



## Banyan Tree Holdings

### GLOBAL TOURISM BUSINESS AWARD

### FINALIST 2010

# CASE STUDY

Banyan Tree Holdings is a resort developer operating worldwide, with 26 hotels, 70 spas, 70 galleries, and over 9,000 employees. The majority of its hotels and resorts are located in Asia and the Indian Ocean, with more recent expansion into the Middle East and North America. Its mission is to “Embrace the Environment and Empower People” wherever it operates.

Company-wide efforts take conservation into consideration in the day-to-day operations of its properties, and its hotels and resorts are designed to reflect the natural environment, using local products and indigenous materials whenever possible. It places a strong emphasis on integrating its mission and its corporate social responsibility (CSR)



commitment into all levels of its operations, as well as educating and training its staff about the importance of sustainable practices.

To formalise Banyan Tree’s Corporate Social Responsibility efforts, the company implemented its Green Imperative Fund, which provides funding to assist environmental initiatives and community-based projects in the communities in which it operates resorts. Examples of such initiatives include the monitoring of sea turtles and beach erosion in the Seychelles, and its two resort-based marine labs in the Maldives, combining marine research and educational facilities to enhance the study of the marine environment and promote conservation of marine resources.

In addition, the recently opened Banyan Tree Mayakoba in Mexico’s Maya Riviera engages in a host of conservation and sustainability efforts, including setting the property far back from the beach, which has resulted in the return of endangered sea turtles nesting at Mayakoba, where they had been absent for many years. Mayakoba has also invested in restoring and regenerating the original natural habitat from a former cattle ranch, which has led to the return of other native species, including recorded sightings of native jaguar on the Mayakoba property. Mayakoba has been at the forefront of sustainable tourism development in one of the most popular tourism areas in the world just south of Cancún, setting an important example for sustainable tourism practices in a region better known as a mass tourism destination.

In 2007, the company launched a new initiative called Greening Communities, specifically to address climate change but aiming to reduce and offset their carbon emissions.

## CASE STUDY



Each Banyan Tree resort is charged over the next ten years with planting annually 2,000 non-invasive trees that are complimentary to the local environment, in an effort to reduce its carbon footprint and support local community enhancement.

Banyan Tree Holdings has developed a comprehensive monitoring system for each individual property, establishing benchmarks for energy and water use, waste management, sourcing supplies, staff training, social welfare, and implementation of their company-wide Green Imperative Fund activities.

A designated staff member at each property co-ordinates all CSR developments and projects, including the management of a property-based CSR committee that allows

for the development of locally based CSR initiatives and activities within the framework of the larger corporate sustainability commitment. Each property must report via monthly teleconference on their efforts, progress and outcomes. This ensures accountability as well as allowing for the sharing of best practices and innovations across the company portfolio of hotels and resorts. Using Key Performance Indicators, each resort must complete a monthly Balanced Scorecard which tracks its results across a broad number of conservation measures, from wastewater management to local procurement of goods and services. Particular attention is paid to water and energy conservation, impacts on carbon emissions, trees planted, and number of hours spent implementing CSR activities.

In addition to environmental conservation, Banyan Tree also invests in supporting local communities through cultural heritage efforts, such as aligning the design of its resorts with the local vernacular and traditional building style, and providing training and development for local employment. Its Seedling Program works with at-risk children to “inspire, train, nurture” them to become productive members of their communities. The programme begins through a mentorship relationship, then provides a scholarship for the completion of additional education, and finally offers the opportunity for an internship at the Banyan Tree Resort to enable these young adults to have the financial means to further their education and successfully enter the workforce with a set of skills and initial experience behind them.

At each resort, guests are also encouraged to learn about local cultural traditions and heritage, and are offered a variety of activities that allow them to experience the local culture, all of which generates direct economic benefits to local communities. Banyan Tree works very hard to inculcate its CSR culture and commitment to environmental conservation into all levels of its resorts. Banyan Tree also asks the senior management at each resort to evaluate their impact as a tourism business on their local community and to share that evaluation with their staff and with headquarters.

This level of assessment and responsibility has made Banyan Tree a model for other global resort businesses working across different cultures and natural environments, while still being flexible enough to allow for local innovation and implementation based on sustainable tourism principles.