



### Geoff Buckley



The valedictory interview with the outgoing head of Tourism Australia. May be paraphrased.

• **Marketing:**

-We have the done a lot of research to target the Experience Seeker. Youth is also a growth area. So not just a geographical approach to marketing. We do a psychographic profile, such as young, family, boomers, honeymooners. We are already in that space, in terms of Facebook, with working holiday visas, honeymooners, etc.

-We have a new arrangement to look at markets to see how business is going. The executive management team (5 people) will do the analysis for two days every quarter. We have had a trial meeting, but the first real one is due this September.

• **Strategy:**

-Volume Protection – Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore, UK.

-Maximise Growth (ie good potential for growth) – China, France, India, Malaysia, South Africa.

-Shorthaul Opportunity – domestic, New Zealand.

-Current Business Maintenance – Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand.

-Developing Markets – Argentina, Brazil, Finland Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, UAE, Vietnam.

• **Offices:**

-This year we will lose a lot of our marketing power because of the fall in the value of the A\$. So we have devised a 'hub-and-spoke' (H&S) system – *meaning little more than regional offices*. We are unusual in that we have 6/7 markets that are quite large, then a large number in the second category; we cannot afford an office in all those secondary places. Traditionally, when we got to 100,000 visitors we opened an office.

Also H&S gives us flexibility – if there are sudden changes in the mar-

ket. We are trying to set up road warrior network; someone will go out and make the deal, then the regional office can service the deal. We have made the decisions that we need to make for the current market situation, but we will watch and see the way the market moves. Because we might not know which market is going to be hot, we need to create organisational flexibility. If we had a person in an office, that person is not very flexible. For instance, we have seen greater growth out of Greater China. We took the opportunity to open an office in India, although this does not seem to fit this pattern, because it is a targeted growth market for us.

• **Other comments:**

-To measure visitors, we have arrivals, dispersal, and economic value. But we are now concentrating on volume; we are looking are getting them through the turnstile – because otherwise they obviously don't spend.

-We believe the requirement for overseas offices is still needed. But we are looking at the balance of putting money into bricks & mortar, and into marketing. We have looked at how to get as much money as possible into marketing.

### Rick Allert

Chairman of Tourism Australia. With the departure of Geoff Buckley, he becomes the executive chairman rather than non-executive chairman.

According to media reports, a replacement for Buckley was found – rumours fingered the head of Tourism Victoria – but for unknown reasons, whoever, he/she will not be taking up the job.

So the search has started again, which means it could be six months before TA gets a new operational chief. In addition, there is a complication in that a new report for the government would change the strategy of the TA.

When asked *how you can look for a CEO if you don't know what role he will have*, Allert replied that there are certain standards for a CEO. Clearly

this is a smokescreen; the TA does not know what to do, but it cannot do nothing.

In fact there seems a possibility that the two main authors of the report – Margaret Jackson and Geoff Dixon, deputy chairman at TA – are seeking operational roles in the TA. J&D were a team at Qantas (chairman and CEO). Although they directed the airline into its present dysfunction – with a myriad of airlines, some with the same name but planning different things – they still seem to be respected.

Allert says "tough times present a good opportunity on how to change our business. At Tourism Australia we are constantly looking at how we do business. Marketing Australia in the current crisis calls for new measures."

### Rolf Freitag

Head of the IPK research company – and who has now moved from his beloved Munich to Pisa.

We are impressed with his World Travel Monitor, although we do not like the way he mixes outbound and inbound data with alacrity, as though they were the same. He must know, but he sometimes gives the impression that he does not know these two measures will never be the same – because one outbound traveller may visit more than one destination, and thus produce more than one 'arrival'.

In addition, Freitag's presentations on market developments are often prefaced and inter-mixed with a lot of economic, political, and sociological comment.

We all have opinions, and sometimes strong ones, particularly about the current crisis, and always about the state of the world. But we are not interested in who Freitag blames for the crisis ("the Americans") and who is suffering ("the poor"). But we are interested in who is travelling where, how, and spending how much. He should stick with travel, or add sociological questions to his surveys to back-up his statements.

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