

Terrorism and Tourism:
Taking Tourist Oriented Policing to a New Level

Article

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Introduction

Travel is as old as humankind. Ancient people not only traveled for survival, but also charted their courses in anticipation of discovery, trade, wealth and conquest. Through travel, people have gained a better understanding of their own culture and those of other people. Tourism in its highest form is a quest to fulfill dreams. It is an information-gathering process; it has the ability to inform and instruct--to teach about the civilization to which one belongs and about other civilizations that share this planet.

The tourism industry goes go back more than 2,000 years. Rome was a big empire, and its people were literate and knowledgeable. Travelers were eager to see the great historic sites and the great conquerors. Traveling was slow, by foot, horse, or ship, with sailing was limited to mid-March through mid-November. Vacation villas even appeared during this time, around 200 A.D., on the bay of Naples. The resorts were reserved for the most privileged, with amenities such as glassed-in baths, ball courts, fancy fountains, heated swimming pools and spectacular fishponds. Most of those features are offered today in modern resorts.¹

By the 13th and 14th centuries pilgrimages were a mass phenomenon, practicable and systematized, served by a growing industry of networks of charitable hospices and mass-produced indulgence handbooks. Popular destinations were Rome and the Holy Land. By the 15th century, the tourism industry offered all-in-one packages from Venice or the Holy Land, including passage, meals, inns, donkey rides, and bribes for the infidel. Thousands of Europeans traveled, though preparations were extensive. Everything had to be prearranged, a will set up, and funds raised equal to a year's worth of income. The tours were impressive--featuring distinguished countries,

cultures, food, fauna, and flora--and experienced by people who had seldom left their hometowns before. So the returning travelers had to distribute souvenirs, make social calls, and share their experiences.²

Tourism went on, influenced by lifestyle, and interrupted by war. Then, in the 18th, century upper class English took the popular Grand Tour, with Rome, Naples, Florence, Bologna, Venice, and Genoa as its cultural high spots. Those interested explored darker corners; and the Romantics went to remote and wilder heights.

In the mid-19th century came the inventor of the modern tourist industry, Thomas Cook. Previous travel agents had arranged itineraries to get clients to their destinations. Cook made the travel package the, "destination." Passengers crowded into open carriages to the sound of brass bands. This was the successful start of a decade of charter tours first through England, then Europe.³

Tourism then changed its face rapidly with the development of modern transportation. People made small tours and larger ones not only by railway but also by car, ship, and plane. It was the time of famous achievements and well-known tragedies to remind people that travel was still adventure.

Charles Lindbergh flew nonstop over the Atlantic. The Titanic, the most secure ship of its time, sank on its very first voyage, killing most of the passengers. The Graf zeppelin went up in flames on landing due to sabotage, and killed spectators in addition to nearly all its passengers. World Wars I and II harshly interrupted the growth of tourism, with most people just having survival on their minds.

With the start of the 1960s economic boom, mass tourism began again. Tourism developed steadily, growing 10 percent per year from 1960 until 1974, when it was

worth \$29 billion per year, 6 percent of the total international trade. The boom then set in with the deregulation of air travel. Flights were now affordable for the masses. By 1985 consumer services in the United States accounted for 50 percent of personal consumption expenditures, and tourism accounted for 20 percent, or \$269 billion.⁴

Now, some law enforcement agencies get to do their policing in one of those nice towns where everyone wants to visit. In the post September 11th era of world terrorism, local law enforcement must now consider how to keep visitors coming and how to make them feel safe when they arrive.

Over the past several years, law enforcement all over America has become aware of Community Oriented Policing philosophies and most have a designated COP program in place. But, in the context of supporting community stakeholders, most resort destination communities have yet to develop an enhanced level of COP known as Tourist Oriented Policing. Tourist Oriented Policing is an expansion of the decades old Community Oriented Policing philosophy. Tourist Oriented Policing, (TOP) takes the problem solving strategies of COP and marries it to the varied stakeholders involved in tourism. How law enforcement operates in a resort area can greatly affect travel decisions, theme park and hoteliers, as well as other support businesses, tourists and local jobholders.

Tourist Oriented Policing was first defined by the Miami Metro-Dade Police Department as “a philosophy of policing based on the concept that specially trained police officers, working closely with business leaders, airport authorities, tourism support businesses and private citizens can help prevent or tremendously reduce the

tourism problems related to crime, fear of crime, and the decay of the neighborhoods through which tourists frequently travel.”⁵ For those cities that have had a TOP program in place, the rules of engagement changed dramatically on September 11, 2001.

One of the key objectives of any TOP program is to present an image of safety and security. Studies have shown the safety and security are consistently the primary concerns of tourists throughout the world.⁶ Since the tragic events of September 11th, and the overall spread of global terrorism, law enforcement agencies in resort venues need to reevaluate their TOP strategies. Not only is security a greater threat, terrorism threatens to break the symbiotic relationship between law enforcement and the stakeholders in the hospitality industry.

Greater amounts of money will need to be spent on training deployment and equipment. This will occur during a time when revenue in the resort venue is lagging, placing a greater burden on the police budget.

In an effort to identify the full impact of terrorism on a TOP program, a panel of experts in public safety and the hospitality industry was formed. A nominal group technique was used to identify specific trends and events that might impact a TOP program. Using a formula of importance and probability, the panel ultimately focused on seven significant issues that should be addressed in order to help offset any negative impact.

Technology

Although cutting edge technology can be expensive, it can ultimately reduce the even costlier expense of labor. Technology can provide for early warning and better coordination of effort. It can accomplish things humans simply cannot. One of the primary concerns of the panel was that local law enforcement have access to advanced technologies that are often limited only to the military or federal agencies.

