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The Integrated Pre-Visit Communication Audit: a user guide

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National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication Entry

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SUMMARY

As a result of the increasing influence of tourism, natural and protected area management continues to evolve from management primarily focused around on-site management and conservation to one that more broadly encompasses a greater range of holistic recreation and tourism experiences. In dealing with this evolution national parks and protected area managers are now required to balance on-site interpretation activities with pre-visit marketing and demand management activities.

National parks and protected area managers are now challenged to be more strategic and integrated in their pre-visit communications efforts. Pre-visit communication activities must add up to more than a series of isolated events such as the dissemination of an occasional publication, press release or online message. Being strategic requires managers to be more deliberate, innovative, proactive, and less reactive in their communications practices.

As a result of this change, managers need to better understand the concept of integrated pre-visit communication and how to evaluate their capacity to develop, implement and monitor this aspect of their business. The Integrated Pre-Visit Communication audit (IPCM) is a tool that can be used to help meet this need. The IPCM audit does not focus on the results or outcomes of an organisation's communication practices after they are implemented. Nor does it focus on the target audiences. Rather, it focuses on the organisation itself, its practices and its capacity to undertake effective pre-visit communication.

The IPCM Audit

The development of the IPCM audit is multifaceted. Firstly it is based on a review of integrated marketing communication best practice literature (Reid, Wearing & Croy, 2008). This was followed by a series of interviews undertaken with national park and protected area managers and State based tourism managers. The interviews generated insights into protected area marketing, visitor and stakeholder communication, and in particular pre-visit communication activities. The interviews, in conjunction with the literature review, enabled the development of a mini-audit questionnaire: the *Integrated Pre-visit Communication Management (IPCM) audit*. The audit questionnaire was subsequently administered via mail survey to a range of organisations involved in the marketing and management of national parks and protected areas. The results of the survey and associated feedback have been used to formulate the final IPCM audit (see technical report by Reid, Wearing and Croy, 2008, www.crctourism.com.au).

The 50 item IPCM audit has both evaluative and formative value. It is *evaluative* in that it provides a 'snapshot' of where an organisation currently stands in terms of its pre-visit communication capacity or performance. It is *formative* in that it also points to areas in which the organisation can strengthen its pre-visit communication capability and performance.

Further, the use and re-use of the IPCM audit provides controls around the implementation of marketing-related activities helping to coordinate departments or units with an organisation, and also helps consider the role and coordination of external stakeholders who deliver messages related to national parks and protected areas. Finally, the use of the IPCM audit helps managers document the contribution and process of communications and enables the tracking of outcome and process performance over time.

The IPCM Process

The IPCM audit can be conducted in two ways, either internally and self managed, or externally via a consultant or independent auditor. If conducted internally as a self review it can be completed by key managers and staff involved in the planning and implementation of pre-visit communication. Undertaking the audit internally will require an internal officer or auditor to be appointed to facilitate and coordinate data collection, analysis and action workshops. Undertaking the IPCM with the help of an external consultant results in greater independence but obviously incurs added costs. The advantages to using outside experts is their objectivity, time and availability, the knowledge they bring from other organisations for comparison purposes, and the credibility that may accompany their credentials and expertise.

Generally the IPCM process involves participants to review pre-visit communication practices, complete a questionnaire, enter, analyse and integrate data from participants, and develop actions based on the outcomes of

the data analysis. The process of data collection and review can take place using a paper based approach or by using the accompanying Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (www.crctourism.com.au).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this user guide focuses on the issues salient to developing and implementing pre-visit communications in the context of national park and protected area marketing management. In developing this guide we have drawn together several distinct themes, including the understanding of visitor destination decision-making, the development of segments and the segmentation process, and importantly, the idea of Integrated Pre-visit Communication Management (IPCM).

Key to this guide and the IPCM audit is the consideration and realisation that pre-visit communication is crucial for all national park and protected area organisations. Given the importance of pre-visit communication, the audit and associated analysis provides managers with the necessary insights to make meaningful decisions regarding the management and implementation of pre-visit communications.

In addition to this user guide there is an associated IPCM workbook. This workbook presents the items in questionnaire format and can be photocopied or printed and submitted to those who are participating in the audit. Furthermore there is a Microsoft Excel workbook that enables participants to enter their data and have associated results charts populate automatically. Both of these documents can be found on the Sustainable Tourism CRC website (www.crctourism.com.au).

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Changing Nature of Protected Area Management and the Pre-Visit Communication Imperative

National parks and protected areas throughout the world are used as sites of recreation, leisure and tourism for centuries (Butler and Boyd 2000). However, in the past three decades, we have seen an enormous expansion in the number and types of users, in Australia as well as overseas.

This popularity, partially due to its importance as a tourism promotion tool, has also brought about increased impacts, and management agencies are being faced with significant visitor management issues. Visitors to these inherently fragile natural areas induce a variety of impacts to the natural and historic values of these areas (Booth and Cullen 1995). Nonetheless, in addition to the physical impacts increasingly significant impacts of crowding and displacement are also occurring (Kearsley, Coughlan, Higham, Higham and Thyne 1998; Kearsley, Russell, Croy and Mitchell 2001; Moyle and Croy, 2007). These perceptual impacts are predominately occurring, not surprisingly, in the accessible areas of the protected areas' front country (Vaske, Donnelly, and Whittaker 2000). These impacts, both physical and perceptual, are compounded through the increased diversity of recreational activities undertaken in natural areas (Booth and Peebles 1995; Kearsley and Croy 2001).

As a result of such changes the nature of national park and protected area communication is evolving from one primarily focused around on-site interpretation with a focus on enjoyment, learning and conservation, to one that includes an increasing emphasis on pre-visit communication and managing demand. For managers to meet their changing service delivery responsibilities it is essential that they 1) provide quality services, 2) promote appropriate visitor behaviour, and 3) encourage realistic community awareness, understanding and appreciation of the conservation responsibilities of park agencies, the values inherent in protected areas, and opportunities for appropriate visitor use. Marketing, including an emphasis on pre-visit communication, offers a valuable management tool in fulfilling all three of these macro roles (Reid, Wearing and Croy, 2008; Wearing, Archer and Beeton 2006).

This user guide builds on a recent technical report by Reid, Wearing and Croy (2008). The guide focuses on presenting a mini-audit of pre-visit communication management which can be used by managers to understand how well they have been performing in this area and provide direction for improvement. The mini-audit has been titled the *Integrated Pre-visit Communication Management (IPCM) audit.*

Benefits of Conducting an IPCM Audit

An IPCM audit is an approach to evaluating the processes, activities and results of marketing related pre-visit communication activities targeted towards the visitors to national parks and protected areas. Being effective at pre-visit communication requires an increased level of interaction with stakeholders, greater internal sharing of data and information, and greater cross-functional planning and monitoring of outcomes. These critical processes, which are aligned with the integrated marketing communication concept, can only be effectively managed and developed if they are periodically evaluated and monitored (Duncan, 2002; Reid, Wearing and Croy, 2008).

Depending on its scope and depth, an IPCM audit may deliver some, or all, of the following benefits to the management organisation (Coffman, 2004):

1. It helps build support for pre-visit communication initiatives;
2. It demonstrates commitment to improving pre-visit communication throughout the organisation;
3. It demonstrates a willingness to listen and to respond to national park and protected area stakeholders' views—a key step in building positive relationships, creating credibility and fostering mutual trust;
4. It helps develop practical recommendations for improving pre-visit communication by the organisation;

5. It can help save money and effort as it enables the refinement or elimination of programs or activities that do not yield desired benefits;
6. It can become the basis for creating an effective strategic pre-visit communication plan for the organisation, ensuring that it gains maximum benefits from limited financial and human resources; and
7. It can be a driver for culture change where it engages critical people in building a new culture of open communication, credibility, and collaboration.

Other benefits might include a better understanding of:

1. Whether the organisation's communications activity promotes communication effectiveness;
2. Where gaps exist in communication, such as where information supply does not meet up with demand;
3. Whether communications are on target, and are aligned with audience preferences and with overall organisation product (national parks and protected areas) strategy; or
4. Where attention is required for continuous pre-visit communications improvement.

Overall, the imperative for conducting an IPCM audit is related to enriching the planning and managing of the pre-visit communication process and thereby reducing the risks that limited budgets will be poorly utilised. Further, the use and re-use of such an audit provides controls around the implementation of marketing-related activities helping to coordinate departments or units with an organisation, and also help coordinate external stakeholders who deliver messages related to national parks and protected areas. Finally, the use of such audits help managers document the contribution and process of communications and enables the tracking of outcome and process performance over time.

Chapter 2

The Integrated Pre-Visit Communication Audit (IPCM)

This chapter presents the foundations of the IPCM audit and the principles of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) for national park and protected area managers.

The Foundations of the IPCM Audit

Best practice in the area of marketing communication management has argued for the adoption of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) concept (Duncan and Mulhern 2004; Reid, Luxton and Mavondo, 2005; Kitchen and Schultz, 2009). Whilst often discussed and reported in the context of building consumer brands, the concept and practice of IMC can readily be integrated into national park and protected area management and promotion. In particular, the adoption of the IMC concept for the planning and implementation of pre-visit communication, offers opportunities for promoting a balance between conservation messages and demand management messages, and for building the brand profile of the national park and protected area agency.

In its simplest form, IMC is the bringing together of all visitor and stakeholder communication activities to achieve stated communication objectives. More than this, it seeks to improve the connection between the strategic planning of a communication strategy and the tactical implementation of communication campaigns (Reid, Luxton and Mavondo, 2005). As a consequence of integration, all marketing communication is more likely to be strategically consistent, thereby promoting greater efficiency and effectiveness in achieving desired communication objectives (Pickton and Hartley, 1998).

Adoption of IMC principles provides a basis for strengthening the relationship between national park and protected area agencies and their counterparts in tourism. For managers, an IMC oriented mindset provides a way of thinking about how to encourage all associated organisations to be responsible in how they use national parks and protected areas in their marketing and promotion. Further, it encourages national park and protected area management to become more familiar with designing and implementing pre-visit communication strategies. Thus the IPCM audit is based on the concept of integrated marketing (Duncan and Moriarty, 1997) and integrated marketing communication (Duncan and Mulhern, 2004; Reid, Luxton and Mavondo, 2005; Kitchen and Schultz, 2009).

The aim of the IPCM audit as it is presented here links very strongly into the needs of national park and protected area managers. Particularly, as it relates to managing channels of communication, developing cross-functional and inter-organisational relationships, and utilising visitor insights to develop and implement communication programs that shape behavioural and experiential expectations of visitors to national parks and protected areas.

Principles of IMC for Protected Area Managers

Broadly, there are number of consistent principles underpinning IMC that have been built into the IPCM audit.

