ROI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is utterly no justification for a destination to invest in promotional and marketing activities if there are no returns on investment expected. Thus, a solid marketing strategy will sketch out exactly how a destination is planning to make each resource spent on marketing count, and how fruitless spending with no returns on investment are to be reviewed.

Source: (Bendekovic, J, Simonic, T & Naletina D, 2014)

In addition, due to the sensitive nature of marketing, that one component of a plan can affect the entire plan; organising marketing activities is particularly important to save on fruitless spending. A further important benefit of a marketing strategy is that it synchronizes all departments while ensuring that each section of a destination identifies with the expectations and aspirations. Understanding the importance of a versatile marketing strategy will assist a destination to make sensible pronouncements concerning certain marketing procedure.

Research study methodology

This particular section of the study covers the research methods that were employed in processing the concluding outcome of the study. The focal point of this section consists of the



research method used, data collection process including various sources of information and the type of data collected. The main instrument adopted in collecting data is also presented as well as the style of analysis that was used to analyse the results. MMS is the study area of interest and, the rationale for choosing the stadium is because of its popularity, accessibility, abundance of data seeing that thousands of tourists visit the stadium on a daily basis, tourism potential and the attention surrounding the political administration of this grand tourism facility.

A qualitative method research approach was followed in this study. The stadium is relatively the most recent tourist attraction in Durban (9 years old); consequently, the subject of marketing and tourism is still new and unknown. The use of qualitative method research was particularly suitable for its capacity to provide a better understanding of the research problem in question, solicited data is more detailed, and at times, it can offer insight into important issues that may possibly be missed (Molina-Azorin 2011). A thematic analysis design was employed in this study for its ability to generate and organise knowledge grounded in human experience (Sandewloski 2004).

According to Burns and Grove (1993), a study population is explicated as all elements (individuals, objects and events) that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. Moreover, the participants of interest for this study consist of stadium visitors/public, stadium employees from six different departments, various tenants from the stadium and independent tour guides/operators. A purposive sampling strategy was adopted in selecting the most competent participants - able to answer the research questions proficiently. The participants of the study were selected according to two criteria; (i) availability during the time of the study, (ii) information, capacity and familiarity they possessed in relation to MMS and domestic tourism. In addition, participation in the study was restricted to persons older than 18. This was done to filter participants that were going to be proficient in responding to study questions.

There were fifteen employees from MMS that were specifically nominated due to their direct involvement with matters relating to customers and marketing of MMS. The respondents from MMS were representing all six (6) departments of MMs. Their selection was justified as they were in a position to provide insightful knowledge on the topic of internal marketing and overall marketing strategies of MMS and other internal issues that could possibly disrupt the performance of marketing of the stadium. Additionally, ten (10) participants from various tenants were also selected to provide insight and experience on the marketing strategy of the stadium, marketing support, and so forth. Lastly, another twenty (20) participants from regular tourist guides & tour operators and regular stadium clients were selected to participate in the study. These respondents are the secondary merchants and consumers of MMS attractions hence it was essential for the study to engage them as they are in a good position to provide dependable information about the stadium marketing.

Regarding data collection, researcher-administered interviews were the most fitting tools for this study. According to Creswell (2009), interviews are best suited when dealing with a few participants. The rationale for this form of data collection method was to gain a more in-depth insight and different perspective from major role payers at MMS. Data collection process took place between January and March 2017. Average time for interview per respondent was 25 minutes. English and isiZulu were the main two languages that were used during the process. Audio recorder was used during the interviews to ensure that all the information was captured. Subsequently, the collected data was transcribed into hard copy. Ethical considerations were all taken into account before data collection process commenced. Thematic analysis approach was used to analyse qualitative data, the transcribed data was firstly categorised, themes were identified and data was presented.



Research ethics consideration

This section elucidates the research ethics that were followed during the course of the study. The significance of ethics in research studies has become an essential element, particularly in elimination against the fabrication of information, and also to promote a variety of other important moral and social values in research (Nchabeleng, 2013: 64). The main ethical consideration of this study is the permission to conduct the study, confidentiality of all information recovered during data collection. The publication of the paper is endorsed by both the Durban University of Technology Research & Development Office and the Department of Ecotourism. The authority/consent to conduct the study was approved by the General Manager of Moses Mabhida Stadium, and the Operations Manager respectively. The researcher explained the drive and objectives of the study to all participating respondents including MMS management. All participants were requested to give written and verbal consent before participating in the study. Permission to make use of the audiotape was included in the consent forms.

