



## The Marketing Communication for Cultural Tourism of Klong Roi Sai Community in Tapee Basin

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### Abstract

This research aims to (1) study the way of life and specific cultures that appear in Klong Roi Sai Community in Tapee Basin and (2) explore the content of marketing communications and guidelines for cultural tourism development of Klong Roi Sai Community. In this study, a qualitative research method was used, which was collected by in-depth interview, observation, focus groups, related documents and research papers. In total 27 interviews were completed with key informants from the community that was divided into 3 groups including community leaders, villagers and relevant agencies' representatives in Klong Roi Sai Community by purposive sampling. The results show that the community has a variety of comprehensive marketing communications including advertising, news and public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, website, signages, brochures, Facebook page, visitor center, QR code that can be scanned via smartphones, YouTube, Line and community ecotourism clubs are created. The contents of cultural marketing communication and the guidelines for cultural tourism development of the Klong Roi Sai community consist of media development for public relations, a way of life that still has a traditional lifestyle along the river, a way of life that is related to nipa-palms, most local people use nipa-palm leaves in every part of their life, such as thatched-roof, tobacco, packaging of nipa palm desserts and also can be used as the ingredients of nipa palm in syrup and nipa palm salad. Besides, the nipa palm vinegar is a unique signature of Nai Bang Community as well as a way of life that ensures the community's traditions are passed from generation to generation.

### Introduction

Surat Thani is a city of rivers. The Tapee River is the main river which splits into canals that flow along the land, locally known as "Klong Roi Sai" (canal of hundred streams); that connects to the 6 sub-districts of

Muang District. The local people call this community "Nai Bang Community or Klong Roi Sai Community in Tapee Basin" which includes; Bang Bai Mai Sub District, Bang Sai Sub District, Bang Pho Sub District, Bang Chana Sub District, Klong Chanak Sub District and

Klong Noi Sub District. The community's way of life still uses the boat as local transport, for fishing and farming, and consists of both coconut farms and nipa palm farms. Nowadays, car transportation offers comfort yet the boats are still used allowing the community to have a lifestyle of staying in the garden house along both sides of the canal; similar to life historically. Klong Roi Sai Community is known as a traditional community even though it is not far from the city. The community's people are known as the "Nai Bang People" which is accepted by the community.

According to the landscape, which is a wetland area that is influenced by freshwater and seawater, which is why the Klong Roi Sai Community is composed mainly of plants, especially nipa palms. The community has an ideal area to organize agricultural tourism activities and the government has a policy to promote the tourism industry. Hence, Klong Roi Sai Community has become the most important tourist attraction in Surat Thani Province. Visitors can experience the way of life of fishermen and farmers by both car and longtail boat trips. Moreover, there are local monkey picking coconut shows, unique local handicrafts and the visitors can pay respect to "Luang Pho Kao Suk" at Bang Bai Mai Temple which is the soul of the people of Klong Roi Sai. In addition, the tourist can also see millions of fireflies that are shining like lights of Christmas trees at night, as the slogan states, "Watching birds, catching crabs, seeing monkeys and fireflies, hundreds of canals and narrow waterway".

Therefore, this research is to study the way of life and specific cultures that appear in Klong Roi Sai Community in Tapee Basin through the survey of content of marketing communication and guidelines for cultural tourism development of Klong Roi Sai Community by engaging with community tourism management based on members of the community participation. The marketing communication is responsible for connecting the knowledge, understanding and having the common perspectives together, including collaborating with the third parties for the mutual benefit of the community. Engaging marketing communication is the heart of social bonding which leads to the collective action within a group or community to become a strong and develop community. Therefore, the focus of the study is what content of marketing communications are used by members of the community to secure the prosperity along with the preservation of the environment, a way of life and to ensure of the community's traditions are passed from generation to generation.

## Objectives

1. To study the way of life and specific cultures that appear in Klong Roi Sai Community in Tapee Basin.
2. To explore the content of marketing communications and guidelines for cultural tourism development of Klong Roi Sai Community.

