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BUILDING BRAND EQUITY FOR THE
UDZUNGWA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

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ABSTRACT

The Udzungwa Mountains National Park (UMNP) in the Eastern Arc Mountains in Tanzania is currently experiencing challenges in tourism. When compared to the other national parks in Tanzania, UMNP has a very low number of visitors with an abnormally short visitation period. After personally visiting this phenomenal park, I am certain that the only reason tourism revenue is so low is because of poor marketing. To promote ecotourism and to extend the visitation period at UMNP, I am building a brand for the park using Keller's Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity as a strategic framework. After carefully building a brand, I intend to communicate and distribute this brand image using social media to spread awareness and link potential tourists to a newly designed website. Hopefully, the revenue generated from this marketing plan will empower the local people while preserving the Udzungwa Mountains National Park's resources.

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Chapter 1

Introduction of the Problem: Low Tourism Numbers

The Udzungwa Mountains National Park, located in the Eastern Arc Mountains in Tanzania is currently experiencing challenges in tourism. (See Appendix A for maps of Tanzania and of the park). When compared to the other national parks in Tanzania, UMNP has a very low number of visitors with an abnormally short visitation period. According to the Udzungwa Mountains National Park visitor statistics, 3,693 people visited the park in 2009 for an average of 1.08 days each (UMNP Visitor Statistics). Compare these tourism numbers to those reported by the Tanzania Department of Recreation for the Serengeti, Tanzania's most frequently visited national park: 318,419 visitors in 2000 with a steady increase since that time with an average stay of 17 days per visitor (Eagles and Wade). After personally visiting the phenomenal Udzungwa Mountains National Park, I am certain that the biggest contributing factor to low tourism revenue is poor marketing. The Udzungwa Mountains National Park faces challenges with promotion and advertising to the global tourism market due to the limited resources allocated to this specific park by the Tanzania National Parks Association (TANAPA); therefore, it is never an option in the consumer's consideration set during the decision making process. To promote more ecotourism and to extend the visitation period at UMNP, a stronger awareness of the park and its brand must be developed.

One major reason consumers instantly think of the Serengeti National Park and Mt. Kilimanjaro is their enormous brand power, which can in part be attributed to the

large marketing budget allocated to these sites by TANAPA. To promote tourism and to extend the visitation period at the Udzungwa Mountains National Park, brand equity must be built for this park. However, it is imperative that this plan stress *ecotourism* for conservation purposes. The park and the surrounding area do not have the capacity to support the same number of tourists as the largest parks such as the Serengeti, and its flora and fauna are both rare and fragile. Conservation in this park is of the utmost importance and therefore acts as somewhat of a boundary constraint for the acceptable level of ecotourism. Nevertheless, a conservative increase in ecotourism would positively serve the park and the people in the surrounding communities by generating revenues. One way to achieve brand power and therefore increase ecotourism is by using Keller's strategic framework for Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity.

Chapter 2

Product Description

Before building the brand, one must first understand the product. In this particular case, a consumer product is replaced by a physical location, a destination. Although Keller's writings are intended for consumer goods, his research is general enough that it can be reinterpreted and used in this new sense. Although words could never do justice to this place nor the impact it has on those who visit it, a product description with context is necessary to begin to understand the potential brand power it holds.

Historical Background

The Udzungwa Mountains National Park is situated in an ancient region dating back millions of years. Considered the "cradle of humanity" due to its prehistoric past, this region of Africa is known for its sacred mountains, cave dwellings, archeological digs, slave trade sites, and even colonization. These types of attractions would intrigue historians across the world and should therefore have a focus in the marketing materials.

A few intriguing sites that could easily draw tourists are the Mwanalueve and Magombelema salt caves, found in the western side of the park, which were used as a hide-out for over 200 locals at a time during the colonial wars. Tourists can also visit the sacred areas such as Bokela Mountain, Chavemba and Nyumbanitu found in the eastern side of the park. These sites are still used today by the villagers as a place of worship during different times of hardship such as famine, drought and disease.

Additionally, Udzungwa is an alluring location for archeologists and anthropologists with ruins and abandoned villages such as Mbatwa and Mdene found in the northwest region of the park. These settlements show the continued migration of the earliest settlements of people and their way of life. There is so much marketable history within the park boundaries that could attract tourists with the right promotional strategy (Tesha).

Biodiversity

According to Honey's Ecotourism and Sustainable Development, "Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world. But it is arguably the richest in wildlife" (Honey 18). With fourteen national parks, twenty five game reserves, marine parks, and wildlife management areas, nearly 40% of the country is under some type of protected status (Nahonyo, Kissaka, Mtui).

Arguably the most biodiverse region within Tanzania is the Eastern Arc Mountains, which house a beautiful, serene 770 square miles of protected land known as the Udzungwa Mountains National Park. This ancient rain forest, formed over 200 million years ago, is characterized by enormous, lush green mountains, impressive waterfalls, and one of a kind biodiversity. This region of Tanzania covers less than 2% of the country's area but holds 30-40% of its plants and mammal species (Udzungwa). The park provides a sanctuary for many unique plants, mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and butterflies species. In fact, Conservation International has named this region one of

thirty-four “Global Hotspots” or biologically unique places in reference to flora and fauna. The Udzungwa Mountains National Park has over 2,500 species of plants and is the only park in Tanzania with a closed, unbroken rain forest canopy (Udzungwa).