Participants' identities and contact information were not recorded or used for the study for reasons of anonymity. Study subjects were assured that all information provided would only be used for the purpose of the study and that it would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Study subjects were informed that the processed data (published paper) would be made available to anyone who is interested in the study. Participants of the study were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any given time without any explanation required. Throughout all the interviews, an informed written consent letter was obtained from each of the research participants. The respondents were advised not to mention their names, therefore the researcher used codes to classify respondents.

Results and discussion

This section will present and discuss the results with reference to the sample description and study variables. The information that is presented in presented in four different subcategories; the demographic information of the respondents, the perspective from the stadium tenants, the perspective from the tour operators and local clients, and lastly from the internal employees of MMS. The results of the study will be then interpreted in the end. The results signify the views and opinions that of the respondents, and all the quotes that are used in this study to fortify the data analysis are recited direct from the respondents.

Demographic information

The gender of the study participants was mostly females with 62 % (28) female and 38% (17) male. The most dominant age group was between the ages of 30 to 39 making up 71% (32), followed by the age group 18 to 29 years making up 27% (12), and the respondents above 70 years accounted for 2% (1) of the respondents. Regarding ethnicity, there was almost a split between African 30% (14) while Whites (Caucasians) accounted for 32% (15), Indians 21% (9) and lastly was the Coloured race 16% (7). The stadium traditionally attracts all ethnic groups with the white race still the most prevalent in visiting the stadium. The African race is gradually visiting the stadium on a regular basis compared to previously where their visit to the stadium was rather minimal. In relation to education, approximately half 51% (23) of participants indicated a postgraduate qualification as their highest level of study, 34% (15) indicated undergraduate qualifications as their highest level of education, 14% (6) indicated national certificate as their highest level of education.



Tourism potential of MMS

It was important for the study to first establish the tourism potential of the stadium thus all the respondents were asked whether the stadium has enough capacity and infrastructure to become one of the most prolific destinations in South Africa. The MMS has been showered with numerous accolades both locally and internationally for different aspects, that makes this destination unique and appealing. When asked this question, a total number 91% (41) of the respondents agreed that the stadium possesses adequate potential to transcend into one of the most visited destinations in South Africa. Conversely, the other 9% (4) indicated that although the stadium possess enough potential a lot more still needs to be done to enable it to reach its full potential. Presently, the stadium is considered by all tourism authorities in KZN to be a major role player in developing and promoting tourism in the province.

MMS is also in partnership with major government tourism authorities in the province including Durban Tourism, which is responsible for promoting Durban, as - South Africa's leading tourist destination, and Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN), which is responsible for promoting KwaZulu-Natal as the leading tourism destination in South Africa and beyond. The study can conclude, based on evidence collected during the fieldwork that undeniably MMS is suitably positioned to emerge as a mega tourism destination in South Africa. The present direction of the MMS is one of many state-owned establishments that has dismally failed due to lack of clear direction and sensible strategy that will incorporate marketing activities of the business. The study will further unpack how the futile marketing activities at MMS has led to the decline of profit and visitor arrivals, and if not addressed will drive this destination to the ground.

Stadium tenant's perspective Marketing strategy of the stadium

The respondents were asked about different marketing aspects of the stadium, including the assistance that is provided by MMS to tenants as far as promoting their products and services as far as possible. The tenants made up 22.2% (10) of the respondents. When asked if they are aware of the existing MMS marketing strategy, the respondents anonymously (100%) agreed that the stadium seemingly operates without a marketing plan or rather they have never been introduced to any existing marketing plan. Each tenant is responsible for his/her marketing activities; the stadium does not get involved. The tenants were then asked whether the decline in visitor numbers to the stadium might be because of inadequate marketing activities by the stadium management. The response was not exactly shocking as 80% (8) of the respondents conceded that the existing lack of clear marketing strategy of the stadium has indeed led to the decline of tourists visiting the stadium whereas the other 20% (2) indicated that they are not sure. Consequently, the decline in numbers also negatively influences the performance of the businesses. External marketing is the main form of promotion for tourism establishments as it allows the activities to reach a vast number of people. The respondents were asked on the overall external marketing approach of the stadium and whether they have seen any adverts or promotional signs outside of MMS. Unsurprisingly, not even a single respondent has previously seen any MMS advert or promotion outside of MMS. The respondents were similarly asked whether they feel that the stadium as an emerging tourism destination not only in KwaZulu-Natal but in South Africa is sufficiently marketed and promoted as all mega tourism destinations should be. The respondents unanimously agreed that the stadium is not sufficiently marketed; the attractions of the stadium remain unknown to the majority of citizens in Durban. Subsequent are some of what respondents had to say regarding the marketing of MMS;