Integrated market communication requires (Duncan and Moriarty, 1997; Duncan and Mulhern 2004; Reid, Luxton and Mavondo 2005; Reid, Wearing and Croy, 2008; Keller, 2009):

1. A sound knowledge of the organisation's customers and stakeholders acquired through two-way interaction with these parties e.g. visitors, tourism agencies, media channels;
2. Strong inter-functional and inter-organisational relationships with people and entities responsible for implementing customer and stakeholder communication and marketing campaigns e.g. other national park or protected area agencies or units within the same park-related agency, state and regional tourism organisations;
3. The strategic co-ordination of various communication channels in a manner consistent with the organisation's mission, and which maximises their synergistic effect so as to build strong customer and stakeholder relationships e.g. print, broadcast, electronic media;

4. Communication tools selected on the bases of the organisation's resources, and their favourability to and use by the intended recipient such as different potential visitor groups e.g. websites, brochures, magazine advertising and editorial; and
5. The use of appropriate, timely, and data driven evaluation and planning to determine the effectiveness of this process and the associated campaigns. This includes insights from existing park-based data collection mechanisms and the use of primary market research designed to understand specific visitor segments.

These principles and practices can be further separated into both strategic and tactical components (Duncan and Mulhern 2004; Schultz and Schultz, 1998; Kliatchko, 2008). It is commonly understood that the strategic dimension of marketing management is the framework that provides guidance for actions (tactics) to be undertaken. Tactical dimensions relate to the shorter-term activities to be used in implementing those strategies in order to achieve planned marketing and communication objectives for specific target segments. For example, the desire to coordinate perceptions about parks in different regions and the subsequent communication campaigns targeted to different visitor segments (e.g. grey nomads, off-road bikers) to shape their expectations and behaviours.

An expanded understanding of the interrelationship between strategic and tactical dimensions is reflected in Schultz and Schultz (1998) and Schultz and Kitchen's (2000) representation of integration as a series of four stages. These stages range from the simple tactical coordination of messages through to financial and strategic integration with the organisation.

Stage 1: Basic message coordination

Focuses on the coordination of all the elements of marketing communication to achieve message synergy and consistency. The main focus is on the effective delivery of outbound communication activities in order to achieve 'one sight, one sound' in the overall communication program. Whilst the main emphasis is coordination of the communication mix and message channels, the key aim is to deliver a clear and consistent message to achieve the desired impact (Schultz and Schultz, 1998, Kliatchko, 2008). For example, this would result in managers developing a consistent format for all print and online materials that a visitor might use to plan a park visit.

Stage 2: Increased 'touchpoint' coordination

Focuses on broadening the scope of marketing communications to include all possible visitor or customer contact points – termed 'touchpoints'. Greater emphasis is placed on coordinating all message delivery channels and on understanding the customer's viewpoint (e.g. visitor segment, tourism stakeholder) (Kliatchko, 2008). That is, identifying those channels that targeted visitor segments prefer and find most relevant. This focus helps in crafting and delivering more relevant messages (content) that connect more effectively with the target visitors (Schultz and Schultz, 1998).

Stage 3: Increased information technology integration

Focuses on a deeper use of information tenchnology in order to get to know, understand, and better identify relevant customers [visitors] (Schultz and Schultz 1998). The key to this stage is the development and application of databases that contain data about targeted customer [visitor] segments. This stage brings the concept of customer retention [in a park sense, repeat visitors] to the fore rather than customer acquisition [constantly getting new visitors]. This stage is also about developing a deeper knowledge of visitors to help managers connect more effectively with their audiences and create more targeted messages (content). These messages are better delivered as managers develop a better understanding of preferred contact points (Schultz and Schultz 1998; Kliatchko, 2008).

Stage 4: Organisation realignment

Concerned with resource allocation and organisational alignment, this final stage is able to put in place closed-loop measurement systems that enable managers to analyse more accurately the relation between returns and investment in marketing communications (Schultz and Schultz 1998). Organisations that are at this level are those that more fully understand the demands of integration and exhibit best practices in the applications and management of IMC (Kliatchko, 2008). The ability of organisations to measure, and achieve a desired return on communications investment further assumes that an organisation has been able to accurately define and understand its most appropriate and desirable target visitors and stakeholders (Kliatchko, 2008).

The pre-visit communication mandate of national park and protected area agencies means that most managers are grappling with a shift between stages 1 and 2—from coordination of messages about parks and protected areas to a more visitor-focused marketing approach incorporating a richer understanding of visitor touchpoints. These are points where different visitor groups might source information about national parks and protected areas generally in order to facilitate decision-making. This difficulty in making the shift is not uncommon across many industries (Reid, Luxton and Mavondo, 2005).

In summary, the concept and process of IMC operates at many levels including corporate, strategic and tactical levels. National park and protected area managers who adopt the principles and processes of IMC as they relate to pre-visit communication are likely to have an improved ability to achieve desired campaign and communication objectives. Such objectives might include increased national park and protected area awareness, improved knowledge about the experiences available at different parks, and improved attitudes and behaviours by visitors when they visit such parks and protected areas. Importantly managers will have an improved capacity to build the agency brand and profile with visitors and with the various tourism-related organisations that market such destinations.

The Design of the IPCM Audit

In this guide, the term Integrated Pre-Visit Communication Management (IPCM) is used to represent the interrelationship between the broader concept of IMC and the pre-visit communication focus of the guide. Broadly, a communications audit is a systematic assessment, either formal or informal, of an organisation's capacity for, or performance of, essential communications practices (Coffman, 2004). In the case of pre-visit communications the aim of the audit is to determine what is working well, what is not, and what might work better if adjustments are made.

The development of the IPCM audit was based firstly on a literature review of IMC best practice (see Reid, Wearing and Croy, 2008). This was followed by a series of interviews undertaken with national park and protected area managers and with state and regional tourism managers. The interviews generated insights into marketing, visitor and stakeholder communication, and in particular pre-visit communication. The interviewees represented a range organisations at different stages of planning and integration of pre-visit communications (Reid, Wearing and Croy, 2008). The interviews, in conjunction with the literature review, enabled the development of a mini-audit questionnaire: the ***Integrated Pre-visit Communication Management (IPCM) audit***. The audit questionnaire was subsequently administered via mail survey to a range of organisations involved in the marketing and management of national parks and protected areas. The results of the survey and associated feedback have been used to formulate the final 50-item IPCM audit.

As stated earlier, the IPCM audit has both formative and evaluative value. It is ***formative*** in that it points to areas in which the organisation can strengthen its pre-visit communication capability and performance. It is ***evaluative*** in that it provides a 'snapshot' of where an organisation currently stands in terms of its pre-visit communication capacity or performance. The IPCM audit does not focus on the results or outcomes of an organisation's communications practices after they are implemented or among their target audiences. Rather, it focuses on the organisation itself, its practices and capacity to undertake effective pre-visit communication.

In total, the IPCM survey is built around seven main themes grouped into three main strategy phases; 1) *foundations; 2) development; and 3) implementation* (Duncan and Moriarty, 1997; Duncan and Mulhern, 2004, Reid, Luxton and Mavondo, 2005; Reid, Wearing and Croy, 2008).

The Integrated Pre-Visit Communication Audit: A User Guide

Phase 1: Strategy Foundations includes the tasks of setting a vision and mission to help legitimise pre-visit communications and help build linkages between departments and facilitating organisations (Table 1).

Table 1: Strategy Foundations

Main Audit Construct	Description
Vision and Mission	– Existence of clear vision and mission statement that positions the goals and actions of the marketing group and pre-visit communication within the organisation, with related organisations, and within the market place. – The communication of the vision and mission so that other stakeholders are clear about the marketing organisation and its goals and mandate for pre-visit communication.
Internal and External Stakeholder Integration	– The degree of internal cross-functional integration that exists in the organisation as well as inter-organisational integration and cooperation essential for development and implementation of strategic pre-visit communications.

Phase 2: Strategy Development includes activities related to understanding target markets, setting goals and objectives, and undertaking the pre-visit communication planning process (Table 2).

Table 2: Strategy Development

Main Audit Construct	Description
Visitor Connectivity	– Degree to which the 'voice of the visitor' (park visitor / tourist) is heard inside the organisation and directs pre-visit communication activities. – The existence of information on the visitor decision-making process and specifically the information search process related to national park and protected area destination choice. – The ability to establish a dialogue with target markets or visitor groups so that a relationship is facilitated.
Clarity of Objectives	– Existence of clear unambiguous performance indicators and objectives related to balancing visitation levels and conservation in protected areas. – Clear association between objectives and visitor segments regarding visitation and behavioural expectations and attitudes towards national parks and protected areas.
Planning Process	– Having a written plan that guides pre-visit communication activities. – The use of a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to help direct the application of marketing communications tools. – The flexibility of pre-visit planning and strategy to enable managers to take advantage of ad hoc opportunities for communicating with visitor segments.

Phase 3: Strategy Implementation includes activities related to ensuring the strategic consistency of messages and facilitating resource allocation for pre-visit communication activities and programs (Table 3)

Table 3: Strategy Implementation

Main Audit Construct	Description
Strategic Consistency	– The planned coordination of all pre-visit messages sent related to national parks and protected areas regardless of what media channels (controllable or leveraged) that might be employed.
Resource Commitment for IMC	– The availability of adequate resources for the pre-visit communication tasks asked of managers, including provision of time, skilled and knowledgeable staff, and sufficient funding.

Chapter 3

The Process for Conducting the IPCM Audit

The IPCM audit can be undertaken by any organisation involved in sending messages to visitors and potential visitors about national parks and protected areas. Conducting the IPCM audit is a very important step in improving the organisation's pre-visit communication capability and performance. The IPCM audit process serves as a catalyst for organisational change by bringing managers face-to-face with communication issues often only haphazardly perceived before. The IPCM audit completion time and the associated costs will vary depending upon the scope of the audit as well as the nature of the organisation itself.

Essentially the IPCM audit is a detailed examination of the pre-visit communication planning and processes, to determine what and where things are working well and identify where and how things can be improved. Prior to undertaking the IPCM audit managers need to answer several questions:

1. Who should conduct and complete the audit?
2. How should the data be collected?
3. What IPCM process should be used?
4. How should the findings be dealt with to create improvement?

Who Should Conduct and Complete an IPCM Audit?

The IPCM audit can be conducted in two ways, either internally and self managed or externally via a consultant or independent auditor.

Firstly, the IPCM audit can be conducted internally as a self review and be completed by key managers and staff involved in the planning and implementation of pre-visit communication. The advantages to doing it internally are that direct costs are likely to be lower and the process may become an engaging organisational exercise that builds communications capacity in and of itself (Coffman, 2004). Undertaking the audit internally will require an internal auditor to be appointed to facilitate and coordinate data collection, data analysis, and action or implementation workshops.

Secondly, the audit can be conducted by an independent outside expert. The advantages of using outside experts is their objectivity, time and availability, the knowledge they bring from other organisations for comparison purposes, and the credibility that may accompany their credentials and expertise (Coffman, 2004). Using external consultants obviously incurs costs, but these may be outweighed by the benefits of their expertise.