In addition, the huge variety of animal life consists of 250 species of birds; 2,500 species of plants; twelve total species and five endemic species of primates; 250 species of rare butterflies; a variety of reptiles such as mambas, addlers, cobras, and pythons; and even some mega fauna such as leopards and elephants that reside in these mountains (Udzungwa). The most notable of these from a tourism perspective is the birds. Avid birders will travel the world to catch a glimpse of a rare species. The birding opportunities at this park have a huge pull with tourists and should therefore be heavily emphasized in the website and social network outlets. Refer to Appendix B for photographs of some of the unique animals found in this park.

The Land and its People

Not only is the land rich with history, it is also incredibly fertile agricultural land. The Ruaha River Valley runs through the park and is known as one of the most fertile agricultural regions in the country (Nahonyo, Kissaka, Mtui). As a result, Tanzanians flock to this southern region from all various parts of the country in hopes of having a prolific *shamba* or variety garden from which to derive profits and feed their families. The water here runs from the highest waterfall in the Tanzanian National Park system, Sanje Falls, and is therefore not contaminated by most diseases or chemicals from commercial agriculture (Udzungwa). The people that live in this Ruaha River Valley are

some of the happiest and healthiest in the country due to the constant fresh, clean water supply and the abundant crops that grow in nearly every backyard. A healthy, happy community makes for a safe tourism location. Crime is nearly nonexistent, and the people are the most welcoming individuals anyone can hope to meet. A tourist from a developed country can visit this park and the communities situated in the valley with certainty that he or she can eat and lodge safely and relax in a place of political and social stability. Refer to Appendix C to see visuals of the local children interacting with tourists.

Chapter 3

Segmenting the Market

Clearly, this park and its surrounding communities are a beautifully unique piece of land carved out of Tanzania rich with biodiversity, history, agriculture, and welcoming locals. An incredible product makes the job of a marketer very simple. First, a choice needs to be made regarding which segment of the market to target. This park is unique in so many ways and can therefore draw upon a heterogeneous population.

Scientific and Sociological Researchers

The first population that should be considered is academic groups such as scientists and sociologists. The park is a common research site for post graduate biology and animal studies students, so scientists are one obvious choice. In fact, a research facility known as the Udzungwa Ecological Monitoring Center and dormitory was donated and built on the border of the park in February 2010 by the Trento Museum of Italy (Trento). As previously mentioned, archeologists and anthropologists would also find this region of Tanzania fascinating. The history, visible in the remaining artifacts, could draw groups of researchers or even vacationers. The Udzungwa Mountains National Park is rich with endemic species and a vast variety of plants, animals, and historical artifacts. Whether the visit is intended for business or pleasure, any avid environmental, animal, or social scientist would be fascinated by this park.

While visiting this park, I met many researchers from various countries such as the United States, England, Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy, France, and even other regions of Tanzania. They were all very interested in the biodiversity found within the park boundaries. So much research can be performed in this area; however, many academics are unaware of its existence. As this park's brand is built, it is important to include this academic segment by advertising all of the research possibilities available to them.

Tourists

Apart from the academic segment, a variety of tourists would be an ideal demographic from which to draw. Fitness and outdoor enthusiasts are one type of tourist and are an appropriate consumer choice. Unlike other national parks in Tanzania such as the Serengeti, roads and lodges have not and will not be built through the Udzungwa Mountains National Park out of respect for conservation. As the name suggests, this park exists in a mountain range and is therefore made up of very steep paths. The only way to experience this park is by foot. Hikes range anywhere from one to forty miles depending on the visitor's preference. Guided tours are optional, and the longer trails require the hiker to carry his own camping equipment, food, and water (Udzungwa). Even the most extreme outdoorsmen and athletes would face challenges in the more difficult sections. Any camping, backpacking, hiking, mountain biking, boating, and nature enthusiasts would find beauty and adventure in this park.

The Udzungwa Mountains National Park is perhaps not as frequently visited because it does not have as many mega fauna as others parks, so a safari in the traditional sense of driving in an open air vehicle spotting giraffes, lions, and elephants is not possible here. Although leopards and elephants are found in this park, they are less frequently spotted and without the assurance of four wheels to carry the tourist to safety. However, a different type of animal watcher and tourist is perfectly suited to this environment: bird watchers. Tanzania is already renowned for its bird watching sites, but this park in particular is a must-see location where it is possible to find hundreds of types of rare birds. Bird watchers are known for their life lists, checklists of birds that a watcher spots in his lifetime, and many of the rarest species are found right in the Udzungwa Mountains National Park (Udzungwa). Appealing to the bird watching crowd is an excellent strategy because this segment will travel great distances to capture a photo or even a glimpse of a rare bird.

Ecotourism: The Unifying Factor

Due to the nature of the park and all that it offers, it is logical to target the biologists and animal scientists, archeologists, anthropologists, fitness and outdoor enthusiasts, and bird watchers. At first glance, this market segment may seem much too broad and too heterogeneous for a unified marketing plan; however, there is one underlying theme amongst these groups: ecotourism. Ecotourism, according to Martha Honey's Ecotourism and Sustainable Development, is defined as “responsible travel to

natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.” Honey further explains, “Real ecotourism...is more than travel to enjoy or appreciate nature. It also includes minimization of environmental and cultural consequences, contributions to conservation and community projects in developing countries, and environmental education and political consciousness-raising, such as the establishment of codes of conduct for travelers” (Honey 18). Simply put, each of the market segments I have chosen to target are educated, concerned with nature, and have respect for the local people and their property.

