Mission Beach Tourism Inc.

Market research

Conducted between August and October 2005

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This report analyses the advertising methods and cooperation concerning marketing activities of the members of Mission Beach Tourism, and seeks methods to improve the services that the association provides, as well as suggesting improvements for more effective business operations.

Executive summary

The objective of this research is to gather statistics of the members of Mission Beach Tourism, to find out how the members advertise their products, and how to improve it.

To gather information, members of the association were interviewed as well as visitors, and information from the Internet and TTNQ was used.

During interviews that were carried out it became clear that there was a low satisfaction with the Visitor Centre in general, and that it was not clear to the members what they can expect from Mission Beach Tourism in return of their membership contribution.

Many visitor characteristics were research and analysed, including: average age, length of stay, methods of transportation, travel party, capacity and occupancy, where visitors come from and travel to, and information sources used. A division of the market is needed in order to serve all visitors. However, most businesses appear not to target specific niche markets and focus on the entire market.

On average, the members spend less than 8% on advertising which is quite a low figure. The low figure can be explained by the many small businesses that operate in Mission Beach, who do not have the resources for adequate advertising. The network of websites of the members of Mission Beach Tourism could be used as a tool to promote the entire region, and by using links within the network this is already happening. Booking websites are underrepresented at present, and would be a very effective tool for budget- or middle-class accommodation. The association organizes advertising in which the members can participate. By cooperating, prices can be cut by a significant amount. The association encourages all the members to participate as the more participants, the lower the costs.

In conclusion, there are many points in which there is confusion among the members of the association; one of them is the tasks and responsibilities of MBT.

In order to improve business results, it is recommended that the members of the association:
- Plan their activities so that it becomes clear if targets have been met
- Apply market segmentation so that it becomes clear where and how to advertise
- Develop a good-running website where visitors can make bookings
- Cooperate with the other members in advertising, because it is cheaper and more effective

In order to make the association a more smoothly running organization, it is recommended that the committee of the association:
- Communicate its tasks and responsibilities to its members
- Develop a more personal relationship with its members
- Draw up marketing plans for each new activity involving promotion
- Develop a long-term plan (5 years) outlining business strategies

1 Chapter one – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

First of all, a word of thanks to all the managers/business-owners who were interviewed, especially those who could spare up to an hour to sit down and discuss their advertising and business details. Thanks to the executive committee of Mission Beach Tourism, and all the staff of the Visitor Centre for providing the opportunity to do the research and write the report.

Whenever in this report a reference is made to: *MBT*, the *organization* or the *association*; the entire Mission Beach Tourism Inc. under management of the committee is meant.
'*Visitors'* refer to anyone who is not a local resident of Mission Beach, and '*The sample'* refers to the group of business owners or managers that were interviewed during this research (see section 1.3 – the sample and interview methods).

This research was carried out by one person, as part of a 'practical traineeship' by a fourth year student of International Business & Management from Arnhem Business School, the Netherlands.

1.2 The research objectives

The purpose of this research is to generate creative new ideas for Mission Beach Tourism and its individual members to advertise their products as well as the entire Mission Beach area. After analysing the market from both supplier and customer point of view, recommendations to increase the effectiveness of promotion are given in the final chapter.

The main research objective is: *to find out how members of the association advertise their products and services, and how Mission Beach Tourism can assist them to increase the efficiency of their marketing efforts.*

By means of primary and secondary research a profile can be compiled of the tourism market of Mission Beach. By analysing variables such as occupancy, different advertising methods used and expenditure on marketing, it is possible to find out what can be done to improve promotion for the whole region.

The first part of this report shows characteristics of the members of Mission Beach Tourism, as well as the organization itself, and shows satisfaction levels to various activities. The second part deals with various forms of advertising, including the Internet and the final part shows ways to improve promotion.

1.3 The sample and interview methods

The association has approximately 200 members, of which a sample of 20 accommodation operators was drawn. The sample was divided into five classes: Caravan Parks, Backpackers', Bed and Breakfast, Self contained holiday units and luxury resorts. All the accommodation operators in the sample are situated in the Mission Beach area.
In addition to accommodation, also tour operators were interviewed. The sample of these was smaller than for accommodation, because accommodation will provide a clearer overview of visitor numbers.

The following table shows all the members who are based in Mission Beach ('population'), and the distribution of them in terms of the various classes. There were 194 members in total, of which 126 are based in Mission Beach. It also shows the division of accommodation into five categories plus tours, and their share of the total.

Mission Beach	Population		Sample	
Class	Count	percentage	count	percentage
Caravan Parks	8	6%	3	14%
Backpackers	8	6%	2	10%
Bed and Breakfast	16	13%	4	19%
Self contained	30	24%	6	29%
Resorts	11	9%	4	19%
Tours	53	42%	2	10%
total	126	100%	24	100%

Table 1.3 - Distribution of membership of MBT

Questionnaires were handed out to the members of Mission Beach Tourism, followed by a face-to-face interview of approximately 30 minutes. This method of information gathering was chosen to provide useful quantitative as well as qualitative data. Face-to-face interviewing provided an opportunity for the interviewer and the members to discuss the questions from the questionnaire and elaborate on them. Also other issues could be addressed during the interview.

In addition to members of Mission Beach Tourism, 28 visitors were interviewed using a questionnaire provided by TTNQ. The sample of visitors was chosen randomly at the location of Mission Beach. The interviews lasted for about ten minutes each, and were also done face-to-face. In addition to this, secondary data was used from a previous study from Tourism Queensland, where 171 visitors were asked to fill out a questionnaire at the Visitor Information Centre between May and June, and in September. This added up to a total sample of 199 surveys during the months of May, June, August and September.

Other secondary data that was used: various reports of previous studies by Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) and Tourism Queensland (TQ), statistics gathered by the Mission Beach Visitor Information Centre and the Internet.

1.4   Limitations to the research

Due to unavailability and time restrictions it was not possible to conduct interviews with all the members of MBT, thus the sample was limited to those that are located in the Mission Beach area only. The information provided could still be analysed in a useful manner and is under certain conditions representative for the entire population, which is the whole Mission Beach Tourism organization.
The sample size of the visitors interviewed is rather small considering that the Mission Beach Visitor Centre saw over 25,000 visitors in 2004. However, time restrictions did not allow for a more extensive research. The visitor surveys are used to provide a general overview only and should not be considered statistically valid.

2 Chapter two – The activities of Mission Beach Tourism

2.1 The activities of Mission Beach Tourism, including the Visitor Information Centre

There were seven main activities defined for Mission Beach Tourism. The members were asked to indicate the importance of each of these activities to their business, and then their satisfaction of each of the activities. The choice was between: high (3), medium (2) and low (1). The following table shows the results.

Mission Beach Tourism

Activities	importance	score
Operating a website	2.6	2.1
Operating a Visitor Information Centre	2.5	1.7
Keeping its members informed	2.4	2.3
Advertising MB in brochures etc.	2.2	1.8
Dealing with local authorities	2.2	1.6
Being available for questions and complaints	2.1	1.9
Representing MB at travel shows etc.	2.1	1.6

Table 2.1a - Importance and satisfaction of MBT activities

The three most important activities are: operating a website, operating a Visitor Centre and keeping its members informed. The response to operating a Visitor Centre bears concern, as satisfaction is low. Most businesses seem to be satisfied with the website and with the information that MBT sends out to its members.

Visitor Information Centre

Activities	importance	score
Providing information to visitors about accommodation and tours to visitors	2.6	1.7
Making bookings	2.6	1.5
Welcoming visitors to Mission Beach	2.1	1.7
Providing information of Cassowaries, crocodiles and stingers	2.1	2.0
Networking with other VICs	2.0	1.7
Providing news and weather reports	1.8	1.6

Table 2.1 b – importance and satisfaction of VIC activities

Overall satisfaction with the Visitor Centre is quite low. Of the two most important activities; 'Providing information about accommodation and tours', and 'making bookings', the latter received the lowest score for satisfaction. Many businesses believe that in the past year the Visitor Centre has sent fewer visitors to their business. Indeed the number of visitors to the Visitor Centre has gone down this year, but not as dramatic as the results appear to be. Approximately half of the businesses interviewed said that the intensity of competition has increased in the past 12 months, so that might be a reason for the decline in referrals. The fact that 'making bookings' is valued as being to most important, shows that many businesses do not realize what other objectives and responsibilities the organization has.

2.2 Room for improvements

From all the suggestions that were given to improve the work of Mission Beach Tourism and the Visitor Information Centre, the main topic was communication. It seems that not all members are aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the association. The activity 'making bookings' was a sensitive topic during the interviews, as many businesses feel that the Visitor Centre is making less bookings for them this year than in the years before.

Some members rely heavily on referrals from the Visitor Centre, so they are responsive to the number of visitors walking into the centre, or even the person who is standing behind the counter. Others rely mostly on Internet bookings, and are able to keep up business regardless of the number of visitors to the Centre.

It is important for Mission Beach Tourism to let its members know what is happening within the organization. An update could be sent to all the members giving an explanation for the decline in visitor numbers of this year, and pointing out what the association can and cannot do to reverse this trend. There should be more clarity on the promotional activities of the association, including the budget. Finally, the best way of achieving improved communication is in the informal circuit, in other words by meeting the MBT members in person. The 'End of season networking BBQ' is a good start for all the members, the committee and the volunteers to get to know one another, and for the members to explain and promote their tours and accommodation.

3   Chapter three – the tourism industry in Mission Beach

3.1 Recent trends in the market

As most members pointed out, the begin of the season of 2005 has been poor business-wise mainly due to unseasonable weather conditions earlier in the year, high petrol prices together with high competition. It shows that many visitors do not book far in advance, and many others have changed their minds at the last minute.

Visitors to the Mission Beach VIC				
2004			**2005**	
Feb – May	Jun – Sep	Oct - Jan	Feb – May	Jun – Sep
6,027	*13,772*	*6,311*	*6,507*	*13,475*

Table 3.1 – Visitors to the VIC

Even though July and August this year saw a decline in visitor numbers, the decline was very small. Different businesses have different experiences with the amounts of guests. For example, two out of three caravan parks reported a decrease in visitor numbers, as well as the resorts. For self-contained units, the answers varied between increase, remained stable and decrease in the amount of guests. Marketing works well for some businesses who report an actual increase in business. Four out of six self-contained accommodation businesses said that competition has increased in the past 12 months, and three out of four B&Bs said the same. The backpacker segment was the only one who reported a decline in competition.