## Conceptual framework

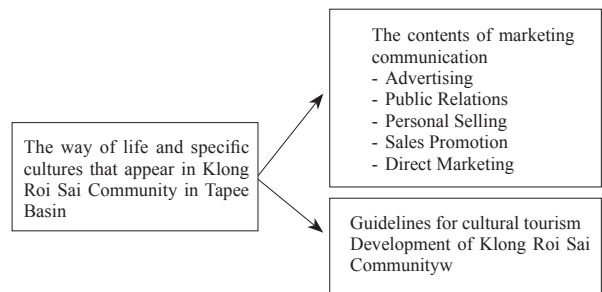


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

## Research methodology

The researcher conducted this research by using a qualitative research methodology: in-depth interview, observation, focus group interview and then applies the concepts of marketing communication and cultural public relations media to analyze the results. In addition, the researcher also studied relevant documents and research papers for further discussion.

### 1. Population and samples

The researcher performed the sampling in Klong Roi Sai Community by using a purposive sampling. The samples are divided into 3 groups, as community leaders, villagers, and relevant agencies' representatives. The community leaders are in the first group, including the formal and informal community leaders, which is a person who has worked on tourism management activities and is accepted and respected by people in the community. In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 persons consisting of 6 village headmen and 6 representatives of the Subdistrict Administration Organization.

The second and third groups were the villagers totaling 15 persons which consisted of 10 people who live in Klong Roi Sai Community as well as Homestay and boat trip entrepreneurs. For the third sample group 5 people from the relevant agencies' representatives, which are the organizations that support the community tourism management. The researcher applied in-depth interviews and focus group method for the second and third groups.

## 2. Research instrument

2.1 In-depth interview, the researcher used the interview model based on Semi-Structural Interview/moderated scheduled interview.

2.2 Focus group interview, the researcher used this tool to interview the samples.

2.3 Participant observation, the researcher participated in various activities that were organized by the community to promote community tourism. The researcher would observe the behavior and feeling of members of the community who participated in the activities, then the data analyzed the content of marketing communications which leads to the cultural tourism development in Klong Roi Sai Community.

## 3. Collection of data

In the first step, the researcher collected the relevant supporting documents, such as history books, research, and news articles. Then, the researcher applied the information collected from the documents to be a guide to design the questions. The open-ended questions were created based on Semi-Structural Interview/Moderated Scheduled Interview, so the sample expressed their opinions. After that, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with the sample groups and focus groups that included participant observation as well as collecting data. The researcher analyzed the results of the study by using the conceptual framework and relevant theories and then interpret all the data as descriptive data with the idea diagram attached to make the research as clear and easy to understand.

## 4. Data Analysis

In this study, the research tools have checked the quality by the experts in marketing communication, cultural communication and communication arts. A total of 3 people considered and gave suggestions for the improvement of the tools. After that, the tools needed to be experimented with the sample then the research tools were used to collect data. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed the data to find the coherence of all the data and to answer the objectives of the research.

## Results

### The way of life and specific cultures that appear in Klong Roi Sai Community, in Tapee Basin.

This study summarizes the way of life of Klong Roi Sai Community in Tapee Basin, from the 6 sub-district areas as follows:

**1. Bang Bai Mai Sub District** is located next to Muang District. Nowadays, there is a way of life that

still has a traditional lifestyle along the river. In the past, the rice was grown for consumption for the household. The main occupation of the people of Nai Bang from past to present is coconut plantation. The coconuts have a good taste, a thick texture and the water inside are concentrated due to the coconuts being grown both in fresh water and seawater. Moreover, Bang Bai Mai has many nipa-palms. The local people use nipa-palm leave in every part of their life, such as thatched-roof, tobacco, packaging of nipa palm desserts and as the ingredients of nipa palm in syrup and nipa palm salad. Furthermore, the nipa palm vinegar is a unique signature of Nai Bang community because the soil in this area is not fertile for growing lime trees, then the local wisdom is to make vinegar from nipa palms instead. In the past, the way of life was often cooked from the ingredients which can be found in the area and canals, such as Tamarind Soup with Mullet, Thai Sour Curry, Thai Steamed Curry. Currently, many routes have been developed and a bridge has been built which is the most convenient journey to the community. If the tourist wants to stay in a homestay, there are villagers open houses to accommodate and the visitors can also experience the coconut plantation and the processing of coconut at the knowledge center named “Suan Lung Song”.



Figure 2 Bang Baimai

**2. Bang Sai Sub District** is located next to the mouth of Ban Don Bay and is a city of 3 waters: freshwater, saltwater and brackish water. In the past, the local people used a boat as the main transport. Most villagers' main careers are fishing, fish rafts and growing upland rice, namely “Chang Chu Ngung” which is a popular rice variety of Bang Sai people. Before the rice harvest in October, many molting crabs are cooked.