Only attracting ecotourists to abide by the conservation goals of the park could seem like a boundary constraint. However, this park calls for a niche market. This “green movement” and environmentally responsible attitude that seems to have swept the nation, and even the globe, is particularly popular with a young, vibrant generation of idealists and big picture thinkers who hope to conserve both their bank accounts and the world in which they live. The Udzungwa Mountains National Park is the perfect fit for a member of this group.

Although the airfare is expensive, the rest of the trip expenses are minimal, especially with the current exchange rate of 1 dollar = 1,518 Tanzanian Shillings (Exchange Rates). To put this exchange rate into perspective, all locals live on less than \$1 per day. A tourist can buy a meal at an “expensive” restaurant for less than \$5, and he could eat from street vendors for an entire day for roughly the same amount. Transportation for an entire day would amount to less than \$10 for a van of people. Quality souvenirs such as tapestries, carvings, paintings and the like can be bargained for at low prices ranging anywhere from \$3-\$20. In short, the dollar goes a long way in this

developing country. Furthermore, spending time at this park and in the surrounding communities shows a person who is interested in green living that it is possible to live both simply and happily.

Chapter 4

Building the Brand Using Keller's Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity as a Framework

Now that the “product” or in our case, place, as well as the “customers” or tourists have been clearly defined, we have the necessary tools to build brand equity. According to Keller, customer-based brand equity is defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand (consumer perceptions, preferences, and behavior arising from marketing activity). By building this brand equity, consumers who were never aware of the Udzungwa Mountains National Park's existence nor its splendor can then make more informed purchasing decisions when planning a trip for both pleasure and research. In time, the consumer will come to hold *favorable, strong, and unique* brand associations with this destination. Ultimately, the goal of strengthening brand equity is to encourage a more favorable consumer response and therefore enhanced revenue.

While in Tanzania, I met with members of the Tanzania National Park Association (TANAPA) and a woman from the tourism office at the Udzungwa Mountains National Park. These meetings had two important takeaways: confirmation that both parties wish to increase ecotourism and the obstacles associated with implementing new marketing efforts in pursuit of this common goal. The Udzungwa Mountains National Park's tourism office expressed concern about the low rates of tourism numbers as compared to the other national parks in Tanzania. Because they cannot draw the same level of revenue as the other parks, they do not receive funding from TANAPA for resources such as travel agents, web development, and print materials

such as brochures, maps, etc. Therefore, this park's marketing materials are weak in comparison to those of the other parks, which explains tourists' lack of awareness. As an outsider, implementing any of the aforementioned materials within TANAPA is virtually impossible due to the political structure and hierarchy of the organization. I have therefore decided to analyze the park's brand potential using Keller's research and then create my own marketing materials for the park – an undertaking the park's tourism office strongly supports. The materials could be designed and implemented as an independent contribution to the Udzungwa Mountains National Park and have no association with TANAPA.

In the case of the Udzungwa Mountains National Park, we have a thorough understanding of the product and the target consumers. Now, we will examine the current state of the park's marketing efforts and how they can be improved with brand awareness and brand image, the building blocks of brand knowledge and, ultimately, brand equity.

Current Marketing Efforts and New Directions

Currently, the only effort the park is making to connect with the outside world is a very basic website with weak descriptions and explanations of what the traveler can expect. Additionally, there are no links on other sites that direct the consumer back to the park site, which is one function of social media. Therefore, unless the consumer is aware of this park from word of mouth or another source, he would never know to search for its website. Once a potential tourist does arrive at the site, there is not enough eye catching

material on this plain page to keep him there for any length of time. Pictures are few, and the English is at times incorrect. It is likely that a young web savvy tourist would instantly become bored and develop negative associations towards the park upon visiting this basic website. The website does contain helpful information for the scientific market segment regarding biodiversity; however, it does not delve into the experiential aspect – the park’s most marketable attribute. Finally, the website does not provide personal testimonies or travel logistics, two necessary elements should a traveler actually want to book a trip to this destination.

Now that it has been established that the current marketing efforts are insufficient to create brand knowledge, it is the marketer’s job to discover new ways to spread the park’s name and create positive associations. Scientists and ecotourists must be made aware of the park to even begin to search for this website. Therefore, this marketing plan is aimed at reaching out to these groups using social media to create a “buzz” about this destination and then to direct them to a much improved website that offers a greater explanation of park experiences and logistical travel information.

The task of achieving familiarity with and knowledge of this park is paramount in a remote, little known location. If the consumer does not feel that this location is such a foreign, unknown option, he is more likely to choose it. Brand knowledge can be achieved by addressing the issue in two parts: brand awareness (in terms of brand recognition) and the brand image in the consumer’s memory.

Brand Knowledge

Keller defines a brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Keller 2). Brand knowledge refers to the brand as it exists in the consumer’s mind. The more strongly a person’s knowledge of this park is associated with other positive feelings towards travel and life in general, the more likely he is to choose this destination at the point of purchase. It is the marketer’s job to build these cognitive connections in the minds of the consumer and make him feel as familiar and comfortable with this exotic destination as possible. Therefore, the best marketing strategy is one that allows the consumer to experience or be exposed to the brand to increase favorability and awareness. This connection can be forged by integrating brand identities into a supporting marketing program. Once the brand is solidified, marketing materials must be created and distributed. The following sections discuss Keller’s underlying strategy, creation, and distribution of marketing materials that result in stronger brand equity.