IPCM Data Collection

The IPCM audit is based on the completion of a questionnaire (see IPCM Workbook on the Sustainable Tourism CRC website, www.crctourism.com.au). Questionnaires allow for a standardisation and comparison of responses. They can also be administered relatively cheaply to all participants within a short timeframe. The benefit of the survey method is that there is a diversity of opinion and views about areas of strength and areas that require improvement (Coffman, 2004). Further, the survey approach can help reduce the effects of power differences within an organisation, as everyone has the same opportunity to contribute and the results will identify the diversity and range of views of everyone's perspectives (Coffman, 2004).

For the IPCM audit each staff member, individual or manager selected to participate in the exercise will independently respond to the questions in the questionnaire. Following this all responses will be bought together and analysed for overall performance and for significant discrepancies in responses. All data is provided on a confidential basis so that the realities of the organisation's pre-visit communication performance can be bought to the fore.

The findings of the audit should then be used to develop strategies and actions to improve the way pre-visit communication is managed and to improve the development of pre-visit communications designed to target different visitor groups or designed to promote or demarket certain national parks and protected areas.

Additional data sources

Additional sources of data for the audit can be generated by reviewing documentation associated with the planning and implementation of pre-visit communication or through face-to-face interviews with those involved.

Interviews allow respondents to provide a rich, qualitative sense of how practices are performed and how the organisation treats communications. Interviews can also be conducted with the organisation's external stakeholders or target audiences (Coffman, 2004).

As part of a review it is often useful to examine documentation associated with pre-visit communication e.g. publications and marketing collateral, campaign materials, press releases, and the organisation's website. This review can then be used to build an understanding of the consistency and quality of the information provided to visitors and to assess where improvements to communication materials may be made.

The IPCM Survey Process

The questionnaire based data collection process has seven (7) main steps as follows:

1. Determine who will answer the questionnaire.

   The participants should have significant involvement in the planning and implementation of marketing or pre-visit communications activities of the organisation. There could be anywhere from 1–5 staff involved in completing the associated IPCM questionnaire (see Appendix 1 for a brief explanation of each question).

2. Print and distribute IPCM audit questionnaire.

   The questionnaire for the survey can be found in the **IPCM Workbook** which is an associated publication on the Sustainable Tourism CRC website. Sufficient copies should be printed and or copied. It is also advisable to download the associated IPCM Analysis spreadsheet.

3. Provide a briefing on the aims of the exercise.

   All participants should be briefed as a group as to the aim of the IPCM audit. That is, the desire for a realistic, 'warts-and-all' assessment of how well the organisation plans, resources and implements pre-visit communication and how satisfied managers and staff are with the outcomes of current communication strategies and actions.

4. Each participant completes the questionnaire.

   Participants should be asked to reflect on pre-visit communication practices and management prior to answering the questionnaire and have sufficient time to adequately consider and answer each question—thus answering the questionnaire may take from 20 minutes to two days depending on the scope of the exercise. Each participant should have the same amount of time to answer the questionnaire. Each participant should be encouraged to review any documentation or marketing collateral they feel is appropriate in order to formulate responses—but should refrain at this stage from discussing their answers with others.

5. The questionnaire submission should be confidential and no names should be ascribed to the responses provided by various participants.

    Discussion with and between participants about audit questionnaire responses should not be undertaken until all questionnaires have been completed and data entered. No participant should be forced to highlight their own individual responses unless willing to do so.

6. Data for each question and set of questions should be tabulated and averaged.

    This can be undertaken using a simple pen, paper and calculator approach or the data can be entered into the Excel workbook that accompanies this report and calculation and charting will take place automatically (see IPCM Analysis Spreadsheet and IPCM Workbook on Sustainable Tourism CRC website (www.crctourism.com.au).

7. Results should be discussed as a team and actions formulated and agreed on as a team

    The audit champion needs to provide a tabulated report for the team to use as a basis for discussion on critical issues regarding the management and implementation of pre-visit communication, and the determination of action priorities and subsequent actions to be undertaken (this can be printed from the accompanying IPCM Analysis Spreadsheet). At least two meetings are required in order to consider and formulate responses:

    i.   Meeting one should be based around tabulated quantitative responses and qualitative comments—what seems to be working well and what needs addressing. This determination can be based on the overall average for each item or set of items. Another way of looking at the data that encourages attention to diversity is to focus on the range of scores. For example if one item has been rated 1 or 2 by some participants and 4 or 5 by others then this can be a point of discussion by the team. Qualitative comments can also be examined for insights into various aspects of performance. The outcome of this meeting is to highlight priority areas for further evaluation or for action. Remember to celebrate the areas where people feel pre-visit communications is functioning at a high level.
    ii. The second meeting is where the team/participants meets to finalise the desired actions and activities and to assign responsibility for completion of these. Obviously any further meetings can be scheduled as needed to address audit outcomes and actions.

Forming Actions from the Audit

Once the audit questionnaire is completed, data entered into appropriate worksheets and results calculated, the next step is to identify areas in which the organisation can improve. The questions in the IPCM use a 1–5 scale and any results should be interpreted with the following in mind:

Overall, any assessment of what the organisation should do must be based on an account of the organisation's realistic capabilities with respect to pre-visit communication. While an organisation can make pre-visit communication a priority and request specific resources for it, the outcome also depends on what senior management and funders are willing to support (Coffman 2004).

Table 4: Ratings and Implications

Score / rating (out of 5)	Implication
1	This rating suggests that practices are not well considered, may be ad hoc and uncoordinated. In this case immediate action is required to address the concern or deficiency in the way pre-visit communication is managed or implemented.
2	
3	This rating suggests that practices and processes are more deliberate but may be reactive, performed infrequently, or performed inconsistently. Action is required to further embed the process or behaviour more formally in the organisation to help improve its contribution to pre-visit communication performance.
4	This rating suggests that that practices and processes are being performed well, that they are strongly embedded in the organisation, and are more likely to be formally evaluated and monitored. Action is still required to tweak the way things are done and to ensure that the process or behaviour is performed consistently well.
5	This rating suggests that practices and processes are being performed extremely well and that management are highly satisfied with their contribution to pre-visit communication outcomes. Practices and processes should continue to be monitored to ensure that standards do not slip and to ensure that management does not become complacent.

.Case Study: Australian Protected Area Management Agency

The following case example about a protected area organisation demonstrates how the IPCM audit can be used. The respondents have rated the organisation's performance on a subset of the total 50 item IPCM audit. The following exhibits provide a visual representation of how managers perceive and experience performance and provide an indication of what might be done to improve the management and implementation of pre-visit communication.

The comments regarding improvement are those of the authors and any organisation would need to undertake several workshops as stated above in order to more fully lay out desired actions. The comments are also general and would need to be calibrated to the specific organisation being evaluated.

Figure 1: Satisfaction with IPCM outcomes
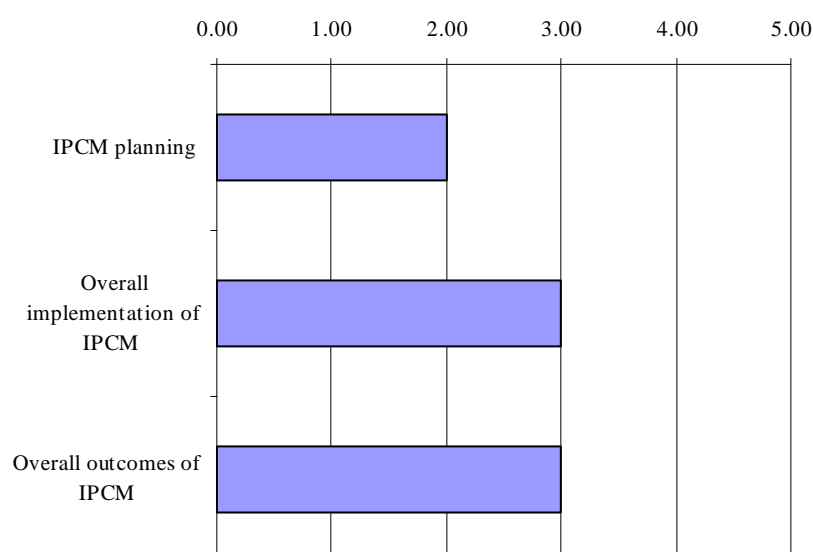
Managers appear to be somewhat dissatisfied with the overall outcomes and implementation of pre-visit communication. In particular managers express dissatisfaction with the overall planning of pre-visit communications and suggest a real opportunity to improve the planning and implementation of pre-visit communications. The following questions are now used to highlight specific areas of poor and good performance.

Figure 2: Mission Marketing
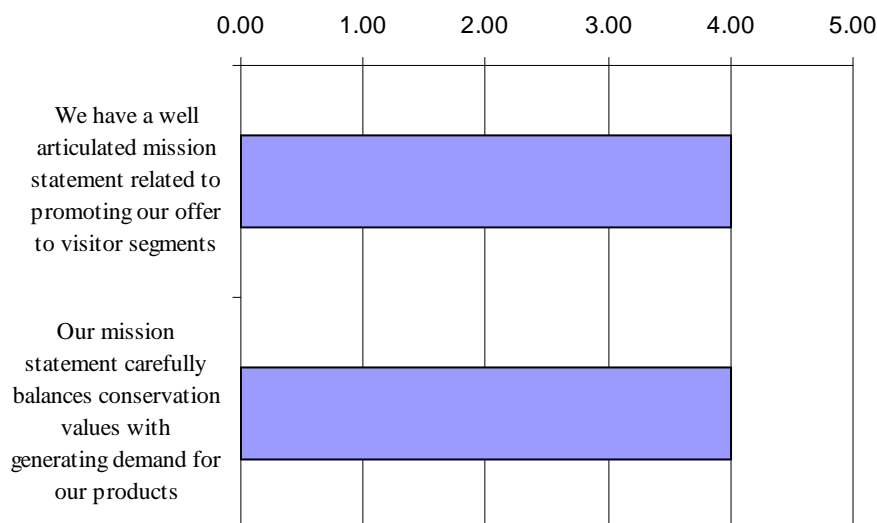
Managers felt that their mission and vision statement did a good job in promoting pre-visit communication and took into account the competing values of conservation and marketing of protected areas. Poor performance here means that such statements should be reviewed to ensure their currency. Overall, the finding suggests that managers need to continue to promote and champion this mission across the organisation in order to continue to facilitate a balance between traditional organisational mental models related to the conservation and those of the newer 'marketing' mandate.

