

Canada

Experiences

A toolkit for partners of the CTC
2nd edition October 2011



Kraus Hoisinger, Nahanni, Northwest Territories
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explorez sans fin
Canada
keep exploring



Dear Colleagues

I'm delighted to present *Experiences – A toolkit for partners of the CTC* (2nd Ed.) for industry. The release coincides with the launch of our new Signature Experiences Collection® and our deeper knowledge of the values, attitudes and behaviours of travellers to Canada based on our Explorer Quotient® (EQ®) research.

Travellers around the world are telling us that they want to explore the unique, the exotic and the unexpected. We've promised them that Canada is the place where they can fulfill this dream. Our tourism businesses are key to delivering on that promise.

Memorable and engaging visitor experiences in Canada bring our brand to life. They also strengthen the perception of Canada as an all-season, premier travel destination.

Our goal at the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) is to entice travellers to select Canada as their preferred vacation destination. You, your company and your ability to create memorable experiences are essential to Canada's success. Capturing the hearts and minds of visitors with new and engaging ways to discover and enjoy Canada is our collective challenge.

We proudly support Canada's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with tools, research, digital asset sharing, programs and marketing campaigns. Our Brand Experiences unit works directly with industry to support your product development, marketing and market development activities.

The *Experiences - A toolkit for partners of the CTC* (2nd Ed.) for industry provides updated information that we hope clearly explains experiential travel and the business opportunity it represents. It also provides links to other tools and resources that will support your efforts to create compelling experiences that inspire Canada's best prospective international travellers to visit now. We are sharing stories from five businesses that have successfully embraced experiential travel. We hope their stories will inspire you.

We look forward to the innovation this Toolkit stimulates, the current practices it validates and the creative product development that will emerge. Together we can welcome the world, increase demand for travel to Canada, and strengthen our national brand: **Canada. Keep Exploring.**

Sincerely yours



Michele McKenzie
President and CEO
Canadian Tourism Commission

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Thank you Canada's tourism industry

The feedback we received on the first edition of the Toolkit was extremely valuable. We genuinely appreciate the contributions, queries and insights that you continue to share so that toolkits like this are as relevant and useful as possible.

Ready? Let's get started!



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Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC)

The information contained in this document is designed to assist you in developing engaging, memorable visitor experiences that align with the **Canada. Keep Exploring** brand. It reflects information available to the CTC as of October 2011. The CTC is not rendering professional advice and this information should be used in conjunction with your own business planning and strategic decision-making.

The information is provided by the CTC to you in good faith and on the basis that the CTC, its agents and employees should not be held liable for any reason with respect to any statement, information or research analysis provided to you.

A group of people are gathered in a workshop, looking at a large wooden canoe hull. The workshop has a rustic, wooden interior with various tools and materials visible. A man in a grey jacket with 'Haida Canoe' written on it is pointing at the hull. A woman in a green hoodie with 'STITCH' written on it is looking at the hull. A man in a red jacket is also looking at the hull. A woman with curly hair is looking at the man in the grey jacket. A man with long hair is looking at the woman with curly hair. The text 'The CTC's interest in experiential travel' is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

The CTC's interest in
experiential travel



Canada. Keep Exploring and experiences: Our competitive advantage

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) is Canada's national tourism marketing organization. Our vision is to inspire the world to explore Canada. With our tourism industry partners and the governments of Canada, the provinces, and the territories, we market Canada in 11 countries around the world.

The CTC's international marketing programs increase the potential of every tourism business in Canada, large and small. Directly and indirectly, we extend the international reach for businesses and destination marketing organizations in our collective interest to attract more visitors to Canada.

Working together, industry and government have an opportunity to change traveller perceptions of Canada. Given the substantial investments in the past to market Canada's landscapes, it is not surprising that international travellers perceive Canada as a place for active adventure and personal journeys but not a destination known for its cultural, cuisine or urban experiences. This trend is consistent across too many of Canada's most important

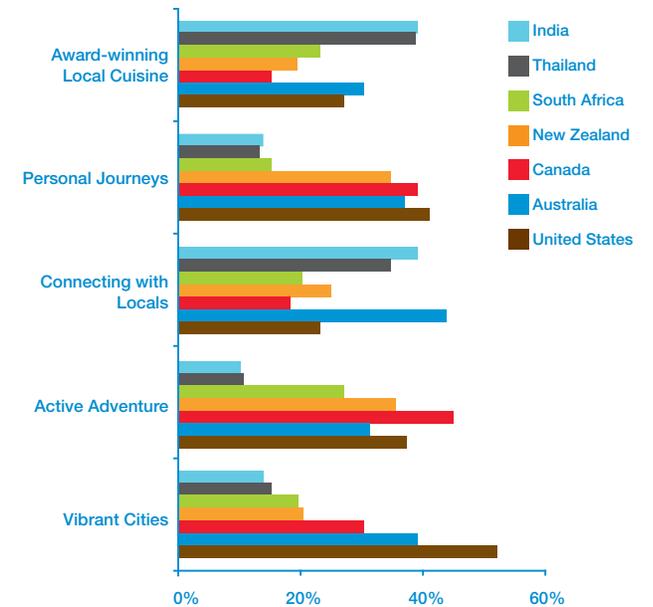
foreign markets. For example, Figure 1 shows that in the UK, our largest overseas market, 46% of UK travellers perceive Canada as offering active adventure experiences to travellers. However, 12% of these same travellers recognize Canada as offering award-winning local cuisine.

“Canada fares well in terms of its perceived scenery and parks, but falls short in cultural and urban offerings.”

CTC UK Market Insights, 2010

Working together is crucial given the fierce competition for international travellers. For Canada to grow its share of lucrative travellers, we need a competitive advantage that separates us from other destinations as we strive to convince these long-haul, long-stay visitors that Canada has what they are looking for. We believe that our collective advantage rests in getting your brand and Canada's tourism brand working together to develop, promote and sell “experiences.”

Figure 1. UK Traveller Perceptions of Canada's Competitive Position with regards to Canada's Unique Selling Propositions (USPs)



Source: GTW 2010 Base Long-haul pleasure travellers (n=1,509)
For more information regarding Canada's USPs, see page 6



Avalon Peninsula, British Columbia

Our national brand advantage

The CTC, together with our partners, has succeeded in developing a strong tourism brand. Canada was ranked the #1 country brand in the world by FutureBrand's Country Brand Index in 2010.

A strong destination brand is the best response to the competitive pressures facing us all. It tells potential customers who we are, why they should visit Canada and helps us stand out from other international destinations that are competing for the same customers.

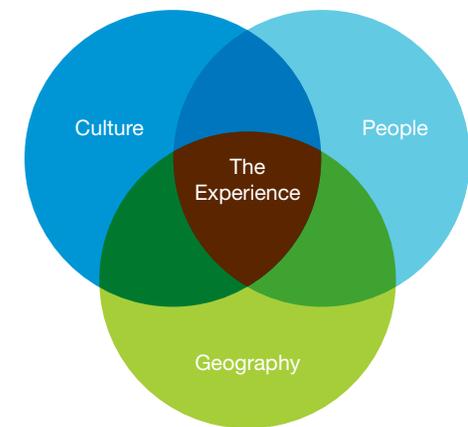
Our brand and your brand create the promise Canada makes to travellers. Aligned, they can consistently portray what makes our country unique and build a common perception that is attractive to visitors.

The CTC's national tourism brand makes its own promise: Canada is a place for self-expression, evoking emotion and inspiring exploration and engagement. Canada gives travellers the opportunity to experience a life less ordinary and delivers the promise wrapped in a personality that is uniquely Canadian.



TIP: The **Canada. Keep Exploring** brand adds significant value to your own business by generating high international awareness of Canada and creating an emotional, loyal connection with visitors.

Figure 2. Canada's tourism experiences are at the heart of our brand. They bring it to life and create the motivation for travellers to visit Canada.



The Canada. Keep Exploring brand communicates what's most unique about our culture, geography and the people that live here. The places where these "pillars of the brand" intersect represents travel that is truly Canadian and cannot be replicated elsewhere in the world.



The experience advantage

The CTC realized that the quality, authenticity and uniqueness of visitor experience would be a core feature of Canada's brand to differentiate it in the international marketplace. Research shows that travellers want more out of life and their time away. They do not want to simply see things; they want to be engaged and they want to immerse themselves while travelling. Marketing tourism experiences based on why people travel vs. selling products is key to Canada's approach to competing on the global stage.

Developing the "right" experience starts with knowing more about the "right" international traveller. This is where we can help. Our award-winning Explorer Quotient® research (EQ®) provides detailed customer profiles on different traveller types. It is psychographic research designed to gather a deeper understanding of travellers' travel values, social values and travel behaviours. It's a major leap forward because these factors influence peoples' travel choices. The Explorer Quotient provides rich insights into what motivates people to travel, how they like to travel and the things they like to do when they travel.

This market segmentation research provides important information that is extremely useful when designing experiences, developing products and packages, as well as marketing Canada. The EQ profiles, which also include key demographics, are a comprehensive source of information of value to companies developing experiences.

A full set of EQ resources are available in the CTC industry resource section at: www.canada.travel/corporate.



