

The Blueprint for Hotel Watersports

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Beachfront hotels are tuning into the fact that a quality watersports facility as part of their leisure and recreation brings both increased revenue and additional marketing power.

Watersports specialists Blueprint Watersports report significant interest from hotels that have realised they are not maximising revenue from their waterfront. A well-managed facility will contribute well in excess of 50% gross profit through a mix of equipment hire and scheduled lessons by qualified instructors. Lessons can be anything from a single lesson to a program of half day lessons. Children's activities are superb revenue and great for the parents of course.

In addition, more advanced sessions, regatta's and corporate activities can all add significant revenue using the same basic equipment as efficiently as possible. The waterfront takes on a club atmosphere, not unlike a winter ski school, where guests can be independent or interact with other guests which all helps with social activities and to make an enjoyable holiday. Watersports can also be an attractive addition for hotel leisure clubs and a great way to bring in outside groups and their associated revenue.

A properly set up watersports facility can provide many things to a hotel - additional food and beverage sales from guests choosing to stay on site because of the activities on offer, associated retail, increased marketing opportunities, greater referrals, greater repeat bookings and improved corporate offerings.

In this age of tourist blogs and consumer websites, hotels have realised that bold claims need to be fully justified. Many hotels claim to have 'watersports' as part of their recreation programme but can pedalos and inflatable banana rides really be described as 'sports'?

A programme of activities must be tailored to the venue but generally, sports such as dinghy and catamaran sailing, windsurfing, kayaking and waterski sports lend themselves well to the hotel environment. Professionally run watersports not only look fantastic but also encourage guests on the beach to join in and have a go.

Safety is fundamental and instructors should be qualified and experienced, as well as having excellent communication and customer service skills.

Traditionally, third party concessions can be a solution for hotels but there are a number of drawbacks from a hotel management perspective. The concessionaire will of course be profit focused and therefore may not invest in the latest equipment, or indeed spend money on maintaining their existing fleet. As the hotel often sees any additional revenue as a bonus, they may end up with a very poor share of the revenue. In some cases we have seen this being as little as 10% to the hotel and 90% to the operator! Staff are unlikely to represent the hotel in the way that all other staff do and therefore quality suffers. Managers might also feel that using a third party would distance them from any liability in the event of an accident. This may not be the case where a hotel promotes a third party activity on site.

Blueprint Watersports Director Tim Hughes believes a quality facility should be run by the hotel. 'This ensures that the hotel's objectives can be clearly met - improved revenue, quality of service, quality and choice of activities (not everyone wants to visit the spa or stay inside in the gym!) and above all, safety, said Hughes.

'This is achieved by setting up an appropriate facility, training staff (including some local where possible), provision of operating procedures, lesson plans, risk assessments, management processes and equipment sourcing'.

The Blueprint solution is a simple three-step process:

Appraisal - assesses venue potential

Installation - fleet purchase, staff recruitment and training, risk assessments, lesson plans and the creation of an operations manual

Activation - Initial management of the facility and providing ongoing quality management as required.

Hughes added 'There is a great opportunity for hotels to introduce their own watersports programmes across their brand. This way guests can book with the knowledge and confidence that they will get the watersports that they want, as well as being able to progress to the next level of their ability through a hotel award scheme'.



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Blueprint Watersports provide a wide variety of watersports solutions.

With over 15 years industry experience the founders of the business have been involved at the very top of the watersports industry, managing and consulting on some of the world's most successful watersports centres. They have also been instrumental in the development of current safety legislation, operational procedures and income generation ideas used by leading hotel and leisure activity companies around the world.

Blueprints unique packaged approach ensures that clients receive a complete watersports solution for their needs. Quality of safety, staff, operations, equipment and activities are key to our packages, which are tailor made for each client or venue.

Blueprint team credentials:

Tim Hughes

Former Head of Operations for the world renowned United Kingdom Sailing Academy (UKSA) and experienced watersports business professional at the forefront of industry development.

Chris Eades

Former Regional Development Officer for the Royal Yachting Association (RYA),

expert in the active holiday market with extensive knowledge of customer focused and safe, yet financially viable, on-water activities.

Jamie Boag

Top International professional yachtsman and watersports business professional and respected project Manager of high performance luxury cruising yachts and race boats.

Ian Walker

Double Olympic silver medallist and America's Cup Skipper, I is one of the worlds top racing helmsmen/tacticians manager of large scale racing projects worldwide.

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