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Sustainable Tourism in the Caribbean

As it relates to the Cruise and Resort Industry

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5/21/2008
Hospitality and Tourism Management
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Précis

The business world has been preoccupied for some time now with the concept of social responsibility. Corporations have often been portrayed in a bad light for their focus on profits, at any expense. Their focus has previously been on stockholders rather than all the different shareholders that have a connection to the corporation. This includes society and the local environments. Thus, the idea of a triple bottom line was developed. Traditionally, in a company they have what is known as a bottom line, or profit. A triple bottom line not only focuses on profit but on the environmental and social aspects as well. Research is beginning to show that companies who focus on a triple bottom line seem to enjoy higher profits and higher stock prices.

This has been especially true for the tourism industry, where the idea of sustainable tourism has been gaining more popularity in recent years. Sustainable tourism, in a general sense, is the environmental, economic and social impact the tourism industry can have on a local community. The goal is for the tourism industry to support a positive impact. However, there had been reports of certain tourism sectors who had not taken an active role in sustainability due to the fact that there are hardly any short term benefits.

Through research and study, this paper presents the argument that major tourism sectors, such as cruise lines and all inclusive resorts, should take an active role in the fight for sustainability in order to ensure the long term survival of their industry. This is related specifically to the Caribbean where the natural beauty of the destination is one of its major tourist appeals.

Sustainable tourism, specifically in the Caribbean nations, has long been a topic of interest for major organizations such as the World Tourism Organization. They have dedicated several documents and assemblies to this issue because they had long ago realized the significance of tourism's impact on a community. Other organizations have also been created for the specific task of supporting and encouraging sustainable tourism in the Caribbean, such as the Caribbean Tourism Organization and the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism. Many of them have partnered with cruise lines or resorts to ensure sustainability practices are being enforced. These organizations and their many sister organizations have not only taken an active role in getting the large tourism sectors involved but have also taken the initiative to inform tourists of their impact as well.

Through the efforts of these organizations and more media attention on social responsibility, the tourism industry should begin to realize the significant long term benefits that sustainability will have on their industry. If proper procedures are not followed, the industry will eventually destroy itself by destroying the environment out of which it operates.

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Introduction

Millions of tourists travel to the Caribbean annually, enjoying its immaculate beaches and beautiful aquatic life. Many of these tourists travel to the Caribbean on cruise ships or to relax at a beautiful beach resort. They are drawn to the destination by its natural beauty, enjoyable weather and exotic heritage. However, the cruise lines and resorts, on which these tourists travel, have not always operated in unison with the local environments in which they operate. In recent years, many of these tourism businesses have taken the necessary steps to ensure the natural and exotic appeal of the destination. With the development of organization to aide in sustainability practices and the research that is beginning to show the benefits of sustainability, tourism business are beginning to realize the significance sustainability will have in the long term.

Sustainable Tourism

The concept of sustainability gained awareness during the 1980's when nations struggled to expand their economies without severe repercussions on the environment and future generations.[1] This idea can apply heavily to the tourism industry as many developing countries use tourism to generate revenue and wealth.

The tourism industry has a significant impact on the Caribbean. Tourism represents over thirty percent of the Caribbean's GDP. Most of which is heavily dependent on the region's natural beauty, especially their beautiful beaches and local aquatic life. These elements are threatened by environmental and social impacts. For this reason, efforts for promoting tourism that preserves these elements for the future have become very important to the Caribbean region[2]. This gave way to the rise of a social movement known as "sustainable tourism".