Fuel prices indeed have risen by more than 20 cents this year, and because Mission Beach relies mostly on self-drive visitors, this might account for a decrease in visitor numbers. It also means that locals who would normally drive further for their holidays will stay in the region.
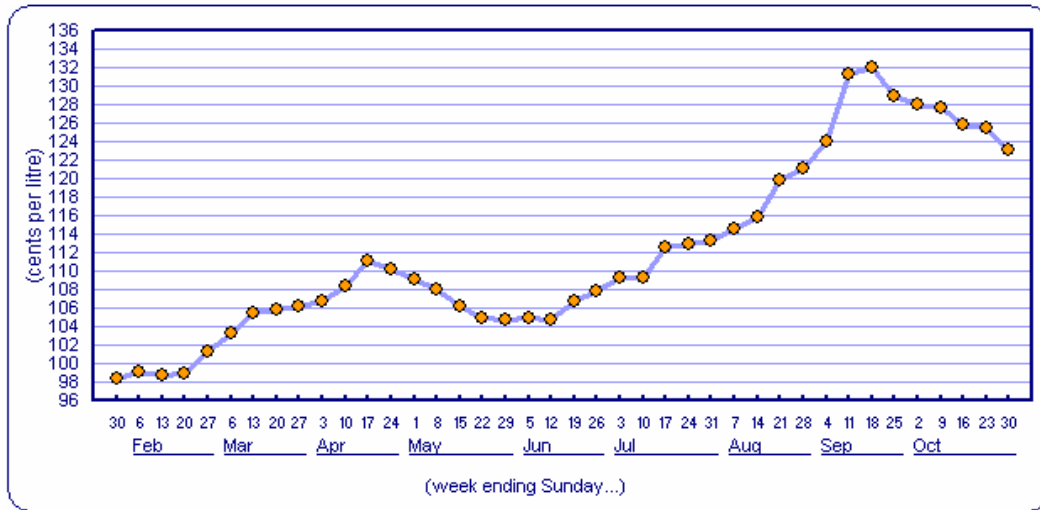
Graph 3-1 – Fuel price development 2005

Source: http://www.aip.com.au/pricing/orima.htm

3.2 Capacity and occupancy

A study in 2004 showed that the 41 accommodation businesses had an annual maximum capacity of 1,135,880 persons with an average of 3112 persons per day. The average annual occupancy was 51.8%, being the highest among motels (72.5%) and lowest on Real estate holidays rentals (35%). That means a total of 588,386 visitors to Mission Beach in that year.
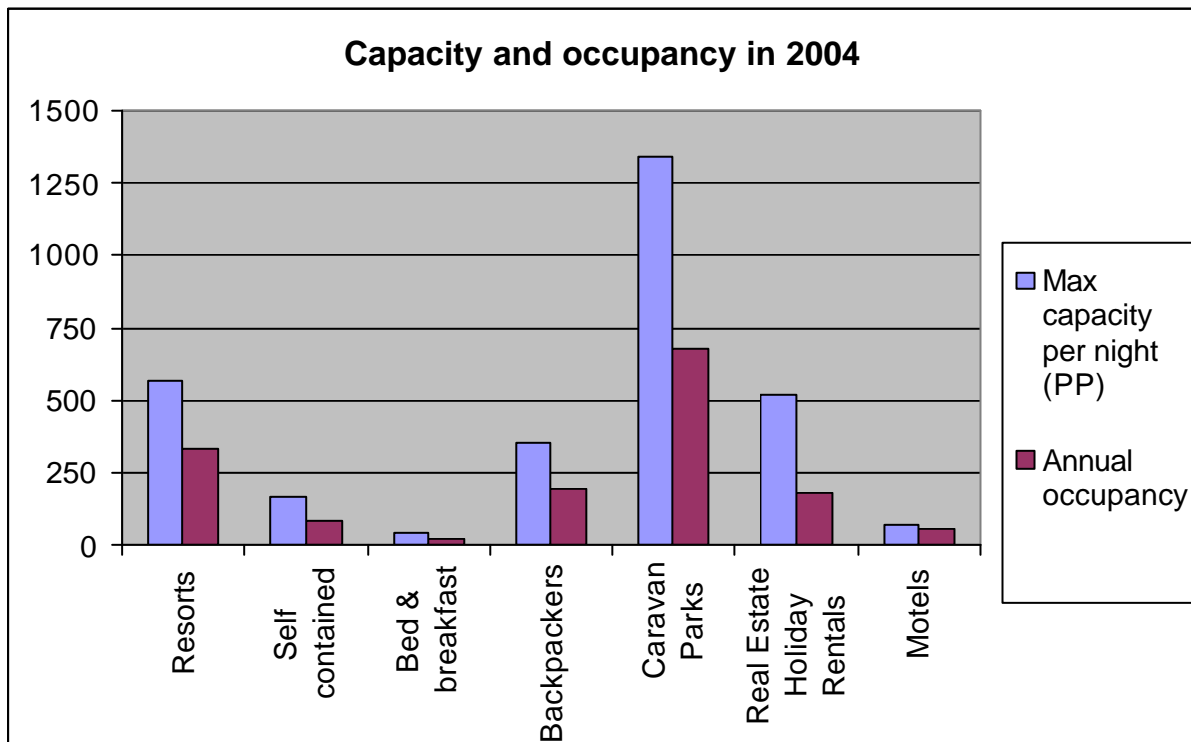
Graph 3.2a - Distribution of the accommodation in 2004 according to capacity and occupancy

The following graph shows that there has been a decline in occupancy between 2004 and 2005. The caravan park segment suffered the most, while the B&B segment shows a slight increase.
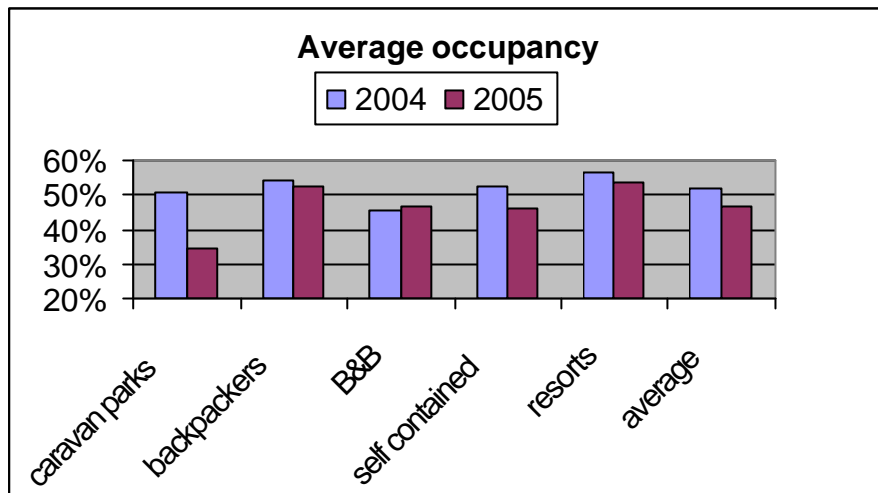
Graph 3.2b – occupancy in 2004 – 2005
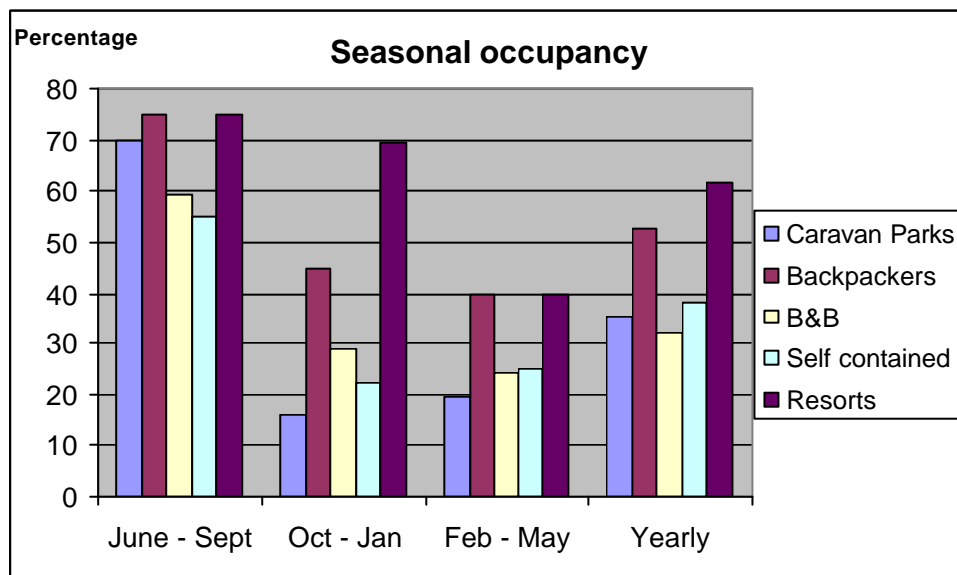
Graph 3.2c – seasonal occupancy

The above graph shows that the Caravan Parks were most sensitive to seasonal changes, and resorts and backpackers are the least.

3.3   Visitor behaviour and details

The following section will give an overview of visitor statistics that were collected through various means. Key elements that are looked at are the characteristics of the visitors: where they come from, how long they stay and how much money they are willing to spend.

As a result of interviews conducted with visitors to Mission Beach in August and September, it becomes clear that most people are very satisfied with Mission Beach (overall satisfaction is on average 4.29 out of 5) and that the beach is the main feature of Mission Beach.

Age
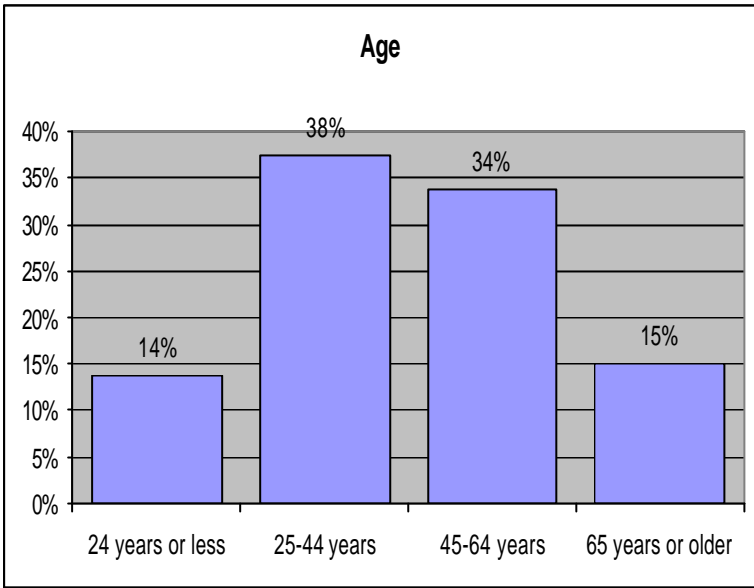
Most people fall in the age groups between 25 and 64 years. That is a large group, and it shows how a different variety of visitors come to Mission Beach.