Respondent I, "It's funny that in the province of KZN, especially in the city of Durban; you have some larger billboards promoting tourism attractions from other provinces but not even a single one that promotes our own destinations like MMS.



The perfect example is the Cable Car billboard at the King Shaka International Airport but there's is no billboard about MMS anywhere in KwaZulu-Natal or outside of the province".

Respondent II, "I think they don't even understand the basic principles of marketing. It's expected given that the people who are running the stadium are political deploees and not professionals.

The outcome clearly suggests that the stadium has no founding document nor strategy that informs the marketing direction of the activities. There is a visible disjoint between the stadium and its tenants as presently there are no joint efforts or partnerships between the two parties when it comes to promotion and marketing of the stadium attractions and offerings. The respondents also stated that they have never been introduced to the marketing team of the stadium, which might be because it does not exist. There's only a single person responsible for the entire marketing activities of MMS hence the current state of their marketing. This is all due to either the disregard of the significance of a marketing strategy by MMS management, the "don't care attitude" which is to be expected from politicians who are more obsessed about power and stealing, rather than the overall development of the tourism establishment, and finally the lack of competent and skilled manpower that is not only capable of doing the job but that is willing to think outside of the box so that MMS will thrive and eventually reach its full potential. The long-term vision of the stadium, which is to be the leading tourism destination and event venue seems to be nothing but a hope, and according to the outcome of the study, that vision is baseless and not feasible unless the city changes the work force.

Social media platform of the stadium

According to Stelzner (2010), social media is undoubtedly one of the management tools that tourism organisations can use to effectively promote and market their products and services to a wider audience with minimal financial implications. It was rather important for the study to scrutinise the present social media platforms of the stadium as they relate to the overall marketing strategy of MMS. This study has established that the marketing activities of the stadium are rather feeble and too standard. They depend too much on the website and social media platforms. Thus, the respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the state and the quality of the stadium website of which 90% (9) of the respondents expressed total dissatisfaction in this regard. The website was branded by the respondents as "useless", not user friendly and not achieving any purpose. Some of the respondents had the following to say about the stadium website:

Respondent I, "Unfortunately, the stadium website is not necessarily a corporate website that can attract potential clients but it's more of an event website. Everything on that website is about events and nothing else. The amount of information about our products is very minimal and some information regarding our offerings is either wrong or outdated".

Respondent III, "The stadium's website is mind-numbing, user unfriendly, the quality and the size of the font used is so erroneous that sometimes you can't even make sense of whatever is written on the website. What is actually happening at the stadium at times is totally different from what is written on the website".

Social media like platforms create a loyal connection between product and individual, which leads to large advertising opportunities. Social media has become a stage that is certainly reachable to all internet users. Increased communication for organisations promotes brand awareness and regularly, enhances customer service. Furthermore, social media platforms



serve as a moderately low-priced platform for tourism companies to carry out marketing activities and campaigns (Bronner and Hoog 2010). The respondents were then asked about the social media platforms of the stadium; does social media help the stadium tenants, whether social media is effective enough and the outlook of the stadium social pages. A total number of 70% indicated that the social media of the stadium are of no use to their businesses whereas the other 30% (3) indicated that sometimes, but rarely, the social media pages of the stadium are supportive particularly at providing contact information to potential clients, but their overall impression of the stadium social media is largely negative. On the question of the effectiveness and the ability of MMS social media pages to lure visitors to the stadium, the respondents all concurred that the social media pages of MMS have successfully failed in that regard. The respondents had the following to say about the stadiums social media pages;

Respondent I, “The number of likes and comments on each of their social media posts should tell you everything about their social platforms”. The types of comments we usually see are not exactly positive.