Sustainable tourism has been given many definitions throughout the years. Some choose to define it more broadly referring to the use of destinations natural resources such as beaches and landscapes. Others choose to be more specific citing it to be a low impact form of tourism that contributes to the maintenance of species and habitats. However, some definitions become rather comprehensive for a better understanding, including such elements as experiencing, learning, ethics and preservation.[3]

The World Tourism organization defines sustainable tourism as "development guidelines and management practices that are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects

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[1] Savitz, Andrew. The Triple Bottom Line. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
[2] http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/idsd/themes/tourism.htm 7 February 2008.
[3] Fennell, David. Ecotourism. New York: Routledge, 2003.

of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability"[4]. Sustainability practices should make use of environmental resources, respect the social and cultural aspects of a host community and ensure that benefits are being provided to all stakeholders. This proved to be difficult in practice. As a response, in 1997 the WTO created the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. The code was to be a set of principles to guide all stakeholders in sustainable tourism development. The Code outlines sustainable development practices for destinations, governments, tour operators, developers, travel agents, workers and travelers themselves. The Code of Ethics is not a legally binding document and its acceptance is voluntary. The Code of Ethics constitutes "a comprehensive set of basic principles whose purpose is to guide tourism development and to serve as a frame of reference for the different stakeholders in the tourism sector, with the objective of minimizing the negative impact of tourism on the environment and on cultural heritage while maximizing the benefits of tourism in promoting sustainable and responsible development, including poverty alleviation, as well as understanding among nations"[5]. The Code is comprised of a Preamble, the Principles, consisting of nine articles and a mechanism for their implementation, known as article ten.

The WTO also established a World Committee on Tourism Ethics. Members to this committee are elected by the UNWTO Regional commissions. It is the duty of this committee to ensure the implementation and survival of the Code of Ethics. In order to better inform one of the most important stakeholder, travelers, the committee published an article known as "The Responsible Tourist and Traveler". This article outlines how

[4] http://www.unwto.org/frameset/frame_sustainable.html 7 February 2008.
[5] http://www.unwto.org/code_ethics/pdf/ga2005/a_60_167_e.pdf 7 February 2008.

everyday travelers can learn to be a better tourist and make for an educational travel experience. The advice given to tourists is based on the Code of Ethics and stresses the point that even tourists can make a difference. To be considered a responsible traveler and tourist, one must do the following:

> 1. Open your mind to other cultures and traditions – it will transform your experience, you will earn respect and be more readily welcomed by local people. Be tolerant and respect diversity – observe social and cultural traditions and practices.
> 2. Respect human rights. Exploitation in any form conflicts with the fundamental aims of tourism. The sexual exploitation of children is a crime punishable in the destination or at the offender's home country.
> 3. Help preserve natural environments. Protect wildlife and habitats and do not purchase products made from endangered plants or animals.
> 4. Respect cultural resources. Activities should be conducted with respect for the artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage.
> 5. Contribute to economic and social development. Purchase local handicrafts and products to support the local economy using the principles of fair trade.
> Bargaining for goods should reflect an understanding of a fair wage.
> 6. Inform yourself about the destination's current health situation and access to emergency and consular services prior to departure and be assured that your health and personal security will not be compromised. Make sure that your specific requirements (diet, accessibility, medical care) can be fulfilled before you decide to travel this destination.
> 7. Learn as much as possible about your destination and take time to understand the customs, norms and traditions. Avoid behavior that could offend the local population.
> 8. Familiarize yourself with the laws so that you do not commit any act considered criminal by the law of the country visited. Refrain from all trafficking in illicit drugs, arms, antiques, protected species and products or substances that are dangerous or prohibited by national regulations[6]

This article serves as an indicator for what the WTO is striving to attain for the world through sustainable tourism practices. They are stressing that these practices will not only be beneficial to the host communities but also for the local governments, the local population and most importantly, the tourist.

[6] http://www.unwto.org/code_ethics/pdf/respons/resp_tour_e.pdf 7 February 2008.

