Building Relationships

It is nearly always the case that tourism organisations have to work together in order to bring about tourism development. For example:

* There’s no point in building a new theme park if transport routes are not good enough to allow visitors to get to the attraction easily.
* There’s no point in building a new hotel if there are no attractions in the area.

By working together, tourism organisations can develop successful relationships which bring about tourism development. This helps the businesses themselves and the local community.

The story of the hotel owner below shows how working in partnership with other tourism organisations can make a big difference to the success of a tourism business and bring about tourism development.

‘My name is Ali Iqbal and I am the owner of the Burnham Oaks Hotel. The hotel is graded as 3-stars with 65 en-suite bedrooms, a restaurant and an events hall which can hold up to 120 people seated. We do not have leisure facilities or a swimming pool.

I purchased the hotel 2 years ago and I have a large mortgage on the property. I am just about keeping up with the repayments. However, I have been looking for ways to develop the hotel so that I can provide better products and services, attract new business and therefore charge more.

I recently joined the local tourist board. However, I found out that in fact it was a Destination Marketing Organisation. I wasn’t aware of what this was until their representative explained their role to me. The meeting I had was extremely helpful and gave me lots of ideas about how I could develop my hotel by working with other tourism businesses.

The first bit of good news is that my membership fee to the DMO will entitle me to have the Burnham Oaks Hotel listed on their website. This should draw in a lot more customers who book through their website, through online bookings. I must admit that the hotel’s website is a bit dated and the guy from the DMO said that they might be able to help with a re-design of the website.

Also, I’ve already agreed to get some new brochures printed so that they can be placed in two local TICs managed by the DMO.

The guy from the DMO put me in touch with a local wedding planner. I hadn’t realised what a big business the wedding market is. We have a lovely lake in our grounds which would be a fantastic setting for wedding photos and I’m sure our catering staff could manage to develop a few set menus that we could offer.

I’ve also been given the name of the manager of the local golf course. I’ve never played golf and have no interest. However, they are looking for a partner hotel to work with so that the golf club can offer golf breaks. Quite simply, by working together we could offer rounds of golf and a two or three-night stay at the hotel for an all-in price. Most of this business would be mid-week, which would be great for us.

I’ve set up a second meeting with the golf club manager to discuss how we could develop some form of joint marketing activity promoting both businesses at the same time. Promoting both businesses through our websites seems to be the most obvious thing to do.

Last week I attended a business breakfast organised by the DMO. I was talking to a local butcher who mentioned how he was selling more and more meat products he obtained from local farmers. When we meet again I need to talk to him about the possibility of him supplying some of my meats.

The last bit of good news is that the DMO is talking to the council about improvements to a roundabout and sorting out parking problems near to where the hotel is situated. Apparently, a number of businesses have mentioned that a new road system and better parking would be good for their businesses. The council certainly wouldn’t listen if it was just me complaining.

# Activity 1

As you can see, Mr Iqbal’s business is likely to benefit a great deal from working with the DMO and forming relationships with other tourism organisations.

Having read the information, answer the questions below.

1. Outline the product of the Burnham Oaks Hotel
2. How might being listed on the DMO’s website increase business at the hotel?
3. What do the letters TIC stand for?
4. Identify two advantages the hotel has for holding weddings.
5. Explain how joint marketing with the local golf club will benefit both the golf club and the hotel.
6. Explain how the possible developments discussed with the DMO might benefit the employees of the hotel.