Figure 3: Internal Integration
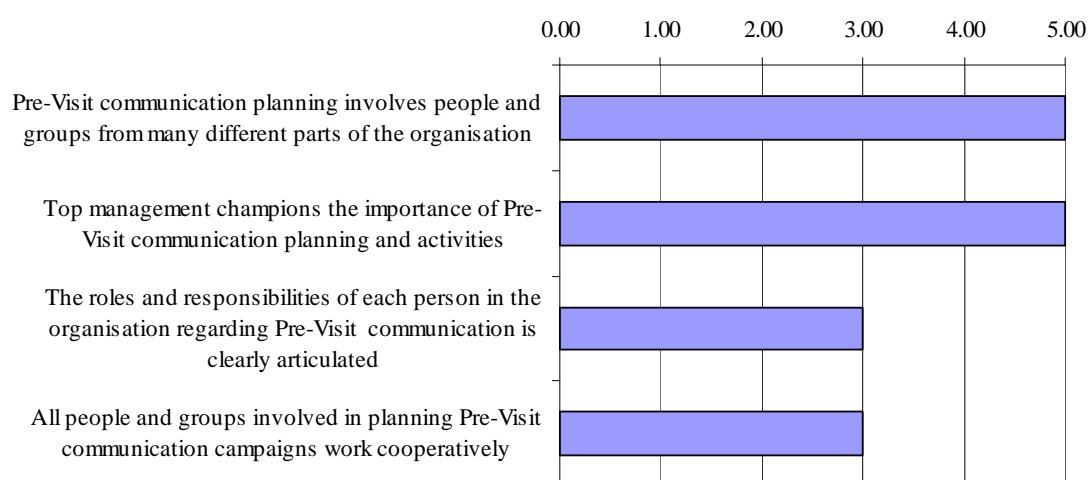
Managers suggest that they do well in terms of involving people from many parts of the organisation and in terms of having top management champion the importance of pre-visit communication. Significantly though, there are weaknesses in terms of determining the roles and responsibilities of people and in clearly articulating these. As well, there is some weakness in the cooperative nature of people involved in the pre-visit communication process.

An implication of this may be that whilst people are working cross-functionally the lack of clear determination of roles and responsibilities might be undermining the ability to achieve desired outcomes. The lack of role definition is likely to result in duplication of some aspects of pre-visit communication and a lack of attention to other important communication tasks. This lack of role clarity is also likely to result in an overall lack of cooperation in both planning and implementation of pre-visit communication strategy.

Work needs to be undertaken to map out who is involved, why they are involved and what they are responsible for. This clarity of roles and responsibilities needs to be championed by senior management to avoid internal political battles over perceived territory.

Figure 4: External Integration
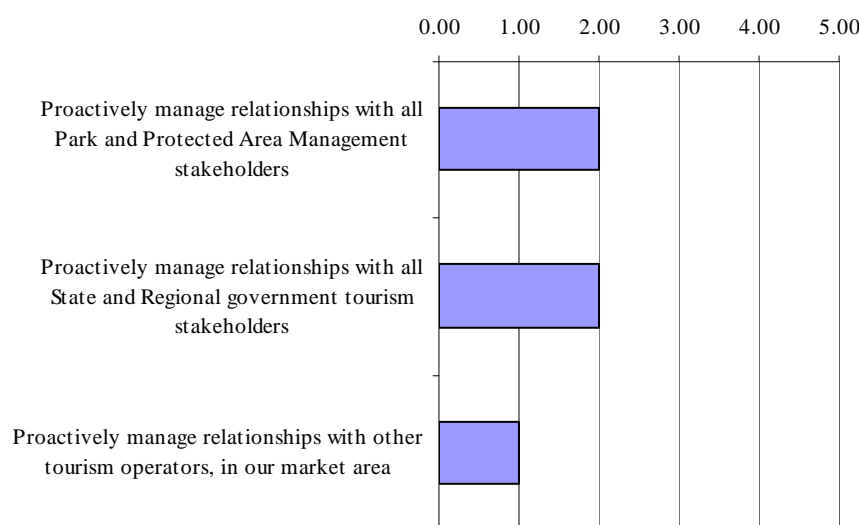
Managers express dissatisfaction with their lack of proactive engagement and linkages with external organisations that also market or manage aspects of national parks and protected areas. Failure to have a set of strong linkages increases the transaction costs associated with developing marketing programs and in adequately policing the marketing of such areas by external organisations.

Overall, there is a need to have an improved understanding of the market programs of external stakeholders and how these might offer the agency the opportunity to piggyback off marketing campaigns designed to target potential visitor segments. More broadly there is a critical need to create strong working relationships with media channels, apart from the main STO and RTO groups. This includes the mainstream media and other local specialised channels, including auto clubs, map producers and the like. Improved media relationship management offers scope for improved park and product publicity or public service messages to be carried at lower cost.

Figure 5: Voice of the Customer
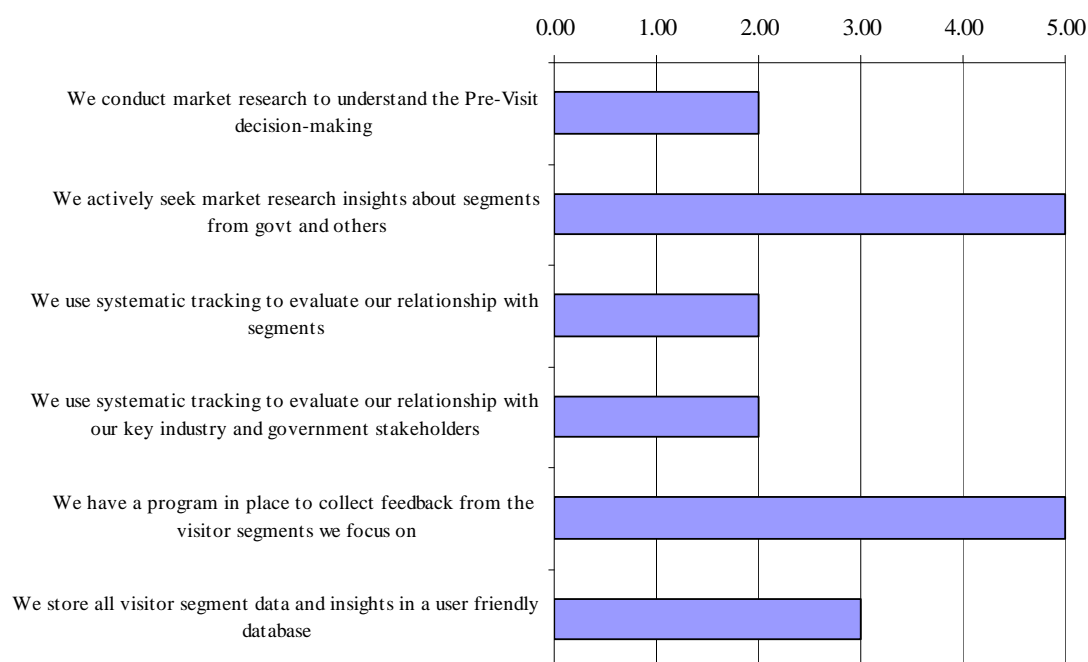
Here managers show some areas of strength, particularly in seeking market research insights from others and in collecting park level information from visitors. Both of these areas are important and efforts need to be directed towards maintaining and reinforcing these strengths.

Weaknesses have been highlighted in areas related to conducting market research to profile visitor segments and potential visitors, and in tracking how various segments are developing and using parks. This area need addressing especially given the greater marketing requirement of national park and protected area managers. This weakness may be a function of the transition phase of national park and protected area agencies to a greater pre-visit marketing focus. It is also likely to be a function of budget constraints associated with the cost of market and visitor research. The case needs to be built by managers to increase the research budget, particularly as it relates to making media and communication message related decisions.

Further, some effort also needs to be direct towards using and improving databases which are easily accessed and provide segment data in a user friendly manner—that is, managers should be able to easily find out data for various parks and protected areas or for particular segments. Access to data is essential for making appropriate pre-visit communication decisions.

Figure 6: Clarity of Objectives
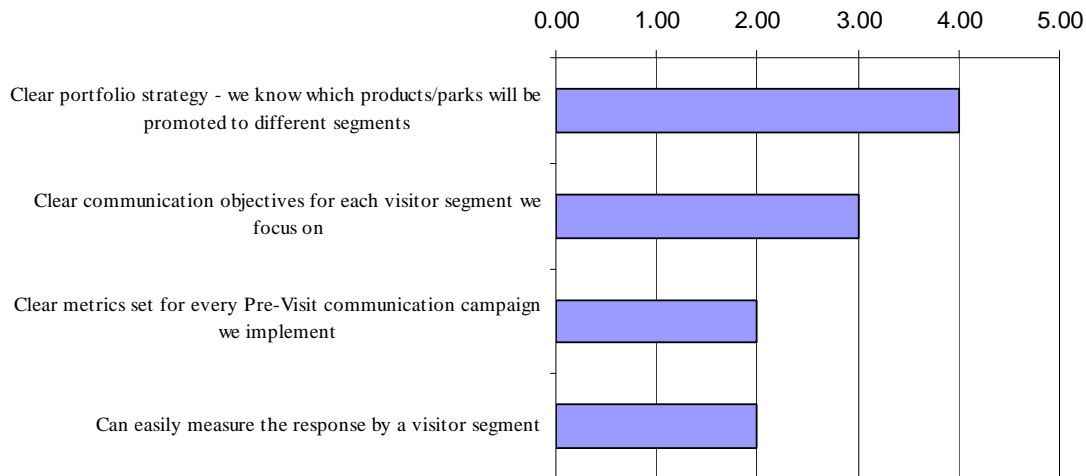
Managers felt they had a clear product portfolio strategy—how the various parks and protected areas under their control will be marketed or matched to different visitor segments. The development of a market/product portfolio matrix is an important tool in planning how to communicate with particular segments and to build demand or demarket certain protected areas. The portfolio requires on-going refinement as data on visitor segments and their behaviours arises.

Managers felt that there could be improvement in the clarity of the communication objectives set for each visitor segment they target. Clear communication objectives including product (park) or issue awareness, attitude formation, and actual behaviours are important to set for targeted segments as they help direct message development and the best communication mix for reaching and influencing these potential visitors. Possibly as a result of a lack of clear objectives, managers also felt there was a weakness in being able to measure the outcomes of communication campaigns. Work needs to be done to ensure the portfolio strategy or matrix is used actually define objectives for targeted segments and then to consider how best to communicate with those groups and measure their response.