New technology requires that the leader of the organization to always be scanning the environment for items that will help with providing the best possible service. In addition, it would seem plausible, if not preferred, that the many levels of safety and security technology that exists in the tourist venue be connected so that the greatest possible benefit could be realized.

Funding

More than likely, any critical reduction in tourism revenue will result in smaller public safety budgets. This only serves to exacerbate an already stretched staffing issue. Local agencies should work towards identifying permanent sources of public safety funding that is directly collected from and spent towards safety and security in the resort area. This is already occurring in air travel. One of the cornerstones of TOP is high visibility law enforcement. Not only does it contribute to a greater feeling of safety, it can serve as a marketing tool and as a deterrent to criminals. This will require additional funding.

Marketing

Another major aspect of a successful TOP program is its ability to market a city's entertainment venue. In the past this has been accomplished through partnerships with the visitor and convention bureau, publishing the existence of a TOP program in journals and on the Internet, and strong police presence along with civilian volunteers. Terrorism requires even greater efforts on the part of law enforcement. What an agency does on a daily basis in the resort, or how it handles special events, will ultimately be reported in the newspaper and discussed in professional industries such as travel and convention planners. One strategy that has met with success in Anaheim, CA is the matching of hotel and convention sales staff with TOP officers. Officers will frequently attend sales meetings to answer the potential client's questions related to resort safety and security.

Media

A crucial component of TOP is a healthy media relations program. Savvy departments can get coverage on those programs and strategies that may be tactically prudent to release for both a marketing and prevention point of view. Strong relationships with the media will also be helpful if there is a terrorist or other event in the resort. The media will be judging the local agency's response to the event as much as it will the event itself. Clear and comprehensive crisis management plans must be in place, which can be relayed to the media.

Crisis Management

In the past, resort area public safety departments planned for the normal types of disasters: power outages, flooding, major accidents and so forth. Now, however, the bar needs to be raised. Crisis management in a terrorist event takes on a much greater magnitude. Planning needs to include many more resources from the local, state and federal levels. The types of possible terrorist scenarios and the response must be worked out in advance and partnerships developed with allied agencies. Protocols cannot wait to be discussed in a post-event environment. Another related component to crisis management is training.

Training

First responders to potential terrorist incidents need to be trained and equipped to meet the new challenge. Training must be provided in topics such as force protection, terrorist tactics and strategies, and counter-terrorist responses. Training must also include actual exercises and tabletop scenarios, which include all needed agencies and department staff.

TOP officers should also provide as much training as possible to the hospitality industry. Information regarding suspicious behavior and must continue to flow and TOP can help the stakeholders become additional eyes and ears.

Collaborative Problem Solving

One of the common themes in Community Oriented Policing and Tourist Oriented Policing is the idea of collaborative problem solving. It has proven to be very successful in both programs.

Public safety and the hospitality industry need to expand the potential gains of collaborating in areas, which in the past might have seemed mutually exclusive. As mentioned earlier, technology is seen as a necessary but expensive tool to fight terrorism and crime in general. New technologies allow for surveillance systems from many different venues to be channeled into one central command center. This is also true with data that is collected at front desks, transportation hubs and the like. Redundancy can be reduced and technology used to its full potential.

Another very important issue in partnering is advanced warnings for special events. It is crucial for public safety and private venues to communicate regarding events that have an added potential threat. Only through on-going communications can this take place. It is too late to tell a promoter about huge security costs after a contract has been signed with a venue. The venue must know in advance the threat assessment and be able to make a sound business decision. Likewise, venue operators need to include law enforcement when planning special events, well before final staffing decisions are made. Lastly, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) must be reviewed in the newer context of counter terrorism.

Conclusion

Tourism needs protection for several reasons. First, it is big business. Almost 51 million international travelers visit the United States each year according to a report issued by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Tourism Industries Office. This number generates about \$21 billion in spending by international travelers on U.S. air carriers alone. In the United States, tourism provides 18 million total jobs, and over 100 million worldwide.⁷ That's 1 of every 8 working persons in America. Tourism is the third largest

retail industry in America, totaling over 582 billion dollars in expenditures and 93 billion dollars in tax revenue for local, state, and federal governments. Without tourism, U.S. taxpayers would each have to contribute another \$906 dollars in taxes.⁸ Financially, it is prudent to protect an investment and source of revenue.⁹

Resort cities without a TOP program should seriously consider implementing some form of TOP. Those cities with existing programs need to constantly reevaluate their threat assessment and how best to mitigate the problems. Through collaborative partnerships, coordination of effort, greater uses of technology and training, law enforcement can go a long way towards continuing to provide a safe and secure environment for tourists and maintaining a high level of marketability for their venue.

Endnotes

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 - ² Michael D. Olsen, "Into the New Millennium – a White Paper on the Global Hospitality Industry", International Hotel and Restaurant Association, (1995)
 - ³ ibid
 - ⁴ Tourism and International Economics, World Trade Organization, Economic Research and Analysis, 2001, H<http://www.wto.org/H>
 - ⁵ Metro-Dade Police Department, Tourist Oriented Policing Unit Program History and Development manual page 1.
 - ⁶ Dr. Peter Tarlow, "Tourism Tidbits" obtained on-line at H<http://www.tourismandmore.com/H>
 - ⁷ Richard Rubin, "The New Economy Goes Global", Newsweek, 1999:9
 - ⁸ Travel Industry of America, "Impact of Travel on State Economies", obtained from the TIA website 2003, H<http://www.tia.org/H>
 - ⁹ ibid