Canada's 5 Unique Selling Propositions

Does your experience fall under one of Canada's *unique selling propositions*? Based on our research, we found there are five experience categories that make Canada different and unique:



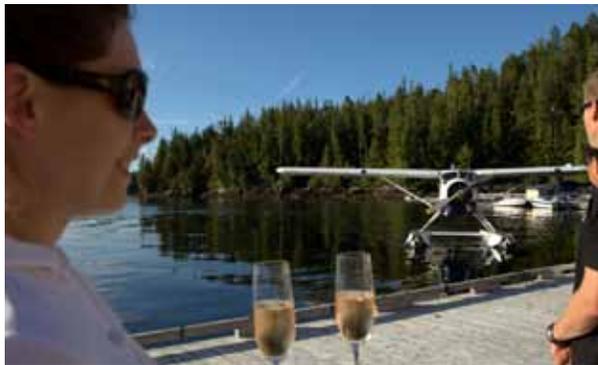
- 1 Award-Winning Local Cuisine:** local flavours, food/wine festivals, culinary learning



- 2 Connecting with Locals:** aboriginal culture, unique character/local lifestyles, historical/cultural attractions



- 3 Vibrant Cities on the Edge of Nature:** cities close to nature, city activities, entertainment, major events, city culture, nature close to city



- 4 Personal Journeys By Land, Water and Air:** multi-day touring on own, multi-day group tours, land-based journeys, water-based journeys



- 5 Active Adventure Among Awe-Inspiring Natural Wonders:** ski/snowboard vacations, other winter activities, summer activities, beautiful scenery, national parks, wildlife viewing, resorts in natural settings

Taking experiences to the next level

Since the launch of the Canada. Keep Exploring brand we've seen many successes, but we can't rest on our laurels. We know Canada has the types of visitor experiences that are in demand internationally, but our research confirms the ongoing perception in the global marketplace is that we don't offer what travellers are looking for. The Signature Experiences Collection will help us change this misconception.

What is the Signature Experiences Collection?

It is a qualified inventory of Canadian visitor experiences that best exemplify Canada's tourism brand — those experiences that will capture the attention and imagination of consumers around the world to entice them to visit Canada now. Businesses that deliver the types of engaging, immersive experiences sought by today's travellers can apply to become part of the Collection. The CTC's Brand Experiences team and an industry panel evaluates and selects them, then the CTC's marketing, media and sales teams draw on the collection to create campaigns and raise awareness with travellers. The end result — more travellers to Canada, increased revenues for businesses and more memorable travel experiences in Canada.

What is a Signature Experience?

A *Signature Experience* is an exceptional travel experience designed and delivered by qualified Canadian-based tourism businesses. It is engaging, immersive, hands-on and connects travellers to the special people, places and cultures in a community or region. *Signature Experiences* invite visitors to discover, learn and enjoy Canada in ways that are personally relevant and aligned with their motivations to travel.

The experience must appeal to one or more EQ segments, be aligned with one of Canada's five unique selling proposition, and meet a set of criteria that define a signature experience. For more information on the Signature Experiences Collection program visit www.canada.travel/SEC.

Experiences strengthen Canada's tourism brand. Enjoy this toolkit and learning more about how to develop relevant, meaningful visitor experiences that create lasting memories for travellers.



Signature Experiences feed into CTC's integrated marketing and sales activities





Experiential travel



Fort Selkirk, Yukon © Asymetric / Jason Van Bruggen

What is experiential travel?

Experiential travel engages visitors in a series of memorable travel activities, that are inherently personal. It involves all senses, and makes connections on a physical, emotional, spiritual, social or intellectual level. It is travel designed to engage visitors with the locals, set the stage for conversations, tap the senses and celebrate what is unique in Canada.

From yoga on the docks of the Discovery Centre overlooking the UNESCO-designated landscapes of Gros Morne National Park to the intriguing culinary dining adventures in complete darkness at O'Noir, to digging for dinosaurs in the badlands of Alberta or learning to mush a dogsled in Canada's North, captivating visitor experiences engage travellers in memorable and relevant ways that go beyond viewpoints, interpretive talks or serving a tasty meal.

Experiential travel represents an opportunity for the tourism industry to inspire visitation by creating authentic experiences designed to connect travellers to the special places, people and cultures within communities across this nation.

Businesses may develop and deliver programs directly to the market or, alternately, create the experience, then partner with an operator creating experiential packages who will take it to the market. Whether a business sells an individual program or a travel package of multiple experiences, each must be designed to celebrate a unique aspect of the people, culture, geography or community of Canada.

While opportunities for self-discovery will always exist, many travellers prefer to directly purchase individual or multi-day experiences in advance for the certainty of knowing that everything is taken care of and that their specific needs will be met.

“Seeing the sights is no longer enough. Experiential travellers want to venture beyond the beaten tourist paths and dive deeper into authentic local culture, connecting with people from other cultures in deep and meaningful ways, the arts, architecture and music, cooking and food, sports, adventure and nature, language, history, economics and literature, philanthropy and a desire to “give back.” More than ever before, people are travelling their passions.”

Joe Diaz, Co-founder
Afar Magazine

Is it a trend?

No. Experiential travel represents a new layer of opportunity beyond delivering traditional tourism products based on goods and services.

The foundation of experiential travel is rooted in the understanding gained over the past decade from a well-researched economic framework introduced in 1999 by Joe Pine and James Gilmore. In their book, *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre and Every Business a Stage*, they demonstrate that there is a fourth level of economic value called “experiences” and that customers are willing to pay a premium for them.

The Progression of Economic Value (page 10) helps businesses understand the fundamental difference between commodities, goods, services and experiences. While each level of commerce has value, as your product progresses, so does your ability to differentiate yourself in the marketplace and charge a premium.

Experiential travel represents a real opportunity for tourism operators, not-for-profit organizations and government attractions such as parks and historic sites. It involves a customer-centric approach to planning travel, communicating with visitors and delivering programs that are aligned with what visitors are interested in experiencing in Canada.

The reality will be that experiential travel will not be for everyone, and that's okay. Some businesses are doing just fine with their current commodities, goods, services or a combination of these three.

However, for those who would like to take their business to a new level, this may be the opportunity you are looking for.

Great customer experiences are:

- a source of long-term competitive advantage
- created by consistently exceeding customers' physical and emotional expectations
- differentiated by stimulating emotion
- enabled through inspirational leadership and facilitated by culture
- designed from the outside in, rather than the inside out
- revenue generating and can reduce costs
- an embodiment of the brand

Colin Shaw
Revolutionize Your Customer Experience (2005)

“Creating outstanding and memorable experiences has become central, not just to the leisure and entertainment industries, but to an increasing number of businesses as companies that seek to build the emotional involvement that goes with them.”

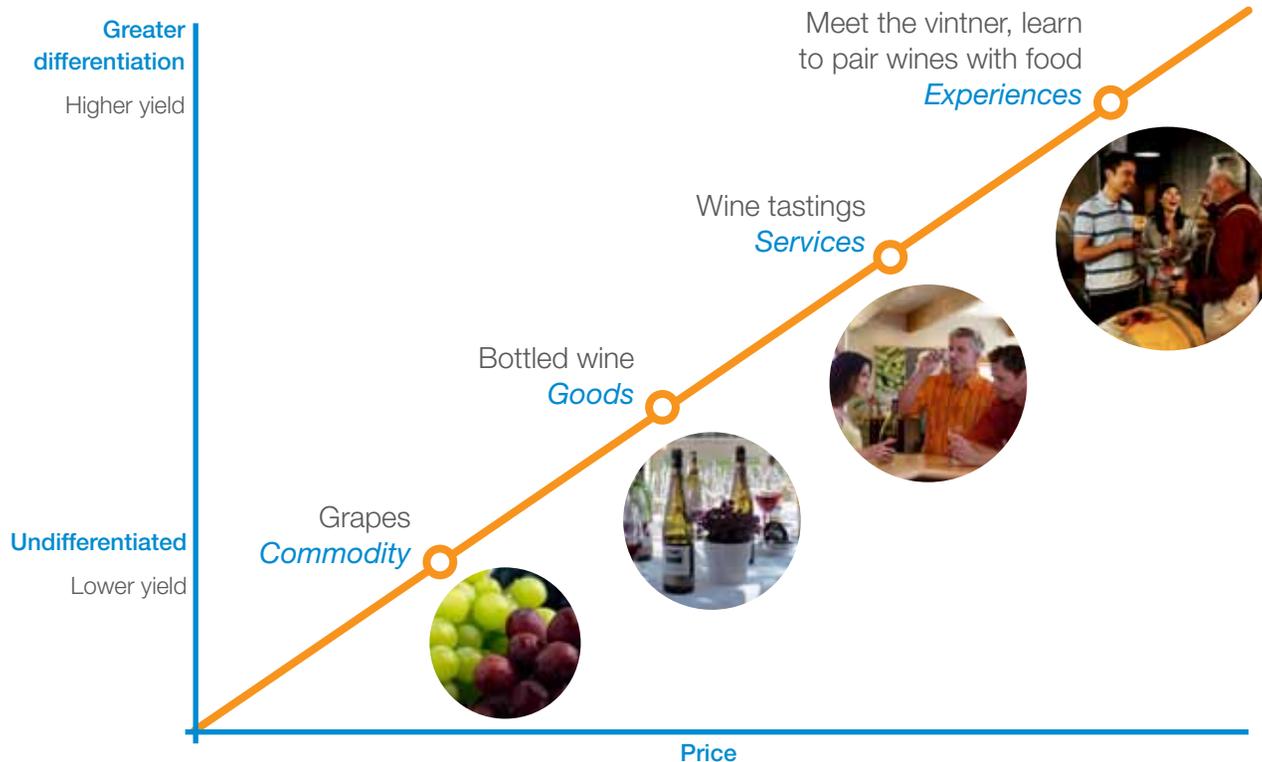
Chris Voss (2004)
London Business School



So how does it work?

The basic premise is that commodities, goods, services and experiences all offer a distinct economic difference and appeal to specific consumer sensibilities when purchased and consumed. As you move up the scale of economic progression and customize the use of the commodity, good or service, you increase your competitive positioning and can increase the price.

The Progression of Economic Value



Source: Nancy Arsenault, Celes Davar and Todd Lucier (2011)

Using an agri-tourism example of a vineyard, here's a simple example of how the scale applies.

