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Destination Marketing Organization of Gold Coast Australia

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## **Executive Summary**

Tourism contributes a highly important role in the development of Australian economy where it added nearly 2.6 percent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and also to the Australian employment ratio to about 4.5 percent during FY2009-10. Having almost 46 percent of the tourism budget in Australia being invested in several local regions, coastal tourism has been believed to be of substantial importance to the country's several local groups. Therefore, to develop the extent of tourism significance, this report attempts to analyze the Destination Management Organization of Gold Coast, Australia. The Gold Coast is one of the leading leisure destinations of Australia. It is popular for its surf, beaches, hinterland, nightlife, shopping and theme parks. Gold Coast has been enticing Australian citizens for several years.

Gold Coast is situated in southeast Queensland, only an hour from Brisbane (south), the Gold Coast expands from Cabarita Beach in New South Wales, to Beaudesert in west, Beenleigh in north and South Stradbroke Island in east. The area attributes 70 kilometers of continuous seashore and is bordered by rainforest hinterland, comprising of National Parks listed in World Heritage. The Gold Coast has a robust linear urban base that expresses a direct alignment with the shoreline, Pacific Highway along with the mountain areas that all exist parallel to the seashore. The area has been based on its appealing environment, lifestyle and climate and has a hugely specialized market that is led by the tourism industry.

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## **Gold Coast Tourists**

The Gold Coast city is located in Southeastern coastline of Queensland, Australia. Gold Coast is the 6th hugely populated metropolitan in Australia, having almost 516, 00 inhabitants in 2011. The city has a predicted growth in population of 730,000 by 2026 (Gold Coast Regional Snapshot, 2013). The city is a prominent holiday spot, offering exciting adventure sports and natural drawings. The climate is suitable, in summers the temperature is about 83 Degrees Fahrenheit, while in winter the temperature shifts down to nearly 65 degrees Fahrenheit. The seaside is accessible, bearing some of the highly renowned surfing places in the country. Gold Coast seashores are also recognized as a Surfer's Paradise all around the globe. It is a suburban area of the city and it is specifically famous among tourists since it features the best recreation, adventurous surfing, restaurants and night life. As a whole, the Gold Coast attains 35 miles of coastal seashores which are reachable, and more than 530 miles of watercourses which are also traversable and therefore favorable for tourists' visits.

### **Domestic Tourists**

Overnight domestic visits in the Gold Coast was comparatively sustained during 2013 (around - 0.9%), having a robust increase in trade related visits offsetting little reductions in holiday travel and VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives). The interstate travel to the city rose substantially during 2013, with 7.4% (Gold Coast Regional Snapshot, 2013). The VFR tourist also increased by fellow neighborhoods of Queensland. Similarly, intrastate corporate travel augmented, which was capable to offset reductions from the holiday or leisure sector.

Intrastate corporate travel remains to be a sector of significant rise for the Gold Coast, having enlarged air travelling contributing to over 40 percent from this sector. This rise easily surpassed intrastate business tourism to the entire Queensland, which augmented 6.3 percent. Unluckily, the area's biggest interstate regions (VFR and holiday) reduced, which affected overall outcomes. The quantity of domestic night stays on the Gold Coast raised 1 percent to 14 million during 2013. This outcome reveals that while slightly fewer tourists visited during 2013, but those that did spent a longer time (Gold Coast Regional Snapshot, 2013).

### **International Tourists**

In 2013, international tourists to the city enlarged by 6.8 percent, caused by robust progress from the United Kingdom, China and minor Asian regions. Chinese tourist arrivals augmented by 18.9 percent since 2012, which contributes to the revelation of the First tourism Law during October 2013. On the other hand, Singapore remained its current robust progress having a 14.8 percent rise due to the persistent impact of straight Scoot flights. Moreover, visitors from India increased by over 30 percent (18,000) during 2013. Japanese visitors showed a continued reduction, with a reduction of 10.9 percent over the last year. Whereas New Zealand tourists increased by 4.5 percent, moving against state reductions (Gold Coast Regional Snapshot, 2013).