Villagers collect the crabs to make pickles that are made for papaya salad. At present, some villagers fish and offer homestay as their career.



Figure 3 Bang Sai

**3. Bang Pho Sub District** is located near the river and the sea. In the past, a bridge was not built into the community which caused the local people to use a boat as the main transport. Most local people's careers are fishing, make shrimp paste, banana and coconut farming. Some villagers have a shipyard and rafting as a career. In Bang Pho, there are many nipa palms, so the local people use nipa palms for their living, such as tobacco, thatched-roof and wickerwork. The local foods are seafood and desserts made from coconuts, bananas and nipa palms. Moreover, many cattails are found in this area, so the local people use the cattails as a food ingredient, such as Cattail Tamarind Soup with Mullet, which is the local signature dishe. Besides that, the tradition of people in the community still passes down



Figure 4 Bang Po

to the new generation, especially making Phanom Phra boats that are decorated with shells as well as receiving an award 3 years in a row.

**4. Bang Chana Sub District** is located next to many canals and is close to the sea; allowing the locals to use boats as the main transport. Most local people's careers are fishing, fish rafts and shell farms. There is less agriculture in this area due to there is more saltwater than freshwater. According to the way of life that is related to nipa-palms most local people use nipa-palms in every part of their life, such as cooking, thatched-roof and tobacco. The local foods are seafood. Besides, there is Phanom Phra boat that is hauled across the countryside and through the river in Chak Phra Festival.



Figure 5 Bang Chana

**5. Klong Chanak Sub District** is located near the river and the sea. There are plenty of mangrove forests, so the mangrove herbs are easy to find. Most villagers main careers are fishing, finding seafood, fish rafts and shell farms. The local handicraft is the crab trap tool and making wickerwork as well as the local wisdom of making fish trap tool, locally known as "Simple Catching Boat". Nevertheless, there is no rice farming because this area is more saltwater than freshwater. In addition, the abundance of nature attract many fireflies allowing the offer of firefly boat trips. There are local traditions as Tak Bat Devo, the End of Year Ceremony as well as during the rice harvest, everyone in the community gets together to prepare "Khao Mao" (pounded unripe rice) a highlight of this community.



Figure 6 Bang Chanak

**6. Klong Noi Sub District** has several canals that flowthrough the community. Nowadays, there is a way of life that still has a traditional lifestyle as well as using both car and boat as local transport. Most of the villagers careers are in agriculture, such as santol farm, coconut farm and growing fruits and vegetables. The community has a Training Monkey School as well as the local wisdom of making wickerwork and a pot-rest. In addition, Klong Noi economic learning center is established and offering homestay as accommodation in the community.



Figure 7 Klong Noi

### The contents of marketing communication and the guidelines for cultural tourism development of Klong Roi Sai Community in Tapee Basin.

From in-depth interviews and focus groups with community leaders, villagers, and relevant agencies' representatives on the issue of the appropriate marketing communication model for cultural tourism development of Klong Roi Sai Community in Tapee Basin, the results are shown as follows:

**Bang Bai Mai Sub District**, there is conservation tourism which has a tourist attraction, such as Pracharat

Bangbaimai Floating Market, Suan Lung Song and the ancient house of over 100 years. Visitors can experience the local foods and desserts as well as take the boat trip for the nipa palm tunnel and the way of life in this community sightseeing which can be used online and offline marketing communication.

**Klong Chanak Sub District** applies a model of marketing communication and public relations for cultural conservation tourism which focuses on the learning media and public relations media of the product. There is eco-tourism in which the visitors take a boat to watch the fireflies and the mangrove forest. Besides, this community is located next to the sea that it is easy to find seafood and the price is quite reasonable; which is the main selling point in marketing communication.

**Bang Pho Sub District** focuses on marketing communication through performing arts media, public relations media, direction signs, brochures and maps which keep on a way of life of people in the community. The River Rafting Festivals are created for the visitors who are interested in watching a way of local life and the fireflies at night. During the Chak Phra Festival the Phanom Phra boats are decorated with shells and are hauled across the countryside and through the street.

**Bang Sai Sub District** focuses on marketing communication through the history and faith of the community, such as marketing public relations of Thai Wood House, signage on the food storage and cultural communication. In the part of cultural tourism, Luang Pho Rueang of Bang Kluai Temple has the reputation for giving a blessing, is respected by the people in the community for over 100 years and to fulfill one's vow with katom leaves and coconut juice.