Graph 3.3 d – Age of interviewed visitors

By far the largest group of visitors is adult couples, while visitors travelling alone, in family groups and as friends travelling without children are of about the same size.
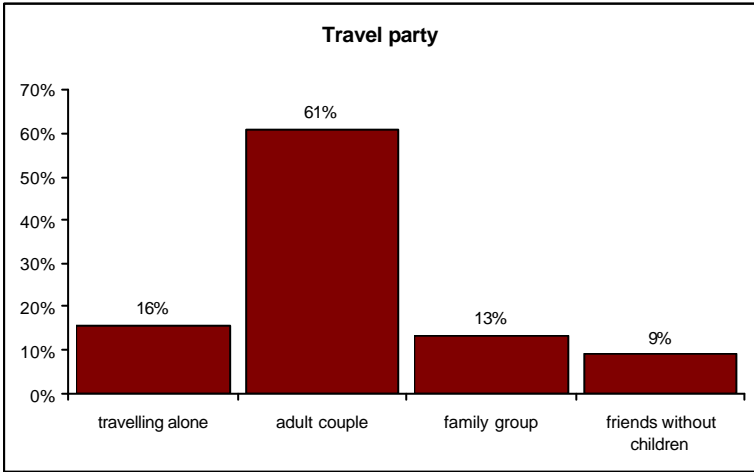
Travel party

Graph 3.3e – Immediate travel party of interviewed visitors

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Household income
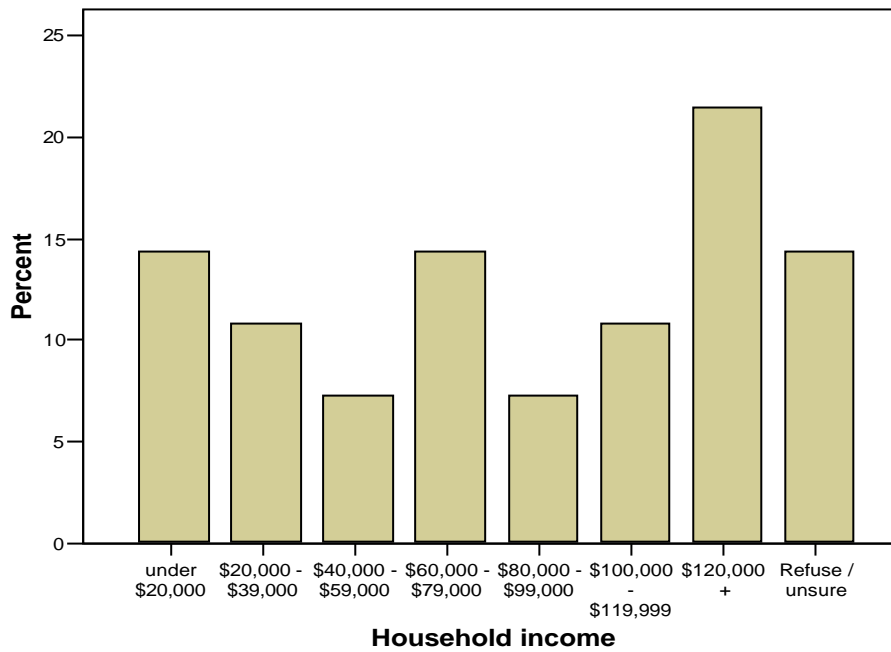
Graph 3.3f – Approximate household income before tax of interviewed visitors

The largest group (21.4%) pointed out that their household income was over $120,000 and the smallest two groups are $40,000 to $59,000 and $80,000 to $99,000. A relatively large amount of visitors (14.3%) refused to give their average household income

Type of accommodation
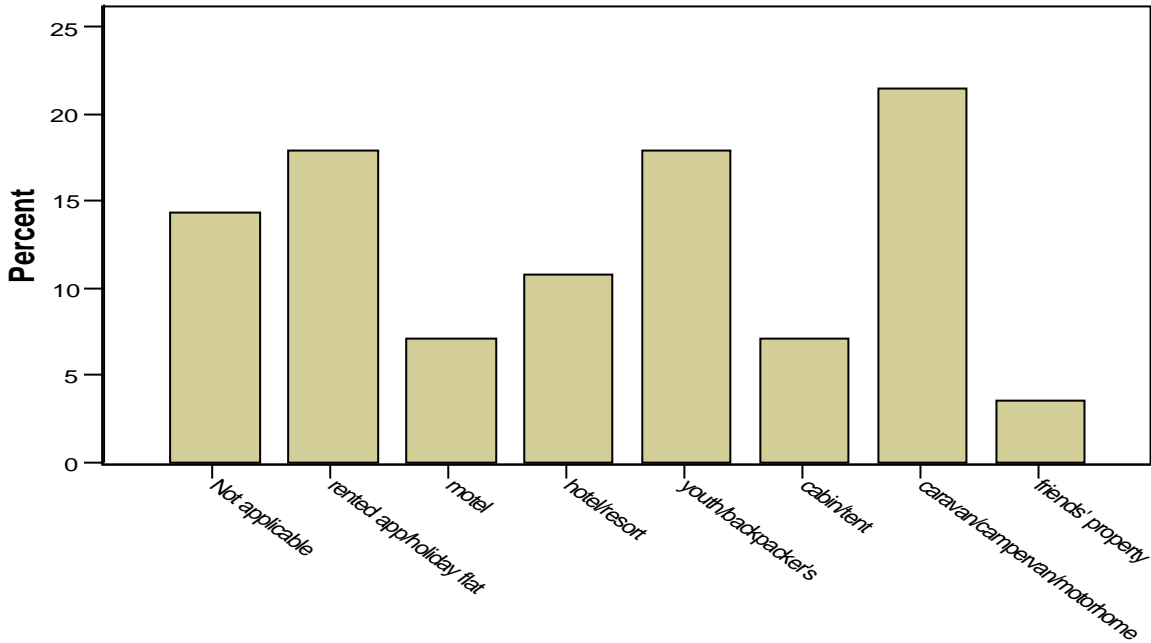
Type of accommodation

Graph 3.3g – Type of accommodation of interviewed visitors

The main types of accommodation are caravan parks (21.4%), rented apartments (17.9%) and backpackers' (17.9%). 14.3% of interviewed visitors were on a day trip only.
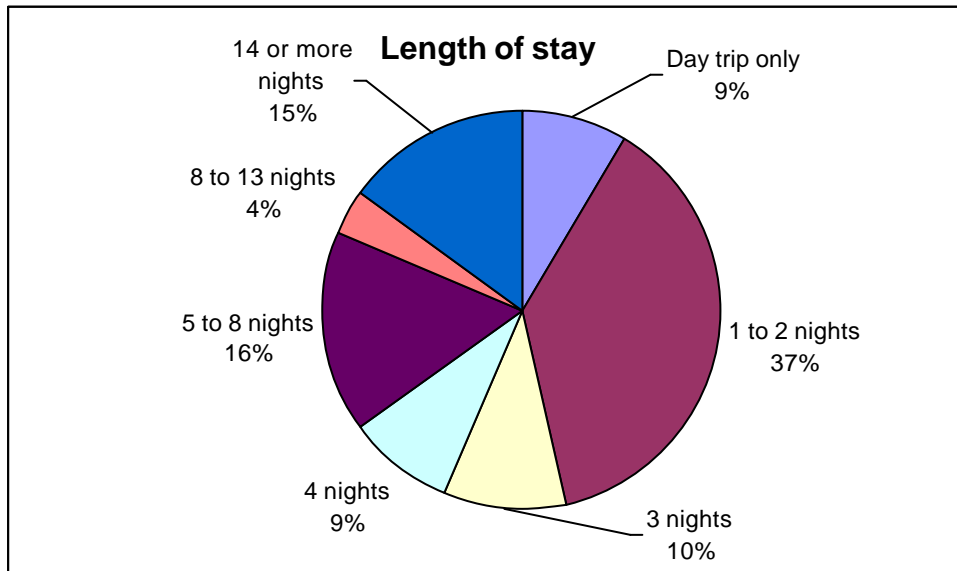
Graph 3.3h – Average length of stay

The above pie shows the average length of stay. Most visitors stay only 1 or 2 nights. Over half of all the visitors stay shorter than four days in Mission Beach.

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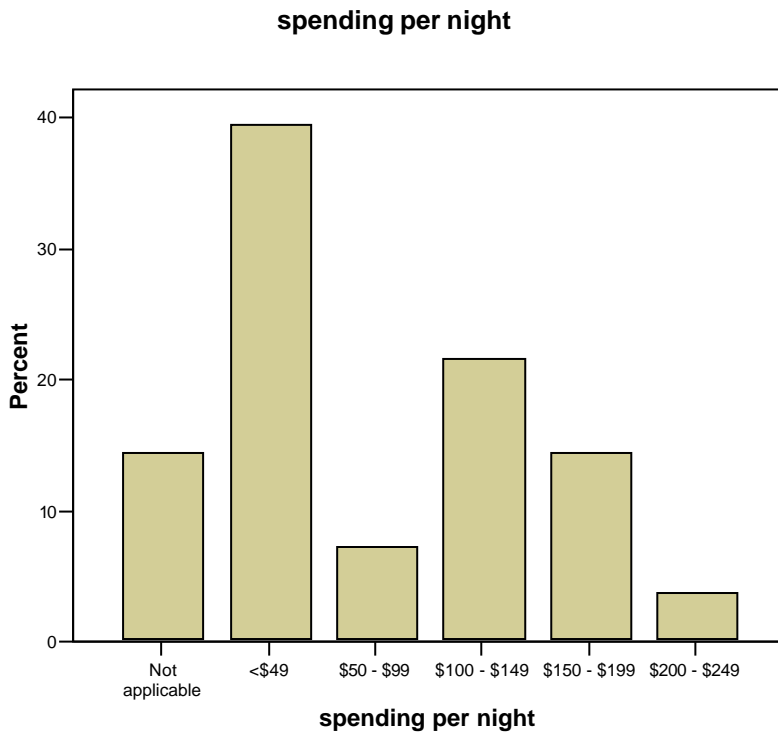
spending per night

Due to caravan parks and backpackers' mostly being under $49 per night, this group is the most popular (39,3%). The next group of $50 to $99 only has 7.1% of visitors' response and 39.3% spends over $100 per night.

Graph 3.3i – Average spending per night of interviewed visitors

		Night before MB		Night after MB	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Valid	At home	21	14.1	39	26.6
	Not at home	125	85.9	107	73.4
	Total	146	100.0	146	100.0

Table 3.3a Where do visitors spend the night prior to arriving, and after leaving Mission Beach

Almost 86% of the visitors did not spend the previous night at home, while 73% of visitors spent the night after leaving Mission Beach not at home. 13% more visitors have chosen Mission Beach as their last destination before going home. Most likely these are people who are not travelling anywhere else than Mission Beach. The fact that so many travellers in Mission Beach are 'passing through' means that the area is seen as a place to stop for a few days, before heading most probably to either Townsville or Cairns (see graph 3.3f).
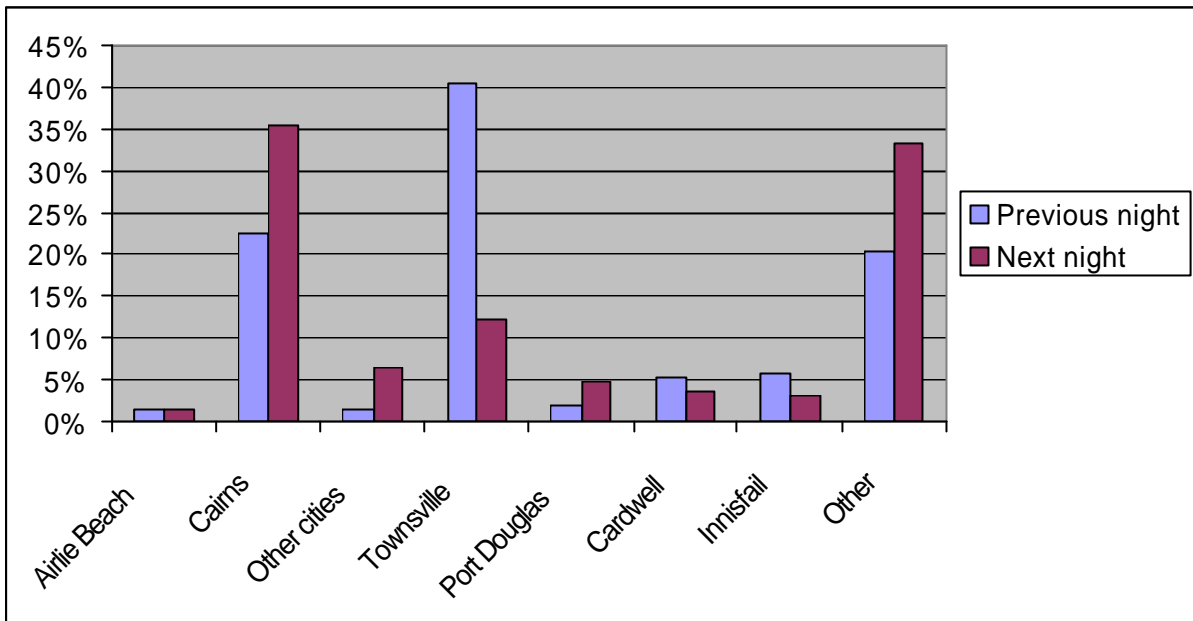
Graph 3.3f – Where did visitors spend the night before arriving to and after leaving Mission Beach