A particular area of interest, as of late, has been the Caribbean as it relates to sustainable tourism. There are a few programs that are addressing the issue for sustainable tourism in the Caribbean. For the most part, statistics on tourism activities have been economic in nature. Only more recently have efforts begun to monitor the impact of tourism on the local environments. Thus, in recognition of the pressing need to proactively manage resources and address these concerns for sustainable development, the Caribbean Hotel Association Environmental Committee was established in 1992. In order to create an effective mechanism that would institutionalize environmental activities throughout the region, the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) was created three years later. The Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, working closely with the Caribbean Hotel Association, promotes responsible environmental and social management of natural and heritage resources respectively, within the hotel and tourism sector. All these organizations are dedicated in their efforts to promote the economic, environmental and social welfare of their people. This is achieved by constantly providing high quality education on sustainable tourism to stakeholder and the tourists. They also educate tourism businesses by providing materials such as manuals, guides and DVDs explaining best practice resources, as well as providing training classes and workshops to ensure that businesses have access to this important knowledge and information. Among other efforts, CAST has implemented a project jointly with the Caribbean Tourism Organization known as the Blue Flag Program, which rates the environmental quality of beaches in the region, and seeks to develop sustainable development indicators on tourism.[7] These are only a few of the organizations who have

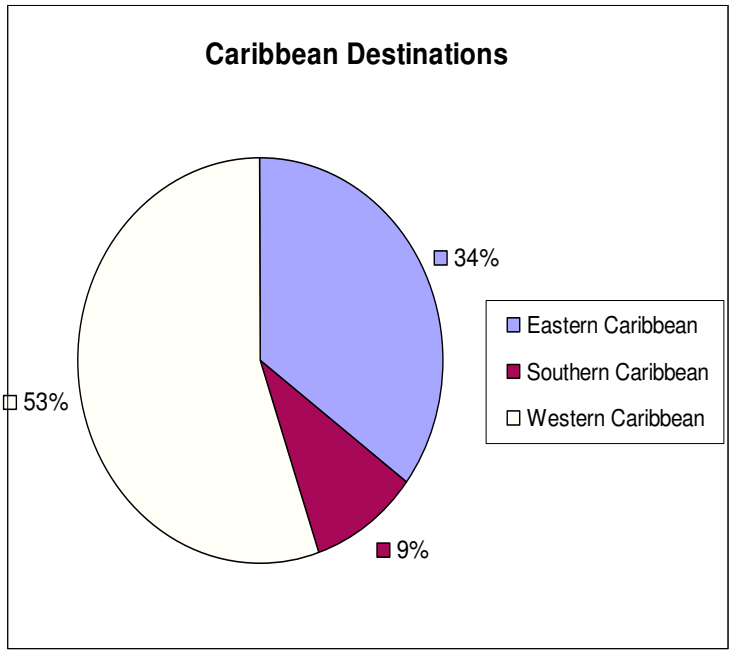
[7] http://www.cha-cast.com/whatwedo.html 7 February 2008.

dedicated themselves to sustainability. However, other businesses need to recognize that they too can make a difference.

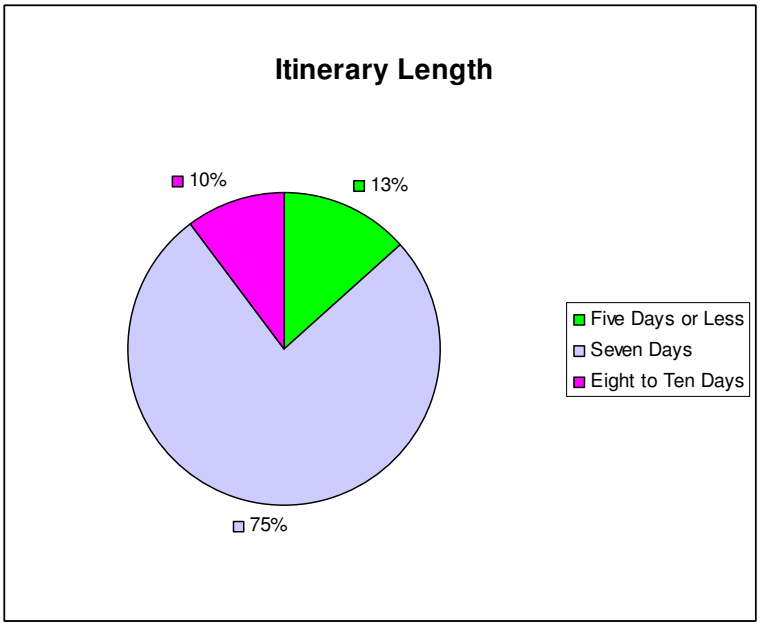
With the development of “all inclusive resorts” and the popularity of the Caribbean as a cruise line destination, the efforts of these organizations have sometimes fallen prey to these giant sectors of the tourism industry. In the past many of these tourism organizations have been criticized, and even fined, for their negative contribution to the local environments. However, sustainable tourism organizations are now indicating that these two giant sectors are working interdependently with these organizations to ensure the promotion of sustainable tourism and to make certain that the natural appeal of the region survives to keep visitors returning to the Caribbean, whether by sea or plane.