Respondent II, “Most of the comments on the social pages of the stadium are largely negative and criticising. The customers are always complaining about attractions that are always grounded for weeks, the state of the soccer field and the general maintenance of the stadium. Personally, I do not think that it’s good for any business to associate itself with such negativity”.

The principal investigator thus opted to scrutinise the social pages of MMS to draw some correlation with the views of the respondents. The stadium has got a total of 216.5 thousand likes/followers on social pages; 180 thousand likes/followers on Facebook with an average number of 6 likes and 1 comment per post, 25.7 thousand likes/followers on twitter with an average number of 9 likes per post and 3 retweets per post and lastly, 10.8 thousand likes/followers on Instagram with an average of 110 likes per post. The level of interaction between the stadium social pages and the followers is extremely negligible and purposeless. The study concludes that indeed the social media pages of the stadium are neither helpful to the stadium tenants or the stadium marketing activities as they reach less than a fraction of its followers.

The outcome suggests that the stadium is in fact failing to become organised when it comes to marketing activities. The study discovered that the social media platform of the stadium is not providing any form of assistance to the tenants. The stadium customers that are able to reach the stadium on social media would rather vent about the apparent mismanagement of the stadium and how the stadium is failing its customers as sometimes the main attractions would remain grounded for over a month. This is clearly, because there is no plan in place to enhance the visual interactions with customers on the social pages. These are all issues that are supposed to be addressed by the marketing plan but since that is non-existent, issues of this nature will continue to prevail and upsurge.

Tour operators/guides and clients perspective

The Tourism Business is a multidimensional field and consequently includes numerous participants for its smooth operational activities. An important element for any successful tourism destination is the involvement of stakeholders and their partnerships.

Amongst these stakeholders are the tourism operators and tourist guides that play an important role in the tourism sector since visitors need to have a clear picture of the all major destinations and their offerings, laws, rules and regulations and other expected behavioral patterns (Ap and Wong 2000). Furthermore, tourist’s guides should have the capacity to



transform the tourist holiday into an unforgettable experience. The only way the tourist's guides can achieve this is to have a mutual, beneficial, transparent and strong association with tourism destinations.

According to Baum, Hearn and Devine (2007), tour guides and tour operators are considered one of the most important tools that tourism destinations can use to promote and sell their offerings to visitors from all over the world. Once a tourism destination has established product and services with a good reputation, then it's rather easier to work with both outbound and inbound tour operators. These people are always looking for the best of the destination, and the establishment will stand above the rest if the relationship with the tour operators/guides is firm and mutually beneficial.

The tourist's guide/operator and clients made up 22.2% (10) of the respondents. With that being said, the respondents were then questioned on their relationship with the stadium, whether there are any agreements in place and so forth. Accordingly, 70% (7) of the respondents indicated that there is no relationship with the stadium whatsoever whereas the other 30% indicated that they do have some sort of a relationship with the stadium. The respondents pointed out that there are presently no incentives or benefits for them when they bring in visitors to MMS unlike other destinations where they can earn discounts and commissions when they bring in visitors.

Furthermore, the respondents also indicated the inconsistency of MMS attractions, as sometimes they would bring in buses full of visitors only to be informed on arrival at the stadium that some of the main attractions are suspended. Some of the respondents indicated that they had decided to exclude MMS on their itinerary because of this unprofessional practise of running a tourism business like a tuck shop. They only come to MMS if the clients insist on coming to the stadium.

On the question of communication, all the respondents indicated that the communication between them as tour guides and the stadium does not exist making it more difficult to work with the stadium. Subsequent is some of the responses as stated by the respondents;

Respondent I, "Working with the stadium is a waste of time. We bring so much business for these people but never give us anything in return. In some destinations you get a discount according to the number of visitors you are bringing but here you are told this a government establishment".

Respondent II, "Beautiful views from the Sky car and my niece did the sky jumping but I find the prices exorbitant. Some days no activities for no apparent reason. This could be a goldmine if managed in a different way".

