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MARKETING PLAN FOR MAURITIUS : TURNING A HONEYMOON DESTINATION INTO A FAMILY FRIENDLY HARBOUR

Executive Summary :

Whenever one imagines the scenery of Mauritius, white, sandy beaches and idyllic blue seas comes to mind. Lounging with your family on the beach and sandy little footprints complete the picture. When one imagines having a relaxing, care-free holiday however, struggling to enable your child to enjoy the experience equally, does not. That is why I have decided to present my product offering as high-quality, easily usable swimming diapers for children and tourists.

The tourism market is one of the key contributors to the economy of Mauritius. It encourages foreign direct investment in the form of employment creation and assists as a key driver of economic power of communities within the region. My product offering aims to continue making Mauritius a convenient, accessible tourist destination which caters to all needs of the market it aims to engage. It also aims to cater for the whole family, instead of just honeymoon couples.

1. Market Analysis

1.1 Economic Environment

In a market analysis note dated 2018 by the African Development Bank, the author Ndoli Kalumiya indicated a continued growth trend in the economy driven significantly by tourism. He asserts the tourism industry as one of the main contributors to a steady growth trend in the overall economic development of the region with a positive short term outlook with increased projected growth trends of around 4.3% for the 2019-year on the back of stronger investment, further increased tourism, and an upturn in export demands (Kalumiya, 2018).

According to the same market analysis by the African Development Bank (Kalumiya, 2018), the medium- to long term outlook remains positive with diversification of the tourism industry into medical tourism cited as a main economic driver.

When analysing the financial economic indicators provided by the Bank dated 2016 to 2019, it is clear that GDP growth, including growth per capita, has shown no contraction in growth (Kalumiya, 2018) It is therefore evident that the opportunity for business dealings is ripe and no substantially hindering challenges exist.

1.2 Social and Cultural Environment

The now-culturally diverse Mauritius is described as having been uninhibited before colonisation by various societies, rendering the country as having no official language but being hailed as a “cultural meltingpot” (Sun Resorts, 2018). Most inhabitants are proficient in English and boast skills in a vast array of languages which are further developed by the Mauritian schooling system (Sun Resorts, 2018). This makes the destination the perfect selection for tourism. Estimated youth unemployment for the 2020-year sits at roughly 24% (Plecher, 2020) which provides me with the opportunity to contribute to remedying the situation by employment in my envisioned business endeavours.

1.3 Infrastructure indicators

The Mauritian government is dedicated to infrastructure development and transport infrastructure is described as relatively well-developed with around 1,834km of the 1,910km of roads being paved (Kisu, 2010:42). Government has earmarked around USD0.4 billion for the upgrading of road infrastructure as part of the public sector infrastructure investment programme (Kisu, 2020:35). Water and sanitation services is regarded as being one of the best in the sub-saharan African region with 99.9% of the population enjoying access to water and 93.1% enjoying access to sanitation services per a survey conducted in 2016 (Department of water and sanitation, 2017:233). The ICT-sector is ranked highly in terms of its “network readiness index” and has yielded revenue in excess of USD1-billion annually (NRI, 2020). The continued development in this particular sector, it has consequently rendered it one of the main contributors to the Mauritian economy.

2. Product Description

As a result of the continued thriving Mauritian economy with particular reference to an exponential growth in the tourism industry for families, I have elected to import, distribute and market swimming diapers for young children. With the lovely beaches and no shortage of luxury resorts in mind, I have identified the need for continued ease of access to essential products which will make the stay of tourists comfortable and result in continued perception of Mauritius as a preferred travel destination.

The product offering will consist of both disposable and reusable diapers, and will cater to the needs of the environmentally conscious customers as well as customers who prefer convenience.

3. Recommended Marketing Strategy

In order to aid the continued perception of Mauritius as the preferred travel destination due to its beauty, cultural diversity, and the overall enjoyment of the visit, I will be providing young children's swimming diapers, available at luxury resorts, to ensure further comfort and ease of stay for travellers.