**Bang Chana Sub District** focuses on the concept of marketing communication in conservation and the culture of way of life. There is a natural walkway of mangrove and cork forest that are on both sides and watching the fireflies at night. Moreover, the highlights of the community are a traditional fisherman's way and cockle farm stay.

**Klong Noi Sub District** focuses on the development of public relations media, learning media, marketing public relations media, Facebook Page and direction signs. The organic tourism is created for the visitors who love to visit the local vegetable and fruit farms, such as santol farm and organic vegetable farms as well as to experience a long-standing way of life of people who train the monkey.





Figure 8 Klong Roi Sai-Nai Bang, Surat Thani

The synthesis of research data can summarize the marketing communication model of Klong Roi Sai community in 6 sub-districts. There are promotions and ecotourism in the community enterprises model to set up work and income. The local famous food products are sold within the community and focuses on using natural materials. However, the marketing communication tools can be used in a mixed pattern which consists of 5 main tools as the following:

1. Advertising tool, there are billboards in the village as well as newspaper, journals, television and radio, depending on the behavior of the targets.

2. Public Relations tool consists of a word of mouth between people in the community and applied the public relations signage at Subdistrict Administration Organization.

3. Personal Selling tool, there is a retail store where the customers will be able to find and exchange the information of the product as well as to do direct selling.

4. Sales Promotion tool consists of a product discount, product exchange and product sample which is the technique to stimulate the needs of the customer in products and services.

5. Direct Marketing tool provides sale channels that the customer can access directly through Subdistrict Administration Organization's website as well as the community enterprise group's Facebook.

According to the study, the researcher found the information on the cultural tourism of Klong Roi Sai Community in 6 sub-districts as the following:

Table 1 The information on the cultural tourism of Klong Roi Sai Community

Sub district	Cultural tourism information of Klong Roi Sai Community
1. Bang Bai Mai	<p>Bang Bai Mai Community has formed a Pracharat Bangbaimai Floating Market which is available on Sunday to support tourism activities of the community. As a boat trip is offered to see the way of life of Nai Bang People. Due to many naturally grown nipa palms area, there is a cruise through the nipa palm tunnel. The visitor should not miss to pay respect "Luang Pho Khao Suk" that Bang Bai Mai people believe in the holy and always make wishes. Moreover, there is an ancient house of over 100 years and the knowledge center namely "Suan Lung Song"</p>

Table 1 (Continue)

Sub district	Cultural tourism information of Klong Roi Sai Community
2. Bang Sai	<p>Bang Kluai Temple is located next to the river. It is a center where villagers come to participate in various religious activities. There is Luang Pho Rueang as the soul of the people in the community with the reputation for giving the blessing. Besides, there is a shipyard which is a career, passing down from generation to generation as well as the abundance of nature, many fireflies are found allowing the offer of afire fly boat trip.</p>
3. Bang Pho	<p>It is located next to the Tapee River. The highlight of the tourism is the rafting, viewing the nature and the way of life of Bang Pho community with a large wooden raft using a towing boat. This community also has a travel route about life through various activities, such as visiting the shipyard and take a boat to watch the fireflies and crab-eating macaques.</p>

Table 1 (Continue)