On the other side, the stadium has some clients that usually buy vouchers for all the attractions particularly the sky car. These clients are regulars and they mostly represent the hotels, local accommodation establishments, and various other companies. When asked on their relationship with the stadium, surprisingly they were somewhat happy with some elements of their partnership with MMS. The entire number of respondents 40% (4) indicated that they normally received discounts when buying vouchers at the Retail Centre. However, they indicated their displeasure that often even these vouchers are not always available and they too shared the same sentiments with the other tour guides that the attractions are always closed.

On the question of whether they feel that the stadium is well marketed as a tourism destination, all 100% (10) of the respondents including the tour guides agreed that the stadium is not marketed well even indicating that "MMS does not seem to understand the sensitive nature of the tourism industry that visitors typically will give you a single chance to prove yourself as a



destination; you disappoint them and they are never coming back. MMS has mastered the skill of disappointing customers over and over”.

The study may conclude that the nonexistence of a good relationship between the stadium and its main stakeholders present a “missed opportunity”. This missed opportunity is MMS failing to take advantage of the marketing benefits, business opportunities and financial gains that are associated with a good-working relationship with tour guides and regular clients. MMS remains one of the few if not the only destination that does not reward tour guides and offer discounts to them especially when bringing lots of business to the stadium. This is a bad business practice, and the only way to fix this is for MMS to start recognising the value and the significance of these stakeholders. With all the benefits that these stakeholders bring to MMS including free marketing and promotion, they deserve to be rewarded when necessary so that they will be encouraged and continue to do business with MMS knowing that they always stand to gain something in return.

Employee’s perspective Internal marketing and employees

Internal customers, also known as employees are the most important component of any business. Organisations must start by convincing the internal customers about the products and services before they can hope to attract external customers, this is known as internal/inside marketing. The concept of internal marketing is aimed at targeting those who know the business best such as its employees so that employees will invest their backing in developing a strong brand image internally.

The justification behind internal marketing activities is that tourism organisations can use its own employees to “sell” the benefits of its products or services, a strategy that saves on external marketing costs and strengthens the brand overall (Kale 2006:3). Internal marketing campaigns are highly effective as they generate enthusiasm among employees and they filter important information to all employees. This study also included the employees of the stadium from six different departments including Marketing, Events and Retail. The employees of MMS made up 33.3% (15) of the respondents.

The respondents were asked questions relating to internal marketing at MMS, a total number of 87% (13) indicated that there’s presently no internal marketing taking place at MMS whereas the other 13% (2) decided not to answer the question. They pointed out that the internal marketing is extremely poor to such an extent that some of the employees do not know the prices of the attractions, and this was a common complaint from other departmental staff particularly from those who do not deal with customers. Another respondent indicated that the venue information and prices that MMS is charging remains unknown to everyone except to the staff of the Event Department, as such, we could not answer customer’s questions about how much the stadium costs if one wishes to have an event. This, according to the respondents is because there is no traditional Marketing Department at MMS; most of the marketing activities are carried out by an agent, including updating the website. Since the Marketing Department is not necessarily a recognised department but an extension of the Retail Department, the budget allocated for marketing activities is apparently extremely small and insufficient. One respondent stated the following regarding marketing of MMS;

Respondent 1, “the marketing of the stadium does not exist, sometimes we run out of brochures for weeks and no one cares. The information which should be shared with employees is always protected and kept as secrets hence sometimes we struggle to deal with customers because we are always in the dark”.



The respondents were later questioned on the current state of the overall marketing approach of MMS especially to external customers. The responses were somewhat similar to that of internal marketing. The majority of respondents confidently indicated that the marketing approach of the stadium has been a shame for years. Furthermore, the respondents indicated that the minimum budget that is allocated for marketing activities is nothing compared to the volume of marketing activities that is required and has been disappointing considering the nature of business of the stadium. "MMS is a tourism attraction that has lots of potential but only if the municipality can change the management and sort out the priorities of the stadium", stated one of the respondents. Another respondent had the following to say regarding the marketing of MMS;

Respondent II, "We once suggested that the stadium should do mall activations as form of promoting the brand of MMS seeing that the attractions are no longer attracting many visitors. The response from the management was that it's a waste of time and there's no budget allocated for such activities.

The outcome of the study clearly proves that the problem does exist and by the look of things, it can be fixed. The respondents were also asked a few other questions relating to marketing activities of the stadium including the question of who or what might be the contributing factor to the apparent decline of MMS popularity as a mega tourism destination in KZN.