Figure 7: Planning Process
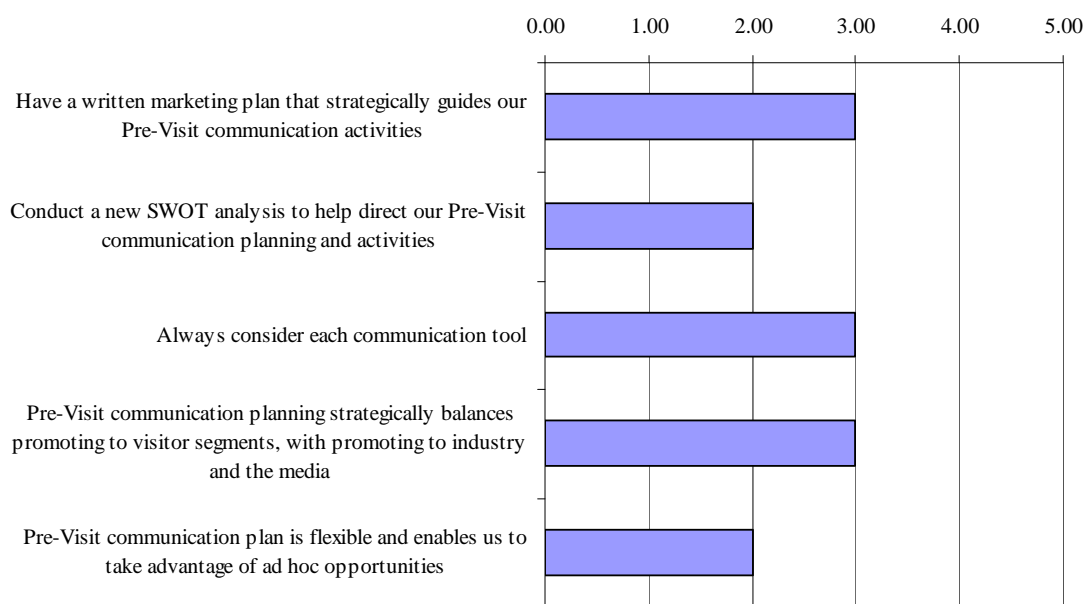
The Integrated Pre-Visit Communication Audit: A User Guide

Managers suggested that there was some weakness in the planning process associated with pre-visit communications. Managers only somewhat agreed that they had a marketing plan that strategically guided their pre-visit communications activities. Work needs to be done here to develop a plan that acts as a vehicle to consolidate thinking and agreement on the strategy and on the implementation tactics for particular visitor segments and parks or protected areas.

Managers also suggested that they did not consistently conduct a SWOT analysis to help direct planning and communications activities. The SWOT analysis is a structured evaluation of internal strengths and weaknesses in the ability to undertake communications and the opportunities and threats that can help or hurt the organisation in its communications. Importantly, his analysis enables SWOTs to be prioritised in order to help allocate limited resources and in determining which communication tools are best to employ.

Managers felt that the degree to which a range of communications options or tools is considered in planning is also somewhat weak. Similarly, the development of communication plans which balance promoting to consumers or visitors, and to important message channels such as the media and other members of the tourism industry, was also poorly practiced. With the emergence of new communications tools and channels (e.g. podcasts, SMS, twitter), and a fragmentation of tradition media (e.g. print and broadcast), it is necessary to challenge the status quo with regard to what might be employed. Evaluating the best choice of communication tools is also necessary when considering achievement of different communication objectives for various visitor groups including broad awareness vs. specific behavioural modification for a recreation or visitor segment.

Managers also suggested that their communication plan was inflexible and not able to respond easily to ad hoc opportunities to communicate with different groups. Maintaining flexibility in communication plans is necessary but difficult especially where media has to be purchased some time in advance and where resources are limited and tend to be exhausted quickly. Flexibility is however necessary as somewhat volatile market conditions often require emphasis to be switched from one visitor group to another or in the case of protected areas to demarking or targeting particular recreation groups.

Figure 8: Strategic Consistency
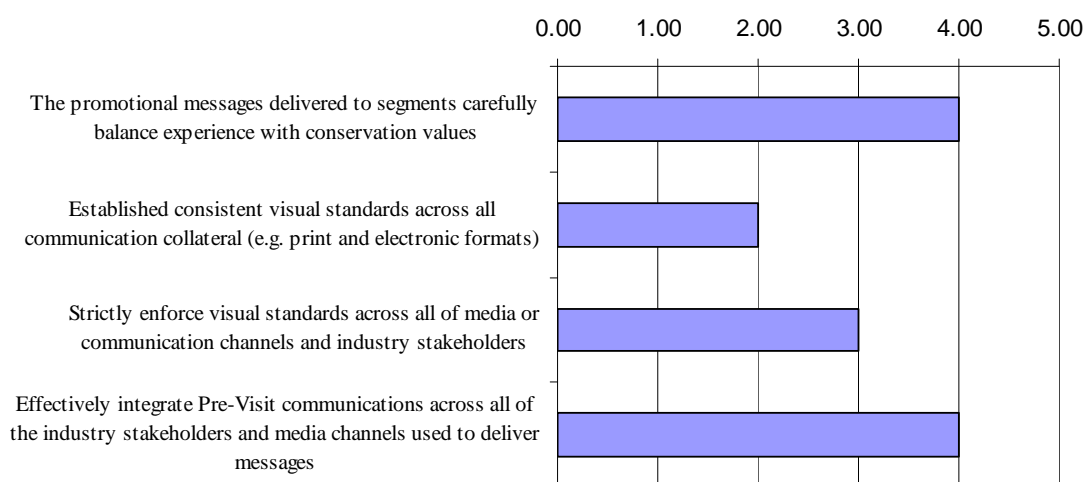
Managers were satisfied with the way in which they have been able to design and deliver messages that balance both experience and conservation values. It will be important to maintain and refresh such messages and to ensure that the messages are being heard and responded to by targeted visitor segments when visiting parks and protected areas.

Managers are less satisfied with the ability to establish consistent visual standards across their marketing communication collateral. Visual consistency is a significant factor in building brand recognition for any organisation and for enabling visitors to link information back to the source. Visual consistency has flow-on benefits in terms of the source, e.g. park agency, being recalled by visitors and used in subsequent visit planning. Elements of consistency that managers need to integrate include symbols and logos, colours and design, thematic consistency (e.g. experience and conservation statements and values), and verbal consistency in taglines and slogans.

Managers also highlighted their need to improve the way they enforce the consistency of their marketing collateral—ensuring that any pro-bono media or free media be used does not compromise the quality of production. Finding a balance between absolute control over materials and allowing other content providers or

message channels to utilise images or text is a difficult task, but one that is significantly important if the right messages are to be reinforced and the national park and protected area brand image built as desired.

Figure 9: Resources
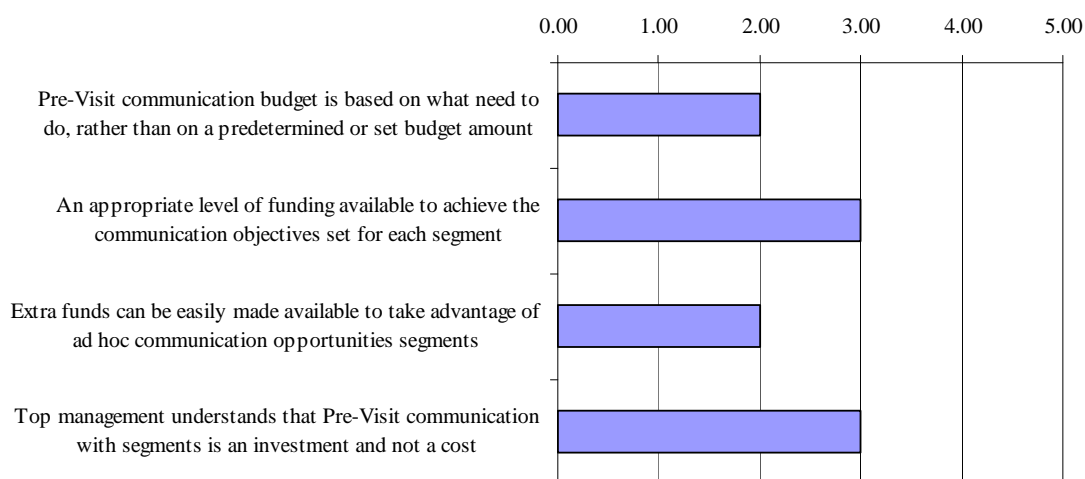
Managers felt that this area was one of weakness. Whilst top management somewhat understands the need to invest in pre-visit communication there appears to be weaknesses associated with the delivery of this. In particular managers were dissatisfied with the way they budget, the level of funding, and the ability to access extra funds.

Best practice in integrated marketing communication suggests that managers adopt a zero-based budgeting approach or an objective-task approach. This approach argues that each manager needs to determine the communication task being asked of them (e.g. a campaign for a specific segment) then appropriately determine how much communication is necessary (and the cost of this) to achieve desired outcomes. By going through the objective-task approach managers will be in a better position to understand the gap between what they have and what they need, and this may be used in future funding negotiations.

Managers also felt that their senior management only somewhat subscribed to the idea that pre-visit communication spending was an investment and not a cost. With the changing mandate for national park and protected areas senior managers must adjust their perspective on budgets for pre-visit communication and market research to support related communication decisions. Managers must seek to make pre-visit communications resourcing a legitimate part of the overall communications activities of the organisation.

Commercial reality of course would suggest that resources, particularly money for the purchase of media space and creative agency work, is and never will be sufficient. This again highlights the importance having a clear product/market portfolio, sound understanding of 'marketing' objectives, clear sense of what is wanted from targeting specific visitor segments, and being able to leverage opportunities for 'free' message delivery through other stakeholders.

Summary

In this case study it was found that overall satisfaction with the planning, implementation and overall outcomes of pre-visit communication was somewhat low and that scope for improvement existed. An analysis of the various IPCM items has highlighted which areas are performing poorly and need to be invested in or changed. Overall any audit team needs to use this information to devise actions and to nominate timeframes and desired outcomes for the improvement of pre-visit communication related activities and processes.

Appendix 1: The IPCM Audit Questions

This appendix presents each of the questions in the final IPCM audit and briefly outlines what participants should consider when answering each question. The fifty questions presented here represent an extension of the work by Duncan and Moriarty (1997), Reid, Luxton and Mavondo (2005), Reid, Wearing and Croy, (2008), and Luxton (2008). The questions are presented in four sections:

1. Satisfaction with pre-visit communication management and outcomes
2. Evaluating strategy foundations
3. Evaluating strategy development
4. Evaluating strategy implementation

It should be noted that there is an associated IPCM workbook that accompanies this user guide. The workbook presents the items in questionnaire format and can be copied and submitted to those who are participating in the audit. There is also a Microsoft Excel workbook that enables participants to enter their data and have charts automatically populate. Both of these documents can be found on the Sustainable Tourism CRC website (www.crctourism.com.au).

Satisfaction with PVC management and outcomes

Definition and explanation

The audit begins by asking participants to reflect on the activities and processes related to pre-visit communication that have been carried out over the previous planning period e.g. the previous year or half year. The scope or timeframe of the evaluation exercise needs to be stated in the initial briefing so that participants have a specific period on which to base their answers. Reflecting and commenting on performance helps start the process of thinking about where aspects of poor or good performance might be and what might be driving performance. In answering each question it is useful to make a few notes about why they rated each question as they did.

Satisfaction with visitor responses: In answering this question managers should reflect on whether the activities they undertook resulted in desired responses from the visitors or visitor segments they targeted. For example:

- Were visitors number increased for certain parks and protected areas designed to carry higher loads?
- Were certain areas demarketed well and reduced visitor loads achieved?
- Was there increased traffic on those areas of the organisation website which highlight visitation to national parks and protected areas?
- Was there strong attendance at particular events designed to improve visitor engagement with national parks and protected areas?