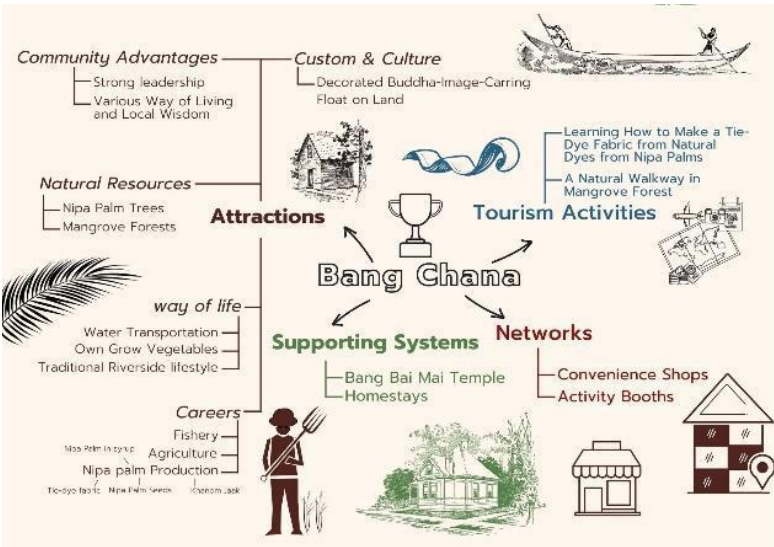

Sub district	Cultural tourism information of Klong Roi Sai Community
4. Bang Chana	<p>Bang Chana is located near the mouth of the river and the sea. There are plenty of mangrove forests and a natural walkway.</p>  <p>The diagram for Bang Chana is centered on 'Bang Chana' with arrows pointing to four main categories: Attractions, Tourism Activities, Supporting Systems, and Networks.    <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Community Advantages</b> (top left): Strong leadership, Various Way of Living and Local Wisdom.</li> <li><b>Natural Resources</b> (middle left): Nipa Palm Trees, Mangrove Forests.</li> <li><b>way of life</b> (bottom left): Water Transportation, Own Grow Vegetables, Traditional Riverside lifestyle.</li> <li><b>Careers</b> (bottom left): Fishery, Nipa palm Production, Nipa palm Service, Fishery Jack.</li> <li><b>Custom &amp; Culture</b> (top right): Decorated Buddha-Image-Carrying Float on Land.</li> <li><b>Tourism Activities</b> (middle right): Learning How to Make a Tie-Dye Fabric from Natural Dyes from Nipa Palms, A Natural Walkway in Mangrove Forest.</li> <li><b>Supporting Systems</b> (bottom center): Bang Bai Mai Temple, Homestays.</li> <li><b>Networks</b> (bottom right): Convenience Shops, Activity Booths.</li> </ul>   The diagram includes illustrations of a boat, a house, a trophy, a person with a fork, a temple, and a shop.</p>
5. Klong Chanak	<p>Lamthong Temple and Prince of Chumphon, which is the spiritual anchor of the people in the community. This area has plenty of mangrove forests where the visitors can come to learn about the mangrove herbs as well as taking a longtail boat to watch the fireflies.</p>  <p>The diagram for Klong Chanak is centered on 'Klong Chanak' with arrows pointing to four main categories: Attractions, Tourism Activities, Supporting Systems, and Networks.   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Attractions</b> (left): Fishing Equipments, Coastal Fishery, Fish Farms, Year Ending Ceremony, Basketry Group, Fireflies, Rafting, Tobacco Rolling Papers.</li> <li><b>Tourism Activities</b> (bottom center): Taking a Boat Tour for Riverside Sightseeing, Learning Traditional Fisherman Way of Living, Making Fishing Equipment.</li> <li><b>Supporting Systems</b> (bottom center): Tak Bat Devo Festival, Making Processing Seafood, Pho Ta Hin Kling &amp; Year Ending Ceremony.</li> <li><b>Networks</b> (right): Companies and Shops, Universities, Hotels/Resorts, Community leaders, Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Provincial Public Health Office, Conservation Group, Community Restaurants.</li> <li><b>Other Resources</b> (top left): Subdistrict Health Promoting Hospital, Fresh Seafood, Shipbuilding, Ta Yuong Beach, Shipyard, Mangrove herbs.</li> </ul>   The diagram includes illustrations of a fish, a boat, a temple, a tree, and a group of people.</p>



Table 1 (Continue)

Sub district	Cultural tourism information of Klong Roi Sai Community
6. Klong Noi	<p>There is a traditional way of life which is gardening, so the santol farm is the signature of Klong Noi Community as well as Santol Festival, organic vegetable farms and Training Monkey School, which are the reputation places that should not be missed.</p>

## Discussion

### The way of life and specific cultures that appear in Klong Roi Sai Community, in Tapee Basin

In focus groups interviews, the samples in Klong Roi Sai Community, such as community leaders, villagers, and relevant agencies' representatives provided information that could be summarized as the specific cultures that appear in Klong Roi Sai Community consists of material culture, such as foods, places, houses, temples, antiques, and nonmaterial culture, such as the wisdom of using the local material (Nipa-Palm), making traditional foods and desserts, shipbuilding, Phanom Phra boatbuilding as well as fishing that agrees with the study of Suphaphan (2013) noting that the culture is divided to a different type of culture. The researcher has chosen this issue for the classification of cultural studies as the two basic types of culture are material culture and nonmaterial culture. Furthermore, the way of life and specific culture in 6 sub-districts are long-standing and have been passed down to new generations which is consistent with the study of Chirothphan, Sakunaphat, & Chœikiwong (2008) that the way of life of people in each local society has a common morality from past to present, such as Northern Folk Culture, Isan Folk Culture, Central Folk Culture and Southern Folk Culture etc. Thai Folk

