Coopetition and knowledge transfer dynamics: New Zealand’s regional tourism organisations and the 2011 Rugby World Cup.

Kim Werner
Geoff Dickson
Ken Hyde
RWC 2011

- Quadrennial event owned by the International Rugby Board (IRB)
- 9 September – 23 October 2011
- Biggest event ever hosted in New Zealand
- 133,200 international visitors
- Organised & delivered by RNZ 2011
- Held in 11 cities in 12 different stadia across NZ
To ensure the success of RWC 2011, RTOs were expected to collaborate to develop a nationwide approach. They simultaneously competed with each other for visitor nights and spending. Simultaneous cooperation and competition is known as *coopetition* (Nalebuff & Brandenburger, 1996). Relatively little is known about the impact of coopetition on knowledge transfer dynamics (Easterby-Smith, Lyles, & Tsang, 2006, 2008).
Research question

How did coopetition affect knowledge transfer dynamics among RTOs in the context of RWC 2011?
Collaboration can positively enhance inter-organisational learning and KT (Inkpen, 1996).

Paradox: Knowledge shared for cooperation may be used for competition (Loebbecke, Van Fenema & Powell, 1999).

Coopetition is relevant in the tourism industry (von Friedrich Grängsjö, 2003)

Limited evidence explaining why organisations in a relationship switch between cooperation and competition (Wang & Krakover, 2008).
Literature review

- data – information – knowledge
- Knowledge transfer: When information has been reasoned over and incorporated into the receiver’s existing knowledge structures (Beesley & Chalip, 2011)
- Effective KM and KT is essential to remain competitive in the global, rapidly changing business environment (Talwar, Hancock, Yeomans, & Padgett, 2010)
- More research on the influence of coopetition on KT dynamics needed (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006).
Qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2009)

Participants:
- 12 RTOs (CEOs and senior management staff)
- Executive Officer from RTONZ

Methods:
- Semi-structured interviews both pre- and post-event
- Formal online survey (post-event)
- Documentation review (e.g. reports, media articles, bid documents)

Thematic analysis
Collaboration among RTOs for RWC 2011

- The RTOs used each other mainly as a source of information and to exchange ideas.
- The level of collaboration among them was limited.
- The RTOs collaborated mostly with organisations from within their regions (intra-regionally) and with national bodies and organising committees (e.g. TNZ, RNZ 2011).
Barriers to collaboration

- Other vehicles were regarded as more effective to foster collaboration among RTOs
- RWC 2011 was a one-off event
- Limited resources
- The focus was on intra-regional collaboration
- Limited willingness to collaborate
Competition among RTOs for RWC 2011

- Several RTOs identified competition within the RTO network in the lead-up to, and during RWC 2011.
- The RTOs were competing for matches and teams (during the match and team allocation process by RNZ 2011), but also for visitor nights and spending.
Continuum of collaboration & competition among RTOs

**Collaboration**
- in certain markets (e.g. Northern Hemisphere)
- for certain projects of value for their own goals and strategies (e.g. official travel guide for RWC 2011)

**Competition**
- in certain markets (e.g. Australia)
- for matches and teams (team and match allocation process)
- to increase visitor nights and spending for each region
Coopetition did not (negatively) affect event planning

- The RTOs did not feel that coopetition among them (negatively) affected the preparations for the event.
- Most of the preparations took place *within* the regions; also close liaison with national bodies/organising committees
- Collaboration with other RTOs was not felt overly important for the success of the event
Knowledge

- RWC 2011 provided a significant learning opportunity
- RTOs gained useful skills & experiences
- RTOs learned more from organisations *within* their region and from the national organising bodies than from other RTOs.
- Information sharing among RTOs was a selective process.
Coopetition did affect KT dynamics

- The RTOs agreed that coopetition negatively impacted on knowledge sharing and transfer among them.
- The continuum of collaboration and competition (coopetition) impeded a more efficient and effective KT process among the RTOs.
Impact on coopetition on KT processes

The knowledge acquisition and transfer processes among the RTOs were negatively affected in two ways:

1. The limited RTO collaboration did not facilitate an effective knowledge transfer process; and

2. RTO competition constrained knowledge sharing.

These factors restricted the flow of potentially useful knowledge and information around RWC 2011.
Conclusion

- Coopetition can negatively affect the sharing and transfer of knowledge
- The set-up of RWC 2011 played a major role
- If future events use a similar set-up, collaboration among the RTOs should be further promoted
- Significant opportunities of a mega-event to facilitate KT processes among RTOs.
- Need for future strategic approach to leverage these knowledge opportunities *ex ante*
THANK YOU
References


References