Spreading Park Awareness Online

The first component of brand knowledge is brand awareness or the strength of the brand in memory and the consumer’s ability to identify the brand under different conditions. Can the consumer recognize the park’s name when involved in a search for a tropical destination? Will the consumer instantly think of the Udzungwa Mountains National Park when he is involved in a search for an ecotourism vacation or an

environmental research location? Currently, the answer is more often no than yes. By enhancing the way in which information about this location is disseminated, more ecotourists will not only be made aware of the Udzungwa Mountains National Park, they will have a much stronger and favorable cognitive presence. Only then can this park become part of the consumer's consideration set when selecting a vacation or research location.

Availability, ease, and frequency of exposure to information about the park are the key components to making a person aware and familiar. How can a tourism office with virtually no budget promote a park on a global scale? The answer is social media. In today's technological age, the young, educated, outdoor enthusiasts we hope to attract receive their information from the internet. They spend hours online every day visiting websites, reading blogs, and posting and viewing photos on social media sites. For absolutely no cost, the Udzungwa Mountains National Park could reach its target market from a remote location and make the consumers feel favorable and familiar associations with the park.

I recommend employing sites such as Facebook, StumbleUpon, Twitter, and category specific blogs as an excellent way to spread the Udzungwa name to gain some brand knowledge and eventually link consumers back to a new and improved website.

Facebook is a social network that allows people to meet, reunite, or stay in touch with friends. It allows the user to create a profile, which has a specific place for interests. People with common interests can then create an online Facebook group or forum to which they can post messages, photos, and news updates. A person who does not already belong to a Facebook group can search for a group that promotes his common interests. I

propose the creation of an Udzungwa Mountains National Park Facebook group that includes photos of the park, personal testimonies from people like me who have visited the park, and key words such as ecotourism, Africa, Tanzania, hiking, and backpacking for search purposes. See Appendix E for an example of a Facebook group.

StumbleUpon is a social media outlet that allows its users to experience websites, videos, and photos from friends or people sharing common interests. A user creates an account on StumbleUpon and chooses from a list of interests. Then, StumbleUpon recommends websites for the user to discover. In this case, the scientific users would select words such as biodiversity, conservation, rain forest, or primates, while ecotourists would select words such as ecotourism, backpacking, green travel, Tanzania, waterfalls in Africa, among others. Udzungwa could sign up for an account on StumbleUpon and have its webpage suggested to these users. This system is perfect for this park because it offers many opportunities for people with specific interests who are currently unaware of this specific place.

Twitter, yet another social media outlet, is an easy way to send short messages of 140 characters or fewer to the public. The Udzungwa Mountains National Park has the ability to create a Twitter account and send brief messages and updates about the park. For example, scientists may be interested if a new species of primate is discovered or if an extraordinary amount of rainfall occurs. The park can “tweet” or post these updates to the public. The park can also “tweet” messages about a particularly beautiful hike or an upcoming festival in the village for ecotourists. Tweets are simply news blurbs that help spread the name Udzungwa Mountains National Park to the public frequently enough that

people become more familiar with it. Additionally, the park could tweet links to their website to route travelers to a place with more information.

The last social media outlet I will suggest is blogs or web logs for people with interests specific to the market segmentation. The birding market segment is especially populated with bloggers or groups of people who share their experiences and advice on where to view the best birds. Because Tanzania is so well known for its rare birds, and this park offers many of these birds, it is wise to advertise Udzungwa on blogs such as fatbirder.com and surfbirder.com. These blogs are forums where serious birders provide testimonies of their experiences in Tanzania. I would recommend that the Udzungwa Mountains National Park tourism office consistently post messages as if it were posted by an actual birder about all of the fascinating birds they have witnessed in this park.

Eventually, after using all of these social media outlets to make the consumer more aware of the Udzungwa Mountains National Park, he will then be linked to the improved website to learn more about the park, what it stands for, what it offers, and how to plan a visit. These elements will work together to create a young, internet savvy, and familiar park image.

Park Image

Keller states that brand awareness and brand image are the two components that work together to create brand knowledge. More specifically, brand image is defined as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in the consumer's mind (Keller 3). While awareness deals with the establishment of a brand node in

memory, image influences the nature of the relationship a consumer has with a product. The health of the brand depends of the awareness and the nature of the image consumers hold in their minds with regards to a particular product or this particular park. To create positive, strong brand equity for the park, ecotourists must feel that the Udzungwa Mountains National Park is both favorable and unique, two qualities that must be emphasized with specific attributes throughout the website and other brand deliverables.

Keeping this advice in mind, I have designed a much improved website for the Udzungwa Mountains National Park. As the market segmentation suggests, the ideal consumer is a young, adventurous academic or ecotourist. This demographic obtains its information and evaluates decisions using web-based information. Seeing this park appear in various social media outlets will instantly catch this demographic's attention. Then, once they actually reach the visually appealing, user friendly, informative website, the park will earn credibility and ultimately create a strong, favorable, and unique park image in the consumer's mind. Two components that clearly demonstrate exactly how this park is both favorable and unique to an ecotourist are attributes, descriptive features that characterize a product or service, and benefits, personal value consumers attach to the product.