Question: Satisfaction 1						
Overall satisfaction with visitor or customer responses to our pre-visit communication activities?						
Very dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Very satisfied

Satisfaction with stakeholder relationships: In answering this question participants should reflect on whether they had a strong relationship with key communication-related stakeholders and that the planning and execution of pre-visit strategy and activities was facilitated because of this. For example:

- Was the interaction with tourism organisations appropriate and did it facilitate access to research insights or enabled piggybacking off tourism-related campaigns?
- Was there a strong interaction with different media channels (e.g. local TV, newspapers, auto associations) and did that interaction facilitate messages being carried for lower cost or more effectively?

Question: Satisfaction 2						
Overall satisfaction with communication stakeholder relationships?						
Very dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Very satisfied

Satisfaction with communication planning: In answering this question participants should reflect on whether the activities they undertook in planning pre-visit communication strategy and campaigns were effective and efficient.

- Was the process of strategy development well managed?
- Was their sufficient input from important stakeholders?
- Was their sufficient input from market research?
- Did planning actually result in actionable outcomes?

Question: Satisfaction 3						
Overall satisfaction with the planning of pre-visit communication activities and strategy?						
Very dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Very satisfied

Satisfaction with strategy implementation: In answering this question participants should reflect on whether the strategy they designed and the activities they planned to execute were indeed executed and implemented well.

Question: Satisfaction 4						
Overall satisfaction with implementation of pre-visit communication activities and strategy?						
Very dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Very satisfied

Satisfaction with resources: In answering this question participants should reflect on whether pre-visit communication was sufficiently resourced to achieve the goals set down in the planning period and more broadly mandated by senior management. Considerations include:

- Was there sufficient time?
- Was there sufficient trained staff?
- Was there sufficient finances?

Question: Satisfaction 5						
Overall satisfaction with resources allocated to of pre-visit communication activities and strategy?						
Very dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Very satisfied

In answering these questions (and the following) it is useful to make some notes on why you (the participant) were satisfied or dissatisfied with an area. The more specific participants are with their ratings, the better able the IPCM audit coordinator is to determine what actions can be taken to maintain or improve performance.

It is important to remember that for any scale or construct, the lower the score the more significant the problem and the more likely it is that it will require immediate action.

IPCM Part 1: Evaluating Strategy Foundations

Vision and mission

Definition and explanation

This set of questions relates to having a vision and mission to help focus, guide, and legitimise how integrated pre-visit communication fits into the organisation. The existence of a well developed vision and mission statement is central to shaping effective pre-visit operations and outcomes. The difference between a mission statement and a vision statement is that a mission statement focuses on the organisations present state while a vision statement focuses on the future. In a definitional sense:

- A vision statement is an idealised description of a desired outcome that inspires, energises and helps staff create a mental picture of the future of a national park, protected area or protected area organisation.
- A mission statement addresses how the organisation will deal with its various stakeholders including staff, visitors, other government agencies, the community and environmental groups.

Question 1

Before answering these questions you should review the vision and mission statement currently in use and determine how useful it is in guiding pre-visit communication strategy and activities.

Question 1						
We have a well articulated vision and mission statement related to promoting national parks and protected areas?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 2

The review of the mission statement should enable you to determine whether it appropriately balances statements about the need to conserve or sustainably manage national parks and protected areas, with promoting these areas to the public for recreation use.

Question 2						
Our vision and mission statement balances conservation values with generating visitor demand?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 3

In reviewing the mission and vision statement you should consider how well it helps guide your pre-visit communication focus and efforts. Does the vision and mission statement enable clear direction for communications strategy?

Question 3						
Our mission and vision statement is a key consideration in pre-visit communication planning?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 4

Mission and vision statements have limited value if they are not promoted to staff and those responsible for planning and implementing pre-visit communication. Has the vision and mission statement been championed and does it promote a consistent and coordinated view of the way you wish to engage internal stakeholders and balance both environmental and commercial imperatives.

Question 4						
Our mission and vision statement is actively promoted to internal stakeholders?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 5

Pre-visit communication takes place as part of a network of government agencies and organisations all of whom are promoting aspects of the natural environment. You need to determine whether the mission and vision statement has been communicated to these entities so that they understand what you are trying to achieve and how you view the environment–commercial balance.

Question 5						
Our mission and vision statement is actively promoted to our other government stakeholders?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 6

Pre-visit communication takes place as part of a network of private tourism and media organisations all of whom are promoting aspects of the natural environment. You need to determine whether the mission and vision statement has been communicated to these external entities so that they understand what you are trying to achieve and how you view the environment–commercial balance.

Question 6						
Our mission and vision statement is actively promoted to our industry stakeholders?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Overall, the vision and mission statement acts as a charter for the organisation and the way it proposes to engage with its stakeholders. Active promotion of the vision and mission statement as a charter not only helps staff and other parts of the organisation, but can also help orient other organisations and the way the approach communicating messages about national parks and protected areas to their own customers and constituents.

Internal Stakeholder Integration

Definition and explanation

Internal integration includes both vertical (different levels of management and staff) and horizontal (across different organisational areas) communication and cooperation. Both forms of communication are essential for any organisation to ensure that consistent and coordinated pre-visit messages about protected area visitation, experiences and expectations are promoted in an accurate and responsible manner. Organisations that have poor horizontal and vertical communication often incur higher internal transaction costs where communication is more of a battle than it should be.

Before answering these questions you should reflect how well communication is undertaken in your organisation. Consider whether information flows freely between organisational groups and between senior management and staff. Consider whether groups involved in communicating messages to potential park and protected area visitors have clearly defined roles and responsibilities – who does what and when? Consider also whether the planning of pre-visit communication activities and 'marketing' messages is coordinated effectively through interdepartmental cooperation.

Question 7

Firstly, consider whether senior or top management champions the importance of pre-visit communication throughout the organisation. Do they ensure that each department or area understands the importance of coordinating messages about national parks and protected areas with potential visitors and other stakeholders?

Question 7						
Senior management champions the importance of pre-visit communication throughout the whole organisation?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 8

When you reflect on communication in your organisation do you feel that senior managers, staff, and organisation areas have a clear understanding of the need to coordinate pre-visit communication messages?

Question 8						
There is a clear understanding of the need to coordinate messages to our key stakeholders about managing protected area visitation?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 9

Consider whether each part of the organisation you work for understands its roles and responsibilities for undertaking pre-visit communication and whether these roles and responsibilities are clearly laid out. Are there problems associated with people or groups 'doing their own thing' without coordinating with others to effect the desired and agreed upon strategy?

Question 9						
There is clear articulation of the roles and responsibilities of each person in relation to pre-visit communications strategy and activities?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 10

To what degree is there involvement of people from different parts of the organisation when your group or organisation undertakes planning for pre-visit activities or the development of a strategy for pre-visit communication? Cross-functional involvement is meant to facilitate the improved transfer of information and an improved ability to coordinate strategy and actions.

Question 10						
The planning of our pre-visit communication strategy, campaigns, and activities involves people from many different parts of the organisation?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 11

Although a number of people from different parts of the organisation may take part in planning of pre-visit strategies and actions, their involvement can be beneficial or otherwise. To what extent do those who are commonly involved in pre-visit communication related activities work cooperatively to achieve desired aims?

Question 11						
All people and groups involved in planning pre-visit communication strategy and campaigns, work cooperatively?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Overall, internal integration and internal communication is about improving the ability to work effectively and to facilitate the development and implementation of coordinated and consistent pre-visit strategies.

External Stakeholder Integration

Definition and explanation

External stakeholder integration relates to the proactive management of the relationships between PAMS and other organisations involved in delivering messages to visitors or potential visitors. Organisations include state and regional tourism organisations, visitor centres and also those who actually own various media channels, e.g. local media, auto and caravan clubs etc. Successful cross-organisation integration helps achieve consistent messages, enables leveraging of message and media channels, and enables insights to be shared about how best to target particular visitor groups or segments.

Before answering these questions participants should consider who is actively involved in the development and implementation of pre-visit strategies and activities and how well you work with them (or they work with you). Importantly, external integration extends beyond meetings to include the analysis and integration of important parts of the strategic plans of other organisations.

Question 12

Firstly, to what degree has there been any actual analysis of the alignment between your organisation's focus and those of important stakeholders who impact pre-visit communication strategies? To what degree does the organisation take the plans of major tourism organisations into account when designing its own strategies?

Question 12						
There is clear alignment between state and regional tourism plans, and our own marketing plans for protected areas?						
Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly

Disagree						Agree

Question 13

To what degree do you proactively seek to engage significant protected area related external stakeholders in the planning of pre-visit communication strategies and activities? Being proactive means that the organisation has instigated meetings and the like, to determine the needs of stakeholders and other organisations and to consider how to integrate at least some of their needs.

Question 13						
We proactively manage relationships with all other protected area management stakeholders involved in pre-visit communication related activities?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 14

To what degree do you proactively seek to engage significant state and regional tourism organisations in the planning of pre-visit communication strategies and activities?

Question 14						
We proactively manage relationships with all state and regional government tourism stakeholders involved in pre-visit communication related activities?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 15

To what degree do you proactively seek to engage significant nature-based tourism operators in the planning of pre-visit communication strategies and activities?

Question 15						
We proactively manage relationships with other nature-based tourism operators, involved in pre-visit communication related activities?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Overall, the degree to which you seek to, and successfully engage external stakeholders will influence your overall ability to influence pre-visit communication strategies. In particular, such engagement improves coordination and consistency of messages being sent to potential visitors and is also likely to influence the availability of channels to carry messages—possibly at a lower cost (both in a dollar cost and transaction costs).

IPCM Part 2: Evaluating Strategy Development

The second section of the IPCM audit relates to Strategy Development. Strategy Development consists of three main areas: visitor connectivity, clarity of objectives, and the pre-visit planning process itself.

Visitor Connectivity

Definition and explanation

Visitor connectivity relates the activities that aid the organisation in hearing the 'Voice of the Visitor' and using this understanding of visitor needs and behaviours to help direct pre-visit communication strategies and activities. Importantly this construct extends beyond simply hearing the visitors' voice (their needs and wants) to incorporating the ability to develop a dialogue between the organisation and potential visitors about the experiences they desire and the experiences they perceived. This area also focuses on the application of primary and secondary research to aid decision making.

Question 16

The first question relates to the existence of visitor segment profiles that outline the visitor groups to be targeted with communication activities. Such profiles should outline motivations for visiting national parks and protected areas and provide appropriate insight into the best way to reach potential visitors with park-related messages e.g. popular media and channels for finding out about national parks and protected areas.

Question 16						
We have excellent visitor segment profiles that provide clear direction in targeting communication to the different segments?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 17

Insights in the decision-making process have important implications for the design of both messages and channels of delivery. Primary research generally relates to work conducted specifically to profile and understand the experiences of targeted visitor groups. To what degree does the organisation undertake their own (or commissioned) research to develop segment profiles and to understand the visit related decision making process.