Cities at Sea

According to Cruise Line International Association (CLIA) the Caribbean is the hottest cruise region in the world. Nearly 80% of the 500 CLIA travel agents polled stated that the Caribbean as the most popular choice of agency customers. Furthermore, 88 % of agents also reported that the total number of Caribbean Cruises sold in 2006 had increased from 2005 with a prediction for a further increase in 2007. As seen in the charts below, the most popular cruises sail toward the western Caribbean and have seven day itineraries[8].



[8] Pike, Joe. "CLIA Study: Caribbean Remains King of Cruises." Travel Agent (09 April 2007): 38-43. Business Source Premier. EBSCO. 2 January 2008.



Cruise Passenger arrivals in the Caribbean for 2007 totaled near 15,541,823, up from 2006 where arrivals were 15,016,585[9]. Cruises have become popular for the Caribbean because many people are interested in visiting the naturally beautiful destinations but are unsure of exactly which Caribbean destination to visit. This is one of the most prominent reasons why tourists will plan a cruise. A cruise does not restrict a traveler to one island, but rather several islands without the hassle of packing and unpacking a suitcase. On a seven night cruise, the most popular itinerary, most ships will visit at least four islands. The smaller percentage of people who extend their cruising to eight or even ten days, have the possibility of visiting eight or nine different islands. Travelers can visit several exotic destinations all in the luxury of a five star hotel[10]

Cruise ships have the luxury of land based resorts, but with the option of several destinations. In fact, Norwegian Cruise line has based its company on the idea of a

[9] "Latest 2007 Tourism Statistics Tables" (Updated February 2008). http://www.onecaribbean.org/information/documentview.php?rowid=4476 28 February 2008.
[10] Archer, Jane. "A Sea of Option Awaits." Travel Weekly (UK). (09 March 2007): 82-83. Business Source Premier. EBSCO. 2 January 2008.

floating resort. They have even replaced traditional fixed dining with various places to eat, giving travelers an option, similar to a land based resort. Some cruise ships even have bowling alleys and rock climbing walls.

Even with the growing popularity of the Caribbean as a cruise destination there has much been much speculation surrounding the cruise line industry and its contribution to sustainable tourism. Cruise lines have been heavily fined for violating environmental laws in the past. However, both the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) strongly insist that cruse companies have seen the error of their ways and are now fully committed to protecting the environments of its destinations[11]

The CLIA maintains that it has not only been complying with U.S environmental enforcement agencies, but that it has also been strengthening their own policies and procedures, monitoring onboard procedures to ensure proper standards are maintained. The CLIA also defends itself by stating, "The cruise industry has been very proactive in its efforts to minimize all types of pollution at sea. We have installed state-of-the-art environmental equipment onboard our vessels. This equipment includes: grinders for food and product waste, separators for food products and recycling, crushers for glass, aluminum and cardboard; incinerators for food, cardboard, paper and other waste by-products; and sophisticated engine room equipment to reduce or eliminate liquid discharge"[12] Finally, the CLIA recognizes in their environmental declaration these practices are vital to the survival of the waters on which they sail. If cruise lines were not

[11] Springer, Bevan. "Cruise lines helping Caribbean, says Florida exec." New York Amsterdam News 96.41 (06 October 2005): 14-14. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. 2 January 2008.
[12] http://cruising.org/industry/environment.cfm 28 February 2008.

proactive in environmental procedures and preserving the natural beauty of destinations, over time their livelihood would suffer.

