

How does Sustainable Development in the Hotel Industry relate to Gros national happiness?

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This presentation addresses itself to the question of the multitude of issues that are faced by a developer or owner of a new Hotel Project.

There are currently about 40 hotel projects either in the planning or construction phase, and yet, very few have established a plan for the sustainability of the project. Too many times, an over simplistic budget plan is made to be used in connection with the mortgage application required by the bank and too few times, an overall picture of all aspects relating to the project is made.

To my knowledge the Government does not mandate a study or comprehensive plan for any new construction, and while some discussion points might come up locally with any project, no guideline or specific recommendation seems to exist.

Many countries have by now adopted very strict plans that take into account the multitude of the issues that relate to sustainable development. It is suggested here that Bhutan, parallel with the proposed star rating system will implement or mandate a logical sequence of laws that will protect the country from less enlightend developers and guarantee the country an increased level of Gros National Happiness.

While there is not enough time to go through each item of the sustainable development chart, we will touch on the major issues.

Environmental Plan

Each new property should be mandated to fulfill the very basic criteria of proper handling of:

- Use of available solar energy for water heating and electrical energy production
- Proper separation of grey water, to be reused for irrigation
- Proper use of energy savings devices, such as energy saving light bulbs. Possible installation of wind generators
- Use of heat pumps to reduce electricity consumption
- Proper water reserve systems, for at least 4 days of total consumption, in case of failure of system. Proper power back up system.
- Recycling of Waste, reducing waste, selling of recycled glass, aluminium, cardboard
- Proper use of kitchen left overs
- Reduced use of Bucaris, to eliminate smoke

Land use Plan

- Proper location of buildings as concerns exposure to sun, wind, areas for cultivation, areas for recreation, areas for employees use.
- Access for
 - Guests
 - Goods
 - Employees
 - Refuse removal
 - Refuse storage
- Archaeological issues
- Landscape Architecture
- Staff housing

Critical Path

Development and continuous update of the critical path for the entire project. Using a project planning computer system, will allow for day to day monitoring of the progress and properly schedule eventual delays. This type of planning tool is now universally used, and yet barely known here in Bhutan

Cultural Heritage

Inclusion to the maximum all aspects of the local or national cultural heritage to give the project a sense of inclusion and participation in orderly development.

Community Plan

All aspects on how the project can and will interact with the local community. This can include special training programs, benefitting the community. Conscious decision to support the local community by supporting for example organic growing of vegetables and fruits. Support of local projects, e.g. renovation projects etc. participation in sports programs. Local purchasing for goods. Support setting up small businesses that can be useful in providing services to the hotel.

Operational Plan

An operational plan that takes the local circumstances into consideration, e.g. Staff availability, Food availability, and how to best incorporate it into a functional plan. Too many times such

plan starts with a fixed position and a ill advised determination to make pre existing concepts supersede local realities.

Marketing

Too many times, little or no thoughts are given to marketing, but an almost pathetic acceptance of a market situation. Owners should all be well advised that all the necessary funds for a proper marketing plan that should start a year or so before opening is well advised. This plan should / could include innovative elements of programs that reflect the location and also the capacity of the facility. A proper PR plan will also provide Global awareness. The TCB should provide necessary support for such situations.

Overall comment

Only if Owners / Operators adopt a conscious sustainable Development plan will the results greatly contribute to an increase of GNH as relates to the Hotel Industry.