Most visitors (40%) spent the previous night in Townsville, and 35% spent the next night in Cairns. 'Other Cities' are Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney combined and represents only 2% previous night and 6% next night. Among 'other' were mentioned: Hinchinbrook, Undara, Dunk Island, Ravenshoe and other places in the region. Clearly, the route between Townsville and Cairns is most popular.
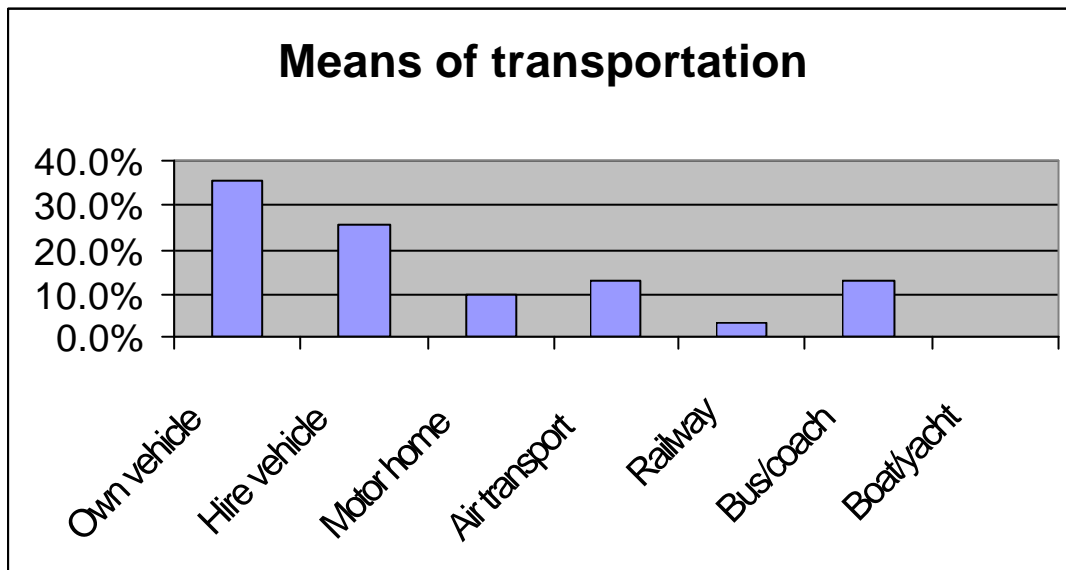
Graph 3.3c Means of transportation

The most popular means of transportation are own or rented vehicles (together 61.3%) followed by motor home/caravan and bus/coach. Noticeably railway is not popular and so is boat/yacht.

Information sources used
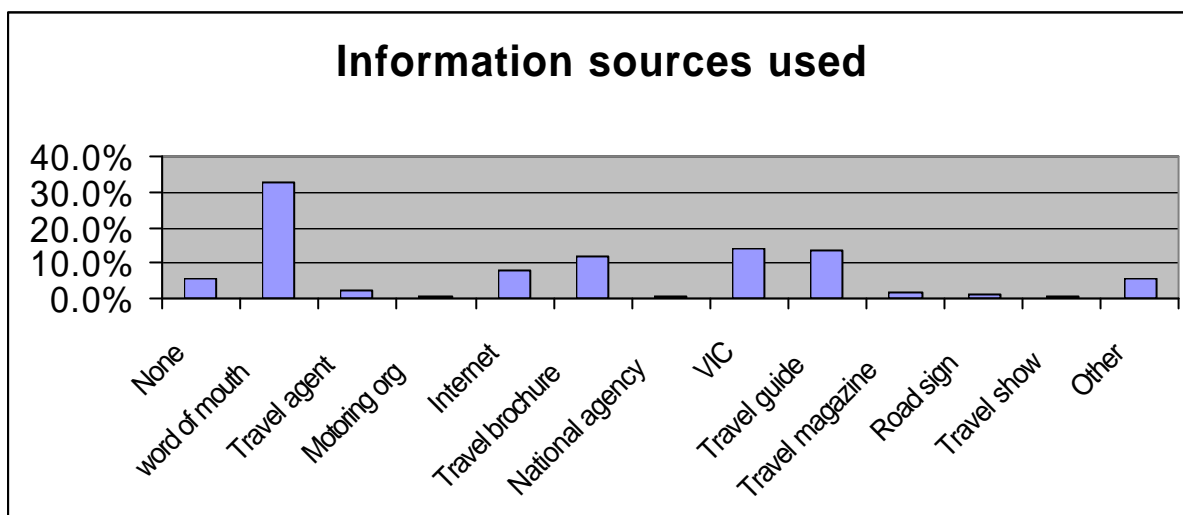
Graph 3.3d Information sources used

The most popular information sources used are word of mouth, Visitor Information Centres, travel guides (such as Lonely Planet), travel brochures and the Internet. These five amount to 80.6% of the total.

The three mostly visited Visitor Information Centres in the region around Mission Beach, are:

(Mission Beach)	(36.8%)
Kuranda	15.8%
Atherton	5.3%
Innisfail	5.3%

None of the interviewed visitors had been to the Visitor Centres in Babinda and Ravenshoe.

3.4 Visitor satisfaction and preferences

On average the visitors to Mission Beach are very satisfied with their experience here. Most people rank it a four or five out of five. There is also a strong relationship with weather conditions; it appears that when the weather is bad (rain) the overall satisfaction goes down.

When asked about visitors' plans of activities and experiences, scenic drive (64.3%) and walking trails (82.1%) score remarkably high. Organized tours are only intended by 21.4% of visitors. The ocean is obviously popular, as going to the reef is mentioned by 50%; boat/cruise is 39.3%; snorkelling/diving is 32.1%; and fishing 21.4% as activities and experiences intended by visitors.
Of Mission Beach's sights, the ones mostly mentioned by visitors are:

Beach	92.9%
Rainforest	82.1%
Cassowary	75.0%
Reef	50.0%

When asked what aspects of Mission Beach appeal the most, two aspects are usually given: the beach and the quiet atmosphere of Mission Beach. Suggested improvements are 'no high-rise!' which was answered by almost all visitors, and to develop some additional facilities (and walking paths) along the beachfront.

Overal satisfaction

Fulfill motivation
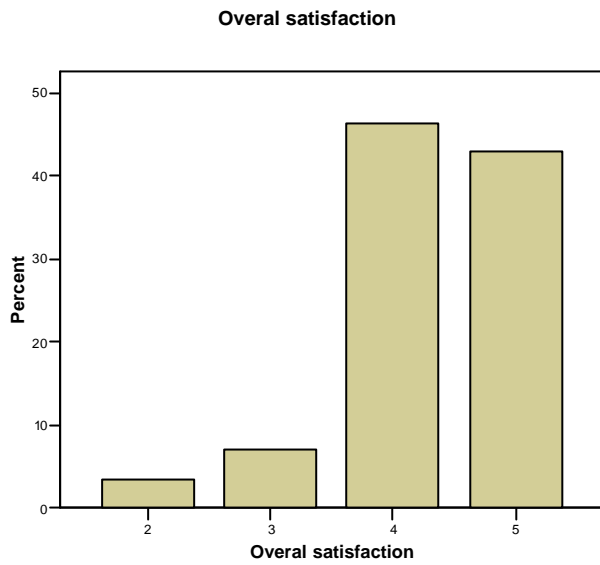
Graph 3.3f – Overall satisfaction (1-5) of interviewees
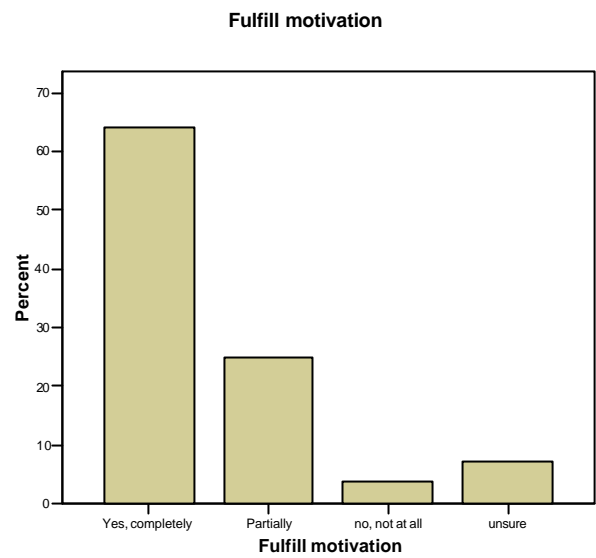
Graph 3.3g – Fulfilment of motivation of interviewees

As is shown in the above graphs most visitors (46.5% gave a 4); (42.9% gave a 5) are very satisfied with their stay in Mission Beach, and when asked if their visit fulfilled their motivation of going, most of them (64.3%) answered with: "Yes, completely".

The following table reflects the scores given by visitors when they were asked about their satisfaction about certain aspects of Mission Beach on a scale of one to five, where one (1) stands for very dissatisfied and a five (5) very satisfied.

