

“DEVELOPING SABAH’S TOURISM PRODUCTS AND BRAND SEMINAR”

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Bismillahirrahmanirrahim,

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh, and a very good morning.

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am indeed honoured and privileged to be present here this morning amongst so many distinguished delegates of the ‘Developing Sabah’s Tourism Products and Brand Seminar: Creating A Blue Ocean Strategy’. I believe the theme of this seminar will stimulate ideas and solutions enabling us to build on the new growth of Sabah tourism.

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate School of Business and Economic, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Borneo Ecotourism Solutions & Technologies (BEST) and Edith Cowan University, Australia for organising this seminar, and for having graciously invited me to deliver this welcoming speech. I would also like to thank Borneo Eco Tours Sdn. Bhd., Sutera Harbour Resort and Sutera Sanctuary Lodges for their contribution towards organising this important seminar.

Ladies and Gentlemen, **(TOURISM TREND)**

Tourism in the future is likely to be even fuzzier than it is now and dominated by an experience economy. They make the important point that 'memorable experiences are not simply about entertaining people in a service setting, but about capturing their imagination and meeting a combination of four needs: entertainment, education, escapism and aesthetics. These new consumer attitudes are impacting destinations, which are increasingly likely to offer low impact tourism facilities, consistent with consumer demand for environmental values and desire not to contribute to negative impact.

The tourism industry meets new challenges with vast environmental changes, these changes call for swift development actions. They also mould expectations and quality requirements of customers. To answer both these requirements means creating new innovative products and operational solutions. So, the tourism business should balance economics with people, culture and environment and adapt strategic thinking so as to develop tourism with benefits for everyone, extend and diversify product offerings to improve yield and social value and spearhead innovative management and help spread best practice through corporate social responsibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen, **(SDC)**

Sabah Development Corridor (SDC) also emphasize on new tourism product development to meet the changing demand. Among the SDC's highlights for development is to market Sabah as an exclusive holiday home destination,

develop new tourism products anchored by signature resorts, encourage rural participation through community-based tourism, develop a one-district one-product programme, make the state a centre of excellence for tropical biodiversity research and to set up an arts and culture fund.

Ladies and Gentlemen, **(INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY)**

World travellers are also increasingly looking for quality products and experiences that offer value for money, especially environmentally-friendly travel and tourism related products and services as well as those that enable them to take part in local community activities.

The London School of Business published reports that a key innovation in today's business is experiences. In today's environment, of ever more sophisticated consumers, those who deliver memorable customer experiences consistently create superior value and competitive advantage.

Developing new and innovative experiential tourism products, which are affordable to customers and generate profits for tourism businesses, is essential. No matter how attractive the destination, visitors will not arrive and stay there unless the necessary infrastructure and activities are in place. The public sector typically develops the basic infrastructure that allows the private sector to run tourism activities and businesses. However, governments and development organizations can also play an important role in promoting sustainable tourism products that tap into growing niche markets and create benefits for host communities.

Successful that is also profitable to the tourism firm in a competitive market, must increase the value of the product or tourism experience. Since the value is tourists' perceived quality divided by the price (cost) of this quality successful innovation must increase value by improving quality or by lowering price (cost). New tourism products which offer a special or unique value to the tourist are more successful than innovation without the consideration and participation of the tourist. Hence, innovation leads to higher market shares, a higher efficiency and easier realisation of aims regarding turnover or profit.

Creativity provides new tourism products and thus sets you apart from your competitors. In the tourism development game, it is much better to lead than to follow. But innovation for its own sake is ineffective; the product must be carefully planned, designed, and developed if it is to reach its potential.

Ladies and Gentlemen, **(BRANDING)**

In many business industries, characterized by complex offerings that drive functional, symbolic and experiential benefits, the brand represents the main relational resource to create and to maintain a competitive advantage. Moreover, in the actual hyper-competitive markets – with the decreased effectiveness of traditional marketing tactics and the emergence of new marketing tools the brand becomes one of the most important assets for the organization that intends to build and manage significant relationships with all business player presents in own value constellation mainly with the final customer.

Ladies and Gentlemen, **(CONCLUSION)**

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity, once again to thank the organisers of this seminar for their initiative and wish you all a fruitful discussion in developing a new tourism product development in Sabah. Universiti Malaysia Sabah stands ready to extend its fullest cooperation in building a new vision of tourism which bring benefits to the wider world.

Thank you.