

What are International Customers looking for?

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The Hunting Agency



THE HUNTING AGENCY

- Like many businesses in the Hunting and Tourism Sector, ours was a hobby that got out of control!
- First, random chance sparked the germ of an idea,
- 'Hunters Instinct' suggested the concept had merit...
- but...

- Commercial experience demanded that a viable business case be proven.
- Almost a year of research conducted online and in person



- How did the industry operate?
- Who would be our competitors?
- Where would we advertise?
- Who would our customers be?
- What would they want to hunt, where would they like to hunt it and how?
- Would they want to keep a trophy? If not, why?
- Where would they like to stay?
- What is the buying cycle?
- What would be a typical budget?
- How long would each trip last for?
- What would they want from their Guide / PH
- Why would they want to deal with The Hunting Agency?

- An example of our Market Research was conducted online across 17 Hunting Forums and Bulletin Boards when we asked:
 - Regardless of whether this was your 1st or 101st visit to Africa, where would you personally prefer to stay during your Hunt?
 - 5 Options included:
 - 5 Star VIP Hotel, Air Con / Room Service
 - Comfortable Lodge away from Hunting Grounds
 - Hunting Lodge within Hunting Grounds
 - Stay with Guide as House Guest at Estate
 - Tented Safari

And the winner was....

- Tented Safari
- Tented Safari took 73% of the votes – worldwide!

- While accepting that every client is different with their own motivation, as a result of our research we found that we could categorise many of our prospective clients into 3 distinct groups:

- Collectors – Trophy Hunters & location -hoppers, each with a very specific agenda
- Adventurers – Looking for a Boy's Own Adventure with guns and 4X4's
- Killers – Some people just want to pull the trigger!

- Generalisations are a terrible thing, so let's hear what some of our customers said.
- Last week we emailed our 2010 clients and asked them what they look for?
- This is what they told us:

Quote

- Never having been on any kind of hunting trip before I had no idea what to expect or ask. It was important to me that our agent understood this and was able to offer advice and suggestions as to what we may need to know. Although we had an idea of what packages were available it was very helpful to talk things through from what we would hunt, to where and how and when. My son wanted to discuss guns and ammunition and other hunting things which the agent happily dealt with. All of these details allowed us to prepare and set our own expectations.
- I wanted to book our trip with someone who had experience and knowledge of the region and who understood their clients requirements. When we arrived our PH was fantastic and being 'local' was clearly very well experienced and familiar with the area, its landscape and wildlife. Again, we were offered advice on what to expect and ask. Throughout our trip the PH was great company making it a hugely enjoyable trip and an expert on all aspects of hunting. This ensured we felt well looked after, safe and well informed at all times. The hunting was exactly what we wanted, a wide range of difficulties and challenges. We had been warned that nothing can be guaranteed but with the expertise of the PH we never doubted that we would leave without having achieved all that we had hoped for. At no point did I feel rushed, or that my questions were silly or irrelevant. Both the agent and the PH did their utmost to ensure we had the holiday of a lifetime.

Quote

- It's not all about inches!
- The context, surroundings, build up and afterwards are equally important.
- It's preferable if the PH knows a lot about the non-target species birds smaller mammals vegetation etc. The history of the place the tribes the events.
 - I was there to experience Africa in its broadest sometimes I feel there was too much emphasis on the hunt. By this I mean just being there and taking time to admire a view can be as important. I also like to get an understanding of local hunting traditions and practices and don't expect everything to be tailored to perceptions of the Western/ American way of doing things.
 - Again I can only speak for myself but I haven't hunted enough to go only for a 40" Markhor or whatever one's particular goal is - I want to pull the trigger a few times! As an example I prefer the Doe season as I'm able to be on my own and make more decisions rather than have the stalker breathing down my neck to make sure I take only a representative buck as opposed to the one he's saving for his Danish guests. Out in Africa I get the feeling that my only responsibility is to keep up and shoot straight when the occasion demands!

Quote

- There is also an economic balance to be struck. The perception of hunting especially abroad that it is about overweight, impotent scandalously wealthy people slaughtering endangered wildlife. While these people might leave the biggest tips I think widening the appeal to a broader socio economic demographic will increase hunting's sustainability in the long term. I don't know how the sums work but 3 cull hunts might bring in more than 1 trophy hunt but even if it didn't its 3 times as many people spreading the word and fighting hunting's corner.
- It's important to me that the hunt is entirely sustainable from a biodiversity perspective - I may be in a minority here but I'd rather pay more or be less successful but know that a full assemblage of predators existed in the environment.
- Also important to see that the hunt benefits the local community. I think my spell on the Kunene did more for the locals in terms of trickle down and meat! than drive through tourists. It's also I think more culturally aligned for local people to be involved in hunting than green tourism as its more deeply rooted in the environment.
- Unfortunate though it may be no environment is untouched by man and trophy hunting is a very good way of ensuring the environment isn't turned over to unsustainable cattle and goat herding. .