The Florida Caribbean Cruise Association is another organization that responded to criticism that the industry is not making a significant contribution to sustainable tourism. Some of the major concerns included not sourcing Caribbean agricultural products to not employing enough Caribbean nationals. The FCCA rebutted by stating the in some Caribbean destinations, such as St. Vincent's, they are the number one employer. They also stated that cruise lines will begin to buy Caribbean products such as chicken and bananas. However, similar to the CLIA, the FCCA admitted to wrongdoings in the past resulting in heavy fines for which indiscretions on human error and greed were blamed. The FCCA stated that they are the now most heavily regulated industry in environmental compliance[13]

The FCCA has also been working closely with the Caribbean Tourism Organization, who in the past has been in conflict with the cruise industry. The Secretary General of the CTO expressed that the Caribbean marketplace is shaped by cruise passengers just as much as it is by stopover visitors and that they must be committed to ensuring an exceptional cruise visitor experience. Although, cruise passenger spending is lower compared to stopover spending, any spending is extremely important to the Caribbean. The CTO also views cruise passengers as potential stopover visitors as well as an excellent marketing tool. This is one of the main arguments as to why the CTO wants to ensure an excellent experience even for cruise passengers. They believe their best measure of success is whether cruisers will recommend the Caribbean as a potential

[13] Springer, Bevan. "Cruise lines helping Caribbean, says Florida exec." New York Amsterdam News 96.41 (06 October 2005): 14-14. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. 2 January 2008.

vacation destination. Word of mouth can often be the best marketing strategy. The CTO has realized this and has therefore realized the importance of interdependence between themselves and other organizations for the continued success in the Caribbean[14]

A report issued by the Conservation International's Center for Environmental Leadership in Business in 2006 showed a vast improvement in the way the Cruise Industry is managing sustainable tourism. "The report described the various steps that cruise line and have taken and should continue to take for environmental and cultural management. It describes actions that governments, civil society groups, and shore operators should take to create and maintain sustainable partnerships and encourage support of the local economy at cruise destinations"[15]. This supports the assertions made by the CLIA that the cruise industry and become proactive in its participation in sustainable tourism. For example, Norwegian Cruise Lines has partnered with restaurants in Bermuda to encourage passengers to sample and support the local culture. Royal Caribbean International's Explorer of the Seas has onboard instrumentation that is intended to help scientists' research ocean and climate questions. Besides these instruments there are also atmospheric and oceanographic laboratories on board to aide in this research. "Ocean flow measurements are used to understand the balance distribution of heat on Earth, while other data help to monitor populations of organisms living in the sea"[16].

The report also reveals that cruise lines are investing in the local effort for conservation and community development. Cruise lines also offer off shore excursions as

[14] Springer, Bevan. "Cruise lines helping Caribbean, says Florida exec." New York Amsterdam News 96.41 (06 October 2005): 14-14. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. 2 January 2008.
[15] "LAND, HO." Environment 48.4 (May 2006): 4-4. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. 17 Mar. 2008.
[16] Ibid.

a chance for cruise passengers to explore the destination. The report discovered that cruise lines are promoting environmentally and culturally responsible shore operators and recreation providers to serve passengers[17]. This data demonstrates that the Cruise Industry understands the importance of securing a sustainable future for the Caribbean and therefore a sustainable future for the cruise industry. It also provides hope that the Cruise Industry and learned from their mistakes and will not be counteracting the major efforts that have taken place over the past few years. It is hard to know for sure whether the Cruise Industry has completely changed its former ways, because after all who is going to see you in the middle of the ocean?

