
Environmental Communications Consultation for Untamed Path: An Ecotourism Group

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The Scenario

In this fictional scenario I have been hired as the Communications Director for Untamed Path, a travel organization that creates sustainable travel tours while promoting ecotourism. The materials I developed are going to be used to encourage environmental travelers to go on adventures with Untamed Path, as well as motivate travel news sources to write about the trips this organization offers in order to increase their media visibility. My blog post will be published on BuzzFeed Travel, a popular website among young individuals who are very likely to travel and take nontraditional trips around the world. My op-ed piece will go to National Geographic or Science Daily, publications I know my environmentally friendly audience keeps up to date on, and my press release will go to bigger news sources like The Guardian or the New York Times.

Strategic Communications Memo

Below I have listed out the goal, audience, message, and engagement (GAME) for my media campaign for Untamed Path.

G: Goals

The long term goals for this promotional campaign consist of the following:

- Increase visibility of the organization and all of their past and present international efforts regarding ecotourism
- Encourage travelers to minimize their physical and social impacts on the environment
- Strengthen traveler knowledge of sustainable tourism
- Increase responsible travel that conserves the environment as well as supports and respects local cultural traditions
- Increase participation in the numerous sustainable adventure trips the organization offers

The short term goals for this promotional campaign consist of the follow:

- Promote all of the ecotourism trips the organization hosts
- Launch new ecotourism trips with the organization in Southeast Asia
- Further the influence of ecotourism internationally by getting writers from all over the world to join the trips and report on their experiences to popular news outlets
- Promote the organization's mission statement and values

A: Audience

- Environmentalists who have never traveled as part of a tour and who want to decrease their negative impacts on the local environment and communities when they travel
- Individuals who travel often and want to partake in sustainable nature tourism

M: Messages

- The tourism industry is bigger than ever, meaning that a lot of destinations travelers go to end up being destroyed because of the large influx of visitors. We are targeting travelers and environmentalists because they are the people who can make a big impact on the behavior individuals exhibit when traveling abroad.

- It is more important than ever to promote the conservation of the natural environment as well as the protection of the cultural traditions of local communities since it has become so easy to travel virtually anywhere in the world.
- It is no longer acceptable for environmentalists and travelers to be idle in the conversation of sustainable tourism because they are the ones that have the most power to influence. The people who partake in travel adventures need to take the responsibility to preserve the environments they are traveling specifically to go see.
- There needs to be an increase in the amount of eco travel destinations around the world, because it is a way to travel to natural areas that will not adversely affect the environment or local people.
- The stories of the individual travelers that have gone on trips with the organization will be publicized which will encourage other tourists to follow in their footsteps
- Traveling is about completely immersing yourself in another culture and environment, and the travel tours this organization offers lets you do that while you simultaneously maintaining low impacts

E:Engagement

- Op-Ed
- Blog post
- Press Release

Messengers

- Individuals that partake in the sustainable adventure tours
- Writers and journalists that go on the trips
- The owner of the company, Jeff Boyd

Frames

- A change in the traveler paradigm from tourism that is inherently destructive to ecotourism that protects and respects the local environment and communities
- Travelers will trust the experiences of other travelers, which makes them the best messengers
- There should only be positive impacts from tourism

An Opinion Editorial Piece (Op Ed)

Why be a Tourist when you can be an Ecotourist?

Being an environmentalist comes with a lot of failures and let downs. Let's face it, much of the work we do goes unnoticed, and much of the legislation we try to pass gets shut down. In this day and age the future of natural environments around the world is looking bleak, as big businesses have taken control and destroy almost everything in their path in order to get what they want. The tourism industry is no different, and many times destroys the environments it promotes. But there is a way to travel so that you won't contribute to the destruction of the environment or to the disruption of local communities. In order to abstain from contributing to the negative impacts of tourism, you can participate in ecotourism, a form of sustainable travel.

The tourism industry is detrimental to the very places tourists travel to go experience. It is a destructive cycle because as the amount of visitors to certain places increases, the need for development and infrastructure increases, which leads to the depletion of natural resources and the degradation of the environment. It results in hasty construction of infrastructure, damaged habitats, and deforestation. It is truly unsustainable, and many times popular tourist destinations are unable to accommodate the large influx of visitors which leaves them at overcapacity.