Visitor satisfaction; scale 1 - 5

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (average)	Std. Deviation
Access	3	5	4.21	.630
Road quality	2	5	4.00	.720
Signage	2	5	4.07	.958
Cleanliness	2	5	4.07	.858
Picnic/BBQ	1	5	3.79	.918
Public amenities	2	5	4.00	.756
Attractions	3	5	4.25	.608
Accomm range	1	5	4.30	.926
Accomm value	2	5	4.04	.806
Accomm quality	3	5	4.29	.690
Accomm service	3	5	4.38	.711
Accomm overall	3	5	4.38	.647
Restaurant range	3	5	4.22	.647
Restaurant value	2	5	3.50	.786
Restaurant quality	3	5	4.19	.655
Restaurant service	3	5	3.94	.574
Restaurant overall	3	5	3.83	.618
Shopping range	1	5	3.15	.933
Shopping price	2	4	3.00	.725
Shopping open	2	5	3.89	.676

Variety of activities	3	5	4.15	.784
Beaches	3	5	4.46	.744
nat. parks/ rain forest	3	5	4.50	.590
Weather	1	5	3.14	1.325
Availability tourist info	4	5	4.63	.492
lots to see & do	3	5	4.41	.694
Availability tours	3	5	4.45	.686
Variety of tours	3	5	4.43	.676
Safety/ security	2	5	4.37	.688
Friendliness locals	2	5	4.46	.744
Overall satisfaction	2	5	4.29	.763

Table 3.3c – Visitor satisfaction

Some observations that stand out are the high scores for the beaches (mean = 4.46), the national parks and rainforest (mean = 4.50), and in general the availability and variety of tours and tourist information (all scores range over 4.40). As expected, the opinions on the weather vary from day to day, as can be seen in the large standard deviation of 1.3.

The lowest scores were given the price of goods (mean = 3) and range of shopping (mean = 3.15) in Mission Beach. Also the value for money in restaurants received only 3.5. Some complaints were made about expensive food and souvenirs, and the lack of shops in the area other than the Mission Beach and Wongaling shopping centres.

Visitor motivation; scale 1 - 5

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
family holiday	28	1	5	3.18	1.679
partner	28	1	5	3.61	1.595
relax	28	3	5	4.46	.744
luxurious	28	1	5	2.96	1.453
nature	28	1	5	4.00	.981
local culture	28	1	5	3.14	1.008
active	28	1	5	3.61	.916
discover	28	1	5	3.68	1.307
personal interest	28	1	5	3.00	1.491
peace & quiet	28	2	5	4.25	.928
nightlife	28	1	5	1.82	.983
socialize	28	1	5	3.54	1.170
learn about nature	28	1	5	3.43	1.200
off beaten track	28	1	5	3.39	1.133
time on my own	28	1	5	2.50	1.262
Valid N (listwise)	28				

Table 3.3d – Visitor motivation

The above graph shows the motivation for visitors interviewed for taking their holidays. Standard deviations are large in all of the results, which reflect large variations in the given answers. The highest score was given to 'To relax and rejuvenate', followed by 'enjoy the peace and quiet of an uncrowded destination'. Only few of the interviewees came to Mission Beach for the nightlife and entertainment (mean = 1.82).

3.5 Summary and conclusion

Due to the small sample size the results displayed in this chapter can only be used to provide an initial impression of the situation. It becomes clear that the visitors to Mission Beach are quite diverse, range from all ages and income levels, and plan their trip in different ways. Most visitors spend a couple of nights or a day trip only in Mission Beach on their way to Cairns or Townsville.

Even though the range of B&Bs and holiday apartments is the largest, these are not the most popular accommodation types for visitors. The self-drive market is the largest for this area, followed by bus. The Internet, travel books and brochures make the most commonly used source of information for visitors when planning their trip, in addition to word of mouth. It seems that other Visitor Centres do not network very much, in terms of referring visitors to other regions. Another explanation might be that visitors simply do not visit the Visitor Centres in the area due to unawareness. Visitor satisfaction is very high and the aspects that appeal the most are the unique features of Mission Beach; the beach, rainforest and reef. Facilities to improve in the village are the price of goods and food, more pathways along the beach, more variety of shops and the overall consensus is to keep Mission Beach undeveloped and the quiet town that it is.

Rather than increasing the number of visitors, it is more cost efficient to let them stay more nights. Most visitors stay for a short period of time and will have the opportunity to take only one or two tours. What is needed to change this is to make visitors aware that Mission Beach is a destination where one can stay for a week or more. What needs to be done is, market Mission Beach in the places where visitors come from, such as Melbourne or Sydney. Then, it must be ensured that there is enough to do in Mission Beach, and promote all the day tours in and around Mission Beach.

4   Chapter four – the advertising behaviour of MBT members

4.1 Frequency of different methods of advertising

Two advertising tools that were valued particularly by members were the Mission Beach map which shows where their business is and the Mission Beach Tourism website. Newspapers are seen as too expensive and have a too short life to be effective for advertising.

There are nine different methods of advertising defined. Each member was asked which one(s) they use to promote their business. They are:

distribution	Caravan Parks	Backpackers	B&B	Self contained	Resorts	Total
Brochures	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%	**96%**
Internet	66%	100%	100%	100%	100%	**93%**
Maps	100%	0%	20%	100%	100%	**64%**
Magazines	33%	100%	0%	80%	75%	**58%**
Bill-boards	100%	0%	40%	40%	75%	**51%**
Newspaper	33%	0%	0%	80%	100%	**43%**
Trade publications	33%	0%	0%	80%	100%	**43%**
TV/Radio	33%	0%	0%	40%	100%	**35%**
Video/CD-ROM/Poster	66%	0%	20%	20%	75%	**36%**
Other	33%	50%	40%	20%	0%	**29%**

Table 4.1 – Distribution of different advertising methods

Nearly all businesses make use of brochures and the Internet. Backpackers and B&Bs use the fewest different methods, while resorts use basically all methods.

4.2 Market segmentation

Not every member defines its target group in clear terms. Others will not have much choice regarding advertising, as they are affiliated with another organization that organizes the advertising for them. It seems that variables such as age, income and travel party are not often used to define target markets; especially with Internet advertising there is rarely a target group defined.

A marketer can rarely satisfy everyone in a market. They identify and profile distinct groups of buyers who might prefer or require varying products and marketing mixes. Market segments can be identified by examining demographic, psychographic, and behavioural differences among buyers. The firm then decides which segments present the greatest opportunity—those whose needs the firm can meet in a superior fashion.
(Kotler, Philip; Marketing Management 2000; page 16)

Demographic characteristics in this case include things such as: age, occupation and income. Psychographic can be described as: lifestyle, personality and values of visitors. Behavioural characteristics are price sensitivity, the reason for going on holidays in Mission Beach, status and attitudes of visitors. After selecting the appropriate characteristics of the most profitable segment, the right marketing mix must be applied. (The marketing mix consists of Product, Price, Promotion, and Place: four variables which a manager can control.)

Businesses that offer something special, such as extreme sports, luxury resorts or eco-friendly or budget accommodation are already making good use of marketing segmentation. Target groups should be clearly defined and appropriate marketing tools should be chosen. On average, businesses that do not formulate target groups (13 out of 22 interviewed) have a yearly occupancy of 31%, businesses that formulate very broad market segments (2 out of 22) have occupancy of 33% and businesses that are quite specific in formulating their segments (7 out of 22) operate on 50% annual occupancy.
This shows that by simply directing advertisements, as well as other marketing tools such as customer service or price policy can make a difference in occupancy. From table 4.1 can also be seen that resorts and backpackers are using uniform methods of advertising, which corresponds with their high occupancies of 52% and 53% respectively.

The Hassel report from June 2003, mentioned nine different target markets for Mission Beach. They are:
1. International Holidaying Backpackers
2. International fly/drive hire car
3. Fly/drive interstate
4. Self-drive intrastate short breaks
5. Holiday indulger
6. Grey nomads
7. Active family market
8. Working backpackers
9. Visiting friends and relatives segment

The reason why they are mentioned here is that it should provide the reader with an idea of what a target market may look like, and that it is important to segment the market. The reason why market segmentation is so important is that it will increase the coverage of the advertisement (meaning that more people will be targeted that are likely to make a booking and less advertising money will be wasted on people who are not likely to make bookings).

The nine segments are described as follows:

International holidaying backpackers
This group is described as independent, self-drive travellers between the ages of 18 – 30. They travel on average between 2 and 4 months in Australia along the East Coast and are interested in having holidays, not work.

This group of people is highly motivated to experience Australia's nature, landscape and wildlife through outdoor activities. They tend to choose budget accommodation to save money for attractions and tours. They travel all year round.

Fly/drive hire car international
Independent travellers, driving campervan or hire car. They come predominantly from Germany and the UK, are between 30 and 55 years of age and travel up to 4 weeks in Australia. They will stay in the region for only 2 days on average.

This group of travellers is highly motivated to experience natural areas. They choose mid-range accommodation or caravan parks to spend significantly on attractions and food and beverage. They spend money in regional areas beyond mainstream destinations and on locally made arts and crafts. They travel during domestic low-season and can offset the current seasonality of peak visitation.

Fly/drive interstate
Independent drivers, predominantly travelling from Sidney and Melbourne. They age between 40 – 60 years and travel without children. They stay on average 5 to10 days in the region.

Experiencing natural areas is important for this group of travellers and they choose mid-range accommodation to spend significantly on attractions, tours and food & beverages, locally made arts and crafts in regional areas beyond mainstream destinations. They travel outside school holidays.

Self-drive intrastate short breaks
Independent travellers who use their own car, predominantly coming from Townsville and from within 400 km of the region. This group consists mainly of couples and young families of between 25 – 40 years of age. They travel during school holidays and long weekends and stay on average 3 – 4 days.

This market is easily accessible and includes Townsville military personnel who want to experience the region. They choose mid-range accommodation particularly self-contained apartments to spend on attractions and food & beverage

Holiday indulger
This group of visitors fly then transfer to a single destination, typically an island resort. They are motivated by relaxation, are between 30 and 45 years of age and stay on average 5 – 7 days

This group spends much money and will provide local employment. However, there is a limited interest in exploring other areas and significant marketing efforts are already directed to this market by the resorts and other travel agents.

Grey nomads
This group consists of retirees (+60 years of age) from Southern states such as Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. They favour a relaxed lifestyle and seek the sun. They travel long distances and mostly stay in caravan parks. On average, they travel between 4 and 6 months and stay in the region for 6 days.

This market is easily accessible but expenditure is low. Townsville is already directing marketing efforts to this group.

Active family market
Regional market of families from Queensland, between 35 and 45 years of age and stay in the region between 1 and 2 weeks. They travel during mid year school holidays.

This market is easily accessible for self-contained accommodation and coastal activities. However, this market is limited to school holidays, sensitive to wet weather and alternative destinations cater for a wide range of children's' activities much better than the GGW (such as Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast)

Working backpackers
These independent travellers travel predominantly by bus, are 18 to 25 years of age and travel and work up to 1 year in Australia. They stay in the region on average 7 days. They are motivated by entertainment and socializing, but do not spend much.

This market is also easily accessible and there is an established market for existing hostels. However, the low spend and narrow range of interest in attractions and activities make this segment difficult to be profitable.

Visiting friends and relatives
This segment is attracted to visit friends and relatives who live near coastal areas. They consist of all ages, stay in host accommodation and travel by own car. They will stay in the region for 6 days on average.

There is an easily accessible market for food and beverages, day tours and attractions. There is no spend on accommodation and expenditure on other products will be low too.

Mission Beach Tourism
Because Mission Beach Tourism represents all of its members, it is necessary to target all market segments. However, different campaigns should be launched to target different segments. For example, in the wet season the advertising should focus on overseas travellers and backpackers. In the high season the fly/drive segment (people driving between Townsville and Cairns) is most important. At present, different markets are already targeted with different methods and in different styles, but coordination is still a point of concern. If the organization could develop a separate marketing plan for each segment, it will increase the transparency of the organization and might convince members to contribute.