Question 17						
We conduct high quality primary research to understand the pre-visit decision-making process of our targeted visitor segments?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 18

Does the organisation undertake primary research to determine the needs and wants of key industry and government stakeholders? Understanding what is desired and required by these stakeholders enables decision to be made about how to leverage their particular capabilities and resources.

Question 18						
We conduct our own primary research to understand the needs and wants of our key industry stakeholders (e.g. media channels, tour operators)?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 19

Having a system in place to receive feedback from visitors is essential in identifying and determining problems and experience related perceptions about national parks and protected areas. Such mechanisms relate to formalised in-park experience surveys and also to 'complaint lines' and feedback lines hosted on websites associated with your organisation.

Question 19						
We have an excellent program in place to facilitate visitor segment feedback (e.g. complaints and compliments, desired experiences, needs and wants)?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 20

In the absence of significant budgets for conducting primary market research, organisations should be seeking access to and reviewing the research conducted by their stakeholders on similar or related targeted visitor segments.

Question 20						
We actively seek and review market research insights about potential visitor segments, from our key industry stakeholders (e.g. media channels, tour operators, government agencies)?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 21

Where possible managers should seek to have some influence on the data collected by their key stakeholders including inserting specific questions or tracking a battery of questions over different waves of research conducted by stakeholders. For example a park related agency may access and influence the research conducted by a state tourism agency, insert questions, or develop a report from a battery of questions related to national parks and protected areas.

Question 21						
We have influence over what research is done by our tourism-related partners to improve our understanding of visitor segments?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

In the preceding report the area of visitor connectivity was the poorest performing area for most respondents to an IPCM questionnaire (Reid, Wearing & Croy, 2008). Visitor connectivity represents how the voice of targeted visitors and tourists, is heard in the organisation and helps direct development of pre-visit communication strategy and the allocation of resources to the communication mix. This is a crucial element of IPCM and as such requires particular attention. Managers need to consider how best to improve visitor connectivity, especially in the light of budget restrictions.

Clarity of Objectives

Definition and explanation

Development of IPCM strategy is predicated on having clear objectives related to which visitor segments to target, products to market (i.e. protected areas, national parks and their associated experience values), and the management and marketing objectives associated with each product e.g. demarketing, increase visitation or adjust knowledge of experiences available. Associated with this is the explicit identification of what will be

measured to determine how well communication activities shape the behaviour and experience expectations of targeted visitor segments.

Question 22

It is very difficult to make decisions abut how to market or demarket products (parks and protected areas) if organisations do not have a clear understanding of their product portfolio. A product portfolio is a map, matrix, or document which clearly outlines which national parks and protected areas are most suited to which types of activities or experiences and which types of visitors.

Question 22						
We have a clear product portfolio strategy—we know which products (e.g. parks and experiences) will be promoted to different visitor segments?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 23

Strategic objectives relate to the broader growth requirements of the organisation. Managers must set clear strategic objectives for the visitor segments they wish to target. For example one segment may be targeted at increased visitation whilst another may be targeted for diversion to a more suitable park or protected area. To what extent does the organisation have strategic objectives directing the development associated with each of the visitor segments they target?

Question 23						
We have clear long-term strategic objectives for the development and management of each visitor segment we target?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 24

Communication objectives relate specifically to targeting each visitor segment with marketing messages. In the communication literature such objectives include raising awareness of the product, building increased knowledge of a product, and persuading behaviour towards a product (e.g. visit a particular park, change an in-park behaviour) For instance one visitor segment my be targeted for increased visitation whilst another might be targeted for diversion away from a sensitive ecological area for their activities. Managers must evaluate to what extent they have developed clear and well articulated communication objectives for each of their targeted visitor segments and for each of the products (national parks and protected areas) under their management.

Question 24						
We have clear park related communication objectives for targeting different visitor segments (e.g. create awareness, increase visitation)?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 25

As well as being clear and unambiguous, objectives set for each visitor group or segment need to be realistic and achievable. Setting objectives that are unrealistic or unachievable results in a high level of frustration felt by all those who are responsible for effecting communication strategies and activities.

Question 25						
The communication objectives we have set for each visitor segment about our parks and protected area products are realistic and achievable?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 26

As well as being clear and realistic, objectives for pre-visit communication need to be specific and have the ability to be measured. Managers must ensure that the objectives they set have some degree of measurability e.g. percentage increase in visitor numbers, percentage in issues awareness and the like.

Question 26						
We have clear performance indicators for every individual communication campaign we implement (e.g. specific product, park, or issue awareness, number of bookings, percentage increase in visitor numbers)?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 27

Managers should also have mechanisms in place to collect data on the attainment of their objectives. Mechanisms might include specific visitor research projects to evaluate whether communications strategies and campaigns are reaching their desired target and the degree to which targeted visitors are responding as desired to the messages being sent.

Question 27						
We can easily determine the response by a targeted visitor segment, to our total communication efforts with them?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 28

Importantly, managers should be able to measure the effectiveness of the specific communication tools they are employing to send to visitor segments, e.g. how well does the website work as a marketing tool? Failure to review or analyse communication tools can result in inappropriate budget allocations to mechanisms that may not have any value. Similarly the inability to determine the effectiveness of the tools being employed needs to be addressed.

Question 28						
We can determine the effectiveness of the different communication tools (e.g. brochure, website) we employ in a campaign targeted to a particular visitor segment?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

In summary setting objectives to guide a pre-visit communication strategy and communication activities should adhere to the general principles of objectives setting—SMART objectives. That is:

－ *Specific*: The more precise you can be, the more useful your objectives will be.
－ *Measurable*: Mangers need to be able to evaluate communication objectives later, so they must have some quantifiable dimension on which to base future actions.
－ *Achievable:* The whole point of having communication objectives is that they tell managers and staff where they will be down the road. Thus, they should be feasible and obtainable. Overly-ambitious objectives that are never met are just as bad as those which are too easy.
－ *Realistic:* This means the objective is worthwhile and must be future focused. Objectives must be meaningful for the development of the organisation and the park and protected area offer.
－ *Time-Based:* Objectives require timeframes in order to provide impetus for attainment. Timeframes also enable managers to check whether they are on track.

Pre-visit Communication Planning Process

Definition and explanation

The process of planning a pre-visit communication strategy and its associated segment or park related campaigns is central to being successful at achieving stated communication and visitor related objectives. The outcome of such a process should result in an actionable plan for communication with visitor segments. The plan should draw on an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Managers need to examine key visitor contact points, strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and its ability to implement pre-visit communications. As well they should determine threats to products (i.e. parks and protected areas) from the actions of others, such as other organisations who may be communicating inappropriate messages. Furthermore such plans should enable a degree of flexibility in their execution to be able to take advantage of ad hoc and tactical opportunities for communications with key visitor segments.

Question 29

This question deals with the actual existence of a written plan which is used to guide the marketing communication efforts of the organisation. Such plans should be more than just a passive document—they should be the core of the organisation's visitor based activities. Plans need to be a strategically useful guide to undertaking communication activities through the clear identification of target markets, the clear recognition of marketing and communication objectives and timeframes, the determination of responsibilities and an understanding of resources to be employed.

Question 29						
We have a written marketing plan that strategically guides our Pre-Visit communication activities?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 30

Successful and well developed plans require more than a simple extrapolation for the previous years' operations and activities. Managers need to reassess the market place, have a clear sense of what new priorities are and what changes have occurred that need to be factored into marketing and communication activities. In some cases the plan will mirror the previous year but this is a function of analysis rather than the process of 'lazy' carryover and copying.

Question 30						
Our current pre-visit communication strategy is based on a realistic assessment of what we need to achieve and not just what we did in the previous year?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 31

To promote everything to everyone would be a waste of money and effort as no single park offer can satisfy every visitor group. Indeed different parks may not be suitable for particular groups and care is needed to ensure messages are streamed appropriately. It is also important that communications are also directed to other important stakeholders to gather support for park activities and to promote appropriate second-part communication about different parks and the behavioural expectations required of visitors. In examining past communication efforts managers must determine the degree to which they have appropriately balanced communication to different stakeholders.

Question 31						
Our pre-visit communication planning strategically balances communicating with visitor segments and communicating with other stakeholders (e.g. media, operators, STO) who carry messages on our behalf?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 32

The development of the marketing communication strategy and plan is often underpinned by an analysis of the internal *Strengths* and *Weaknesses* of the organisation regarding its ability to successfully communicate to potential visitors. Such strengths and weaknesses might include access to resources and money for effecting communication, the capability of staff to understand and employ low-cost media and the existing 'brand' recognition and recall enjoyed by the organisation. This is particularly important where the organisation sees itself as the preferred source of information by various targeted visitor segments—or not as the case may be.

Similarly, the marketing plan should take into account the prevailing external *Opportunities* and *Threats*. Opportunities might relate to increased access to emerging communication channels or better access to existing channels. Threats might relate to the increased promotion of national parks by other organisations, especially if messages are harmful to the environment or counter to the objectives of management. Importantly, managers must prioritise SWOTs so that appropriate strategies can be developed—failure to do so wastes both time and money.

Question 32						
We conduct a SWOT analysis as part of our pre-visit strategy planning to help determine communication strategy and tactics for each visitor segment?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 33

Most marketing communication plans will employ a mix of communication functions such as advertising, public relations and sponsorship. It will also employ a range of tools, including those with a more mass market orientation, such as websites, magazines and radio, to those which are more targeted, such as direct email. It is important that managers assess the role and possible effectiveness of existing and newer tools to ensure they have the best mix for targeting the visitor segments of interest.

Question 33						
Our pre-visit communication strategy planning always evaluates how we might use all of the different communications tools (e.g. advertising, events, Internet, PR, SMS, email, RSS)?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 34

The ability to adjust communications plans to take advantage of changes in the market and media environment is important. For example, managers may need to undertake emergency communication with a particular visitor group who may be behaving inappropriately. Alternatively a potential message channel such as a tourism body or motoring body may offer the opportunity for reduced cost advertising.

Question 34						
Our pre-visit communication strategy is flexible, and enables us to take advantage of ad hoc opportunities to communicate with visitor segments?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 35

As with the need for a degree of flexibility, managers also need to revisit their communication plan throughout the year to ensure that it remains relevant and that objectives set for each visitor group have been met or are on track to be met. This review requires the organisation to hold a formal meeting or review to determine how it is tracking.

Question 35						
We revisit our pre-visit communication strategy and implementation plan several times during the year, to see whether it is still relevant?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

In summary, the proper and appropriate execution of the pre-visit communication planning process is essential for achieving successful pre-visit communication outcomes. The development of a written plan acts as a vehicle to consolidate thinking and agreement on the strategy and on the implementation tactics for particular visitor segments. Having a written plan is no use, however, if it is unable to be implemented through resource constraints and other inhibiting factors.