See Appendix D for screen shots of the current website and Appendices F and G for screen shots of the newly improved design I have created. Note that it includes both scientific and ecotourism attributes to appeal to both market segments.

Attributes

The website and all other marketing materials should showcase the attributes the park offers. Keller separates attributes into two categories: product related, which are more tangible, and non-product related, which are more experiential. As previously mentioned, this marketing plan has a two pronged market segmentation directed at academics and ecotourists. It is logical to sort the two types of attributes into the two types of market segmentations. Scientists are largely concerned with product related attributes such as flora, fauna, historical artifacts, and the like. Ecotourists are of course still impressed by the tangible attributes of the park; however, they place more importance on the experience and the hedonic benefits associated with traveling to a developing country.

The strongest product related attributes of the park are undoubtedly its natural wonders. These attributes should be featured in the more scientific marketing materials, and include animals and their natural habitats, variety of plant species, the waterfalls and the life they support, medicinal plants, agriculture, and archeological sites. Each of these natural, product related attributes is unique and therefore attractive from a research standpoint. If the park can convince scientists there is a level of biodiversity and social history that is unavailable in its competition, then it can capture a larger group of academic visitors.

Ecotourists search for experiential benefits. They seek hedonic benefits - a feel good, once in a lifetime experience. The ecotourism marketing materials should be peppered with testimonies from past travelers and descriptions of these types of

experiences. Some examples include the opportunity to swim in the base of Sanje falls, which is the highest waterfall in the Tanzania National Park system, hike to the top, set up camp under the Milky Way, and awake in the early morning to a religious sunrise overlooking the entire Ruaha River Valley. Additionally, the cost of this invaluable lifetime experience is a mere \$20. A traveler can also sit just feet from a baboon mothering her babies at the park entrance for no charge. The experiences, the memories, and the sights are impossible to replicate because they occur naturally in this truly magical place. Ecotourists will recognize this park as favorable and unique if these points and other similar personal testimonies about once in a lifetime experiences in the Udzungwa Mountains National Park are emphasized on websites, social media outlets, and other publications.

Benefits

Every consumer wants to know about the personal benefits of the product he is about to consume. In this case, the benefits for both the academics and the ecotourists are the personal satisfaction and the life changing perspective that are inspired by this place. At first, one is overwhelmed by culture shock; however, if a tourist can be swayed to spend an extended vacation in this location, the benefits reveal themselves in the local way of life and all that the visitor can learn from it. The simplicity of this region of Tanzania is so foreign to a tourist from a developed country. There are no high rises, and there is no place to buy chocolate within a two hour radius. Bars more closely represent

back yards, and homes, businesses, and playgrounds are indiscernible as they often occur simultaneously in the dusty streets of the villages. In fact, societal order and government may seem inexistent from an outsider's perspective, and that can be frustrating to a person who is accustomed to convenience and clarity. However, once a person spends enough time to understand the Tanzanian way of life, he learns the benefits of something that can only be learned through personal experience: simplicity.

Tanzanians are in fact very organized and comfortable with their socioeconomic systems. They eat out of their backyards instead of piling the family into an SUV and driving to the local grocery store. All of the village children play together in the paths and forests around town rather than in designated play areas. And their businesses, be it a factory, a service, or a transportation rental site, occur on the sides of the road.

Happiness follows this simplicity, and a visitor from another corner of the world is elated once he feels that he can become a part of it all. This feeling, this personal discovery, is the greatest benefit a traveler could hope to achieve from a trip. It is so important to emphasize the personal satisfaction one finds from the Udzungwa Mountains National Park in all publications that are related to and distributed on behalf of the park to build this benefit into the brand image.

Customer-based brand equity is a combination of the aforementioned elements: brand knowledge, awareness, image, and attitudes. It is essential that the Udzungwa Mountains National Park take each of these into account equally when developing a brand to gain market share in the academic and ecotourism markets. However, once a brand strategy has been developed, it is only effective if it is widely viewed by the target market. Promotion of this brand in the proper forums is essential, for without widespread

awareness, the efforts required to build the brand are wasted. For these reasons, the marketer should focus on product related attributes, non-product related attributes, and these benefits throughout the website and the related social media campaigns.

Chapter 5

Including and Improving the Local Communities through Branding Efforts

Ecotourism has been a consistent theme throughout this branding strategy. Now revisit Martha Honey's definition to be certain that we are staying consistent with this philosophy: "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people" (Honey 18). Conservation of the environment has been discussed; however, improving the well-being of local people is equally important, particularly when considering the plight of these people.

The local villages are extremely dependent on the park's forest resources due to limited alternative sources of income. According to Dr. Hassan at The Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania, deforestation has become a huge problem in Tanzania with the destruction of over 70% of original forest cover in the Eastern Arc Mountains (Hassan). Promoting and encouraging cultural awareness and ecotourism for both the park and the local communities will help to generate an alternative form of revenue. By incorporating local attractions outside of the park boundaries, this marketing plan could alleviate pressures on the park's resources brought about by commercial agriculture, poaching, construction, firewood collection, and other forms of park encroachment in the area. Increasing tourism in a sustainable manner is a way of providing economic stability to the people in the local communities. Ecotourism has the potential to build a mutual level of respect between the Udzungwa Mountains National Park and the surrounding communities.

