



## Travellers Beach Hotel & Club

**Traveller’s Beach Hotel is situated in Bamburi Beach on the North coast of Mombasa. As a large player in the tourism industry, and catering to international guests and tour operators, reputation is a key concern for Travellers. Demonstrating a proactive stand on environmental protection, labour standards and impact on local community were therefore the main focusses of Travellers during the SUSBIZ Programme.**

Travellers Beach Hotel’s participation in the SUSBIZ Programme differed somewhat from the other partnerships in the Programme. In stead of participating together with one Danish partner, Travellers participated in a joint partnership between 4 stakeholders: 1: Travellers Beach Hotel & Club 2: African Pro-Poor Tourism Development Centre - APTDC (Kenyan NGO promoting sustainable tourism in Kenya), 3: World Sustainable Tourism International - WST (Danish sustainable tourism consultancy) and 4: Star Tour (international tour operator). WST was the main Danish partner, whereas Star Tour was more peripherally connected, following the Programme due to their business connection with Travellers. APTDC contributed with local knowledge and network with regard to sustainable tourism.

Through commitment and dialogue between the

partners Travellers managed to align CSR strategy with international market trends, create more environmentally sustainable operations, whilst reducing costs significantly. Improvements at Travellers enabled them to pas several audits from international customers and In 2012/13 the turnover increased by 25%.

### Company facts

#### Travellers Beach Hotel & Club

- Est. 1978
- 400 Employees
- 4 star hotel, 288 rooms
- Mainly European guests

#### SUSBIZ Partners

- World Sustainable Tourism
- African Pro-Poor Tourism Development Centre
- Star Tour

### About SUSBIZ Kenya

SUSBIZ Kenya was a multi-stakeholder Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme with partners from Federation of Kenya Employers, the Danish Business Authority and Danish Federation of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.

The SUSBIZ Kenya Programme was implemented from 2011 – 2013 and facilitated integration of sustainable business development and strategic CSR in Kenyan companies, who had Danish business relations. The aim was to build capacity and show that socially and environmentally responsible business conduct create better companies.

#### The approach focused on:

- Participation of managers and workers
- Shift away from check lists of compliance, to implementing change management
- Develop local capacity to deliver workable solutions to integrate CSR into its business
- Business enhancement is realised through implementing CSR management

The SUSBIZ team worked with knowledge sharing through training workshops and in-house assistance with a focus on practical solutions. The activity flow through the Programme was: CSR assessment and initial audit reports -> action plan development -> training and in-house capacity building -> progress evaluation -> documentation and external communication.

# Benchmarking international standards



**With assistance from one of their partners in the SUSBIZ Programme – WST International – Travellers Beach Hotel benchmarked their CSR standards against international sustainable hotel standards.**

WST International had extensive experience with international green hotel certification schemes, such as Green Key and Green Globe. This experience was used to align the CSR work of Travellers Beach Hotel with international standards in the hotel and tourism industry.

Specifically, the collaboration with WST supported a focus on issues which are important in the hotel industry, but not always part of the CSR agenda for companies in other business sectors, such as:

- Employment of local people and using local small scale entrepreneurs
- Respect for natural surroundings, local culture and cultural heritage and cultural intellectual property of local communities
- Instructing guests in sustainability issues, including emergency preparedness, fire safety, evacuation and respect for local culture
- Ensuring not to jeopardize provision of water, energy or sanitation to the local community



Maintenance staff reading health & safety regulations

## Improved fire safety and fire marshals

Travellers Hotel have made a concerted effort to ensure proper fire safety measures at the hotel:

- Employers are trained in firefighting and evacuation procedures
- 29 Fire Marshals have been trained so far
- Mock drills are conducted twice a year
- Occupational health and safety abstracts have been introduced to help employees remember their safety responsibilities
- All employees now know what action to take in case of a fire

The increased effort paid off in 2012, only 6 months after occupational health and safety had been on the agenda in a SUSBIZ workshop. Due to machinery malfunction, a fire broke out in the kitchen. Two trained fire marshals managed to quickly put out the fire, which could easily have resulted in the entire kitchen burning down



Fire marshalls at Travellers

# The hotel goes Solar and shines at a lower cost



**The service and quality sought by international tourists puts an enormous pressure on resources. This is especially the case with energy used to heat significant amounts of water each day, and provide a well lit hotel.**

From a financial point of view, energy consumption was also an apparent problem as electricity is very expensive in Kenya. To determine the energy saving potential, the SUSBIZ Programme facilitated an energy audit which was conducted by the Kenyan Power and Lighting Company.

With more than 500 guests at the hotel, the amount of water heated each day came up to about 20.000 liters. Additionally, the audit revealed a significant amount of electricity being consumed from electrical lightning. The results were high energy costs and consequently high CO2 emissions.