[17] "LAND, HO." Environment 48.4 (May 2006): 4-4. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. 17 Mar. 2008.

All Inclusive Resorts

The Caribbean is often synonymous with its luxury all inclusive resorts. A whole vacation is paid for in advance, including accommodations, meals, entertainment and sports. Some will have tips and alcohol as the only exception but many resorts are now including those items in packages as well. This allows visitors to know their basic vacation expense before ever stepping out of their home, similar to cruise ships.

The all inclusive trend began in 1976 when John Issa opened the first all inclusive on Jamaica, known then as Negril beach Village. During the 1980's the travel industry was slow due to the oil crisis and recession, however, Issa noticed two sectors that were still surviving; Club Med resorts and cruises. Issa realized that people were choosing to vacation in this manner because they were both all inclusive and vacationers enjoyed not having to worry about the expenses and would be able to just enjoy their time. Therefore, Issa built upon this idea and created a resort where not only food and accommodation were included but also water sports and eventually alcohol. At the time, the idea was revolutionary[18]

Issa was born in Jamaica and was always highly involved in the government as well as in the tourism sector in particular. He knew Jamaica was experiencing problems with rise of guns and drugs, but he has always been adamant that vacationers are never affected by this. He was able to do this by ensuring that during their stay there is never a reason for them to leave the resort. Everything they need is right there and most likely already paid for. Issa expanded his SuperClubs Company extending into different brands

[18] Dunford, Jane. "Happiness is All Inclusive." Travel Weekly: The Choice of Travel Professionals (00494577 (12 January 2004): 60-61. Business Source Premier. EBSCO. 2 January 2008.

for different vacation tastes, as well as expanding into different countries[19]. Another, extremely popular resort, that had similar beginnings to SuperClubs was the Sandals resort founded in 1981 by Gordon Stewart. Sandals was founded in 1981 and has grown ever since, branching out to different types of tourists and to different countries[20] Tourists also enjoy these all inclusive because they are luxury hotels filled with the warmth of the native country.

The Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) had joined forces with the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) to ensure that Caribbean resorts can contribute to the fight for sustainability. The result was the promotion of Green Globe. Green Globe is a certification program created specifically to aide organizations within the travel and tourism sector gain certifications and provide and environmental framework program for the achievement of sustainability. Upon completion of the process, participators can proudly display a ribbon ensuring that they are an organization participating in sustainable practices.

Green Globe's program encompasses two different steps for a total of six different stages. The first step is benchmarking. In order to begin this process the company must first set a sustainability policy and then secondly complete a benchmark assessment. After these two stages are complete, Green Globe will assess them and decide whether a benchmark status has been achieved. The second step is to achieve certification which requires 4 different stages. The first stage is compliance. This requires companies to comply with relevant legislation and policies. The second stage is approach. Companies

[19] Dunford, Jane. "Happiness is All Inclusive." Travel Weekly: The Choice of Travel Professionals (00494577 (12 January 2004): 60-61. Business Source Premier. EBSCO. 2 January 2008.
[20] Carlton, Michael. "Land Cruising." Yankee 69.9 (November 2005): 108-112. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. 2 January 2008.

must now implement an environmental and socially sustainable approach. The third stage is performance which documents the companies' outcomes as they implement the approach strategy. The final stage, and possibly the most important, is communication. Green Globe strives for these companies' to now communicate their outcomes and teach others how beneficial a sustainable environment can be to the tourism industry. Currently, there are participants in over 42 countries worldwide[21]

Green Globe also stresses the many benefits organizations will gain by becoming participants. Current program participants have indicated that Green Globe had aided them to attract new customers, lower cost and build confidence with both the community and investors. Green Globe also promises to help companies build their reputation, market share and position. Participation will help to reduce costs in energy consumption, waste production and resource conservation. Green Globe also assists participating companies to address major environmental issues. These issues include