A website that clearly outlines travel logistics, accommodations, food, and attractions will give tourists piece of mind about traveling to such a foreign place. The website and social media entries should include reviews of hard to find local hotspots in the communities. Now only will these local attractions provide an authentic experience for the tourist, they will also reduce the local communities' reliance on the park's resources by way of a steady influx of revenue to the region. The website would increase awareness about the area and in turn lead to tourists visiting not just for the park, but to also experience the local way of life. Through this form of ecotourism the indigenous people would be able to rely on other forms of income such as guest houses, selling of souvenirs and entertaining tourists, and less upon activities that are detrimental to the park such as agriculture. With this increase in income they would also be able to purchase other forms of alternative energy sources such as fuel efficient cookers which will eventually discontinue collection of deadwood from within the park.

Chapter 6

Project Implications

Bringing many tourists to this region of Tanzania clearly has its benefits; however, a balance must be maintained. If too many people visit this secluded, serene paradise, its appeal will be lost. Unfortunately, even people with the best intentions damage the environment. Something as simple as a footpath through a forest disturbs the natural habitats that contribute to the park's biodiversity, one of its most unique attributes. In fact, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, an organization designed to safeguard the world's most threatened regions in developing countries, classifies the Eastern Arc Mountains in Tanzania as the most likely hot spot to suffer from plant and vertebrate extinction (Critical). Furthermore, the Udzungwa Mountains National Park is the most diverse section of the Eastern Arc Mountains (Trento).

This park's greatest threat has been a steady increase in population. Attracting even more people could potentially result in further ecological damage. However, the aim of this marketing plan is to encourage *ecotourism*. Through careful explanation of the situation to the general public and promotion of eco-friendly activities, appropriate marketing materials will only attract those who show interest in protecting this hot spot. These marketing efforts will draw upon travelers who are conscientious of their own footprint.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Importance and Impact

A marketer who is building a branding strategy requires a broad view of the situation, its environment, and the stakeholders. In the case of the Udzungwa Mountains National Park, the “product” is very sensitive. The natural environment and its inhabitants are truly one of a kind, and the people depend heavily on the land surrounding the park for survival. Furthermore, the local people go without many of their daily needs from new clothes and soccer balls to healthcare and education. In fact, many children cannot attend school simply because their families cannot afford new uniforms, a requirement to start school every year. Soccer games are played with trash bags tied tightly together with string, and virtually no one wears shoes. Although the Ruaha Valley is fertile agricultural land, much of that land is taken by commercial sugar cane companies who offer these people prices they cannot refuse. With the right implementation, this marketing plan could change all of that.

The park is an amazing feature that has the ability to draw the right kind of tourists from all over the world. Furthermore, this park has the ability to bring revenue to the local communities, to stimulate the economies, and to give people a choice to keep their own land and earn money in other ways. If implemented carefully and with a great deal of sensitivity to local culture, this marketing plan could draw money that could be used to employ a local doctor or cover the cost of school uniforms. In time, promoting

ecotourism to this park could increase the local budget, a necessity for supporting conservation efforts and improving the locals' quality of life.

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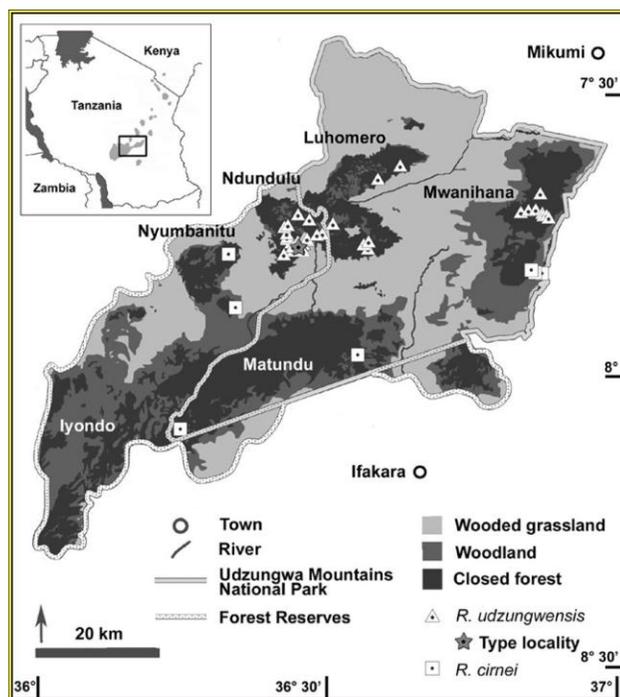
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Appendix A

Maps



Map of UMNP courtesy of the park tourism office



Map of Tanzania with park location in red box.

Infoplease.com

Appendix B

Biodiversity



Sanje Mangabey, an endemic species to UMNP
Photo courtesy of Francesco Rovero



Horned snake found in UMNP
Photo courtesy of Francesco Rovero

Appendix C
Welcoming Locals



Photos courtesy of Abigail Thomas and Rachel Tsupros



Appendix D

Screen Shot of Current Park Website

Udzungwa Mountains National Park - Windows Internet Explorer
 http://www.udzungwa.org/

Udzungwa Mountains National Park

Udzungwa Mountains National Park
 Experience rainforest adventure - Endemic birds and primates - Magnificent waterfalls

Udzungwa Mountains National Park
 Experience rainforest adventure - Endemic birds and primates - Magnificent waterfalls

Home
 Flora & Fauna
 Routes & Camps
 Park fees
 Getting there
 Contact the Park
 Tanzania Parks

On these pages you will find Park information, how to get to the park and what adventures you expect.