## **Solar heating and energy efficiency**

Following the audit, Travellers initiated several energy efficiency initiatives. Firstly, Travellers installed energy saving light bulbs and tubes throughout the hotel, and new power sensors were installed to ensure that light was only on when needed. Secondly, they invested 4,3 mio. KES (50.000 USD) in solar water heating systems in order to heat the showers water with free and renewable energy.

Total energy consumption – and thereby also CO2 emissions – were cut with approx. 33 %. Financial savings summed up to 1,2 mio. KES (14.000 USD) per month

Lastly, a partnership with the Danish Solar Power company SOVITEK was established. In the partnership with SOVITEK solar panels were delivered at a favorable price, whilst Travellers act as a sampling point for SOVITEK to showcase their products to prospective clients.



Solar panels at Travellers Beach Hotel

In addition to the environmental advantage it also delivered a more reliable source of energy, thus increasing customer satisfaction.

## **Additional environmental initiatives:**

Further environmental initiatives were implemented at Travellers:

- Water quality from the hotels waste water treatment plant was assessed. The water quality was approved for irrigation of the hotel gardens. Substantial amounts of water was saved.
- Staff was trained on reusing, recycling and reducing waste. This put efficient resource saving initiatives at the front of their mind, resulting in substantial savings for the hotel.
- New energy efficient laundry machines were purchased

The investments and initiatives demonstrated both business benefits and sustainable environmental solutions in the form of more carbon neutral operations and significant cost savings.

The hotel has now passed National Environmental Management Authority inspections, due to its adherence to effluent discharge regulations.

## Beach operators learn how to better approach tourists



**SUSBIZ supported the hotel in creating a beach management programme for the 'beach operators', who were making many visitors feel harassed when trying to relax on the beach. This resulted in a win win situation for the hotel, the beach salesmen and guests, enabling tourists to enjoy the beach, whilst supporting locals in securing sales from tourists.**

Beach Operators selling items on the beach, was a concerning problem for the destination as a whole. Tourists felt disturbed by the salesmen, when relaxing on the beach.

The Beach operators did not know how to address tourists, and were often seen as too aggressive in their sales tactics. This meant less return visitors and guest recommendations. In tandem, the beach operators were undercutting their own livelihood, as tourists were likely to prefer another destination next time.

In order to address this issue, Travellers' Beach Hotel, in collaboration with other hotels and local associations for beach operators, initiated a training programme:

- The programme was supported by a wide range of local stakeholders
- Beach operators were educated on how to approach tourists in a more favourable manner
- Beach operators' access to the beach was formalised through ID cards
- Beach Operators were additionally educated in keeping the beach clean, a mutual interest to everyone

Beach operators welcomed the programme benefitted greatly.

As a result, Travellers Beach Hotel have managed to strengthen the beach operators sales to tourists, whilst creating a pleasing environment for guests. The incidents where tourists feel disturbed on the beach have drastically fallen. Higher rates of return visitors and positive customer reviews are the outcomes.

### **Promotion of local talent and culture**

Travellers Beach Hotel have also initiated a strategy to recruit and train more locals, in order to link the community to the relatively wealthy value chain of the tourist industry in order to create local prosperity. This goes for traditional hotel jobs, but also local singers and dancers are recruited to perform for the guests at Travellers.

The performers now support their livelihood through performing at Travellers Beach Hotel and guest are entertained. Furthermore, the aspect of local culture performance has been very welcomed by the guests at Travellers and the hotel has added to their sustainability profile, that more locals benefit from the value that flows into the Traveller's Beach Hotel.

### **Support to local businesses**

Local small businesses do typically not enjoy the benefits of the foreign currency that comes in to the hotels. Traveller's decided to deal with the problem and involve the local community through sourcing fresh produce such as fish and vegetables from the local area.

The head chef now visits the suppliers and explains what is required for the produce to meet the hotel's standards. This has improved the relationship between the hotel and the local community and the hotel is now viewed as a source of livelihood for the community. In return, the hotel is able to enjoy the goodwill of the community while obtaining fresh produce at a cost effective price.



# From casual to contract staff, the hotel goes all in to create staff engagement



**Travellers' Beach Hotel became aware of the code of conduct pertaining to their casual workers, and how they were in breach of these codes in relation to their Western tour operators. This could affect their professional standing. Through participation in SUSBIZ, the hotel began to fully develop human resource management initiatives that has resulted in motivated staff and happier hotel guests.**

Prior to the SUSBIZ Programme, Travellers Beach Hotel had not looked into casual workers' rights. The workers themselves were unaware of their rights.