4. Marketing Mix and Strategies

4.1 Product Strategy

My chosen target market segment is the travellers segment with the indirect contribution it will have to the local communities and economy. The product will therefore be marketed as an essential luxury product with the aim of making tourists' stay more enjoyable, comfortable and convenient. Due to the nature of the cultural diversity, the anticipated cultural diversity of travellers and the unique social convictions as a result thereof, my product will be available in both disposable and reusable form.

The product vision will remain static throughout the business lifecycle and provide the business with a clear goal: to continue the upward trend of tourism in the Mauritian market in order to continue contributing to economic growth and social-wellbeing as a result of the perceived ease of travelling to Mauritius.

My product goals will remain simple. I aim to make it known globally that Mauritius is not only a honeymoon destination, but is open and friendly to entire families including young children. By making the destination accessible and convenient for tourists with young children, I aim to eliminate unnecessary planning and concerns for parents ensuring they can enjoy the environmental beauty of Mauritius as a destination with their children in mind. Families will be enabled to enjoy lounging on beaches and at resorts without added worrying about their young children's comfort.

The wider goals of my business will be to ensure my participation in contribution to the Mauritian economy and eventual profitability of my business.

4.2 Distribution Strategy

During the course of research on manufacturers for the product I aim to make available, I have determined the best possible price point for the product to be products manufactured in China and shipped to South Africa. The Durban port appears to be the most widely used port in South Africa with the most competitive pricing and efficient, established policies and protocols with regards to receiving and distributing of cargo. As a result of the previously mentioned established road network in Mauritius, the further distribution channel decided upon is to transport my product via a logistics company by way of trucks. The chosen logistics partner will also avail of warehousing to establish ease of moving the stock. The stock will then be housed at another warehousing partner in Mauritius itself until such time as it is determined no longer viable, in which case I will continue utilising the initial warehouse from where product can then be moved directly to the stockist, being the luxury resort. A quick search on the internet proves that the market for logistics companies is fairly saturated. I will thus be able to negotiate transport costs and keep my overhead in this regard fairly competitive and low, which will have an impact on the eventual consumer cost for the product and in turn the bottom line of the business.

Should the opportunity later present itself, I will explore the possibility of manufacturing and distribution in one of the SADC countries or perhaps Mauritius itself.

4.3 Price Strategy Structure

A price strategy structure can be defined as a manner of pricing products that a business makes use of in order to regulate the amount that the company sells its services or products for (Campbell, 2020). There are various strategies that one can make use of, and I have decided to make use of value-based pricing. This strategy utilises data about consumers and the intended target market in order to determine the consumers' willingness to pay for a product or service (Campbell, 2020). Since the product that I will be marketing is a new, innovative product, there will not be any competitors to compare my price range against. For that reason, I have decided that the value-based strategy will be most effective and can help me improve customer loyalty from the start of my business. As the business evolves as intended, I will be able to increase the price of my product as customers become more ardent and start perceiving my product as a necessity rather than a desire.

4.4 Promotion Strategy

In order to ensure my own relevance in the market, I will make it known that the product is available at the resort only once tourists arrive at their destination. The availability can be made known in the welcome brochure of the resort and the product will be displayed in the resort convenience stores. For this reason I will initially not be making use of a website for the product itself, but as the business lifecycle evolves this strategy can be reviewed. Once an increased demand for the product is shown, I will be able to promote the product via SMS and social media and eventually as part of the offering of the resort itself. This proposition, however, will only be explored once the demand for the product has increased in line with the growth of the tourism industry as anticipated. Should the anticipated increase in demand present itself, I will be able to expand my reach to other markets, perhaps the local market or other tourist destinations not only including resorts, and not only the luxury tourism industry.

Conclusion

After conducting extensive research and an adequate market analysis on Mauritius, it has become evident to me that there is a clear gap in the market. I have identified this gap as the holiday destination being more directed towards honeymoon couples or friend groups than a family-oriented vacation spot. I believe that the product that I have identified is unique and that there is a genuine need and market for it. I believe that if I sufficiently make use of all the precedingly mentioned strategies, a successful, continuously growing organisation can be established.

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