

- Social networking / Tourist trade/travel

TAP SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE PH TOURISM

Philippine Daily Inquirer · 10 May 2018 · A14

It did not occur to me that the Department of Tourism (DOT) has a very big advertising budget, not until the issue with the People's Television Network Inc. came up. With so many tourist spots in the country, what the Philippines needs is more promotion. There are places where hotels are not fully occupied; some tourist places cannot open daily because it would not be cost-efficient for them due to lack of tourists.

Where to start? Social media. The DOT's Facebook page has very minimal readership. Even a child like Scarlet Snow Belo has more readers and followers. Learn from companies like Cebu Pacific, which opened the eyes of many Filipinos to the world by harnessing social media to the max. The DOT should partner with these organizations as such partnerships could be mutually beneficial to them. During his term as tourism secretary, Ace Durano partnered with telecom companies. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. It doesn't cost much to add FB friends or have a good crowd-drawing Instagram account.

Promote a "Visit Philippines" program like other countries, as well as boost festivals. Audience has to be targeted. TV networks and programs where ads are to be placed have to be dictated by a preidentified target market. YouTube also needs to be harnessed.

Maybe it really boils down to having a comprehensive and long-term plan backed by wisdom and real compassion for this country. It won't hurt to pick the brains of travel and tourism experts. Maybe we can even learn a thing or two from Scarlet Snow Belo's social media handler (her dad).

This is just a private citizen's feedback which I hope could be taken seriously by our honorable people in government.

JP FERNANDEZ, jpsfernandez@yahoo.com.ph