Reduction in green house gas emissions;
Energy efficiency, conservation and management;
Reduction in the consumption of fresh water and resources;
Ecosystem conservation and management;
Support for local community development;
Improved management of social and cultural issues;
Improved land use planning and management;
Improved air quality and noise reduction;
Improved waste water management;
Waste minimization, reuse and recycling[22]

Green Globe insists that through the implementation and monitoring of these policies the company can ensure an employee commitment to the program as well as

[21] http://www.ec3global.com/products-programs/green-globe/for-companies/programme/Default.aspx 13 March 2008.
[22] http://www.ec3global.com/products-programs/green-globe/for-companies/benefits/Default.aspx 13 March 2008.

ensuring their own sustainability. Resorts can even take some basic steps to work towards a sustainable environment and gain a Green Globe certification. Some resorts already have a tank that collects rainwater for use in the resort's laundry department. Staff members turn off walkway lights to unoccupied rooms at night and encourage guests to reuse towels. Unused food is donated instead of thrown away. Accommodations have ocean views, open-air showers and private patios, and only a few have the luxury of air conditioning[23].

Green Globe does not only reach out to those companies operating in the Caribbean but also any visitors wishing to travel to that Caribbean. Green Globe stress the recurring theme that sustainability and responsibility begins with the tourist. Therefore, Green Globe offers an extensive network of its participants for consumers to browse[24]. This search cannot only be done through Green Globe's website but CAST's website also has the network of participating properties[25]. They stress the importance of supporting these participants and how even a tourist can ensure their part in this global movement. Both Sandals Resorts and SuperClub Resorts are participants in the Green Globe program.

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[23] Kalis Lisa. "ADVISORY: TRAVEL NOTES; Going Green in the Caribbean." New York Times (1/1/1985 to present) (03 July 2005): 2. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. . 17 Mar. 2008 <>.
[24] http://www.ec3global.com/products-programs/green-globe/network/search-the-network/Default.aspx 13 March 2008.
[25] http://www.cha-cast.com/GGproperties.html 13 March 2008.

The Triple Bottom Line

"A sustainable corporation is one that creates profit for its shareholders while protecting the environment and improving the lives of those with whom it interacts"[26]. These companies do not deplete their natural, economic and human resources. They work interdependently to ensure the interests of all the shareholders. Andrew Savitz, author of *The Triple Bottom Line*, argues that companies can still earn a profit while being socially responsible. This is shown through a concept developed by John Elkington known as the triple bottom line. According to Elkington businesses should measure their success not only by financial performance, the traditional bottom line, but also by their impact on the environment and society. Companies use all three resources when conducting their daily business. They should be able to show a positive return on equity for each one.

The triple bottom line reflects the impact sustainability can have on a company's value. The chart below, developed by Andrew Savitz, is a simple way to understand this idea.

The Triple Bottom Line

	Economic	***Environmental***	***Social***
Typical Measures	Sales, Profits, ROI	Air Quality	Labor Practices
	Taxes Paid	Water Quality	Community Impacts
	Monetary Flow	Energy Usage	Human Rights
	Jobs Created	Waste Produced	Product Responsibility
	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL

[26] Savitz, Andrew. The Triple Bottom Line. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

"Just as meaningful financial reports cannot be reduced to one number, so sustainability does not sum precisely"[27]. Sustainability is becoming a science in which businesses are able to measure their progress. This was one of the primary functions of Green Globe as discussed earlier.

Building your business around the concept for sustainability not only has significant impacts on the environment and community, but can also positively impact a company's financial performance. Companies who strive to attain a positive triple bottom line tend to demonstrate a superior stock market performance[28]. Some view sustainable companies has having knowledgeable and enlightened managers which in turn persuade investors purchase that company's stock.