4.3   Seasonality in advertising

How to attract guests in the low season? Out of the 20 businesses interviewed, 11 answered that they lower prices, on average by 10%, but ranging between 2% and 15%. Six businesses advertise differently, mainly targeting other areas or other markets. Three businesses advertise more and five use other ways to attract more guests in the low season, such as visiting trade fairs. All the self-contained holiday units that were interviewed lower their prices, on average by as much as 14%. Probably the best way to retain guests in the low season would be to utilize all of the methods: advertise more, differently and lower prices, but there were only two businesses that make use of all these methods. Some remarks were made during the interviews that lowering prices does not have as much effect as the other methods, but that depends on the type of accommodation or tour. One needs to look at the reason for the guest or visitor to hire a room or book a tour (see previous section: 4.2 – target groups). In order to advertise differently, it is necessary to segment the market in order to know whom to target.

Some tours are not able to continue during the wet season, for obvious reasons. Mission Beach needs more activities to do when it rains. At least things that can be done in the rain should be stressed more through marketing tools.

As some of the interviewed businesses explained, they do not need much help in the high season, when accommodation and tours are almost booked full for some businesses. It is in the low season

when marketing efforts should be undertaken, and this is also the time when new markets can and should be reached.

Appendix 4.3 shows that each month of the year shows a similar share of visitors out of the total, at least since 1999. The total deviation ranged between 0.5% and 1%. Even though the number of visitors has increased, the seasonal pattern remains the same.

The following graph shows the seasonality of visitor numbers between 1999 and 2005 of three Visitor Centres. Period 1 reflects February – May; Period 2 reflects June – September and Period 3 reflects October – January.

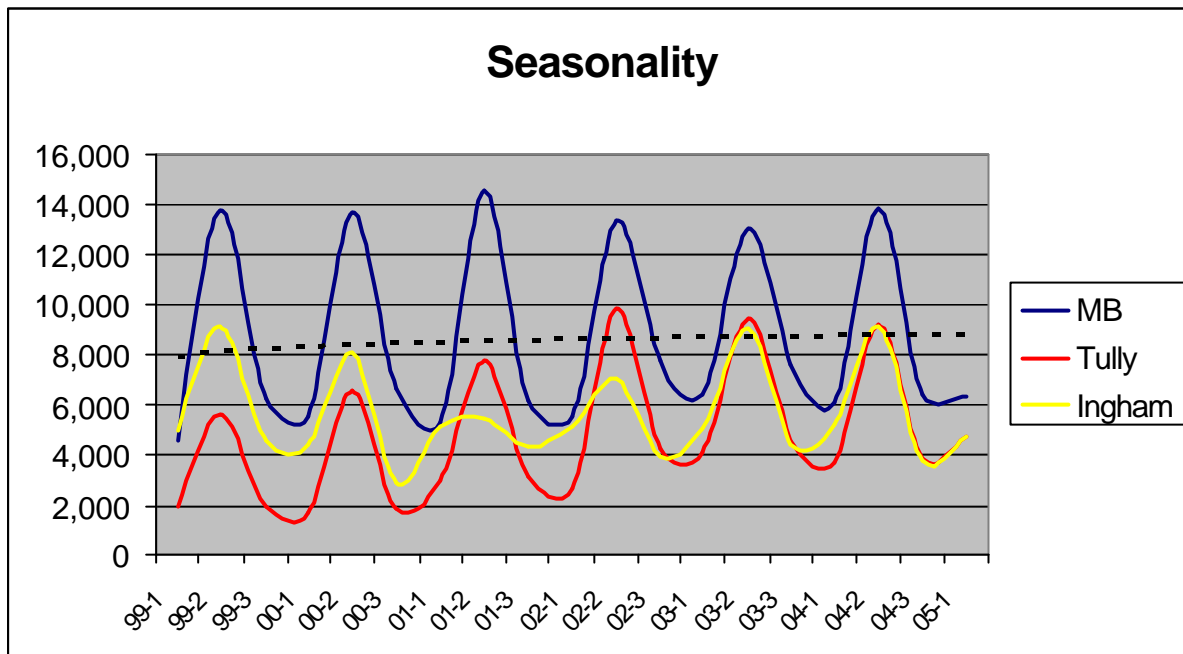**Figure 4-1 – Seasonality VICs**

The trendline for Mission Beach (black dotted line) is rising, but at a low rate. The figures for the high season (June to September) remained relatively stable which indicates that most businesses are operating on capacity during this period. Period 1 has been performing slightly better in the last three years, which means that more visitors are coming in the low season.

The following graph compares the previous year between visitor numbers of various VICs in the region.
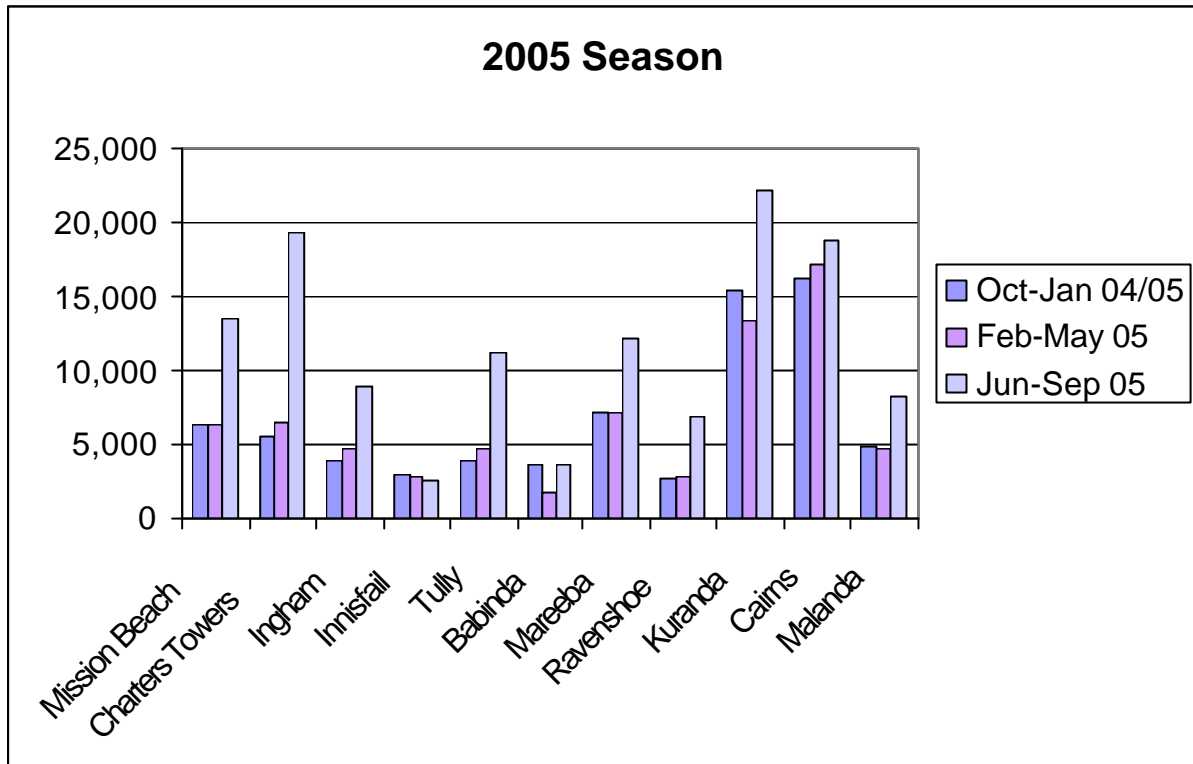
Figure 4-2 – 2005 Season

Mission Beach, Charters Towers, Ingham, Tully, Mareeba, Ravenshoe, Kuranda and Malanda follow a similar pattern, while Innisfail, Babinda and Cairns deviated from this seasonal pattern. Between October and May most Visitor Centres report similar numbers, with a sharp peak in the high season, with nearly double the amount of visitors.

4.4 Advertising expenditure

When asked what percentage of budget is allocated to advertising, the results were:

marketing budget allocation

Caravan Parks	5%
Backpackers	6%
B&B	10%
Self contained	9%
resorts	9%
average	**8%**

Table 4.4 – marketing budget allocation

A third of the businesses were not able to provide these figures, so the sample is very limited. Of all the interviewed businesses, only four spend 10% or more on advertising. Due to some businesses spending as much as 25%, the average spending seems high. Without these 'big spenders', the B&B segment has an average expenditure on advertising of 4% and the self-contained shows a figure of 5%.

4.5 Conclusion

Overall it appears that members who are actively marketing their business have higher occupancy and are better informed of changes in the market. Businesses that advertise little could often not explain why there has been a downturn in visitor numbers this year.

What is definitely needed is for members to focus on a narrower target market. This will allow for a more cost-effective use of marketing tools. The average expenditure on advertising is very low, and especially in the low seasons more advertising is needed. Each business should look at who it is that they wish to reach with their marketing efforts, and focus on that one group (or groups). The organization itself should also keep in mind that they are advertising to different segments. The backpacker and caravan segments are already defined, but sometimes the advertising overlaps; especially the website is not very well segmented. By cooperating, the entire organization will have more resources available and could advertise more efficiently and more cost effective. See chapter six – cooperative advertising for a more elaborate discussion on this topic.

5 Chapter five – The Internet; experiences and opportunities

5.1 The current use of the Internet

Even though not all members host their own website, all of them have some sort of relation of their business to the Internet, if only through the missionbeachtourism.com website. Most members have had an expert developer (NetPorts Australia) take care of their website. As a result, NetPorts has been able to form a network of all the local websites and through this promote the entire Mission Beach region. Their aim is for the local websites not to compete but work together in promoting Mission Beach.

Out of all the accommodation and tour operators that are listed on the website (72), 21 have a website which is developed and hosted by NetPorts, which means that the developers have a firm hand in marketing and networking these businesses. The benefit of this is that those websites which are developed by NetPorts have a similar layout and features, which gives the whole a more professional look than if each website was different. Peter Thwaites, developer at NetPorts Australia, says that through each individual website, along with the generic ones (missionbeachtourism.com and mymissionbeach.com) the Mission Beach area is promoted. He aims to network all these websites so that they form a platform representing the region, and even exceeding Cairns and Port Douglas in coverage!

There are only three businesses that were able to develop and host their own websites, all of which are owned by small businesses. In addition to NetPorts, some different professional developers were used. Eight websites are hosted by www.oz-e.com.au. Eleven businesses do not have a website; that makes up 15% of the total.

5.2 The awareness of E-marketing

As more and more businesses and tourists are using the Internet nowadays, there is a clear correlation between effective use of the Internet and success in business.

The different possibilities of using the Internet for a business in Mission Beach are as follows:

1. Hosting a website where visitors can find information about the company and the product and make bookings or contact the owners
2. Networking by having other businesses put links on their websites so that visitors are referred to the website. This practice keeps visitors within a certain network and thus maximizing coverage of the Mission Beach area.
3. Providing the opportunity to be listed in business- or tourism directory sites (worldwide)
4. Intranet or extranet; by linking computers together information can be shared more efficiently. This is not restricted to the office building; by letting members or the committee log on to the main site by using passwords and lets them add or change information.
5. Email. This provides a fast and easy method of communication which is free. Another benefit over the fax, for example, is that it allows sending colour photos and links to other sites.
6. Gathering statistics in an automated manner. Websites and especially online booking forms can record many different characteristics of their visitors, such as: where they come from, how long they stay on the website, how they found the website, what type of computer they have and so forth.

