Marketing & Promoting the Silk Road: Success Stories and Challenges

6th UNWTO Silk Road Task Force Meeting
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The Role of the Silk Road Task Force

- Act as focal point for Silk Road activities
- Provide input and ideas
- Actively participate in meetings and events
- Help lobby and engagement support
- Facilitate international cooperation and collaboration
The Importance of the Silk Road today

- Outstanding and unique cultural and natural heritage
- New destinations emerging and opening up
- One of the world’s most discussed travel routes online
- Significantly improved business climate
- Increasing political attention globally
Symposium on Silk Road held at UN Headquarters

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The International Turkic Academy has held a symposium on the Silk Road at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, AzerTag reports.

The event attended by the High Representatives of the UN, Permanent Representatives of various countries to the UN, Ambassadors, top executives of international organizations, and distinguished scholars and intellectuals.

President of the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation Gunay Afandiyeva delivered a speech at the event. She said representatives of various confessions lived in peace and in stability in Azerbaijan over the centuries. The president also highlighted the successful reforms carried out under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev.
OPPORTUNITIES:
• Fairs - profile building and trade relationships
• Research – through partnerships
• Online – marketing at local, national and international levels
• UNESCO listed Silk Road Heritage Corridors
• Silk Road festivals and events
• Knowledge sharing – with other routes
While travelling in Uzbekistan:
• 83% of international tourists surveyed said they felt *safe*
• 76% would *recommend* the destination to friends
• 81% were attracted to Uzbekistan due to its *historical connection* to the Silk Road
Silk Road on Discovery Networks International

Project Partners:
UNWTO, Pioneer Productions and 7 Silk Road countries (China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia & Turkey)

Summary:
• **Pioneer Productions** produced a 4 part series broadcast worldwide in April on Discovery Networks International, in collaboration with the UNWTO.
• The series took celebrity host, David Baddiel, across 7 countries in May, June and July 2015.
• The series was a journey filled with incredible culture, history and landscapes
• Discovery Networks International have 2.8 billion subscribers in 220 countries around the world, with programming in 45 different languages
ABOUT THE SHOW

Discovery Channel joins David Baddiel as he sets off on a 4,000 mile journey to explore the most famous trade route in history – the Silk Road.

This four-part travelogue follows the comedian and novelist on the adventure of a lifetime, as he travels from Xi’an, China to Istanbul, Turkey to uncover a series of remarkable locations, mysteries and hidden gems, many unknown to the western world.

The 2,000-year-old ancient highway changed the world, carrying not just trade but knowledge, religion, disease and dissent between the Far East and Europe. With exclusive access to research and investigations, using cutting-edge technology, David retraces the steps of merchants, warriors and pilgrims along the largest trade route the world has ever known.

Along his journey across some of the toughest terrain on Earth, he walks in the shadow of Marco Polo across a haunted desert; tracks the real Indiana Jones into the wild frontier lands; reveals archaeological treasures lost for centuries; and unravels the mystery that baffled ancient Rome - the secret of silk.

Each episode reflects the changing environments along the route; from China to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan to Azerbaijan, and finally through Georgia to the end of the Silk Road in Istanbul.

WATCH A CLIP
DAVID BADDIEL ON THE SILK ROAD

OVERVIEW | PODCAST | Q&A | TRAVEL GUIDE | MAP | FACTS | PHOTOS | VIDEOS

TRAVELLING THE SILK ROAD: HOW TO VISIT

Follow in David’s footsteps and Make Your World Bigger with a Silk Road adventure of your very own.

First coined in 1877 by German geographer Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen, the Seidenstrasse - or Silk Road - is a legendary network of ancient trade routes connecting China with the edge of Europe.

Formally established by the Chinese Han Dynasty in the 2nd century BC, merchants traversed the routes for almost 1,600 years. A combination of geopolitical change and the shift of trade routes from land (slow) to sea (much faster) effectively closed the Silk Road to trade. However, while people in the past travelled the Silk Road out of necessity, today those following in their footsteps tend to explore at a more serene pace.

This ancient route of discovery offers a variety of natural, cultural and historical wonders, and there are dozens of tour operators who run Silk Road tours, ranging from half-day excursions to three-month overland adventures from China to Turkey.

CHINA

Over 3,000 miles of the Silk Road run within China’s borders, and the Silk Routes Network of the Chang’an – Tianshan Corridor was added as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014.

Among a wealth of extraordinary experiences, you’ll find remote sections of the Great Wall built to keep bandits at bay; the famous Kashgar Sunday Market; and the 15th-century Idikan Mosque which can welcome 20,000 worshippers.