There are thought to be three major ways that sustainability practice will enhance a business. The first of these is by helping to protect the business. This includes reducing the risk of harm to customers, both internal and external, identifying risk and crisis early on and being able to manage it properly. The second way sustainability helps a business is by helping to run it. This includes reducing costs, improving productivity, eliminating excess waste and obtaining capital at a lower cost. The final way sustainability helps is by helping the business to grow. This includes opening more markets, launching new products and services, increasing innovation, improving customer satisfaction and loyalty, growth of market share, formation of business alliances and an improved reputation and brand value[29].

The positive effects of sustainability have often been met with some resistance. Cynics believe that until a company's value is based on social performance, in addition to

[27] Savitz, Andrew. The Triple Bottom Line. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

financial, they will continue to maximize the profits of their shareholders and the expense of other stakeholders. Others believe this is just designed so that the government will not enforce more regulations on big businesses. Many cannot see the benefits to having a sustainable company. Many companies believe that profitability, not social responsibility is the primary objective of a business. This is true, however, companies should conduct research and learn that by contributing to sustainability they will also be increasing their profitability. Companies also feel that sustainability issues should be the concern of the government and not the business sector. This can also be seen as true; however, big businesses can prove to be better at handling these situations due to their vast amount of resources and capital. Others just believe that this is a passing trend and the excitement will disappear in a few years.

Conclusion

In order to ensure that the Caribbean will remain the popular destination for cruisers, honeymooners, families and other various types of tourists, the tourism industry need work interpedently with local Caribbean organizations whose goal is to create and maintain a sustainable environment. In order to create a long lasting and healthy relationship between the two, there are a few key notes that the tourism industry must understand. First, that they are an industry working on the basis of a limited resource, the environment. Second, that they are a community based industry and there needs to be more consideration for tourism development because of the impacts it might have, socially and culturally. Third, that they are a service oriented industry and that their employees must be treated just as well as the customer.

All the research indicates that companies can enjoy the profits of a business while still satisfying all the needs of their stakeholders and ensuring their sustainability. It may prove to be a difficult task, but if the tourism industry cares enough to ensure its longevity then it will begin to take the necessary steps. With all these organizations readily available, through internet and publicity, and the growing urgency for environmental safety, consumers may become more aware of their impact on local environments. Therefore, they may choose to only travel with cruise lines or stay in resorts that are contributing to the sustainability of the environment.

Companies need to be willing to endure the short term costs for the long term benefits. However, this is a growing interdependent world and sustainability is one of the first steps to that interdependence. Sustainability will help to make a company more

efficient and productive. It provides the tangible benefits, increased market share, and intangible benefits, improved reputation.

As discussed earlier, supporting sustainability is not a mandatory requirement and companies reserve the right to maintain their status quo. However, we are now in an era where companies are interdependent, electronically dependent and have vocal stakeholders who will hold companies accountable for their actions. Companies are operating in an era where at the click of a button the world will know your business. If a company conducts their business in a way that stakeholders deem unsuitable then they will express their feelings and try to change that behavior[30].

The concept of sustainability should be the foremost concern of the tourism industry because they are trying to sell exactly what they could be destroying. In order to keep the natural appeal of the beaches, they need to be properly maintenance. To keep tourists traveling to the Caribbean for snorkeling and scuba diving we need to ensure that there will still be marine life. To sustain our own future, and that of future generations, we must begin to learn the importance of our environment and what a limited resource it is and how we can sustain and nourish it.

The concept of sustainability is still evolving and it is possible we will not know all the effects, positive and negative, it can have on a company or industry for years to come. However, we do know that all the latest research just enhances the fact that the environment is a limited resource, and though we may not be able to overcome Mother Nature, we can contribute to its sustainability for a while longer. This is especially true for the tourism industry which has always been seen as a service industry, expect they do offer one product, the environment out of which they operate. Therefore, in order to

[30] Savitz, Andrew. The Triple Bottom Line. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

ensure the profitability of that product they must operate their business in a sustainable manner, ensuring their livelihood and the livelihood of generations to follow.

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