

# Opportunities are right in front of us

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RUBEN GOEDHOOP began his career in Advisory with Coopers & Lybrand in Aruba and has amassed considerable experience and expertise with projects in the fields of Strategy, Human Resources and Information Technology. He has been a keynote speaker at a number of conferences and seminars and was also an active board member of the Chamber of Commerce in Aruba between 2003 and 2005. Currently, Mr Goedhoop has overall responsible for the Advisory Practice within PricewaterhouseCoopers Netherlands Antilles & Aruba.

We need to diversify!” “We rely too much on tourism and need to develop other industries”. Phrases often heard in Aruba. The truth is, though, we have no agriculture and practically no natural resources. Logic tells us then to diversify in other service industries. If we are going to diversify our services industry, and with this I mean put our focus on new ‘products’ and new ‘customers’, I believe that we need to further build on our two current main strengths:

1. Our knowledge and experience of the tourism industry;
2. Our geographical location and membership of the Dutch Kingdom.

## Our knowledge and experience of the tourism industry

Over the past fifteen to twenty years we experienced tremendous growth in our tourism industry: a steady increase of influx of tourists, and the establishment of world-renowned hotels and restaurants. Together with our long white beaches and our strong brand name, Aruba positioned itself among the top tourist destinations of the world. In this position we have built up sound experience in the tourism related areas of:

- Destination marketing;
- Air connections;
- Time share;
- Condominiums;
- Event marketing;
- Cruise tourism;
- Taxes (room tax, casino tax);
- Security.

At the same time we can share our lessons learned from the flip side of exponential growth: the economic and socio-economic challenges encountered in the fields of immigration, healthcare, logistics and infrastructure that large scale tourism has on an island/small country economy. This mixture of specific knowledge and experience puts Aruba in a position to which only a few other countries can relate. Based on this, I foresee opportunities in a knowledge economy where Aruba would provide knowledge management services to other countries and islands throughout the world, related to the hospitality industry as well as the spin-off that tourism has on other branches in a small scale economy.

Because of our already obtained knowledge and experience in tourism, it would require relatively less investment and effort to become a key player in the field of knowledge management services in the tourism

Aruba’s experience in tourism gives the island a competitive advantage in knowledge management services