Quote

- One thing I have liked about your approach is the all inclusive nature of the charges and the fact that within limits you need pay for nothing from the point you are picked up at the airport till you are dropped off. I had a fear that the advertised price was just the thin end of the wedge tips (are they expecting my binos/rifle at the end of it) , stops for meals hotels etc etc as well as the financial uncertainty there's the concern about making social gaffes how much to tip? whets a reasonable amount of local drink to consume per evening! reasonable by British or reasonable by local etc.
- It may be that your approach is actually common practice but your assurances certainly gave me the confidence to take the plunge.

Quote

- Transparency (of costs). Sick of surprises and bullshit.
- Authenticity (of experience).
- Ethical
- ADVENTURE!
- Normal life sucks, work is degrading, busy, crowded, noisy. I want to escape all that into a real experience.
- The more authentic, traditional and 'real' the experience, the better.
- I don't give a shit about the lodge, the food or the decoration as long as it's all serviceable, I want good hunting and lots of it.

Quote

- The hunting test seems a pain in the arse for overseas hunters coming in and I can see that being a little off putting to some clients. It seems straight forward enough. 4 shots in 90 seconds at 75 meters in a 17cm target for euro7 (sounds a bit like Rorkes Drift), but I can see some clients rolling the eyeballs at it. SOME TWAT WHO SITS BEHIND A BLOODY DESK WITH HIS FINGER UP HIS BUM HOLE CAME UP THAT....bet the bastard ain't fired a rifle in his life.

Quote

- Obviously first things first, there has to be availability and variety of sustainable game, and unusual game (one of the main reasons you travel to a different country to hunt) in numbers that you are at least seeing, nothing more disheartening than hunting day in, day out and seeing nothing, but also taking into consideration the fact that you would be hunting large tracts of wilderness.
- Trophy quality I think is important, people who hunt for trophies, generally are well off and expect when they have paid a lot of money to get 'something nice', and like to see areas managed particularly with game in mind (I'm thinking of some of the estates in Hungary with a long tradition dedicated to game management for good trophy quality)
- Although as is seen especially in the likes of Croatia, Serbia and the Balkan states and also Poland, cheaper hunts are more available and is attracting the average shooting man, also the cull hunts in Africa, where the British indoctrinating of best practise, alienates trophy hunting, are very popular, just something to take in to consideration, it not all about the trophy.

Quote

- Having hunted in Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, I have never really thought about Finland. Most advertised hunts are for the mentioned above and the US/Canada. So Finland could be of great interest to UK and US hunters (in fact I have never heard of any hunts advertised or of any one that has hunted there), so this could be a "New Frontier" in hunting for a lot of clients.
- It would also be nice to have a trip with both hunting and fishing available and also wild fowling/wing shooting which I presume they can do. Like I said, I have never thought about Finland as a hunting destination, so my knowledge is limited on what species are available and if the hunts are driven of fair chase.

Quote

- Like hunting in Africa, a lot depends on budget and what the client is looking for as an experience. A percentage of hunters would want a trip based on luxury and a reasonable "bag" to brag about and a hotel/lodge with all the comforts. Where other hunters would want more of an adventure in the wilds on more of an "eco-hunt" which would be fair chase and in remote areas, tented or basic cabin as accommodation and sitting around a camp fire. Which is my sort of thing.

Quote

- Good company
- Friendly staff
- A PH who is encouraging, is good company.

Quote

- “Trophy Hunting” is in less demand than “Hunting”!
- Taxidermists, Shipping Agents and Customs share the trophy hunting revenue.
- A new generation of Hunters has been educated by Cull-Hunts in Africa.
- Modern Houses do not have room to display Trophies.
- International Hunters travel regularly and convenience / cost is a factor
- International Hunters can make direct comparisons to other providers

In summary

- In our Industry, no two clients are the same and the random nature of what we do is such that no two hunts can be the same either.
- A changing and unstable global economy means that Outfitters need to be flexible to attract a changing and more cautious target audience
- The cost of taxidermy and shipping prevents many clients considering a trophy hunt
- Clients are increasingly sophisticated in their research methods and expectations
- Transparency of proposal and pricing, perceived value for money and a guide that is genuinely enthusiastic
- Provision of both Trophy and Management Prices for species allows clients an informed choice
- Offer a variety of activities such as Wing Shooting / Fishing to differentiate yourself
- Employ friendly staff who demonstrate and share local knowledge / stories / experience

And finally...

- Clients are looking for an authentic experience, a successful hunt, value for money and memories that they are proud to look back on.
- They want to have fun during that experience, so let them have some.
- All you have to do is find out what good looks like – then give it to them!