Tourists from the United Kingdom increased by 16.8 percent during 2013, caused by the leisure and holiday market segment. This outcome was accompanied by robust development from smaller markets of Europe like Switzerland and France, which expresses that Eurozone customer confidence, is growing (Sofield, 2003).

### **The Backpackers**

Another important source of visitors to Gold Coast is the backpackers. They are mainly the young individuals from Western European nations, specifically Canada and UK. Investing much of their time in Gold Coast, these visitors likely to explore significantly more of the region. Several backpackers contribute in working vacation facilitating them to stay for a longer period of time in the city (Singh, 2008).

### **Sporting Visitors**

The city of Gold Coast also interests the sporting visitors due to its extreme water and adventure sports. This type of visitors mainly contributes to the domestic and inbound tourism to the city (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002)

## **Gold Coast SWOT analysis**

The hotel and resort skyline of Gold Coast, the Surfer's Paradise is highly remarkable. The city has accommodation which facilitates all budgets beginning from mountain leaves and luxurious hotels to camping land and backpacker lodging. Gold Coast huge tourism infrastructure is built upon unrivalled ranges of developed and natural places. The pure rainforest areas offer as the

residual to the health leaves, mountain tracks, art shows, wineries and craft shopping which expect tourists looking for a serene and healthy break from the Gold Coasts internationally renowned seashores. The Gold Coasts' tourism market is hugely promoted by committed scheduled events which reveal the tourism agents to massive business growth opportunities. Such events include tastes of the Gold Coast, Blues on the Broadbeach, New Year Eve, and the Gold Coast marathon. Furthermore, Gold Coast is also observed as a trendiest spot for the trade visitors who identify this sea side city as a vivid, secure, and warm place to participate in conferences and meetings (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002)

### **Strengths**

As per Faulkner (2002) the strength of Gold Coast tourism spot is depend on its location which facilitate the spot to use the city's major international airports that allows tourists access into the area through the Brisbane airport as well as Gold Coast airport. As a matter of fact, the Brisbane airport offers the passengers a simple link to 39 local and 26 global spots. With its extended corporate and holiday product ranges, Gold Coast mostly appeals Australian and international tourists all through the year therefore negating the occasional highs and lows conventionally experienced by the coastal destinations. The business investments tradition in this city, societal support, and sub tropical weather conditions for a perfect tourism growth combined with the size and feature of the tourism industry determine the Gold Coast tourism to remain a leading tourism spot of Australia (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

### **Weaknesses**

Gold Coast tourism also confront with few weaknesses like the dearth of cultural tourism exposures and products, too much dependence on favorable climate conditions, high focus on the redevelopment of lodging infrastructure and the misunderstanding of the city as being only for the tourists as the Surfer's Paradise merely belongs to the sun and surfing (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

### **Opportunities**

In spite of such weaknesses, there are several opportunities in the city. These comprise of innovate and creative tourism products and icons, nature resourced tourism in the city's

seashore and Hinterland areas, niche market growth, creative retail experiences, focusing the connections between the beach culture and Gold Coast lifestyle as well as developing the global air services and holiday concentrated airlines (Ramachandran, 2006).

### **Threats**

Despite of the strong domestic market, the city tourism is considerably threatened by the increased volume and lesser yield sectors which arise from city sprawl, growth in population and loss of significant events. The city is also deprived of a proper disaster and crisis management tourism planning, world class infrastructure for tourism and products, crime and safety issues along with the international industry competition in association to the other visitor spots both in Australian and overseas. The ecological degradation emerging from the ineffective management of the Gold Coast resources holding potential, also bears substantial threat to the accessible tourists' spots (Moore, 2002).

## **Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) Analysis of Gold Coast**

### **Literature**

Whereas tourism debatably likely to be led by a market, serving to the demands of those looking for commercial lodging, increasing evidence has highlighted to the significance of the Visiting Friends and Relatives or VFR market segment. Indeed, numerous international tourist surveys as well as immigration landing records in various countries have used the segment to categorize objective of visit for many years, therefore allowing contrasts in flows of tourists motivated by this requirement with those visiting for aims of business, holidays or any other purpose.