- **commodity** (needed to make the good): grapes
- **goods** (needed to provide the service): wine produced
- **services** (used to promote sales): online purchasing, shipping, tours to learn about the vineyard and wine tastings on the property
- **experience**: meet the vintner or sommelier and engage in a personalized, hands-on experience that connects you to the land, the people and something you likely love—wine; perhaps the experience will include a chef who creates an exquisite meal and pairs the food and wine perfectly with each other

Put another way, commodities are things we extract from the ground and sell in market. Goods are the physical, tangible items we make from commodities, that when sold, generate a higher price point. Services use the commodities and goods to offer differentiated options to customers.

Experiences incorporate commodities, goods and services and use these as elements in developing tourism offers that are designed to create lasting memories. Not all businesses deliver experiences, but they represent a choice for tourism businesses to move up the ladder of economic opportunity, differentiate their businesses and provide a new level of visitor experience to their guests.



Sucrierie de la Montagne, Sugar Shack, Quebec
© Sucrierie de la Montagne

What are the benefits?

Over the past decade, increasingly, companies have embraced experiences as an opportunity for their businesses because of the benefits, which include:

- a new value proposition that can be developed in almost any community
- a response to domestic and international market demand that generates new revenue
- an opportunity to be innovative, creative and truly responsive to the reasons why people travel
- a competitive advantage over those in service industries
- a lower-cost investment because experiences don't involve capital infrastructure changes or upgrades
- the ability to leverage your marketing budget through partnerships
- an opportunity to create advocates for your business with guests that rave online or via word-of-mouth about their time with you
- a decision to be "stronger together" in working with community partners and other businesses to create a more holistic destination experience, particularly in rural communities
- expanding your network of suppliers and partners and working with new people who may never have realized they have something wonderful to share with travellers
- an opportunity to introduce value-based pricing and attract higher-yield customers

Businesses that succeed in developing and delivering experiential travel have one thing in common: it is rewarding to both staff and visitors. But embracing experiential travel doesn't happen overnight. It requires a fundamental shift in how you approach, plan and communicate travel opportunities.

It requires looking at your community and the reasons people come to your destination holistically, and determining where in *their journey* what you have to offer fits.

Shifting from products to experiences





Churchill, Manitoba

What is the difference between a tourism product and a tourism experience?

A tourism product is what you buy.
A tourism experience is what you remember.

The Canadian tourism industry has the ability to build on the excellent goods and services currently available to visitors and to create new experiential products that respond to new marketplace demands.

Success will be a result of everyone's involvement in tourism as we focus on "Why visit Canada" rather than merely where to go and what to do. Tourism destinations and businesses have traditionally marketed themselves as a series of products or commodities—hotel rooms, picturesque views, generic activities such as museums, sports, dining out, etc. They focused on the physical attributes of the landscape.

In developing tourism experiences the focus is on the emotions, feelings and sensations the travellers will have on their journey, the stories they will learn about at the destination, and the connections they will make. Experiences tap the hearts and minds of curious travellers, inviting them to connect with Canada's people, culture and geography through personal exploration.

At the core of an exceptional visitor experience is your company's ability to purposefully and thoughtfully combine your physical assets (buildings, buses, etc.) with the emotional interactions (passion, excitement, awe-inspiring moments) that travellers experience. Exceptional visitor experiences go beyond the time guests are with your business. Planning and delivering exceptional visitor experiences requires

considering the entire customer lifecycle from the visitor's perspective, from the moment they think about travelling until they are sharing stories, photos and videos at home or online.

Word of mouth is a strong marketing tool. Provide an exceptional experience and travellers will share their stories... your stories.

Personalization is key to a great visitor experience. The majority of Canada's tourism businesses are SMEs (small and medium enterprises) that can be found in every corner of the country. SMEs have strong local-area knowledge, community connections and personal relationships that can accelerate creating personalized travel.

What's the difference between traditional and experiential packaging?

Tourism businesses and destination marketing organizations have traditionally gathered a great deal of demographic information on travellers that told us how they like to travel, where they plan to go, what they like to do, the types of accommodations and amenities they enjoy and their dining preferences. This information was used to develop travel packages designed to attract target markets.

Traditional tourism packaging typically combines activities, accommodation and/or transportation at a lower price than a customer could secure individually and save effort for the traveller.

Think about a golf package that has three rounds of golf with a cart, a sleeve of balls, two nights accommodation and a \$50 food voucher. There is a big market for this type of packaged travel and there always will be.

The approach to traditional travel packaging is built on demographic knowledge of the customer and by asking a number of questions in the planning process.

Traditional packaging begins with:

1. What sector are we designing the package for (e.g. adventure, cruise, leisure, cultural)?
2. What activities or amenities does our community have to offer?
3. What can visitors do when they arrive, where they should stay, what activities and events should be the focus of the invitation to visit (e.g. golf, festival, theatre)?
4. Which partners and suppliers will want to be part of the package?

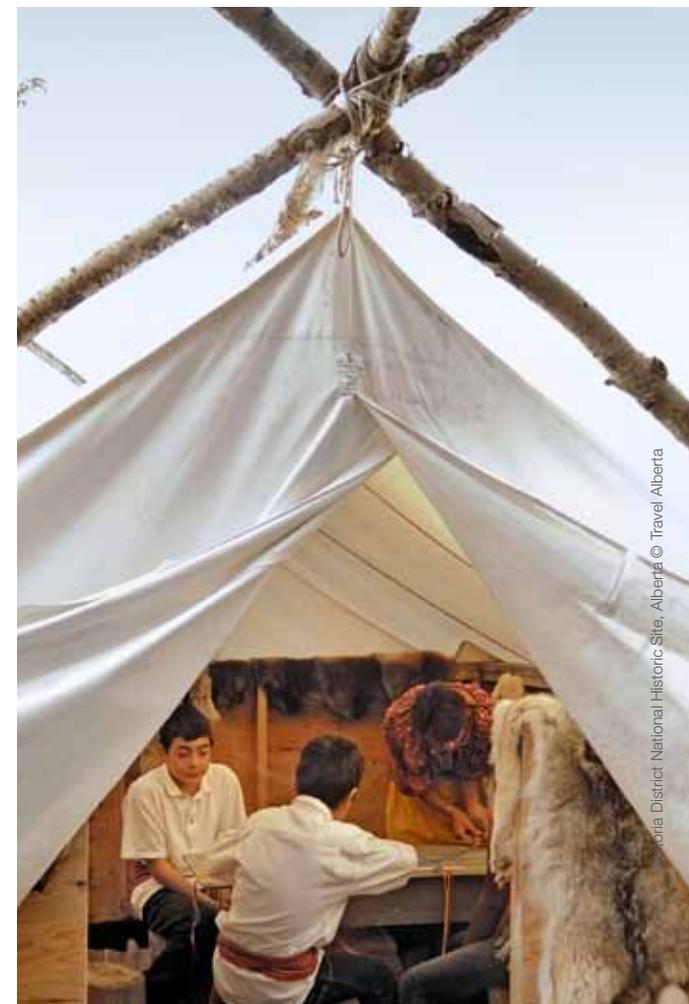
In contrast, experiential packaging focuses on choreographing a series of encounters, interactions and moments that are revealed over time to evoke emotions and leave travellers with lasting memories. The price of the package is based on the cost of the package components, plus a premium for the value travellers receive from having their lives enriched through these unique, personally relevant experiences.

Developing single experiential programs or experiential packages begins with asking different questions.

Experiential packaging and programming begins with:

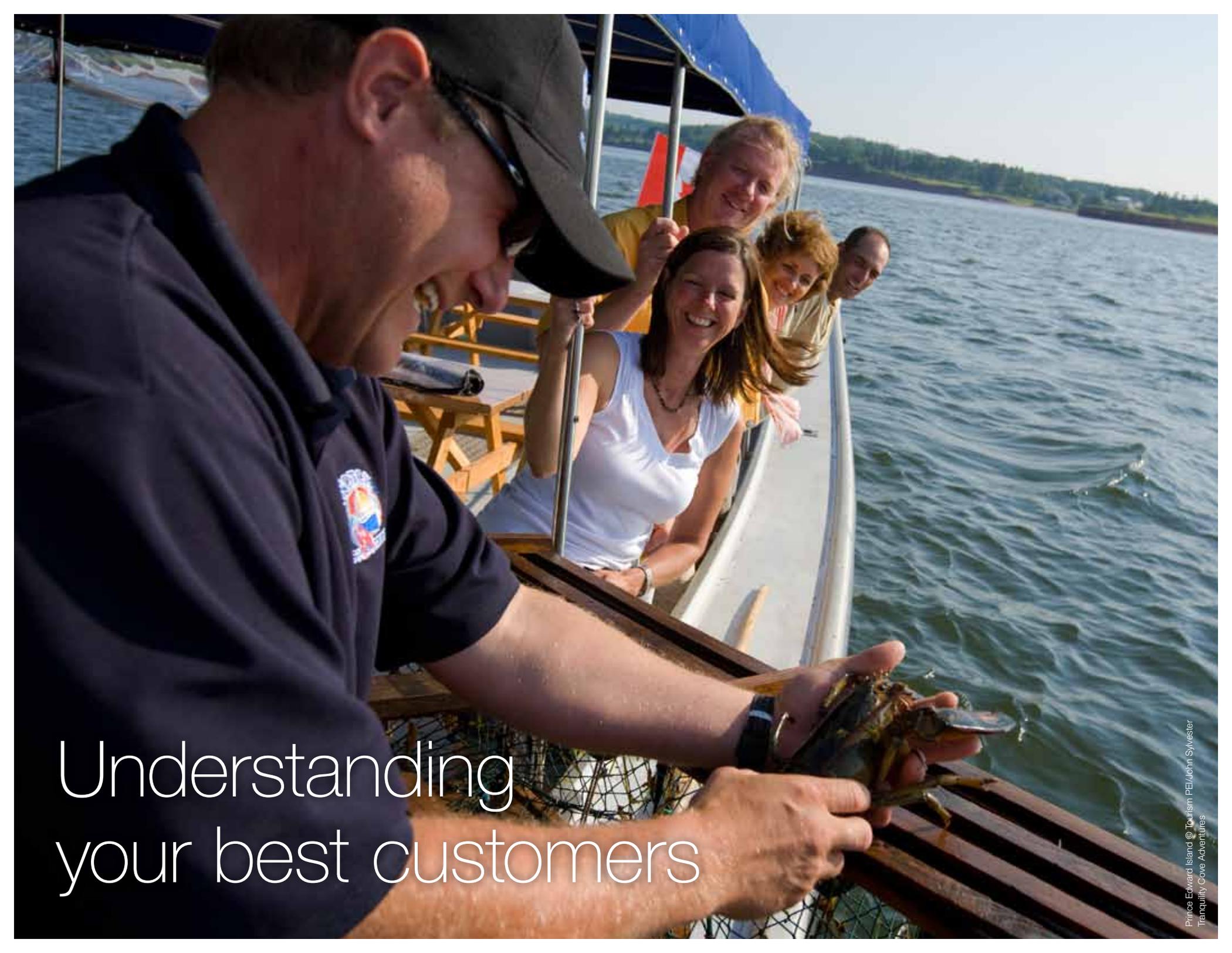
1. What makes our community special (e.g. people, places, stories, traditions, activities)?
2. What memories do we want our visitors to leave with?
3. What traveller interests are aligned with what we have to offer?
4. Who do I need to collaborate with to craft a relevant, engaging visitor experience?
5. Which experiential programs exist, or could be developed, to form the foundation of a package or elements of a package?
6. How can the experience be personalized?
7. What unique, authentic and local treasures can be celebrated, showcased or engaged in?