Culture in each region will be the behavior of the people in their region who have been preaching all their lives, however, this may be similar or different from other local folk culture. The folk culture is a local heritage by storytelling, written sources, or a model that is passed down generation to generation until it is mutually acceptable. Besides, all specific cultures, which appear in the 6 sub-districts of Klong Roi Sai Community, must be published through the appropriate media and content to create perceptions and understanding in a community in terms of upgrading Klong Roi Sai Community to be a cultural tourism community and to create awareness and tourist attractions for tourists visiting and raising the community income.

A study on the format of marketing communication and public relations of Klong Roi Sai Community in Tapee Basin, the research notes that the community has a variety of comprehensive marketing communications including advertising, news and public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, website, signages, brochures, Facebook page, visitor center, QR code that can be scanned via smartphones, YouTube, Line and community ecotourism clubs are created. According to Somyarone & Sriphan (2014) that studied

communication strategies for Folk Toy Wisdom Transmission of “The Khon Thao Khon Kae Group” Padad Sub-District, Mae Suai District, Chiang Rai Province and the result showed that activity media, museum media and other dissemination media, including teaching books, folk toys, VCD how to make folk toys, Facebook, souvenirs and media, that is supported by outside agencies, are necessary and would assist to transfer art and culture.

Moreover, Klong Roi Sai Community has adopted marketing communication to promote cultural tourism which started with the survey of media, communication creation and media selection as the step of the marketing communication process. As reported by Polprasert (2008) who studied the way of tourism development and promotion for a reflection of Kamphaeng Phet’s identity, found the needs of Thai and Foreign tourists are different in travel motives. If the community creates a feedback survey for the needs of media and developed under the needs of the target tourists, it will become a cultural tourism destination that everyone can access and generate income for the community.

The study found that the marketing communication of Klong Roi Sai Community is communicated to the target consumer, consisting of 5 activities, such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations and publishing, personal selling and direct marketing. Due to the variety of marketing communication activities, it is necessary to mix those activities which depend on the budget, the purpose and the type of products (Deeprasert, 2010).

This study focuses on using the marketing communication tools to develop the cultural tourism of Klong Roi Sai Community which designates the diversity of arts and culture and encourages the visitors to understand and appreciate the arts and culture. Therefore, there are the processes of public relations as 1) Creating marketing objectives in public relations as to build awareness of a product, person, organization or opinion, to build trust and to reduce the cost of selling promotion 2) Select news in public relations and communication media 3) To apply public relations plans and media, then bring to integrate and implement the results and 4) Public relations evaluation can be assessed for the success of public relations operations by considering the perception of tourists and changing the attitudes of people in the community (Deeprasert, 2010).

## Suggestion

Cultural tourism development of Klong Roi Sai community is driven through marketing communication that should start by creating storytelling about the strengths of Klong Roi Sai Community which consists of nipa-palms tunnel, nipa-palm vinegar, coconut farms, santol farms and seafood. Due to the abundance of natural resources that is a city of 3 waters such as freshwater, saltwater and brackish water, the villagers should be encouraged and developed to create basic media to promote specific cultures that are outstanding in their community. Besides, the community should relate storytelling with its unique menu consisting of a health service, a viewpoint and a market to respond to tourist behaviors. Furthermore, the communication and culture of the community are closely related because communication is a tool to transfer languages, traditions, attitudes, beliefs, values as well as philosophies and ideas which are a part of a culture from generation to generation. According to Suphaphan (2013), Lasswell said that communication has another important function, to convey the heritage culture of the community from generation to generation. Communication is a way of life for all people in this world which is a process of creating and passing the meaning for mutual understanding in cultural communication. (Dittawiron, 2005) However, the various distribution channels should be established in the community as creating a Community Page on Facebook by posting basic information, community history, and posting photos to make a database for visitors who are interested in learning about the community. Marketing communication tools should be provided within the community, such as billboards and publicity about the famous products so visitors can learn more about the community. Moreover, in terms of physical characteristics should be improved to be clearer and more outstanding by supporting the improvements of certain areas to be a tourist attraction, as well as the shop and shopping center, should be established to distribute all kinds of products of Klong Roi Sai Community by allowing the villagers or entrepreneurs to create their brand with a community logo so tourists or customers will know where the product comes from.

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