In all cases the use of the Internet will both lower costs and increase the coverage of national and international visitors, some of which would have never been reached without the Internet.

It was found that most members have their own website, and are listed on the MBT website. However, the use of networking or online directories is often not thought of.

5.3 Opportunities for members

The opportunities that the Internet can provide are numerous. By networking computers of different businesses, costs could be cut for telephone lines, faster communication is possible and paperwork is reduced. Fast Internet connections will be necessary for this, as dial-up connections tend to be too slow and costly.

When it concerns advertising, the Internet can be used to reach literally the entire world. Nowadays businesses without an online presence will almost certainly lose customers. Accommodation owners as well as tour operators could offer easy-to-use online forms where visitors can book directly from home using their credit cards. Networks with local and international tourism-websites should be established. This would be an excellent way to target the European and North American market.

An inexpensive and very effective opportunity to use the worldwide coverage of the Internet is booking-sites. These websites are linking thousands of accommodation businesses world- or nation-wide together and allow guests to check online whether there is a bed available at a certain date, and what the price is. The only thing that the operator has to do is to provide the number of free beds to the host website, so that visitors can check whether there is a bed available at a certain date. The benefit of these websites is that for operators it requires relatively little work, and little knowledge on the technical side of it, and the host website will take care of displaying the operator's website or details worldwide. The website's reputation will ensure large amounts of Internet traffic. Already in a place like Cairns most accommodation is listed on these websites, as competition tends to be more intense there. The following table shows how many businesses came up with the search term: "Mission Beach". (Only relevant businesses are listed). Besides the websites listed below, there are many more available; especially national websites within Europe, the US or Asia for example. It would require some language skills, but national websites form a good way of entering new markets. With most of these different websites, the same names come up.

Name	number of listings under 'Mission Beach'
www.hostelworld.com	1
www.australia.com	15
www.atdw.com.au	13
www.ebookers.com	1
www.au.lastminute.com	3
www.takeabreak.com	12
www.tripadvisor.com	4
www.tropicalnorthqueensland.com.au	5
www.cassowarycoastinfo.com	21
www.nomadsworld.com	1
www.yha.com	1
www.queenslandholidays.com	11
www.ozbedandbreakfast.com	4
www.bbbook.com.au	1
www.big4.com.au	2
www.ratestogo.com	8

Table 5.3 – an example of booking-websites and the number of listed members under the search term 'Mission Beach'

5.4 The MBT website and NetPorts Australia

The website http://www.missionbeachtoursim.com is designed and maintained by NetPorts Australia. On the website each members has a panel where a brief description of the product/service is given. Visitors can make bookings and enquiries only through an easy-to-use booking form. Overall, the members of MBT seem to be satisfied with the contents of the website and its developer, and do not see a reason to change it. The website hosts a range of features: secure online-bookings, information about Mission Beach, the possibility for members to work on their own site, the MBT newsletter and a proposed Mission Beach Forum.

The number of 'individual hits' to the missionbeachtourism.com website is on the rise, as each month since January 2005 showed a large increase over the previous year. The highest months are March, April and May, but right until October the number of individual hits has been over 12,900 per month in 2005.

Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
Nov 2005	4928	3298	501	160	1094	207658	1281	4013	26385	39425
Oct 2005	4189	2714	488	140	2830	726018	4347	15157	84148	129866
Sep 2005	4860	2947	429	133	2718	750458	4017	12882	88420	145804
Aug 2005	5808	3553	480	138	2904	904992	4291	14897	110165	180050
Jul 2005	5472	3380	505	140	3015	834854	4345	15663	104780	169656
Jun 2005	6259	3961	507	144	2633	970796	4322	15233	118859	187776
May 2005	6698	4703	488	165	3182	1042400	5119	15148	145812	207645
Apr 2005	7732	4429	595	156	2854	1009317	4700	17873	132886	231985
Mar 2005	7041	4511	474	150	2855	1048949	4678	14717	139870	218272
Feb 2005	4241	2992	336	104	505	142875	626	2018	17956	25450
Jan 2005	4928	3065	327	100	1722	692124	3123	10143	95031	152785
Dec 2004	4162	2637	324	95	1594	580458	2962	10053	81755	129045
Totals						8910899	43811	147797	1146067	1817759

Figure 5-1 – Web statistics of www.missionbeachtourism.com

For most accommodation owners, the Internet nowadays is considered "very important" to their business, and most bookings come through businesses' own websites. The value of the missionbeachtourism.com website is received lower scores, especially for backpackers' and B&Bs. The role of Mission Beach Tourism has changed as the Internet is growing more and more popular. In addition to directing visitors from the Visitor Centre to local businesses, it is also important to establish an online presence, and make sure that visitors to the website are encouraged to make bookings.

New features could be added to the website, such as a community forum, information on local news and weather reports, warnings of stinger-jellyfish and cyclones, local issues and developments and special offers such as discounts, markets, live performances etcetera. An automated email-system could be set up to provide members who are interested with appropriate information. If necessary, software from the Internet could be used for this which is usually free of charge or very inexpensive. A '*special offer*' button could be included on the homepage, where a few businesses are highlighted for a certain amount of time, showing special offers. These places would be for rent for the specified time for a reasonable amount of money. This will result in more visitors to the individual's webpage and some income for MBT.

5.5 Conclusion

It has appeared that some businesses are making good and efficient use of the Internet, which results for them in higher occupancy and extensive coverage on the World Wide Web. NetPorts Australia is definitely helping a great deal to lead businesses into the world of E-marketing. The benefits of the Internet cannot be stressed enough, as thousands of people visit Mission Beach- and booking websites each day.

However, it is necessary to keep up with the latest developments, as Internet users are very eager to skip sites that do not offer all the conveniences they are used to. A website needs to have at least: a secure online booking system, clear contact details, an attractive layout with (interactive) menus and useful information. Each business needs to evaluate what type of visitors they are likely to get, and if these people make use of the Internet. Overseas visitors will most likely use the Internet for information at least, and more upmarket accommodation might expect this too. By linking websites to each other, coverage and promotion of Mission Beach will be increased. Accommodation that relies on drive-by visitors such as caravan parks and backpackers' are less sensitive to these developments, but it is worth looking into.

Mission Beach Tourism could make their website a place where locals as well as visitors hang out, by offering a forum (similar to what Lonely Planet is doing), updated information about the weather and wildlife, and hosting weekly or monthly specials from members.

6 Chapter six – Cooperative advertising

6.1 The current situation regarding cooperative advertising

It seems that many (one-third) of the small businesses do not have the budget or have never considered cooperative advertising. Even though this method is much cheaper than individual advertising, it is still too expensive for some businesses. They refrain from doing it because advertising in newspapers and magazines is found to be too short-dated. Small businesses rely on brochures and the Internet. MBT must either find a way to cut down the prices of cooperative advertising, or advertise in ways that are more long-lasting, such as maps or reference-books, bill-boards etc.

The businesses that have made use of this form of joint advertising are very satisfied with it, and would use it again. However, the share of this form of advertising in their advertising activities was rarely above 10%.

6.2   The opportunities for members

Businesses that make extensive use of marketing and promotion have been trying to organize cooperation with advertising in different media. If Mission Beach Tourism is to offer an inexpensive advertising programme, it is important that as many members as possible join in to share the costs. In the past years, various projects have been undertaken by MBT, as well as by individual members.

Cooperated projects that have been done by MBT in the past year:
1. The Mission Beach brochure, which features tour operators and accommodation in addition to promotion of the name Mission Beach with possible insert with listing of various businesses.
2. A local map of Mission Beach and Innisfail, with advertisements of tours and accommodation
3. A page in TTNQ magazine, 2005 featuring six ads by accommodation plus one for Mission Beach.
4. An advertisement in The Road Ahead, featuring one ad for an operator and one for Mission Beach
5. TEL, The Holiday planner including a full page featuring accommodation and operators in addition to a Mission Beach ad.
6. TNT Magazine, backpacker market featuring extreme sports
7. Holidays with kids, vol 9, 2005 featuring three accommodation ads.
8. A rate-sheet, listing all the rates of the operators

As advertising in a magazine has a fixed cost per page or half page, it is possible to share the costs over various interested parties, and the more the better. As the artwork is already done for the projects of previous year(s), the costs will be lower.

Two examples:

Mission Beach featured in a full page in 'Passport to Cairns' starting from July of 2005. There are five issues which are distributed over seven months and have a coverage of over 100,000 readers (40,775 printed copies and there are on average 2.5 readers per copy). The ad cost $1,800 per issue, thus $9,900 in total (including GST). Ten members joined in so the costs were spread. In the end, each member paid only $141 per month, which is $198 per issue, to have their business promoted in a small panel next to a generic Mission Beach ad.

The October/November issue of 'Road Ahead', the RACQ magazine features a Mission Beach ad in cooperation with one or two other businesses. The magazine has almost 850,000 printed copies, but if two members join they will pay only $375 to advertise their business.

The MBT 2005-2006 advertising budget is $20,000 for the year.

Advertising activity 2005 - 2006	expense	income	comments
AAA (RACQ book)	$1,855		3 banner ads on 3 different pages
Innisfail map Graphically Speaking	$240		
Mission Beach Brochure	$11,391	$23,540	profit of this year will offset last years extra print run cost 7545 (ongoing distribution)
Templar marketing brochures	$6,000		distribution and storage of brochures
Tour Dex cairns	$5,000		effective distribution of MB brochure through Cainrs/Port Douglas & Tablelands region
Backpackers Expo	$500		to assist with air fares
RACQ Road Ahead + TTNQ/TEL	$950		advertising Mission Beach
TEL Holiday Planner with 7 operators	$600		
TTNQ convention bureau promotional book	$750		aiming to catch the 'after convention' market
TTNQ Holiday Planner with 6 operators	$8,525	$8,979	for travel shows and marketing campaigns
MBT website	$500		ongoing
VIC ratesheet	$1,405		new print each year
opportunistic advertising	$2,200		for opportunities should they arrive
total	$39,916	$32,519	

Table 5.2 – the MBT advertising budget 2005 - 2006

6.3 *The responsibilities of MBT*

Mission Beach Tourism would arrange the artwork necessary for the advertisement, as well as organizing the placing of the ad. The projects that have already been done will be cheaper in the future.

If more members are required to join, the organization needs to formulate a plan in which the opportunities are explained in detail, and present it to the members. As an extension of the budget, expected returns should be calculated so that businesses can evaluate whether the opportunity if profitable or not. The most common reasons that were given when asked why members had not cooperated with others before were: "never thought about it" and "too expensive". This shows once more that the members are not aware of the benefits of being with an organization such as Mission Beach Tourism.