A crucial foundation to the written plan is a full appreciation of the operating context. The SWOT analysis is a structured evaluation of internal strengths and weaknesses of the organisations ability to undertake communications. As well it identifies the opportunities and threats that can help or hurt the organisation in its communications. Importantly this analysis enables SWOTs to be prioritised in order to help allocate limited resources and in determining which communication tools are best to employ. The importance of the SWOT has been further emphasised in a changing technological and communication world. With the emergence of new communications tools and channels (e.g. podcasts, SMS), and a fragmentation of traditional media (e.g. print and broadcast), it is necessary at this time to challenge the status quo with regard to what might be employed. Evaluating the best choice of communication tools is also necessary when considering achievement of different

communication objectives for various visitor groups' including broad awareness vs. specific behavioural modification for a recreation or visitor segment.

The changing environment has also allowed for further communication opportunities. For organisations who rely, in part, on their message being carried for free by others, it is important to allocate planning and resources to such tasks and to consider strategically how to improve their ability to leverage 'free' channels.

Finally, maintaining flexibility in communication plans is necessary as somewhat volatile market conditions often require emphasis to be switched from one visitor group to another, or in the case of protected areas, to demarking or targeting particular recreation groups.

IPCM Part 3: Evaluating Strategy Implementation

Strategic Consistency

Definition and explanation

Building relationships with visitor segments and successfully implementing integrated pre-visit communications is also reliant upon being able to communicate a strategically consistent message to the target market. Consistency has two levels: 'One-voice, one-look' consistency and strategic consistency.

'One-voice, one-look' consistency occurs when all advertising, promotion, public relations, sponsorships and other communications messages have the same look, sound and feel—the marketing communication collateral all look the same.

Strategic consistency is the type of consistency that occurs when the communication messages differ but each message contains consistent core element. In the context of protected area agencies this might be the core environment or behavioural message. The challenge facing all organisations is working at both levels to facilitate the building of a strong presence in the market place across a number of different audiences.

Question 36

This question relates to the issue of strategic consistency and whether the values of the organisation are being reinforced through each type of communication used in the market. That is, the brand and its values are being reinforced consistently across communication types and that the organisation is being identified as a primary source of information about parks and protected areas.

Question 36						
The messages delivered through our marketing tools and collateral are strategically consistent. They have a consistent underlying theme that reinforces our values to the visitor segment being targeted?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 37

In line with the previous question, managers need to consider whether the messages they are sending to their different visitor segments appropriately balance the experiences that are available at different parks and protected areas with the need for visitors to behave in a way that supports on-going park and protected area sustainability and conservation.

Question 37						
The messages we deliver to visitor segments carefully balance experience values (e.g. nature, activity, fun and excitement) with sustainability and conservation?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 38

In line with the 'one-voice, one-look' consistency, managers need to review the marketing material they produce and make available to various visitor segments and organisations. Does the material have a consistent branding and visual appeal? In dealing with many branches of an organisation there is a temptation for staff to 'modify' the brand livery e.g. colours, fonts, brand logos, product positioning statements—this needs to be avoided and clear guidelines for preparation of material need to be in place.

Question 38					
We have established clear visual standards across all our marketing collateral (e.g. print and electronic formats)?					
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 39

To what degree are the visual standards of the marketing material produced by the organisation reinforced across all of the communication channels employed, as well as the various tourism and industry operators that leverage content and messages? In the desire to leverage 'free' media, protected areas management may wrongly be inclined to accept poor quality image reproductions in publications, or accept off-colour brand livery e.g. a slightly different shade of green on a brand logo.

Question 39					
We strictly enforce out visual standards across all of our communication channels and industry stakeholders?					
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 40

Often an organisation's messages are carried by associated stakeholders and organisations such as tourism agencies, tourism operators, car club publications and other associated tourism organisations. Managers need to ensure that all messages carried by other organisations about parks and protected areas and their associated experience values are clear and consistent. A confused set of message about what a visitor can expect at a park or protected area can significantly lower the value they obtain and may even result in the wrong people heading to the wrong area to undertake activities that are inappropriate for the type of park or protected area.

Question 40					
We ensure that all messages delivered, on our behalf, by tourism stakeholders and media channels, are strategically consistent with our values?					
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 41

Ensuring that the material being offered to the public is up-to-date is an important consideration. Managers need to reflect on how frequently and how well they update their content and refresh the material on their website.

Question 41					
We ensure that our marketing collateral and web content is constantly refreshed and updated?					
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 42

Managers also need to reflect on the degree to which they 'police' the content and imagery being used by industry stakeholders e.g. tourism agencies and tourism operators. Managers must ensure that the material being used by other parties is both up-to-date and also accurately reflects the desired experience and conservation values being promoted for each area.

Question 42						
We ensure that the marketing collateral and web content, used by industry stakeholders, accurately reflects our desired product messages						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

The message consistency challenge is one that all those involved in marketing face. Messages must continually reinforce the brand e.g. the park or protected area agency, as a primary source of information. Messages must also reflect the individual park and protected area values, experiences and behavioural expectations so that the right people visit the right area. This challenge is often complicated when many third parties are involved in delivering the message or are delivering messages of their own which may conflict with the needs of protected area managers.

It is important for agencies to maintain and refresh park-related messages and to ensure that the messages are being heard and responded to by targeted visitor segments when visiting parks and protected areas. Elements of consistency include symbols and logos, colours and design, thematic consistency (e.g. experience and conservation statements and values), and verbal consistency in taglines and slogans. Finding a balance between absolute control over materials and allowing other content providers or message channels to utilise images or text is a difficult task, but one that is significantly important if the right messages are to be reinforced and the national park and protected area brand image built as desired.

Resource Commitments

Definition and explanation

Essential to the success of IPCM is the availability of resources to effect the planning, implementation and assessment of communication strategies. Resources extend beyond simply funds to pay for specific communication activities and campaigns. They include the recruitment and retention of staff that have the capability to manage both specific communication campaigns and manage the building of the Park's brand over time. Importantly, this construct also recognises the need to train staff and to have the capacity to engage consultants to facilitate strategy development. This construct also extends to having senior management who view communication related activities as an investment rather than a cost—that is they legitimise pre-visit communication related activities and associated resource allocations.

Question 43

Top managements' view of visitor-related communication, especially pre-visit communication, can have a significant influence on the resources made available and on the tacit support for such activities. Managers need to consider to what degree their senior managers support pre-visit communication and see it as an investment rather than as a cost to the agency.

Question 43						
Top management understands that pre-visit communication with visitor segments is an investment and not a cost?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 44

As part of the investment-oriented mindset, top management needs to commit to providing highly skilled personnel to plan and implement campaigns. Maintaining such staff requires appropriate rewards and training systems to be implemented.

Question 44						
Top management commits to maintaining highly skilled personnel to plan and implement our pre-visit communication campaigns?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 45

The evolving nature of communication media and channels requires that staff is trained in their use or have the opportunity to be trained. For example the rise of podcasting, SMS messaging and now Twitter, means that opportunities may exist for real-time and low cost message delivery. Similarly the changing nature of more traditional media including television, radio and print also mean that staff should be reminded of their applicability to various visitor-oriented campaigns. This question deals primarily with mainstream or more traditional media.

Question 45						
We have regular training on the use and application of all mainstream communication tools (e.g. print, TV, radio, internet, PR)?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 46

This question deals with the emerging communication tools, many of which are in the domain of electronic-based communications.

Question 46						
We have training on the use and application of emerging electronic communications tools (email, SMS, MMS, podcast, blog, etc)?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 47

Without question, the development and implementation of pre-visit visitor communication activities can be expensive. The issue of money is always a vexing question; nevertheless an organisation that has been charged with achieving certain objectives by their top management must be funded appropriately. The failure to do so is a failure by top management to grasp the costs and complexities inherent in such activities.

Question 47						
We have an appropriate level of funding available to achieve the communication objectives we have set for each visitor segment?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 48

In best practice communication planning budgets for campaigns and the like are set by an objective-task method. In this method the objectives are set and agreed upon for any visitor groups or targeted visitor segments, and then the best approach to contacting and informing the visitor segment is developed and subsequently costed. This approach enables a more realistic way of determining what monies are required.

Question 48						
The budget available for each of our campaigns is based on the objectives we need to achieve for each visitor segment rather than a specified amount?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 49

Often objectives set at the beginning of a communication period may be subject to change. For example a crisis might require extra communication to be targeted to a particular group to moderate or modify their behaviour. To what extent can extra funds be made available for such activities rather than having to draw down on funds that have been allocated for other communications activities?

Question 49						
Extra funds can be easily made available to take advantage of ad hoc communication opportunities?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

Question 50

A final resource to consider is the time available to plan and implement pre-visit communication. The complexity of planning communication activities to cover a broad range of parks and protected areas means that significant time should be given to ensuring it is done correctly. Time availability needs to be built into staff work plans and into the overall suite of planning related activities for the agency.

Question 50						
Adequate time is made available to plan and implement pre-visit communication campaigns?						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree

The resourcing of pre-visit communication is a significant issue for any park and protected area agency. Best practice in integrated marketing communication suggests that firms adopt a zero-based budgeting or objective-task approach. This approach argues that an organisation needs to determine what the task is regarding communication for the planning period and then determine how much communication is necessary to achieve desired outcomes. This objective-task understanding then enables a realistic assessment of the resources necessary to affect the strategy. By going through the objective-task approach managers will be in a better position to understand the gap between what resources they have and what resources they need.

Commercial reality, however, suggests that resources, particularly money for the purchase of media space and creative agency work will always be difficult. The common state of having a set or predetermined budget means that managers must be able to prioritise the communication activities for the planning period. This again highlights the importance of the previously highlighted elements of the IPCM—clear product/market portfolio, sound understanding of 'marketing' objectives, clear sense of what is wanted from targeting specific visitor segments, and being able to leverage opportunities for 'free' message delivery through other stakeholders

With the changing mandate for national park and protected area senior managers must adjust their mental models and seek to make pre-visit communication resourcing a legitimate part of the overall communications activities of the organisation.

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
CRC

Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) is established under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program.

STCRC is the world's leading scientific institution delivering research to support the sustainability of travel and tourism—one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries.

Introduction

STCRC has grown to be the largest dedicated tourism research organisation in the world, with $187 million invested in tourism research programs, commercialisation and education since 1997.

STCRC was established in July 2003 under the Commonwealth Government's CRC program and is an extension of the previous Tourism CRC, which operated from 1997 to 2003.

Role and responsibilities

The Commonwealth CRC program aims to turn research outcomes into successful new products, services and technologies. This enables Australian industries to be more **efficient, productive and competitive.**

The program emphasises collaboration between businesses and researchers to **maximise the benefits of research through** utilisation, commercialisation and technology transfer.

An education component focuses on producing graduates with skills relevant to industry needs.

STCRC's objectives are to enhance:

*   the contribution of long-term scientific and technological research and innovation to Australia's sustainable economic and social development;

*   the transfer of research outputs into outcomes of economic, environmental or **social benefit to Australia;**

*   the value of graduate researchers to Australia;

*   collaboration among researchers, between searchers and industry or other users; and

*   efficiency in the use of intellectual and other research outcomes.