Lockyer & Ryan (2007) reviewed the writing on VFR tourism. Their core findings revealed that VFR is obtaining a growing amount of attraction, from an increasing range of academics using more diverse thoughts. Previous articles normally emphasized on economic, volumetric, and marketing concerns, having a more current rise of interest in the community and social areas of VFR tourism. Considerations for prospect research are argued and contrasts with other subject issues offered. Ramachandran (2006) also discussed the VFR tourism literature and highlights host-guest communication in the tourism segment. Faulkner & Faulkner (2003) evaluated the VFR sector in Australia and how it is estimated, and recommends that employing governmental data for calculating VFR tourism will undervalue this sector in any

destination of Australia. Utilizing the VFR elaborative model as a theoretical model, this study has predicted that VFR travel shows 48 percent of the country's overall night tourism sector. Earlier, Ramachandran (2006) investigated the degree to which VFR tourists use commercial lodging in the Sunshine coast, Australia. He also profiled the traits and attitudes of this specific form of VFR tourist. The study showed that 26 percent of the VFRs resided in commercial lodging.

Fyall & Garrod (2004) explore definitions of VFR tourism for the objectives of researching the capacity of this sector for tourist health. An increased ratio of VFR literature external to the basic tourism academics is emphasized on the expansion of disease by VFR tourists, whose direct contacts with family and friends whilst visiting their places makes them more susceptible of getting and transmitting disease viruses as compared to other forms of tourists. Researches on economic influence and expenditure of VFR tourists include Faulkner (2003) which concludes that the expenditures and VFR numbers have been hugely undervalued because of the issues related with the outflow accounting systems and disregarding the outflows acquired by VFR hosts. Several researches discovered the Leisure Tourism Database and evaluated the experiences of guests and hosts. These studies discuss the positive and negative areas related with the persistent demand to cater relatives and friends. When evaluating the experiences of guests, it has been discovered that when residing at relatives or friends, VFR travelers may feel comfortable with respect to the familiarity of place, however they also mostly experience loss of privacy and the restricted situational hold engaged in the situation (Lockyer & Ryan, 2007).

### **VFR analysis of Gold Coast**

In Gold Coast, this type of tourism compiles up to more than 50 percent of the city's local tourism. VFR tourism will be one of the most important sectors based on demographics and forecasting. Research suggests that the ratio of VFR individual tourist parties to be substantially higher as compared to non-VFR individual tourist parties. Alone and single females could contribute to 19 percent of the United Kingdom families by 2030 (Singh, 2008), which might direct to an emerging VFR market sector for solo young females. The majority of the people do not prefer to visit alone; in this case VFR offers them a purpose to travel. Shifts in family's demography and structures will present the significance of VFR Travel in the coming future (Fyall & Garrod, 2004).

Visiting Friends and Relatives shows a huge and significance market sector, as per the Regional General Manager of Tourism Australia. Gold Coast has persistently been the most famous tourist spot for British people over the last two decades. Having almost 40,000 British migrants to the country each year, this trend depicts a huge increase in the VFR market enabling it a valuable sector. It has been observed that a personal call and, along with it, the pledge of an emotional get-together and potential of a more homely travel experience, makes an important driver when it comes to receiving friends and relatives living abroad to plan a visit to the city. Australia's slogan of 'Australia has everything...except you' (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003) is being utilized to reinforce the VFR tourism in the Gold Coast. The International Visitor Survey depicts that the VFR sector reveals 26 percent of all travelers to Gold Coast, and almost 973,000 tourists in 2013 (Gold Coast Regional Snapshot, 2013).