Interestingly, the respondents indicated a somewhat appalling matter concerning the operation of the stadium. A total of 13 (87%) respondents pointed out political interference as one of the prominent challenges that are hampering the tourism progress of MMS. This destination is owned, managed and funded by eThekweni Municipality though previously a private company on behalf of government administered the stadium. Such purposeless interference from government is disadvantageous more than anything; the physical appearance of the stadium has deteriorated drastically, a number of competent employees have left the stadium, the quality of attractions continues to decline, no new attractions are being developed for visitors, the existing attractions are hardly available, the number of events hosted by MMS are declining and MMS continues to function without a long-term tourism and marketing plan. Political interference in state owned companies has been nothing but a terribly misguided approach; Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife (EKZNW) is another practical example of a state funded tourism and conservation organisation that is reportedly on the brink of bankruptcy due to insatiable political intervention.

The organisation was flourishing for many years until government decided to intervene, the organisation has been involved in financial scandals, prominent government employees have been relieved of their duties due to corruption and the organisation almost collapsed. Similarly, with MMS, since the municipality took over, the number of visitors coming into the stadium has been consistently declining including the number of events. Shockingly, very little is being done to improve the present situation that has left MMS vulnerable and weak. The respondents also expressed their sincere displeasure regarding the existing management that was deployed by the municipality. Subsequent are some of the strong views that the respondents stated during the interviews:

Respondent I, "since they (management) came to the stadium, it's been crisis after crisis, and they don't seem to care about any of the problems that we are facing. Their main focus is to instigate unnecessary vendettas with vocal employees, get rid of people that are useful to the organisation and hire their friends and girlfriends. They are indeed a shame to black people because their incompetency is usually generalised to the entire black populace". The continuous decline of MMS is a direct result of their incompetency and their lack of necessary skills to manage such a mega destination.



Respondent II, “We have vacant shops in the retail section of the stadium. These shops are meant to be generating profits for the stadium but most of them have been unfilled since 2009. Surprisingly, we have hundreds of potential tenants that comes to the stadium on daily basis to acquire occupancies of these shops, but the shops remain closed and futile. Instead, some shops are leaving. We continue to lose lots of money that we should have been generating in these shops because of political indecisiveness.

Respondent III, “it’s very clear now that black people are not capable to lead effectively. The stadium was flourishing in the hands of white people (previous management). They just should have left everything to the capable hands of BKS because these clowns who are here now are oblivious and arrogant. These is too much for them, they are clearly drowning but because it’s not their money that the city is losing, they do not care.

The outcome clearly suggests that the management of the stadium is largely to blame for the dilemma that is unfolding at MMS. Their lack or rather absence of a long-term vision for the stadium has resulted in a loss of millions, their inability to get in-touch with issues that are affecting employees has resulted in the employee-employer relationship being very hot-blooded thus negatively affecting the performance and the morale of MMS employees drastically. Political deployments (incompetent and hopeless) over merits (competent and skilled) persists, and is the major problem blocking the marketing, strategic and commercial success of MMS. Unless, the eThekweni Municipality decides to get rid of the current management, the stadium is not only doomed to failure and closure but the physical structure of this destination will eventually collapse.

Education is a critical aspect in the long-term success of the tourism industry hence both local and public sectors ought to invest in tourism professionals and experts. There is an unfounded perspective that tourism is not a specialised field, as such, any person can work in the tourism sector. That’s unfortunately fallacious; tourism is a specialised field just like any other. Consequently, respondents were asked about MMS employees, and their responses were quite disconcerting. MMS as big of a destination as it is does not have a tourism department instead tourism is a fraction of the Retail Department. The outcome of the study also noted that at MMS there are no managers/supervisors who are tourism experts or graduates. The core business component of MMS, which is tourism, is practically being governed by employees that understand almost nothing about the full particulars of the tourism industry. Consequently, some attractions would remain grounded for months. There was also a common apprehension regarding the proficiency of MMS employees (also part of municipality employees), some respondents stating that “political deployments and nepotism are the reason why MMS will never move forward”.