As someone who is concerned with local and global environmental issues, you have probably traveled outside of your hometown at one point in your life. So unless you made the conscious decision to travel to an eco destination, you have probably contributed to the problem.

But I'm no different. When I was younger my parents would take me on trips to Hawaii, where I would stay at the nicest hotels and participate in popular tourist attractions. I remember how beautiful and green the trees were and how crystal clear the ocean water was. I remember the dozens of slides I went down at the hotel pools, and how great the food was. What I don't remember is the local culture, or ever seeing nature that wasn't part of a hotel tour. As a tourist at a five star resort, I was under the illusion that I was visiting another part of the world and being immersed in their way of life, but in reality I was put into a bubble where I was surrounded by other tourists whose main concern was how tan they were going to get or how cheap the drinks were.

But I have found that engaging in ecotourism allows you to be immersed in the natural world while simultaneously protecting the environment and local cultures you traveled to go see. Being someone who cares about the environment can be exhausting and maybe you just want to get away and disconnect for a little while. You might say you feel that your efforts would be futile because even if you started participating in ecotourism, the tourism industry would still dominate. But if you start traveling in a sustainable way, you won't have to feel guilty about contributing to the destruction that many tourist attractions create because instead you would be traveling in a way that lines up with the values you have at home.

Contrary to popular belief, sustainable travel isn't 'inconvenient' or 'hard'. When I first decided I was going to travel in a sustainable way, I had to do research on what I wanted to do, where I wanted to go and where I wanted to stay. This was no different than what I used to do. The only difference with ecotourism is that I had to type in "sustainable travel" or "ecodestination", which led me to the websites of companies who gave me an exponentially better experience than any traditional trip I have ever taken.

So why bother traveling the traditional way? Participating in sustainable travel adventures is much more rewarding and exciting. It is a way you can feel good about enjoying the refreshing ocean or the lush green beautiful vegetation. Don't leave your environmental consciousness at home while you go on vacation. Instead, you can incorporate your beliefs into your travel plans. Through ecotourism, you can still do all of the tourist-y things you have always done on vacation like go snorkeling through the local vibrant coral reefs or go rock climbing to the top of a mountain to see the beautiful view from the top. The only thing that would be different is that the lodge you chose to stay in will not negatively affect the area you are exploring. And even though the tourism industry still exists, you won't be perpetuating the destruction it encourages.

Dani Garcia is the Communications Director for [Untamed Path](#), a sustainable travel group that promotes ecotourism practices. She has written a variety of popular essays and news articles and has been featured in Buzzfeed Travel. She likes to take many trips to various areas of the world, her favorite being locations in Southeast Asia. She is from San Diego, California but currently resides in Santa Barbara, California.

Blog Post

I decided to write a blog post for BuzzFeed Travel, a travel blog on a very popular website among the younger generation of individuals between the ages of 15-25. I chose this outlet because it is people of this age range that are mostly likely to travel, as many are in their early 20's and want to go out and experience the world before they become too tied down with a steady job. The blog post is written from the point of view of a travel blogger who went on a sustainable travel trip (one of the identified messengers in my GAME) with Untamed Path, the organization I am representing as the Communications Director.

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## 5 Reasons You Should Definitely Go on an Ecotourism trip

It's safe to say that i've traveled to my fair share of amazing, tropical destinations. I have been to Bora Bora, Australia, Thailand, Fiji, Bali, and the Caribbean, just to name a few. But one place I haven't gone, and I am actually kind of ashamed to admit this, is South America.

Now, I know what you're probably thinking, "how can you consider yourself a world traveler if you've never been to South America?" Well, that is why a month ago I decided to book myself a trip to the Amazonian Rainforest.

On past trips I have always stayed in fancy hotels with high ratings and many accomodations. And that has been great! But a friend of mine, an environmentalist, asked me if I had ever heard of ecotourism, a way to travel in a sustainable way that improves the local environment and allows you to immerse yourself in local culture.