6.4 *Conclusion*

Most members have, in one way or another, cooperated in advertising before. However, the big projects still remain difficult to organize. The small budget does not allow the organization to advertise the Mission Beach region sufficiently, and therefore need its members to contribute. It need not be explained that cooperated advertising is cheaper than individual advertising, and the more contributors, the lower the price will be. Therefore, Mission Beach Tourism needs to make clear how effective the advertising will be.

7 Chapter seven – Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 *Major findings of the research*

One of the main areas of concern throughout this entire report has been market segmentation, and the communication of the (good) intentions of anyone in the organization. Market segmentation results in more efficient use of the marketing-dollar and it allows creating structuralized plans on whom to target and what the outcome of a marketing campaign will be. This goes for both the management of the organization and the individual members. The established communication channels seem to be blocked in some way, and need to be re-opened.

The tasks and responsibilities of Mission Beach Tourism Inc are to represent and promote all of its members and provide information to them about local affairs. The association deals with local authorities and promotes tourism in the region. The role of the Visitor Information Centre is to make bookings for guests who visit the centre, provide information about its members and sell local products. Talking to members has shown that many of them only expect the association to make bookings for them, and when this does not happen are unsatisfied.

It has also become evident that only a handful of businesses are making the most of their marketing capabilities. Business that do show stable or even an increase of guest numbers, while other businesses who are only moderately advertising, report a decline in business. A problem arises for the small businesses when having to choose how and where to advertise with a limited budget. Cooperative advertising and the Internet are good alternatives as they are inexpensive and relatively effective.

Market segmentation by the association's committee will provide a clearer picture for those who want to join in on cooperative advertising. It will show them how the marketing efforts will affect their business. It also provides a method for developing long-term plans and monitoring the results for each segment, and research new markets to penetrate. Individual businesses need to consider who their visitors/guests are. The visitor surveys have shown that there are many different types of visitors (backpackers, holiday indulgers, grey nomads etc.) so that there should be a niche for everyone.

7.2 *Recommendations for improvements*

7.2.1 Suggested improvements for members

A successful business is one that has a <u>business plan</u>; a document which outlines what the purpose of the business is, what the market looks like, who their customers are, how the competition is organized and how their product or service is advertised, all of which is supplemented with an 'action plan' with financial results and budgets. In this way, it is easier to evaluate whether targets have been met, and which improvements are needed.

Each business in Mission Beach cannot expect the Visitor Centre to provide them with all the bookings they need; it is necessary to become more active in the field of marketing to promote their own businesses. The organization can help small businesses with advertising, by organizing cooperative advertising. Cooperative advertising only works when there are many participants, so more members are required to participate.

Businesses that do not have a (good-running) website yet, should have one developed now! Already established website owners are very satisfied with their experiences, and some businesses rely on their website for most of their bookings. Search engine optimization (having the website appear highest in the results of an Internet search engine) is an important aspect of an effective website, but there is more to it. Websites must be user-friendly and easy accessible. Finally, by linking websites together

the Internet 'traffic' can be kept within the borders of 'virtual Mission Beach', so that all businesses will benefit.

7.2.2 Suggested improvements for the committee of Mission Beach Tourism

As a result of the low awareness of the tasks and roles of Mission Beach Tourism and the Visitor Information Centre, it is recommended that its members are informed better. A list of activities and issues that are worked on should me made and sent out to the members with frequent updates. The flow of information could also be increased by hosting social events for the members and volunteers at the Visitor Information Centre, such as famils and small parties or get-togethers.

Parties or BBQs can be held for committee members, operators and volunteers from the Visitor Centre, to get to know one another. It was even suggested by one of the members to invite visitors to these events too, to show our friendly atmosphere in Mission Beach.

In order to have more people join in for cooperated advertising, it must be made clear to them what the benefits are going to be. The committee should draw up a plan in which the activities, expenses, time frame and expected returns are outlined. Once a long-term plan is in place, it will be easier to convince members to come along.

7.3 Suggestions for further research

Although gathering statistics can be much work, it proves very useful in analysing the market. In the past year, the only data available was the number of visitors to the Visitor Centre, but this does not show the total amount of visitors to Mission Beach. In order to have the number of visitor nights, all accommodation businesses will need to proved figures to the researcher. A new research needs to be done which includes all the members, in order to have a complete picture of the situation. This can be done using quantitative questionnaires.

Time needs to be taken to look further into the costs of advertising. Since price is the most important reason for members to join in on cooperative advertising, the best deal must be negotiated with printers and distributors.

The organization lacks a clear database with statistics at the moment. The statistics that are gathered are incomplete and the reliability is questionable. The statistics that are collected have not been analysed in a useful way, by the VIC or even the monthly TTNQ reports that are sent out over the past years. By using computer software (MS Excel, Access or SPSS) relationships between datasets can be established which is much more useful and can provide an explanation to some of the problems that face the association (for example, linking occupancy rates with the use of the Internet.)

Appendix 1 - List of tables and graphs:

This questionnaire is intended for members of Mission Beach Tourism. The purpose of the research is to find out more about our members and the local tourism industry in order to make improvements to the service that MBT provides. All information will be analyzed anonymously, and the final report will be made available to all members who are interested. After completing this questionnaire, I shall make an appointment for a follow up discussion about some of the points mentioned in the questionnaire.
Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Part 1 - Your opinion on Mission Beach Tourism

1. How valuable is membership of **Mission Beach Tourism** to your business? Please circle one only.

    1. Not at all

    2. Of little value

    3. Of Significant value

    4. Very valuable

2. For the following activities provided by **Mission Beach Tourism**, please indicate for <u>each</u> activity your satisfaction and the relevance to your business. Please circle one option per activity only.

    1. <u>Operating a Visitor Information Centre</u>

Relevance to your business:	low	middle	high
Your satisfaction:	low	middle	high

    2. <u>Operating a website</u>

Relevance to your business:	low	middle	high
Your satisfaction:	low	middle	high

    3. <u>Representing MB at travel shows etc.</u>

Relevance to your business:	low	middle	high
Your satisfaction:	low	middle	high

    4. <u>Dealing with local and regional authorities (TTNQ, GGW, ***)</u>

Relevance to your business:	low	middle	high
Your satisfaction:	low	middle	high

    5. <u>Keeping its members informed of the latest developments in Mission Beach</u>

Relevance to your business:	low	middle	high
Your satisfaction:	low	middle	high

6.   Taking care of advertising the Mission Beach area in brochures etc.

Relevance to your business: low   middle   high

Your satisfaction: low   middle   high

7.   Being available for questions or complaints from its members

Relevance to your business: low   middle   high

Your satisfaction: low   middle   high

3. Are there any activities which you think MBT should be doing for its members, which they are currently not doing?

_____

_____

_____

4. For each of the following activities provided by the **Visitor Information Centre**, please indicate for each activity your satisfaction and the relevance to your business. Please circle one option per activity only.

1.   Providing information to visitors on accommodation and tours in the area

Relevance to your business: low   middle   high

Your satisfaction: low   middle   high

2.   Making bookings (referring visitors to your business)

Relevance to your business: low   middle   high

Your satisfaction: low   middle   high

3.   Welcoming visitors to Mission Beach (being the first point of contact)

Relevance to your business: low   middle   high

Your satisfaction: low   middle   high

4.   Providing information on Cassowaries, crocodiles and stinger-jellyfish

Relevance to your business: low   middle   high

Your satisfaction: low   middle   high

5.   Networking with other Visitor Information Centres in the region

Relevance to your business: low   middle   high

Your satisfaction: low   middle   high

6. <u>Providing news and weather reports</u>

Relevance to your business: low   middle   high

Your satisfaction: low   middle   high

5. Are there any activities that the Visitor Information Centre <u>should</u> be doing according to you, which they currently are <u>not</u> doing?

_____

_____

_____

Part 2 - Advertising

6. Which of the following methods of advertising do you use, in addition to your MBT membership?

1. Brochures _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   NO   YES

2. Maps _   NO   YES

3. Travel magazines_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   NO   YES

4. Newspapers _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   NO   YES

5. Internet _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   NO   YES

6. Videos/ CD-Rom/ Poster_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   NO   YES

7. Television/ Radio_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   NO   YES

8. Bill-boards _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   NO   YES

9. Trade publications (holiday planner…) _ _ _   NO   YES

10. Other, please specify: _____

7. Regarding the Internet: (please circle one option per question only)

1. <u>How important is the Internet for your business?</u>

Not important   Fairly Important   Very Important

2. <u>Do you find that the internet is an effective medium for advertising a business such as yours?</u>

Not Effective   Fairly Effective   Very Effective

3. <u>How valuable do you think the MBT website is to your business?</u>

Not Valuable   Fairly Valuable   Very valuable

8. What improvements could be made to the MBT website?

_____

_____

_____

9. If you **do not** use the internet for advertising, please indicate the reason: Please circle all that apply.

      1. Most guests/ visitors do not use the Internet when booking

      2. I don't have the knowledge or ability to use E-marketing

      3. No time to get involved with E-marketing

      4. Too expensive

      5. Other, please specify:_____

10. Of the following activities, which ones, if any, do you undertake to attract guests in the low season? Please circle all that apply

      1. Nothing

      2. Lower prices

      3. Advertise more

      4. Advertise differently

      5. Other, please specify: _____

11. Could you indicate what percentage of your budget do you allocate to advertising?

      _____

12. Do you, or have you ever cooperated with other businesses concerning advertising?

        YES   NO

(Please continue with question 13)   (Please skip to question 15)

13. If you have cooperated with others:

    1. <u>Do you think it was a cost effective experience?</u>

    Not   Average   Very

    2. <u>Would you do it again?</u>

    No   Maybe   Yes

    3. <u>Did you use MBT for this, or another organization?</u>

    MBT   Another organization   Organized it myself

    4. <u>How large is the share of this type of advertising in your total advertisement expenses?</u>

    0% – 20%   21% – 40%   41% – 60%   61% – 80%   81% – 100%

14. Could you indicate any suggestions that MBT can make in order to have more members join in for cooperated advertising?

_____

_____

_____

15. <u>If you have **not** cooperated</u>, what is the reason? Please circle all that apply.

    1. Too expensive

    2. No time to plan and organize

    3. I don't think it would work for my business

    4. Never thought about it

    5. Other, please specify_____

Part 3 - Market information

16. Has your business changed in the past 12 months in the following categories:

    1. <u>Business expansion (capacity)</u>

Decreased   Remained stable   Increased

    2. <u>Intensity of competition</u>

Less intense   Remained stable   More intense

    3. <u>The amount of guests/ visitors</u>

Decreased   Remained stable   Increased

4. Other changes, please specify:

_____

_____

17. Do you keep records of demographics and characteristics of your guests?

     YES   NO

18. What is your maximum daily capacity? (number of beds/ visitors)

_____

19. Approximately how many visitors/ guests do you have on average per day in the following periods?

    1. June up to and including September   _____

    2. October up to and including January   _____

    3. February up to and including May   _____

20. If you are offering accommodation, how long do people stay on average?
    1. 1 to 2 nights
    2. 3 nights
    3. 4 nights
    4. 5 to 7 nights
    5. 8 to 13 nights
    6. 14 or more nights

21. Do you aim your advertisements at a certain target group?

     YES   NO

If you answered YES to the previous question, could you describe your target group?

_____

_____

_____