The previously mentioned outcome suggests that on top of marketing issues affecting the tourism performance of MMS, an additional fragile characteristic is the apparent lack of competent, capable, specialised tourism professionals with a will to take MMS to the next level as far as tourism development is concerned. It’s in circumstances of this nature that a solid marketing strategy would be advantageous as it allows destinations to identify and source knowledgeable and proficient workforce that will carry the name of a company to newer heights. Similarly, challenging and catastrophic times are not very prone to come about if a destination operates with a proper marketing strategy. The above responses from various employees clearly indicate that MMS has invested very little in marketing activities, which in turn has resulted in a loss of clientele and profits for the destination. There is a reasonable level of conflict between the strategic direction of MMS and what politicians want the stadium to be. That conflict has unfortunately hampered the tourism progress of MMS.



Results interpretation

The base of this paper was to thoroughly establish, precisely how the existing MMS marketing strategy might be a basis for a decline in the number of visitors and profits-earned in recent years. The MMS is widely recognised as one of the most promising tourism destinations in South Africa but unfortunately, this destination seemingly has not fully transformed from being a typical soccer stadium into a tourism destination largely due to lack of willpower and a high level of incompetency that has been displayed by the present management. According to the outcome, the stadium has been operating without a marketing plan for the past nine (9) years, though it appears that the stadium was gradually developing between 2011 and 2015. The principal researcher believes that the previous growth was due to the fact the stadium was solely managed by an independent establishment without any noticeable political interference. The company had all the necessary expertise and skills to manage such a big destination. Post the government takeover, the present management did not development any succession plan as far as marketing, events, retail and business development is concern. Thus, the results are disastrous and devastating but there is still hope.

The non-existence of a traditional marketing department at MMS and the proper marketing plan ultimately suggests that no studies have been conducted on the life span of the attractions, the marketing direction of the stadium remains directionless and useless, no previous nor ongoing market research is being conducted so as to align the offerings of the stadium to the needs of the customers, no new attractions have been introduced, the state of the existing attractions is rapidly deteriorating, the stadium has not evaluated whether they can meet any customers' needs in a way that allows for profitable exchanges with customers to occur.

There are no activities or plans in place for meaningful communications with customers on a regular basis, no focused strategy to pursue advertising, no promotional, and public relations campaigns that can lead to continued successful exchanges between the company and its customers, no human resource plan of sourcing of competent marketing professionals in place, instead, the stadium continues to lose key important employees. As a result, it remains nearly impossible for the stadium to grow financially and market wisely as long the there's no proper marketing plan.

The study can conclude that most of the problems that are affecting MMS as a tourism destination are somewhat interrelated with marketing. The employees of the stadium concur with the fact that the marketing of the stadium has been nothing but a calamity. More internal and external marketing efforts are required, all the interested and affected stakeholders including the tenants, tourists' guides and operators, stadium clients, and the municipality needs to work together in addressing the issues that are facing MMS. The outcome suggests that all can still go back to normal only if hard-hitting resolutions can be effected.

Study recommendations

The study outcomes revealed that there is presently no proper founding document that outlines the marketing strategy of the stadium. Thus, this research recommends the development of a new marketing strategy that will guide the promotional activities of MMS. The implications and outputs of marketing activities that were not informed by a marketing strategy have been negative, costly and disastrous for MMS. A solid marketing strategy will certainly revitalise the tourism footprint of MMS both locally and internationally. Additionally, a marketing strategy also makes an allowance for market research analysis to take place, as such, the data can be utilised to make informed decisions in the near future. In order for any tourism destination to remain relevant to its customers, constant marketing research must be conducted in order to assess the relevance of the offerings and improve where necessary, to



set both financial and visitor arrival goals and targets, to source potential clients, to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, and to make informed strategic decisions. This can only be achieved in a case where MMS invest a reasonable amount of resources in their marketing activities starting with a first-class marketing plan that will also consist of a destination marketing strategy, and market analysis strategy.