I figured since I had never traveled in a sustainable way, I would give it a shot. I have to be honest, but I am not in the best shape because when I travel I usually just sit by the pool and sip on fruity drinks and fall asleep in the sun. But it was time for a change. I booked a trip with [Untamed Path](#), a ecotourism group that holds multiple tours in South America and the Galapagos.

It was nothing like I have ever experienced before, and it was absolutely exhilarating. I could write for hours and hours about all the amazing things I did and saw, but instead i'll just break it down into the 5 reasons why you should take an ecotourism trip to the Amazon Forest ASAP.

## 1. You will zipline across the Amazonian canopy



One of the best - and scariest - experiences of my life! I really got to see how vast and lush the Amazonian rainforest really is. It really inspired me to do everything in my power to conserve it. Can you believe people actually want to cut down all of these trees?

## 2. Be led on a hike to a hidden waterfall by a local



This hike was so fun! It wasn't too strenuous so everyone in my group (age range was from 9 years old to 45 years old) could do it. Our local guide taught us about all of the hikes they have taken and how many hidden treasures they have found, like this one. And being able to jump in the pool of water at the end was just icing on the cake.

### 3. Travel to the heart of the jungle to be immersed in local indigenous culture



This was the most eye opening and enlightening part. We were taken by plane into the deep Amazon where we met local indigenous peoples and learned about their ways of life. These are some of the indigenous kids I met!

### 4. Partake in an ecotourism project with the indigenous people by helping them create a canoe



While we were learning about the indigenous peoples culture, we helped them make a canoe! This project was really fun and made me feel like I was helping the community while leaving a positive impact on their lives.



## 6. Kayak down a river and see miraculous wildlife



This was our last expedition of the trip and it was amazing to see all of the nature and wildlife. Kayaking was hard and I made my kayak partner do most of the work while I took pictures.

Needless to say, ecotourism is the way to go. It was the best trip I have ever gone on, period.

## Press Release

For immediate release: March 17th, 2016

# Leonardo DiCaprio's on Board for Untamed Path's new set of Ecotourism Trips in Southeast Asia



Leonardo DiCaprio at an Environmental Conference in Anaheim, California

This summer Untamed Path, an ecotourism group who hosts sustainable travel trips to areas of South America and the Galapagos is launching a new set of eco travel destinations in southeast Asia. Starting in June 2016, there will be six new destinations travelers can visit including Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Ecotourism is a way to travel without negatively impacting the environment while also respecting local communities. A big part of this type of travel is to immerse yourself in the local culture and learn about their ways of life. Untamed Path offers many ways to do this, and on some trips travelers are able to help indigenous communities build thatch roofs for their houses or help build canoes for the community to use to gather food.

Leonardo DiCaprio, a well known environmentalist, travels often for work and realized he didn't want to be in a 'tourist bubble' isolated from the environment and communities he travels to any longer. He has been a big fan of the ecotourism adventures Untamed Path offers and has been on numerous trips including to the Andes mountains and to Ecuador. He has donated a generous \$100,000 for the creation of Southeast Asia trips with hopes to expand public knowledge of ecotourism and to inspire others to travel sustainably.

"It is vital that tourists acknowledge the impacts they impose on the natural environments and on the local cultures of the areas they travel to." - Jeff Boyd, Founder of Untamed Path

“Untamed Path allows you to be aware of your impacts without hindering your experience. I have gone on many trips and plan on going on many more! I urge others to do the same and get on board with ecotourism” -Actor, Leonardo DiCaprio

“My trip to the Amazonian rainforest was something I will never forget. It was truly something special to see indigenous communities engage with the environment. They were very accommodating and happy to talk to us about their way of life.” -Traveler, Alyssa Dalton

Multiple trips will be available for each new destination in Asia, each accommodating 10-20 individuals within the age range of 8 years old to 50 years old. There is a trip for everyone, no matter the age or level of physical fitness. Founder Jeff Boyd offers group trips to all destinations in South America, the Galapagos, and now in Southeast Asia, and offers consultation for personalized individual adventures as well. Ecotourism is gaining popularity around the world and the trips with Untamed Path typically fill up fast. Sign ups for the Southeast Asia trips will be up on April 1st, 2016 on the Untamed Path website.

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