Experiential programs can also be offered as part of a conference package or special event, albeit with some of the experience elements modified to meet the needs of a different customer and volume of visitors.



Victoria District National Historic Site, Alberta © Travel Alberta

“Experiential programs are the building blocks of more meaningful travel packages. Often themed or connected to a story, experiences bring out the authentic community gems, talent, personalities and traditions that can increase the value proposition for the traveller and the revenue potential for the tourism operator.”

A man in a dark polo shirt and cap is holding a crab on a boat. He is smiling and looking towards a group of passengers. The passengers, including a woman in a white tank top and a man in a yellow shirt, are also smiling and looking at the crab. The boat is on a body of water, and there are trees in the background.

Understanding
your best customers



Halda Gwali, British Columbia

The why and how of understanding your “best” customers

Meeting international demand for experiential travel requires a deep understanding of who your target markets are, and the best customers within each market. Ask yourself three questions:

- 1 Who are your best customers? Why?
- 2 How much do you really know about them? Write it down; create a customer profile.
- 3 What solutions are you offering each customer group that delivers superior value?

A deeper understanding of your best customer will help your business to:

- garner insights and nuances that inform developing experiential travel products
- select and align with the most appropriate suppliers and experience providers
- attract visitors who value what you have to offer
- target business development and marketing investments
- empower staff members with the knowledge they need to satisfy guests
- enhance your bottom line
- deliver a better customer experience
- create fans who will rave about your experience to others both on- and offline.

Ask Questions

There are different ways to get the information you need. You, your staff and direct guest feedback are important sources. Market research is another.

Understanding your best customers goes beyond knowing their age, life stage, income, things they like to do, length of stay, how they plan their trips and how they book. Ask questions that will help analyze and refine your understanding of what is important to your customers, and what they value when they purchase an experience and engage with your company. This information can then be used to craft more meaningful, personally relevant experiences and focus your marketing communications more precisely. By doing this you save time and money, because you're targeting the right people with the right offers.

Here are some things you should consider when developing visitor experiences that will appeal to your best customers:

- What types of experiences do we offer that we know our guests enjoy (e.g. thrill, intimacy, relaxation, adventure, mystery, once-in-a-lifetime)? Avoid the temptation to list activities.
- Does our infrastructure attract travellers with common interests (e.g. historic sites, trails, parks, resorts)?
- Where are they coming from? Who are they travelling with? When do they prefer to travel? How do they prefer to travel?
- What types of people do they enjoy connecting with?
- What type of cuisine do they enjoy?
- What stories do our guests share with others about their time with us? What do they blog about? What do they post to Trip Advisor or YouTube?
- What are they taking pictures of while they are with us? Which people and places are they connecting with?
- What are their reasons for travelling? What can I offer that responds to what these travellers want to experience?

- Do I have or can I create a product that offers something special to our ideal guests that we can deliver?
- Who can I partner with to develop and deliver the types of experiences our travellers are seeking?
- How can I most effectively leverage my marketing dollars?

The goal is to develop a clear and concise list of the characteristics of your most desired guests. The more you know, the better. This will allow you to incorporate the things that are important to your guests into the experiences you develop and to ensure all marketing, communications, social media, photos and videos really speak to each type of guest.

TIP: When developing visitor experiences, focus on what your best guest is looking for rather than spending time thinking about what you currently offer.





Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Lihagaay, British Columbia

Enhancing your customer profiles with EQ®

Once you have a solid understanding of your customers from your own market research, you want to think about how to increase your knowledge and leverage what you know.

The EQ is a terrific tool to help you gain a deeper understanding of your customers and align your visitors with the types of travellers the CTC markets to internationally.

Download the CTC's EQ Toolkit and worksheets. Review the information on the global EQ types to familiarize yourself with the information. These are available free at www.canada.travel/corporate in the industry resources section. Since the toolkit and worksheets are updated as new information becomes available, make sure you have the most current version. If you have any questions about how to use the information to guide experiential product development, the CTC will be able to assist.

The benefits of using EQ:

- develop deeper understanding of your customers
- access to quality market research that SMEs couldn't otherwise afford
- allows for more targeted marketing campaigns and experiential product development
- aligns your business with the CTC's international marketing
- helps meet the Signature Experiences Collection criteria
- the toolkit is free

Developing memorable travel experiences





RCMP Heritage Centre, Saskatchewan
© Tourism Saskatchewan/Greg Huszar



Victoria, BC © Fairmont Empress

Key elements in designing memorable travel

Conversations, community, learning, laughing, escaping from the real world and being with local people in unique places are all elements of a memorable visitor experience. The combination of elements will change depending on your business, but the key design elements apply whether you are an attraction, accommodation, resort, restaurant, tour operator or park.

“You need to decide what you want to be recognized for. We want to turn moments into memories,” states Martin Leclerc, General Manager.

“For us, our Friends of the Empress experiential programs allow us to tap into new markets, generate new revenues and create experiences you can't buy anywhere else,” adds Angela Rafuse-Tahir, Director of Sales and Marketing.

The Fairmont Empress Hotel, Victoria, BC

The process of crafting a memorable visitor experience

Step 1: Know your customers

Now that you have a greater understanding of your best customers, it's time to begin thinking about the types of experiences that would be inviting and provide what these travellers want.

Step 2: Know your community and region

Look around your community and business with a fresh set of eyes and start making a list of special people and places that make your community unique. This is different than an inventory of "tourism assets" (e.g. two museums, four festivals, 20 hotels). Write down your answer to these questions.

- Assets: What makes your community special? Why do people like to live here? What do they do that visitors may be interested in seeing, learning about or engaging in?
- Where are some unique, less-travelled places to go that *locals know* but visitors may not?
- Are there any iconic people, places, celebrations, festivals and events that draw visitors regularly?
- Who are the storytellers—people who love to talk and can engage others with their stories (this could be anyone from a retired school teacher to a military historian to the chef in your local restaurant)?
- What types of musicians, artists, chefs, dancers, cultural groups, writers, poets, etc. live in your community?
- Are there any underutilized buildings, trails, community centres, legion halls, etc. that could be interesting places to host a group activity?
- Are there any non-traditional tourism business people who could become involved with tourism, such as fishermen, farmers, golf course greens-keepers, carpenters, instrument makers, etc?

TIP: Remember, a great customer experience is a combination of the physical and emotional value delivered.

Step 3: Think about the types of experiences that make sense for your business

There are a variety of types of experiences that engage the senses, connect visitors to people and places, and fulfill their needs for escape, thrill, exploration, and/or immersion. Consider what types align with your company: For example, this could be:

- a desire to bring history to life in ways that are fun and engaging (Halifax Citadel National Historic Site, pg. 40)
- a love of lobsters (Shediac Bay Cruises, pg. 42)
- a need to explore distant lands in remote areas (Adventure Canada, pg. 44)
- a quest for spirituality (Northern Edge Algonquin, pg. 46)
- a desire to connect with your local community (Fairmont Empress Hotel, pg. 48)

Think about the outcomes. If you begin with the end result in mind, you'll have a clearer focus on what you need to deliver to reach those outcomes.

- When the traveller leaves, what do you want them to be talking about?
- What pictures do you want them to be posting to Facebook?
- What do you hope they will be writing about on TripAdvisor?
- For the community partners who will help you develop and deliver the experience, how do you want them to feel about involvement after the guests depart?
- What did guests enjoy most about interacting with staff?
- What could be done to enhance the experience next time?

Step 4: Choose a theme or story

Brainstorm, then pick a theme or story around which the experience will be built. Sit down with colleagues, community partners or a few people from town who support your business and brainstorm about the kinds of things that would be exciting and engaging for visitors.

Think about a theme—something on which to anchor the development of an experience. This is key, so as the experience is developed, everything is aligned.

Stories also are a great basis for developing an experience. As Marty Yaskowich of Tribal DDB says, “Not everyone’s a storyteller but everyone has a story.” Visitors are looking for the unique and authentic. Stories and storytellers can really anchor a traveller in a community because they have character, are unique, connect on an emotional level, are personal and are great for marketing.