MMS is a state-owned business, which largely is working against the progress of tourism potential of this destination. The political interference in state owned and funded enterprises in South Africa has yielded nothing but a series of unfortunate calamities. This research suggests that politically motivated appointments should cease to exist if MMS is to achieve its potential and be profitable. Tourism is a great source of employment for the community of Durban; hence, it should be administered by competent, capable and open-minded tourism professionals, and not by a group of power hungry, self-proclaimed leaders who are perpetuating poverty, corruption, and malfunction of state owned companies. Chris Hart who is an economist and business strategist at Investment Solutions asserted that “in order for state owned companies in South Africa to succeed; government and politicians should remain distant from the day to day management of such companies as they are a great source of livelihood for many South Africans”. He further stated that “all South African state-owned commercial companies possess the possibility to become profitable business ventures, but they are gradually deteriorating and will diminish to nothing if their directives are not made clear and political interference is not terminated”. Truthfully, the political interference in the administration has in actuality affected the tourism potential of MMS negatively, and until this destination is permitted to operate autonomous from politics, things will become worse before it gets better.

This study also recommends the evaluation of an MMS feasibility study. Commonly, a feasibility study includes a detailed narrative of the Industry, current market analysis, competition, anticipated future market potential, potential clients and sources of revenues and sales projections. Reviewing a feasibility study of MMS might be a great source of information particularly on the issue of potential market challenges and sales projection. A profound analysis between what was projected on the feasibility study and what is currently happening at MMS can be used to measure the marketing and tourism performance of the stadium. Possible solutions to potential challenges are also accounted for in a feasibility study hence reviewing the document could be in the best interest of both the stadium and the visitors. The study has established that there are presently no market research activities at MMS, as such; the life span of MMS attractions and popularity remains unknown to everyone as well as the management of MMS. However, such information about the life cycle of MMS attractions is also accounted for in the study therefore the notion to re-evaluate the study is certainly constructive and may well bring to light plenty of precious information.

The model of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis is one process that must be carried out on a regular basis as the industry of tourism is constantly changing. MMS can compare the original SWOT analysis as eluded on the feasibility study against the current SWOT analysis. Through this implementation, MMS will be able to identify struggles associated with the overall operation of MMS as a tourism destination and can thereafter develop counter-strategies to redress the challenges.

Lastly, the study also recommends for the sourcing of professionals that explicitly specialises in marketing and public relations. The outcomes suggest that there is a crisis as far as marketing professionals are concerned at MMS hence the sourcing of a relevant and competent workforce can be an advantage to the destination. Moreover, all the stadium employees including the tourism section that deals with visitors on a daily basis need to share the same objective regarding strategic direction, targets, vision and expected service standards. The stadium needs to improve their affiliation with other tourism destinations as



well as local tourism authorities. This in turn will likely then assist the stadium to be updated according to current tourism and marketing trends.

Other recommendations

The study calls for the formation and the maintaining of a strong, long-term and mutually beneficial association between MMS and prominent stakeholders of the tourism industry. These stakeholders include tourist guides, tourism operators and regular clients. These stakeholders will generate free and unlimited marketing and promotion for the stadium, bring in new clientele to the stadium and distribute MMS tourism packages to various distributions both locally and internationally.

The stadium similarly must reinforce their affiliation with the existing tenants and also develop some sort of a plan/strategy on how to enhance the marketing activities and footprint of both attractions and the tenant's products and services. Moreover, MMS have a responsibility to ensure all the vacant retail shops are leased. The rationale for acquiring new tenants is that they will attract new customers, generate money for the stadium and bring back the much-needed traffic at MMS. The existing and the potential tenants can inject necessary resources in developing a long-term marketing plan of MMS.

Conclusion

This paper has hopefully provided sensible information into the status of marketing and tourism at MMS, in Durban. The concluding remarks on the topic of MMS is the reality that MMS is certainly a world-class tourism destination, however, due to lack of marketing direction which is caused by the existing gap between customer expectations and management perception, the stadium has not been able to realise it's utmost tourism potential. It can also be concluded that the root cause of a decline in visitors and profits is largely related to poor marketing performance. Radical intervention strategies are required if MMS is to regain its tourism popularity, and self-government of MMS must be achieved. In essence, this unfortunate reality that exists at MMS points to the call for the formulation, development and support of a focused tourism and marketing strategy that will bring MMS back to the desired competitive position in the market. For new tourism destinations similar to MMS to be competitive and to strive in the market place, a proper marketing strategy should be implemented in order to achieve product distinction and market value proposition. A constant analysis of marketing and tourism indicators remain one of the mostly preferred methods that can be utilised to achieve strategic and promotional objectives of MMS. Consequently, a need to adopt flexible strategies that will meet the ever-changing nature of tourism does exist.

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