### **Plog's psychographics model**

Stanley Plog Psychographic model was presented in 1967 and it soon became the hugely accepted tool by several marketing firms and researchers to understand typology of market segments (Faulkner & Faulkner, 2003). Plog's psychographic model was the pioneer model to categorize travelers into 5 distinct areas:

- i. Psychocentric
- ii. Near psychocentric
- iii. Mid-centric
- iv. Near Allocentric
- v. Allocentric

These segments are based upon the personality traits and behaviors of the tourist (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Plog's major concern was the tourists' personality traits, or psychographics, are important major aspects of their travel preferences, choices and patterns. The tourists of Gold Coast would be largely placed under the Allocentric segment of the model. Allocentric has its basis in the basic term *Allo*, which means varied in form/type. An individual having Allocentric personality trait, therefore, is informal, sociable and poised. He is distinguished by a substantial level of enthusiasm and adventure to explore and venture new things in life. For the Allocentric people, travel is a medium to express curiosity and satisfy inquisitiveness. By virtue of extensive research, Plog also showed an interesting fact. Whilst the individuals at the top most end of the income range were observed to be majorly Allocentrics. And, those with lower income ranges

were Psychocentrics, likely to be discovering for the favorable kind of destinations (Faulkner, 2002).

The Gold Coast is a contemporary city of astonishing high-rise constructions, developed across outstanding sea shores, including the internationally recognized Surfers Paradise. The reason behind calling it an Allocentric tourist spot is its adventurous and intriguing travel features which has been a centre of attention for the people who love to explore new things, cultures, experiences and want to experience an exhilarating time. The Gold Coast has been the entryway to few of Queensland's amazing natural locations. Whale-watch, unique aboriginal culture and island hop are among the most prominent tourist attractions of the city (Singh, 2008). People associated with Allocentric characteristics are mostly venture seekers and like to gain new life experiences. These people keep going for outings and trips and are self-reliant. They are not only contended by meeting new people or strangers but also it excited them for the discover their unique cultures while such gatherings. Due to the extensive range of holiday destinations and products offered by the Gold Coast, the majority of the travelers can be found as Allocentrics. These individuals specific the region and make their individual travel accommodations (Sofield, 2003).

### **Recommendations**

In any rapidly increasing and competitive international context, strategic planning and implementation has become a core component of business existence. The current times engaged in successfully reacting to industry trends which refers that a continuous environmental evaluation and strategic evaluation procedure is important. Gold Coast tourism should on a strategic and focused approach for their marketing as a business and holiday event spot to ascertain the maximum value generation from their investments of resources, budget and time. In Gold Coast's biggest market sector, Australia, the city harmonize independent and integrative activity relying on sector, season, and condition (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002). The city's mutual activity should further integrate the standard campaigns with associative businesses, Broadbeach Alliance, Surfers Paradise Alliance, Gold Coast Airport, Connecting Southern Gold Coast, airlines, tourist retailers and Tourism Queensland. Globally, the city should influence their cooperative associations even more to improve their investment and output. Beside these basic measures, the following are the recommendations for the Gold Coast Five Year Strategic

Plan. These recommendations are based on the analyzing and assessments of the city's existing status in the tourism industry and have been generated for the aim to improve and excel the development in the coming years.

### **Strategies for Five Year Strategic Plan**

In order to ensure a sustainable development in the tourism market of the Gold Coast and to positively impact the entire tourism industry of Australia, there is a need to establish a well-defined and structured approach. There is a need to offer consistent leadership to emphasize the marketing of the city as a top most tourist spot to acquire optimum sustainable economic outputs to the stakeholders, community and the country. The three recommendations are as follows:

- I. Develop the reputation of the Gold Coast for offering quality service and product paradigms, through market development initiatives like domestic and international service offering, commercial practices, crisis management and digital ready. There should be an implementation of climate and sustainability change initiative program for the aim to develop Gold Coast as the leading tourism spot in the future as well.
- II. Promoting stronger associations and integration throughout all the levels of state to assure tourism requirements are met in statutory, policy, processes, plans and infrastructure excellence.
- III. There is also a need to motivate leadership within the private sector to nurture development and progress, innovation, quality as well as sustainable tourism trade through the Gold Coast and supporting the importance of tourism.

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