Udzungwa Mountains National Park is one of Tanzania's most outstanding, pristine, paradise and unique exciting wilderness mountains forested with greatest altitudinal range of forest. It is one of thirty-four "World Biodiversity Hotspot" and one of 200 WWF Ecoregion of global critical importance.

The park is home of primate and known from the treasure of high biodiversity of plants and animals. The park has high density of endemism species with some plants and animals that are only found in these mountains nowhere else in the world can be found hence center for endemism in the eastern arc mountains.

Udzungwa Mountains National Park is part of the Eastern Arc Mountains, which is a series of mountains ranging from Taita Hills in Southern Kenya to the Makambako Gap in Southern central of Tanzania.

The mountain range sometimes is termed as "The Galapagos Islands of Africa" Galapagos Islands found in southern America has unique plants and animals. The eastern Arc Mountains are small and fragmented mountains each block having a patch of remaining dance tropical rain forests with high rainfall which seems as Islands in the sea of arid savannah vegetation.

The Eastern arc ancient crystalline mountains were formed more than 200 million years ago. Geological changes caused the rising of the central plateau, now the Tanzania/Kenya Highlands, and the formation of the Rift valley.

Eastern Arc Mountains have species concentrations of unique flora and fauna in the world, in addition it contains 30-40 percent of Tanzania plants and animals. Humidity in the air from the Indian Ocean is forced, by the sudden change of altitude, to precipitate as rain in the mountains. Since the prevailing wind comes from east, the mountain range constantly receives rain.

Location and size
 The Udzungwa Mountains National Park with it's area of 1990 sq. km is part of unique Eastern Arc Mountains, which cover about 10,000 square kilometers. The park is centered on 30 41' E and 70 48' S in the Iringa and Morogoro regions of south central Tanzania.

Internet | Protected Mode: On
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 11/8/2010

Appendix E

Screen Shot of Facebook Group

Search

 **Udzungwa Mountains National Park** 
Closed Group

Share:  **Post**  **Link**  **Photo**  **Video**  **Event**  **Doc**

 **Rachel Tsupros** 



 7 hours ago · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Unsubscribe](#)

 **Rachel Tsupros** 



 7 hours ago · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Unsubscribe](#)

 **Rachel Tsupros** 

This place is incredible! Follow the website link to learn more about the modern day Garden of Eden...www.udzungwa.com

7 hours ago · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Unsubscribe](#)

Appendix F

New Website Homepage

UDZUNGWA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS • TAKE ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS

HOME

ABOUT THE PARK

PARK ATTRACTIONS
AND FEES

HISTORICAL SITES

BIODIVERSITY

HUMAN-WILDLIFE
CONFLICT

EXPERIENCE THE
VILLAGE

ACCESSIBILITY

ACCOMMODATIONS

“KEY” SWAHILI

VIDEO VAULT

DONATIONS

CONTACT US



Appendix G
New Website Pages



EXPERIENCE THE VILLAGE



FOOD



ENTERTAINMENT



AGRICULTURE



LOCAL PEOPLE

BACK TO HOME

FOOD

The villages surrounding the UMNP host a number of markets that offer a diverse array of foods native to the area. The outdoor markets are typically set up in a semi-enclosed area out in the streets of the village. Some of the most common food items sold at the local markets include bananas, oranges, papaya, eggplant, albino eggplant, okra, potatoes, cabbage, kale, peppers, beans, lentils and dried fish. Purchase some of these raw ingredients if you're interested in trying your own cooking. There are also a number of ready-to-eat foods such as fried bananas, sugar cane and deep-fried catfish.

You'll also want to try some of the local bars and restaurants in Mang'ula and Mwaya. We highly recommend a meal at the Mountain Peak Inn in Mwaya for traditional fare and a Tanzanian beer such as Serengeti or Safari Lager. Other local drinks sold in the bars and made right in the villages include a banana beer referred to as mbege among the villagers, raha; a banana based wine, pombe; a maize brew carbonated drink made in barrels in the villages over an open flame for three days, ulanzi; wine filtered through the stalk of a bamboo plant and mnazi; coconut water left to ferment overnight. A short walk down the streets of these villages will reveal many of the best kept roadside secrets of home cooking by welcoming villagers - just follow your nose.