Be Different or Be Dead.

Value is the immunization factor. When there is no difference in value, people buy on price alone.

Roy Osing (author), 2009



Step 5: Plan the experience

Prior to developing an experiential program or experiential travel package, assess if there any *core elements* that every visitor must experience that are foundational to your business, your identity, your customer promise?

For example, at Nimmo Bay Helicopter Fishing and Wilderness Adventures (www.nimmobay.com), owner Craig Murray will tell you that every guest experience must have three elements: (1) humour (2) music (3) attention to detail. He even created and trademarked his company's own *Theory of Hospitality*. As a small, high-end wilderness resort, employees also appreciate that everyone has a story to tell and it's the sharing of these stories that creates the comfort zone that keeps bringing people back. Creating a place for conversation between guests and staff is essential.

The Theory of Hospitality™

At Nimmo Bay we live by a basic principal in everything we do.

$$E^2=MC$$

Expectations Memories
Exceeded = Created

At Northern Edge Algonquin (see case study pg. 46) every program delivered includes dreamtime, creativity, adventure, community, celebration and nature.

What are your core elements? If you don't have any, now is a good time to think about this.

As you start to plan the visitor experience(s) think about the following questions.

- Where will guests go, what will they do, who will they encounter? Think unique, authentic.
- How will the guests be engaged? Experiential travel is about interaction and engagement; find ways for the guests to be actively involved, not merely watching

“Shift from being the ‘sage on the stage’ telling people about things, to the ‘guide on the side’ and engaging them in meaningful, memorable ways.”

Patsy Drummond
Fish Creek Provincial Park, AB

demonstrations (look-see tourism). The focus here is to shift from presentation to engagement.

- Everyone learns differently, so it's important to consider different learning styles, potential linguistic barriers or challenges—even accents that may require the speaker to slow down and be understood by everyone.
- Will this be one experience or several sequenced together?
- Will you develop and deliver the program yourself? If not, who are your collaborating partners?
- How will the experience engage the senses? Strive to go beyond sight and sound and incorporate taste, touch and feelings.
- Consider optimal group size. If the group is large, can you break it into smaller groups and rotate them through the experience? Or perhaps each group participates in a few components but not the entire experience?
- How will you make this experience memorable? For example, it is the complete darkness and visually impaired servers that makes the O'Noir dinner experience (www.onoir.com) in Montréal and Toronto unique.
- Can you incorporate an element of surprise, or exclusive behind-the-scenes access—special ways to engage that are not available to the general traveller?
- What type of souvenir or memorabilia can the guests take away? It doesn't have to be expensive, just memorable and linked to the experience (e.g. a recipe from a culinary event, a link to online photos for guests to access and share).
- Think about sustainability and cuisine—how can you showcase the best of what is local?
- Will there be time for self-discovery? Conversation? Over-programming is not a great idea; people need time to enjoy, reflect, talk and make connections.
- Is transportation needed, and if so, what type and what preparations are required for the driver?
- Are any special equipment, permissions, licenses, insurance, etc., needed?



Step 6: Establish the flow with the itinerary

Once a theme has been selected, think about the story, how all the elements will weave together, and how you can best reveal them over time, in different places and with your available resources. You need to ensure there is time for the free flow of conversation, interaction, relaxation and/or reflection, as these are key to success in experience delivery.

Set the itinerary with meticulous attention to detail and personalize it. Write down a detailed itinerary for yourself, staff and partners that ensures everyone has thought through all the little details that can make or break a visitor experience. Here's some other things to think about.

- Consider where guests have been and where they will be going relative to your experience. For example, if they are travelling along the Viking Trail in Newfoundland, engaging in a number of authentic experiences, it is important to know which part of the story has been told at other sites and which activities they engaged in, so the experience at each site is unique and builds on the one before.
- Time the experience in small increments. If it is a two-hour program, think in 10- to 20-minute intervals; if it's a full day, then 30- to 45-minute increments.
- Allow time for transitions between places, activities, guest delays and to let people meet and connect.
- Break down each experiential component into small, simple pieces and ensure that every detail is thought through. This ensures the guests will have a greater chance for success with an activity, and that you haven't forgotten anything. For example, if it is an interactive appetizer with a Red Seal Chef, food portions will need to be prepared and ready to go if time is an issue.

- Think about “positive cues” — elements in the environment that reinforce the experience. If it's a nature-based activity, picnic shelters are ideal over a restaurant for a meal. Select partners and suppliers whose businesses align with the experience. For example, an agri-tourism experience will want to optimize local foods.
- Review all safety matters, plan for them and have a contingency plan.
- Consider weather and have backup plans—will clothing be needed, should guests be advised in advance, etc.
- Consider if any guest limitations could impact the experience, such as fear of heights, physical or auditory limitations, dietary restrictions, etc. How can they be accommodated and if not, how will this be communicated in your marketing materials or when guests call?

Pay attention to detail. When you charge a premium, you must ensure the smallest details are taken care of. The importance of this can't be overstated in planning, delivery and follow-up.





Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island © Tourism Charlottetown / Chris Wilkinson

TIP: Ramping up Volume

Part of the success of a great experience is small groups, engagement and conversations. If you are able to accommodate a large motor coach, consider having two, three or four different experiences available for the guests when they book their travel. This way, for a modest cost of additional program staff and materials, you can welcome a large group of people, but provide a more personalized experience.

Step 7: Select partners, suppliers and experience providers

The people your guests will come in contact with are critical to success in experiential travel.

- Think about the suppliers who will provide things you need and secure their contributions. If you operate with a strong position on sustainability, ensure your suppliers understand this and are aligned in supporting this position.
- Secure the people who will help you deliver the experience(s).
- Coach everyone involved about the guest expectations, the nature of the experience and what is being created, seek their input and when possible, test-run new elements before trying them on a guest.

Step 8: Think about market positioning

Decide which market and sector the experience is in. This will help with the detailed planning and marketing. Markets include:

- mass (everyone), major, niche or customized
- adventure, culture and heritage, nature, festivals and events, agri-tourism, etc.
- domestic, international or both

Consider if the experience fits within the CTC Signature Experiences Collection, and if so, apply. Check with your destination marketing organizations provincially, regionally and locally to understand which market segments they use and what is required to be promoted. And think carefully about your own promotional activities on- and offline to make the critical decisions about where to spend and leverage your limited marketing dollars.

Step 9: Set the selling price

In a competitive marketplace, tourism businesses that don't have a distinct value proposition find themselves competing on price. This leads to a race to the bottom line with operators striving to cut costs to undercut the competition and lure visitors via the lowest price. This approach can affect the service level, quality and perception of your business, unless your business model is designed to differentiate on price, like Walmart or Carnival Cruises.

Companies in the experiential travel business are able to price on value. The price charged to guests reflects the commodities, goods, services and experience, for it is the combination of all these elements that creates a unique offer that can't be replicated elsewhere.

“You can only compete on price for so long, but you can compete on value forever.”

Todd Lucier, owner
Northern Edge Algonquin, ON

Two ways to set prices

Cost-based pricing involves establishing the base costs you incur to offer the product. This typically includes your fixed and variable costs. Once this figure is known, an additional amount or a percentage of the total is added to the total cost to determine the selling price. The percentage added is generally aligned with norms in your industry, be that hotels, restaurants, attractions or tour operators. For example¹:

- Fixed costs \$25 + variable costs \$20 = \$45 cost to offer the product
- \$45 cost + 30% margin = \$58.50 selling price

Value-based pricing also begins with determining the base costs to your organization. **The selling price however, is based on the perceived worth to customers.** Setting prices based on value requires a strong understanding of your customers, your competition and experience positioning e.g. experience differentiation and breadth, price, brand image, service quality, etc.

- Fixed costs \$25 + variable costs \$20 = \$45 cost to offer the product
- \$45 cost + 30% margin + 20% premium = \$67.50 selling price¹

Determining the premium you can charge depends on your customer's perception of your brand, experience and service benefits you offer. You can see why it is important for your business to have a competitive advantage in these three areas. Canada's tourism brand, along with your own meticulous brand building and your efforts to build a customer-focused experience, provide you with the first two advantages. The service benefits are up to you. People will pay for value, but if you don't deliver, you will lose customers. For helpful service ideas, see the next section on delivering a great experience.

The goal of value-based pricing is to set the selling price to reflect the value received and the experience enjoyed. If you can create the WOW factor, connect at a personally relevant level, and deliver on both the service and experience proposition, you have set the stage for value-based pricing and increased revenue.

TIP: Pricing considerations

- It is not uncommon to be shy with pricing and set it too low. Be realistic, set targets, test out your price points and don't be afraid to change.
- If you underprice as a private-sector operator, increases can be introduced with relatively little fanfare.
- If you underprice as a government-funded tourism business (e.g. a park, historic site, museum), changing prices may be more challenging as the customer is accustomed to set prices and marginal increases.



“Our knowledge of the area and where people have their WOW moments allows us to add a few special things in after the price is set to give that extra bit value and expected surprise. These don't cost us a lot of money but mean a lot to the visitors. The benefit to my business is that I can double my profits in one day by just being willing to cater to people's specific interests and time.”

Perry Gotell, Owner/Operator

¹ For illustration purposes only.

Setting Price: An example

Tranquility Cove Adventures on Prince Edward Island (www.tranquilitycoveadventures.com) is a micro business (fewer than 10 employees) and part of the CTC Signature Experiences Collection. Designed to attract leisure and corporate travellers (both domestic and international), it is slowly increasing its inventory of niche market visitor experiences. The themes focus on fishing experiences and their visitor experiences are designed around the natural assets available in the region: clams, lobsters and fishing.

The maximum group the boat can accommodate is 12. With fewer than six people, the owner leads the excursion himself. If there are more than six people, he has one crew member. If he has 11 or 12 guests, two crew members join him.