Travellers set about reducing the number of casual employees, employing them on longer term contracts. The hotel also established a new policy on human resources. Casuals received:

- 6 month contracts
- Equal rights to permanent employees
- Annual leave and one paid resting day per week
- Salary increase to 11% above the minimum wage,
- Adherence to working hour regulations, which in general is an issue in the hotel industry

The hotel made further changes to benefit staff:

- Provided clean and well maintained restrooms
- Formed a Works Committee to address employees grievances
- Created a Code of Conduct for subcontractors, ensuring they abide by Travellers' standards such as; payment, working hours, and security

Freedom of association was also strengthened, by encouraging employees to join a workers union of their own choice.

Through staff engagement, better work condition and more secure living wages, the hotel is beginning to see more loyal and motivated staff, and less sick days. In turn guest reviews are more positive and there are more return visitors.

Additional results are:

- Casuals want to return to work, decreasing costs in relation to recruitment
- Costs related to training of workers have decreased
- Quality of service to hotel guests has increased
- The improvements to staff facilities has resulted in healthier staff and lower sick rates

## **Travellers Beach Hotel Football Club**

The managers took initiative to further engage employees, and invited staff to propose ideas or wishes they had for their working situation. The best ideas were voted for by staff. The result was the formation of Travellers Football Club in 2012. The club helps staff to unwind and provide opportunities to engage with other local football clubs.



Travellers Beach Hotel Football Club

# Health & safety leads to satisfied customers and smooth operations

Through the SUSBIZ Programme, Travellers Beach Hotel have significantly engaged their management and staff in health & safety, which has led to clear policies and a system that is integrated into its operations, with continuous improvements

Occupational health & safety (OHS) is of crucial importance in the hotel industry. It secures the safety of guests and hotel assets and it makes guests feel taken care of by the hotel. It also reduces the risk for accidents that can significantly harm the reputation.

Through participation in SUSBIZ, the hotel management decided to create its first occupational health & safety committee. The committee came up with the following initiatives:

- Health & safety inspection and risk assessment of the work place
- Standard work procedures for various types of jobs and processes
- Employee of the Month Award to promote a safety culture and award safe behavior

To ensure continuous improvements, structures were put in place to monitor and control safety in the work place.

In order to ensure that all staff was prepared for emergencies, education was initiated:

- An employee training programme was implemented. Focus areas were first aid, correct use of chemical masks and helmets, and firefighting skills. Procedures were put in place for continuous refresher trainings and training of new staff.
- Emergency evacuation plans and procedures were developed, posted and communicated to all staff.



First aid training for staff at Travellers

The health & safety efforts have had significant impact on the operation of Travellers Beach Hotel.

- Having staff trained in emergency preparedness means that both staff, guests and the physical assets of the hotel are now much safer
- As guests feel safer the reputation of the hotel has improved
- Following health and safety procedures, have saved the hotel resources spend on health and safety compensation
- Eliminating exposure to toxic fumes has resulted improved workers conditions and following they are more healthy, mentally sharp and attentive. Quality and productivity has increased.
- Work related accidents have been greatly reduced due to adherence to the new standard operating procedures from 6 in 2011 to 2 in both 2012 and 2013.

# Key learnings and continuous improvements



Travellers Beach Hotel set in on a range of fronts during the SUSBIZ Programme, from more innovative solutions such as linking small scale business to the relatively wealthy value chains of the tourism industry, promoting recruitment of local performers and supporting local culture, engagement with beach operators and involvement of all relevant stakeholders to more traditional CSR activities such as health & safety, labour rights and environmental protection. All activities have been integrated in the business strategy of Travellers Beach Hotel, with a keen eye for possible pitfalls and opportunities for developing the business.

A main reason for the diversity of Travellers Beach Hotel work with CSR, lies with the fact that a diversity of partners were involved in the special partnership set-up: CSR and business development specialists from the SUSBIZ Team, local pro-poor-tourism specialists from APTDC and sustainable tourism specialists from WST.

The fact that results were so successful is mainly due to the fact that management commitment was strong. Top management support the ideas all the way and middle management were allocated the appropriate time and resources needed for implementation. With CSR being part and parcel of strategy, management systems and business thinking, continuous improvements are integrated in the way Travellers now operates the hotel.

*“It’s not about compliance any more. It’s about linking what we do to business achievements. That way it helps people realise what is ‘my’ benefit in this. The benefit is the overall well-being of you as a person and for future generations.*

*The things we are required to sustain in SUSBIZ is what we need to use every day and therefore we want to make it our priority.*

*If it is water, we have to use it sparing and to the right recommendations. If it is energy, we need to use the right energy.*

*We do not need to use something just because it is available. We need to know that everything comes with a cost, and every cost comes with corresponding revenue. So we have to ensure that revenue is sustainable”*

**Pius Makau**

**Health, Safety & Security Manager**