Kashgar as a region is ethnically and culturally diverse. At least 50% aren’t Han Chinese; they are descended from central Asian traders, Turko-Tatars, and the warriors ruling the Lighnurs.
1  PERU
British Airways' new direct Gatwick-Lima service (from May) will take just 12.5 hours, putting Peru firmly on the travel map. This year, a new cable car will improve access to ridge-top Kuelap – Peru's 'other Machu Picchu'. And for adventurers looking for an unusual adrenaline fix, there's nowhere like the SkyPools in the Sacred Valley. The glass pools, 400ft up a cliff, offer epic views of Cusco by day and the stars by night. It takes several hours to climb, hike and zip-line to your SkyPoo, which thankfully has its own private bathroom.

2  IRAN
Ever since the US foreign office relaxed its travel advice for Iran last summer, interest has been growing by leaps and bounds. With most of the country now deemed safe, and the reopening of the Iranian embassy in London marking the visa process simpler, travellers can really explore its UNESCOWorld Heritage Sites and Mt Damavand, the Middle East's highest peak.

World Expeditions' Gordon Steer says the mountain is most popular in Iran trip, despite the demanding terrain. 5138m, 16,850ft, it's a challenging climb and the eight-day trip involves mountaineering, camping and nights in mountain huts.

For history and culture, adventure specialist WildFrontiers has seen bookings soar from 30 in 2010 to over 200 in 2016, with many drawn by theIslamic architecture of Shiraz, Kerman, Yazd and the ancient site of Persepolis.

3  CANADA
Never short of opportunities for the adventurous traveller, Canada is accessible and affordable than ever. This spring, the new Maple Leaf was certified by the World Wildlife Fund as a Silverleaf destination and the newest national park, Algonquin Provincial Park, has opened.

Budget travel: A week in Toronto costs $130, with prices dropping to $90 in the off-season, and visiting the Canadian Rockies is free with the Parks Pass.

Tourism: The Rocky Mountaineer offers luxury train travel from $1,800, while the Via Rail offers discounted rates. Life is much cheaper in the provinces, with Banff and Jasper National Parks offering free camping, as well as beautiful landscapes and wildlife.

4  ICELAND
New flights and a growing number of tours and activities make it the ideal place if you don't want to travel halfway around the world for a spot of adventure. Black Tomato's four-day survival camp in the frozen wildernesses of Iceland teaches the art of survival and ice climbing; learn polar survival skills with expert guides and camp out on the Langjökull Glacier under the glow of the Northern Lights.

Meanwhile, the newly direct London to Iceland flight makes the region easier to explore. Discover the World's ice caves, mining the region ofugglebog, a vast region of jagged peaks and waterfalls, and the stunning landscape of the Westman Islands.

5  THE STANS
There's nowhere like the Stans to bag a unique passport stamp, and a cracking adventure experience. The recent relaxation of visa restrictions has helped boost interest in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – all of which celebrate 25 years of independence since the former Soviet Union this year. "The four countries are so different in terms of the activities and the culture of native tribes, and visitors have the chance to learn about everything from the former Soviet occupation right back to the legendary Silk Road," says G Adventures' Rachel Wasser.

6  SRILANKA
Although Sri Lanka has long been famous for its beaches and wildlife, the island has recently emerged as a destination for adventure travel. With the opening of a new airport and the completion of the new rail line, the island is now accessible for a fraction of the cost.

Budget travel: A week in Colombo costs $250, with prices dropping to $150 in the off-season, and visiting the national parks is free with the Parks Pass.

Tourism: The new rail line offers luxury train travel from $1,800, while the Via Rail offers discounted rates. Life is much cheaper in the provinces, with Yala and Udawalawe National Parks offering free camping, as well as beautiful landscapes and wildlife.

7  COLOMBIA
Although Colombia is known for its coffee, Cartagena and Bogota, but there's much more to the country with the opportunity to visit places where tourism is low and far between. There are incredible surf spots, national parks and ancient ruins, including the Anquehue Prefecture, a national park that has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Most visited is the Lost City, Tayrona National Park, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997, and is home to the ancient Magdalene culture. The city is accessible by hiking, which is free with the Parks Pass, and offers beautiful views of the Sierra Nevada mountains, leading to the Andes and the Caribbean. The park is home to a variety of wildlife, including monkeys, sloths, toucans and birds, as well as a wide range of plants and flowers.
How do destinations promote the Silk Road?
Silk Road on UNWTO social media
Let’s get to work!
Marketing the Silk Road: Pro’s & Con’s

**PRO’s:**
- Arguably history’s most important route
- Strong brand recognition
- Unique way of linking countries under positive brand
- Incredible variety of product and experiences
- Limited penetration by mass market

**CON’s:**
- No unified branding
- Limited (or no) budget
- No website
- Limited presence on individual country websites
- Little market intelligence
Roundtable discussion

1. How are destinations currently using the Silk Road for branding and promotion?
2. How can destinations work more effectively together in marketing and promoting the Silk Road?
3. What should be the priorities for 2016/2017?