The Cork Adventure Experience

Targeted to visitors who want to experience the life of an east-coast fisherman, this experience was designed to add extra revenue to the core business of lobster fishing in May and June. A small group activity, a maximum of four guests per day get to spend the day with the fishing crew and:

- participate in a seven-hour lobster fishing excursion that begins before daylight and ends by noon
- sail with the skipper and crew, who will haul 280 lobster traps from the water
- gear up with rubber boots, gloves and oil gear to “work as a cork” (a lobster fisherman’s helper)
- hook buoys, pick traps of lobster, rock-crab (and everything else that comes up in a trap), then re-bait the traps and return them to the bottom
- back in port, learn how to weigh the catch and sell it to the local processor, then see how the crew ice up the next day’s bait, refuel and set the ship for the following day

What goes into setting the price for this niche market experience?

Physical costs: Five-hour use of the boat and all associated costs (a fee contributing to the boat operation: gas, insurance, annual federal inspection, ongoing maintenance, licensing, preparing for visitors, etc.), two crew members and the skipper, use of clothing.

Emotional value: Access to local, authentic people and where they fish, as well as other travellers with similar interests in a small, intimate group setting filled with laughter. Knowledge gained from the skipper and crew, including a lifetime of stories told in unique accents. The chance to step into another world working as a cork, learning how to haul traps from the sea, pick them, bait them and weigh lobsters. Then they receive a lesson in pricing, so the next time guests buy a lobster, they appreciate the cost and can picture the faces of people who make their livelihood taking these delicacies from the sea.

Setting the price

The **Cork Adventure** sells for \$89 per person, generating \$356 per day of incremental revenue beyond the lobster catch, representing a seasonal potential of over \$20,000 in new revenue from this one program.

Other programs

Tranquility Cove also offers a total of five regular programs, each at different price points to increase the opportunity and revenue potential of its fishing operation for visitors. Upon request, they provide customized corporate programs that can generate up to \$1,600 for a two-hour, 10-person event.



Step 10: Marketing and communication

You can develop the most awe-inspiring, exciting, inspirational experiences, with excellent people on the ground to deliver them, but if you can't motivate your ideal guests to buy, the experience can't be enjoyed. Creating interest and excitement in prospective and returning customers is paramount to your success and you need to be conscious of four types of communication.

Business to consumer: You control what's put into the market. The messages are being communicated by your company to the market via channels such as print, the internet, social media, TV, direct-mail, etc.

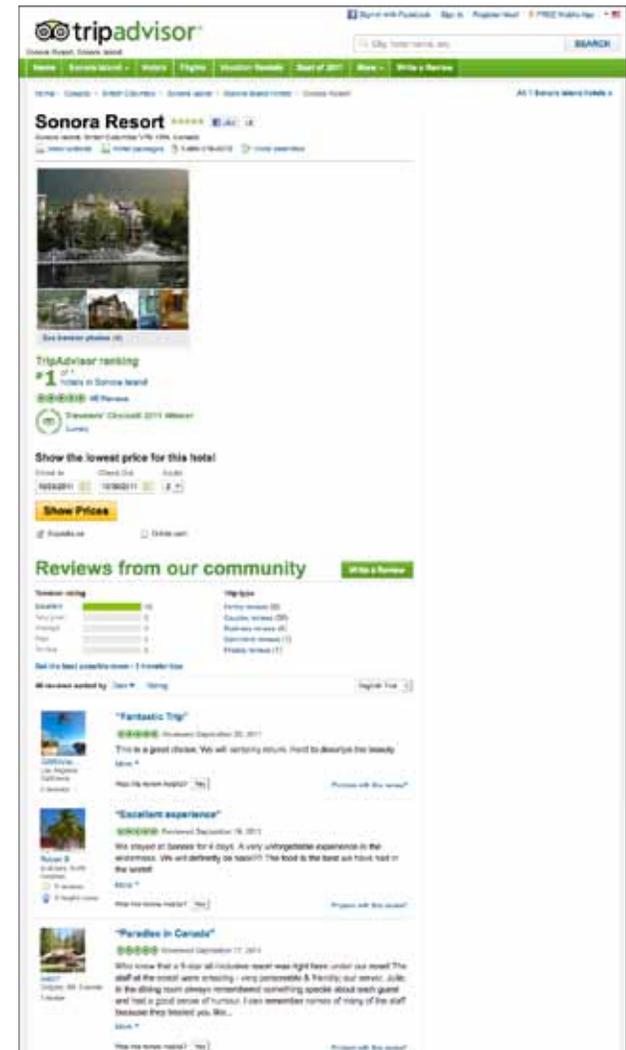
Consumer to business: The customer controls what is communicated to the company via phone, email, mail, and social media channels, etc. Customers inform you about their experience with your company through the customer lifecycle—before, during, and after their engagement.

Consumer to consumer: These are messages between actual and prospective customers. They take place principally online, and you have little to no control over the content. While you can't control what's said, you can decide to monitor and learn about what's being said, or join the conversation.

Business to business: These are messages between businesses about your company or the experience. They may be designed to promote (such as Destination Marketing Organizations) or merely to raise awareness between companies of activities and events (via Twitter, LinkedIn, or personal communications).



Above: various online business communication such as blogs, Twitter pages, and Facebook pages.



TIP: It's about two-way conversations

Marketing is not as easy as it used to be. The available channels have expanded, with the customer influencing messages and conversations in ways never seen in the past. The advent of social media necessitates that businesses engage in a variety of two-way conversations.

Step 11: Prepare the team and pilot the experience

It is important to ensure all details are set prior to the guests arriving, that attention is paid to the details during the experience delivery, and that the experience is evaluated after the guests have gone.

Prior to the guests arriving, think about:

- ensuring all guest communications have gone out and you have received any pertinent information and shared it with partners (e.g. allergies, physical limitations, late arrivals, etc.)
- reviewing the itinerary and flow of activities with everyone involved with the experience
- testing out the equipment and ensure all the supplies needed are available and in working order
- checking the weather to see if it will impact outdoor activities or the arrival and departure of guests
- gaps in your planning, preparation and any last minute things that need to be done
- ensuring everyone who will interact with travellers throughout the entire customer life cycle is aware of who your visitors are, their expectations and the type of experience you want to deliver

Example: Aikens Lake Wilderness Lodge (www.aikenslake.com) ensures its contracted motor-coach drivers all experience the lodge before they ever pick up a guest so that the drivers can begin the journey for visitors as soon as they arrive at the airport.

Prepare your employees and partners

It's hard to design and deliver great experiences if you've never experienced them yourself, and put yourself in the shoes of travellers. It's equally difficult to craft experiences for your company's best customers when those doing the designing don't share the same characteristics, values and motivations of your target customers. Here are a few design ideas:

- try out the experience with another company—get out and mystery shop
- bring people into the planning stage who are your customers and listen carefully to their input and feedback
- dare to be different—try things you have never done before
- ensure you allow adequate time to coach the people delivering the experience; provide them with as much information about the customer as you have, and be specific about how to engage visitors—this doesn't come naturally to everyone

“At WildPlay, part of our hiring process is ensuring that all employees have experienced the elements in the park, from the apprehension and exhilaration of having your feet tied together and jumping off a bridge, to climbing a 40-foot cargo net suspended 50 feet in the air.”

Tom Benson, Chief Experience Officer
WildPlay Element Parks, www.wildplay.com

“When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but with creatures of emotion.”

Dale Carnegie (1888-1955). American writer and lecturer





© Banff Lake Louise Tourism

Step 12: Deliver and evaluate the experience

When delivering the experience:

- Set the stage for people to meet each other and to make personal connections straight away to increase their comfort and create the atmosphere.
- Provide any information guests need up front, and if you are keeping a few secrets, be prepared that some people like to know everything and will be uncomfortable with this. Have a plan to ensure their psychological comfort can be set.
- Deliver the program as planned but be flexible and adapt the delivery to adjust to how the visitors are reacting and engaging with the activities.
- Pay attention to detail en route—remember special things guests say and work them into the conversation. Ensure shy people feel connected to the degree they are comfortable, listen to the conversations and learn about the guests, their interests, their travel plans (great product development intelligence)—and write it all down afterwards so you don't forget.

After the guests have departed ensure you gather guest and partner feedback to evaluate the experience.

- Have a post-guest communications strategy in place: connect with your visitors, learn from them, share with them and invite them back.
- Monitor what is said about your company in your guest book and on social media sites such as Trip Advisor to learn what visitors loved and what could be improved.
- Connect with suppliers and people who delivered the experience to get their insights, reactions and ideas about what works and what could be done differently. Honest, open communication is key.

Telling and selling your story





Telling your story to sell the experience

Storytelling makes a great foundation for planning experiences and bringing them to life, plus it opens up the door to creative marketing. Both Tourism Newfoundland and Labrador and The Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre have done just that.

Rather than describe the places to go and list the things to do, “We are writing chapters of stories that tell people about Newfoundland and Labrador,” says Carmela Murphy, Director of Marketing. “When I think of the Viking Trail, for example, we marketed the trail for years, and talked about ancient places in history. It wasn’t too exciting. Now we tell the story of the Vikings as explorers, and we connect the place to visual images of curious children exploring this barren land—it is far more powerful. We even have people contacting us now waiting for the next year’s television commercial.”

Stories create emotional connections. The Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre (www.discoverfossils.com) in Manitoba focuses its marketing around its core attribute—fossils. The Centre’s dig experience takes visitors on a fossil hunt with a staff member who teaches them about fossils. Guests are provided with tools to work on the site so that they can engage in a hands-on experience in a real dig site. Tyler Schroeder, the former general manager said,

“People love it. It’s so much more real than just hearing someone talk about digging for fossils.”