Photo Courtesy of Abigail Thomas



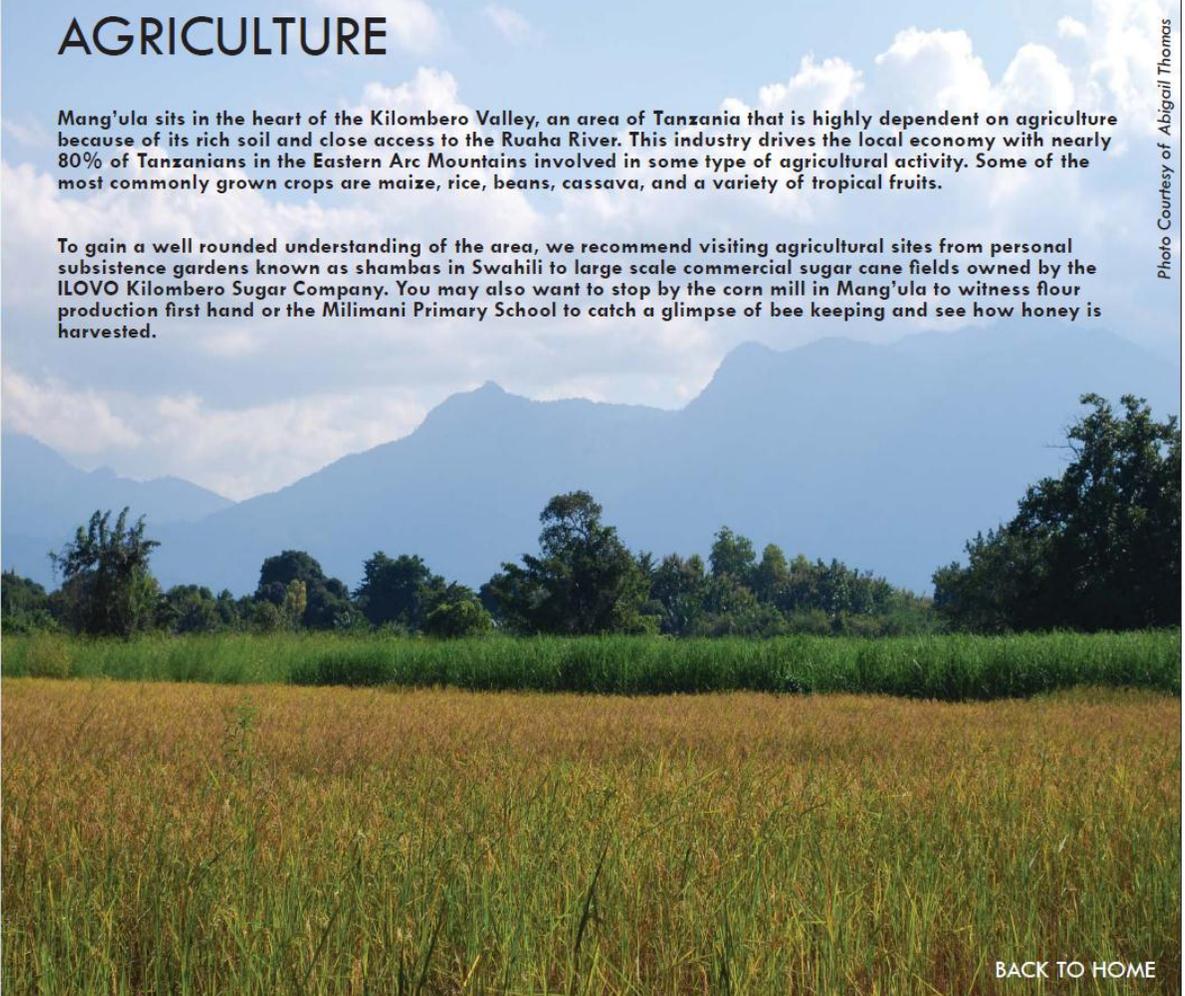
BACK TO HOME

AGRICULTURE

Mang'ula sits in the heart of the Kilombero Valley, an area of Tanzania that is highly dependent on agriculture because of its rich soil and close access to the Ruaha River. This industry drives the local economy with nearly 80% of Tanzanians in the Eastern Arc Mountains involved in some type of agricultural activity. Some of the most commonly grown crops are maize, rice, beans, cassava, and a variety of tropical fruits.

To gain a well rounded understanding of the area, we recommend visiting agricultural sites from personal subsistence gardens known as shambas in Swahili to large scale commercial sugar cane fields owned by the ILOVO Kilombero Sugar Company. You may also want to stop by the corn mill in Mang'ula to witness flour production first hand or the Milimani Primary School to catch a glimpse of bee keeping and see how honey is harvested.

Photo Courtesy of Abigail Thomas



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ENTERTAINMENT



Watch traditional African drummers and dancers perform at the Hondo Hondo camp roughly 2 km east of the park office. This camp site is great for both overnight camping and nightly entertainment with local drumming and dancing. You'll also want to visit the local curio shop in Mang'ula for wood carvings. These ornamental statues have cultural roots in fertility, religion, and celebration.

Schedule your trip over World Environmental Day in early June if you're able! This national holiday is widely celebrated in Tanzania and particularly in Mang'ula because of the conservation activity brought about by the park. In 2010, eleven of the surrounding primary schools came together in Mang'ula to perform original songs, dances, skits, and poems that promoted conservation of the park. Be warned that you'll be expected to take part in the dancing after the show!

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LOCAL PEOPLE

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
 Although the area is full of local gems, expect a stark contrast to the Western way of life. There are a distinct set of cultural differences. In many areas you may not find the amenities that you are accustomed to such as clean drinking water, reliable electricity, or air conditioned rooms. However, bottled water is not hard to come across and many hotels are equipped with back-up generators which they run during specific times. Most likely you shall be well received by the community as a whole. The villagers are usually very welcoming of visitors. The little children particularly show great enthusiasm towards tourists often times shouting out greetings and waving.

VILLAGE SOUVENIRS
 Buy a kanga from a shop owner or a seamstress. Kanga is the proper name for the brightly colored fabric you'll notice the women in Tanzania wearing. Often you'll find sayings, political affiliation, puns, or social commentaries printed along the fabric edges. After you purchase your fabric you may want to take it to a local seamstress who will sew a number of custom made clothing items for only a small fee.

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