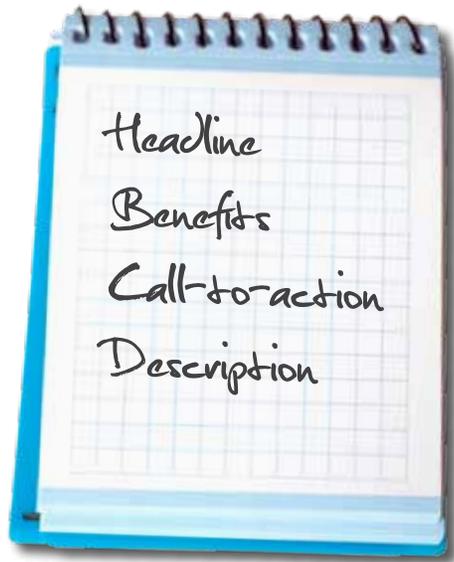
In 2008, a local family visiting the centre made the phenomenal discovery of an 80-million-year-old, 11-metre-long ancient mosasaur near Morden, MB. It was the most significant find in 30 years. While the discovery was exciting and led to many great stories, the folks at the site allowed the family to name the fossil. They chose “Angus.” Now Angus is a part of their “family” and a story that they will share for generations to come. This one event led to a storyline that became the focus of the Centre’s marketing activities. Staff members are now listening and watching for other significant guest experiences to build their marketing messages and stories around.

Experiential marketing is about creating personally relevant encounters attached to a call to action. Stories have emerged as a powerful way to do this because they:

- connect people, places, the past and present
- have characters that people can relate to
- evolve over time and can be shared
- can be told in ways that bring guests into the story, creating connections and personal attachments
- change with every storyteller who brings his or her own special version to the audience
- are powerful at triggering emotions that lead to decision making

“If you market the *stuff* you will be like everyone else talking about old artifacts and buildings. But *stories* are personal, uniquely yours. They belong to you, your site, your community, and highlight your culture and traditions.”

Terry McCalmont
Former Manager, Fort Rodd Hill NHS



Louise Stitt, co-partner in the Meanderer Creek Patch (www.pumpkinfun.ca), listens carefully to her guests. On one occasion she heard a child squeal with delight to her grandfather, “It’s better than Disney!” Jumping on the occasion to learn why, Louise quickly discovered some of the reasons, which included (to name a few) no line-ups, children can run around safely, it’s close to home so it doesn’t cost a lot and take all day. This one customer interaction led to the company using the words that described “why we are better than Disney” in their marketing communications.

Marketing communication that grabs attention

What follows are some important things to remember when telling the story of your experience using words, images, audio or video.

Words that work

Tourism marketing has traditionally focused on promotions that are too quick to describe the infrastructure and amenities: “We offer a five-star hotel, indoor pool and spa, with three golf courses nearby.” Travellers need factual information about location, price and other details to make a travel decision. This, however, is only part of the decision criteria that influences the choice to buy. Travellers have to first understand the benefits you’re offering before they commit to buy. Marketing experiential travel is about involving passion, telling stories, sparking curiosity and addressing traveller motivations. Focus on this to sell the experience. Then add the package details.

Like one traveller talking to another, you want to sound as though you are telling a good friend about your unique experience, exactly as you feel it. Based on what you know and have learned about your “best” customers (this includes listening to what they say when they describe the experience), select words that strike a chord with your prospective guests. Or even better, use their words (with permission, of course).

Getting the words right is an art for those who aren’t natural writers—but when you are thinking about describing your experience to a prospective audience make sure you have the following:

Headline: A short three- to five-word phrase that captures readers’ attention and imagination.

Benefits: Focus on what travellers will get out of the experience.

Call-to-action: Be clear and concise in describing the primary action you want readers to take.

Descriptions of the amenities that may be important for certain promotional activities. Make sure it supports the experience. Do not position buildings and beds as the reason for travel.

Remember to be true to your brand personality. Focus on what makes the experience unique, keep your writing simple and say it with feeling.

The social and travel values that characterize each market segment defined by the Explorer Quotient can help you focus on what matters to your target customers. Use these insights to tap into the emotions and motivations of your target travellers.



Photos that capture people, emotion and a sense of place

Pick up any brochure, look at a travel magazine ad, browse the websites of many accommodations, attractions and restaurants, and you'll notice something is often missing—the customer. People want to see themselves in photos, be it heli-touring the Niagara wineries or sipping a fine wine at the Wickanninsh Inn while storm watching. Most great photos are not accidents. They are planned, but still feel natural.

Approaches vary. Photos should look as though a traveller could have actually taken them, rather than feel staged by a professional photographer. Shots are from a traveller's point of view so that people can easily imagine themselves in the scene. Images used to sell Canadian travel experiences should evoke curiosity and reflect the experience. Ensure they are top quality and invest in a professional photographer.

Tips for capturing or choosing great imagery:

- ensure travellers are engaged in the moment
- take the picture from the traveller's point of view
- make sure the people and the action look natural, not overly posed
- verify the lighting and content have inherent warmth
- allow plenty of clear space for a headline (if needed)
- try to capture unique aspects of Canada
- think about how to capture authenticity
- ask yourself whether this communicates the experience in ways the best customer will identify with



TIP: Tagging photos and video

Every time a photo or video is shared on the Internet, publishers are given the opportunity to include titles, descriptions and tags to describe it. Take the time to use words that include your location, activity, business name and other words that prospective travellers may type into a search engine to find your business.



Whistler, British Columbia

Sound great

Audio is often overlooked, but is potentially one of the most appreciated types of media. Before recording audio and making it available to your guests, consider when they are most likely to be listening to this media.

Whether making the mobile version of your website come to life with informative, behind-the-scenes audio interviews, or providing access to songs provided by local musicians that your guests can play in their car en route to your location, providing links to audio can extend the visitor experience.

Audio examples:

- music that is authentic to your region and/or musical styles appreciated by your guests
- Interviews with guests sharing first-hand experiences or your staff giving a sneak peek behind the scenes.
- background sounds associated with your location and experience that add depth to your audio
- guided tours or other audio that helps folks appreciate the journey to your location

Nothing inspires like video

Every day over two billion videos are watched on YouTube alone. Over half of YouTube users visit the site weekly and share videos with friends and family. Video is one of the best ways to convey a sense of what you offer to potential customers and give them a sense of what they will experience when they are with you.

Four basics tips for shooting quality video:

Steadiness: Use a tripod or brace yourself so that you are holding the camera as steady as possible.

Clear audio: Use an external microphone to reduce the wind and background noises.

Lighting: Ensure your subject is well lit.

HD Video: Use a camera that can produce high-definition (HD) video.

TIP: Privacy and individual rights are essential considerations when you're shooting video and photography that will be used for commercial purposes. Be sure to have subjects appearing in the video and/or photos sign release forms allowing you to use what you shoot to sell your business and experience.

Producing and distributing video that connects with people means you must consider the:

Length: Statistics show that most videos lose half their audience after the first minute. A video that is 100 to 140 seconds long gives plenty of time to get your message across. If you have more to say, consider a second, targeted video.

Audience: Think about your ideal guests and capture the authentic emotions they will feel, the places and people they will visit and the things they will discover.

Message: Tell stories to sell travel.

Sharing of your video: You can upload the same video to many different websites for free (e.g. Youtube, Facebook, TripAdvisor). Know where your travellers are watching online and be there.



Leverage your marketing dollars

There are many ways to leverage your limited marketing dollars. For small and medium tourism businesses, the Internet allows you to compete on an international stage. Remember:

- partner or align with brands that complement yours
- tap into partner programs with your destination marketing organization
- use the voice of travellers to build credibility, then tag and link to these people to extend your reach
- welcome travel writers, invite them in, let them experience your product, then link their story to your website, post the link to Twitter and Facebook—get as much mileage as you can from them
- use social media to build awareness—encourage your guests to write, share stories, photos and videos—monitor this, listen and learn as it will help your product development and marketing
- invest in promotions that you know your ideal guests appreciate and track ads to confirm their value
- have a good website and link to businesses that will send you traffic; monitor and reward these businesses

TIP: Remember, distribution of your media is free online. Your investment is best focused on producing digital text, photos, audio and video, and then posting them where they reach your ideal guests.



Above: www.paddlingontario.com is an example of cluster marketing where businesses work together to promote their experiences. This leverages their marketing dollars for greater impact.



Above: an example of media coverage resulting from hosting travel media.

Celebrating excellence



Nobody tells the story of experiential tourism better than the people actually delivering the experience.

We interviewed five businesses, big and small, to find out how making the shift to selling an experience is working for them.



The Halifax Citadel National Historic Site: Bringing history to life

Halifax, Nova Scotia

www.parkscanada.gc.ca/halifaxcitadel

CTC: Tell us about yourselves.

Perched atop Citadel Hill, this iconic landmark is an integral part of the Halifax community that is managed by the Parks Canada Agency. It's an excellent example of a 19th-century bastion fortification with ramparts, powder magazines, signal masts and a defensive ditch. The Citadel, as it is commonly referred to, commemorates Canada's military history.

Share with us an experiential program you are proud of.

Our **Regimental Dinner** is a two-to-three hour program that allows us to engage visitors in our living history, while enjoying a 19th-century officer's meal.

Guests are welcomed at the austere gates to the Citadel then taken to the tailor shop to get fitted for their period costume. Depending on the group, they participate in a simple meal to a full military-style mess dinner, and engage in time-honoured ceremonies, storytelling and musical events. On special occasions, a guest is allowed to fire the evening gun.

Building on themes that celebrate our heritage designation, we also offer a Highlander Experience, Victoria Tea, Scotch Tastings, and if you really want to immerse, you can be a Soldier for a Day.

Who are your ideal guests?

People who are interested in history, engaging in unique experiences and having fun. Individual visitors who are seeking authentic, cultural experiences and enjoy visiting heritage sites.

Our ideal corporate guests are companies looking to host a unique experience that is highly engaging and fosters great conversations. Offered on- or offsite, we take our assets and customize them.

Tell us about your partners.

Our main program partner is the Halifax Citadel Regimental Association, a non-profit organization that promotes Canadian military history. They are a vital link to delivering programs and managing some of our revenue-based programs.

We also work with hotels, like the Delta Barrington, and outside partners to assist with the delivery of programs on site.

Tell us about your marketing.

We use our interpreters to tell our stories and sell our programs at live events. We collaborate with provincial and municipal tourism departments to leverage increased marketing opportunities. As a result, we have a strong visual presence in many of their campaigns. In addition, we often host travel media that results in valuable editorial that complements our promotional efforts.

“We just returned home from the MS Rotterdam cruise and one shore excursion stands out as the best ever!

I signed my husband, a history buff, up for the Soldier for a Day in Halifax. We were there on July 1, Canada Day. He was greeted, briefed then taken to the tailor shop to be fitted for a uniform. I have never seen him as happy. He had the time of his life and learned a bit of history.”

Linda, 2002 visitor



We work with strategic travel trade partners to promote our experiential offerings to our target markets. Familiarization tours, trade shows, special events, training opportunities are just a few of the types of initiatives that help increase awareness.



Which markets are you in?

Our guests come from all over the world, but roughly 60% of our market is Canadians and 30% is from the US.

We have a strong presence in international and domestic markets. Key sectors we work with are:

- cruise, as a shore excursion provider
- conference, meeting and incentive travel group
- FIT, motor coach

How do you contribute to Canada's competitive landscape?

Canada's natural and cultural heritage is a major motivation for travel. By offering diverse programs to domestic and international markets, being flexible and able to respond to mass and custom market demands, we are ambassadors for the entire Parks Canada system. We hope a positive experience with us will encourage visitation to other historic sites.

What are the benefits of planning experiences versus packaging tours?

As a federally designated historic site, there are several benefits:

- increasing our relevance to Canadians and international visitors
- engaging people in history in ways that are fun and educational
- allowing us to generate revenue for our site and our community partners
- leveraging our marketing budget
- new stories can be introduced any time using the same basic infrastructure

Any advice for others?

- Continue to evolve your experiential programs over time.
- Develop a shared vision with the community and partner with them to share the opportunity, ensure authenticity, and leverage resources.
- Community partnerships deliver stronger results than "going it alone."
- Identify the champions inside your organization who will support the changes required in attitudes and businesses activities to achieve success.
- Invest in developing your unique stories, then customize how they are told and brought to life to fit individual audiences.

- Invest in programming and relationship building, which are less expensive and more adaptable than traditional infrastructure investments, and generate needed revenue.
- Never compromise on quality and authenticity, as visitors recognize both.
- Think beyond the walls of your own facility. Experiential programs are portable and raise the profile of your organization when delivered offsite.
- Flexibility is as important as being responsive.
- The ability to repackage and price six basic products, adapted for different clients, has been fundamental to leveraging our investment and developing quality partnerships.
- Build on your assets, your stories and connect guests in ways that are relevant to them and true to you.

Thank you!

Contributed by:
Dave Danskin
Manager, Visitor Experiences

Shediac Bay Cruises: A taste of the ocean

Shediac, New Brunswick

www.lobstertales.ca

CTC: Tell us about yourselves.

This business started 11 years ago quite by chance. The previous owner (Eric LeBlanc), god bless him, said to me, “The story has to be told.” I was 52 years old and my wife Denise and I decided it was now or never! It’s turned into a family business, my daughters have worked here, and there is such satisfaction when I tell people the story about my livelihood. After all, I am still first and foremost a lobster fisherman of 27 years. The cruise tours are a seasonal complement from mid-May to mid-October. It’s an additional revenue stream and we get to share our culture with people every year who come to hear our stories.

Share with us an experiential program you are proud of.

We offer the full lobster fishing experience on our 2.5-hour cruise in Shediac Bay, engaging all senses on every tour. Our guests work with the lobster traps, pull on the ropes, enjoy a 20-minute educational presentation, learn to cook and crack open lobsters and then the grand finale! We serve up a traditional lobster meal with potato salad, coleslaw and rolls. We have bar service, so you can also enjoy a nice cold drink. We teach them how to cook lobster and send them home with a recipe.

If they don’t like lobster we provide alternatives so everyone can enjoy a taste of Acadia. We are proud of our culture and want to share what we do, the food we eat, and the music that makes us dance!

Who are your ideal guests?

Sixty-eight percent are walk-ins. Basically, we attract people who are curious about lobsters, love eating lobsters, or want to learn more about lobsters and a fisherman’s way of life. Locals love our tours, too— people who live in New Brunswick but don’t know much about our traditional way of life.

Tell us about your partners.

I look for a little bit of myself in someone, and so does my wife. When we find them, and think they would make a good employee or a good partner, it’s easy to align our interests.

We love to use university students, as we are a summer operation and every now and then you find a gem who loves to tell a great story! It doesn’t matter if they are fishermen themselves, they come from the area and are as proud of the Acadian culture as we are. The guests feel that passion.

My motto is “If you can smile to someone, you’ve sold half your plate. Use the rest of your character to sell the full plate.”



© Shediac Bay Cruises / Ron Cormier
www.lobstertales.ca

Tell us about your marketing.

We use our website, work with our DMO and:

- promotional brochures in hotels, tourist agencies
- consumer shows
- word of mouth (reputation)

Which markets are you in?

We cater to people from all over— Australia, Japan, Hawaii, Texas and Timbuktu. Anyone who visits New Brunswick, we’d love to host. Coach and corporate markets represent a large part of our business because we can accommodate up to 65 on our boat.

“For a second consecutive year... fantastic experience.”

A Montréal family, 2010



How do you contribute to Canada's competitive landscape?

Canada is a country of food producers, farmers and fishermen. We connect people to the land and sea with an experience you can't get everywhere else in the world.

We can cater to mass markets, niche markets and custom requests, so we are very flexible in meeting any traveller's or travel organization's needs.

We hope that by sharing our culture with people from around the world, it will encourage visitors to look differently at our region, stay longer, do more, then tell their friends about us and come back again!

What are the benefits of planning experiences vs. packaging tours?

Sharing our culture with people who are truly interested and curious is why we are in the businesses.

Of course, any time one business brings 10,000 people to town, lots of businesses benefit—from the ice-cream stand 50 feet away, to the hotels, restaurants, and shops. We like being one of the reasons that attracts visitors to our community.

Watching the guests enjoy our way of life is really rewarding. I feel a little guilty though, because sometimes I feel we get more out of it than they do! We love having people visit.

The other benefits: tourists get to savour our lobster, which helps the fishing industry, listen to our Acadian music, which helps our musical artists, and taste our "Acadian Joie de vivre."

Any advice for others?

- Be yourself. I wear my Acadian culture on my sleeve. Feel what you are saying and your guests will love it. I guess that's what everyone is referring to when they talk about an authentic experience.
- Focus on your culture, be proud, and share your stories, food and daily activities. It always amazes me how much people are interested in the things we take for granted everyday.
- Make people smile, laugh and help them to get to know people on your boat. This creates a community.
- Hire people who share your passion, and work hard while having fun. Be there for your staff, support them well.

Thank you for your time!

Contributed by:
Ron and Denise Cormier
Owners and Operators

Adventure Canada: Isolated treasures

Toronto, Ontario

www.adventurecanada.com

CTC: Tell us about yourselves.

Adventure Canada is a family-owned business that has been operating with a mandate “to make Canada better known to Canadians” for almost 25 years. We have deep roots in the communities we visit. Our programming is a mix of science and the arts, with a full lecture series covering everything from history, to art, to climate change, to marine biology. We offer a best-in-class staff to traveller ratio of 8:1.

Share with us an experiential program you are proud of.

Our **Heart of the Arctic Program** is very rich in the communities of Southern Baffin Island.

We've worked very hard to ensure that we have quality local Inuit guides in the communities we visit so they can connect our travellers with their community and share their experiences of living in Canada's isolated north.

We always travel with at least one musician, and when able to stay late in a community, we put on a show at the community centre and invite the local residents to a night of music and dance. It's a great way to build relationships for our company, but most important, our visitors enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Who are your ideal guests?

Lifelong learners who are attracted by our lecture series and hands-on workshops. They want to engage with the local people, food, culture and expand their world view through authentic experience. These are soft adventure seekers, looking for a customizable product that allows them to choose their own daily adventures.

They are well educated, well travelled, and can sense when they are welcome. It's our job to ensure our in-community relationships are strong and respectful, so that we can create that magical connection for every traveller. This is where memories are made, stories emerge and photo opportunities are to-die for.

Tell us about your partners.

Our partners are the communities we visit. They help us identify new places and new experiences. We engage:

- local artists who share their craft, then invite our guests to purchase artwork to retain the connection
- local guides ensure the authenticity of people and place and our tours provide them with additional revenue
- community leaders and elders are invited onto our ships—we want them to converse with our travellers, as much as our guests love interacting with them

“I was expecting the icebergs, but I was not expecting such a rich cultural experience. I particularly enjoyed the resource staff. They were knowledgeable, always helpful and fun. Many thanks. It was a marvellous trip. Well planned and well executed.”

Jane – Heart of the Arctic 2009



Everyone has a story to tell. Our role is to set the stage, create the atmosphere and ensure everyone's comfort so they can enjoy their time together.

Tell us about your marketing.

We prefer to establish partnerships with like-minded organizations and reach out to their members. Canadian Geographic, the Walrus Foundation, the David Suzuki Foundation and World Wildlife Fund Canada have all been partners in Adventure Canada voyages.

Additionally:

- referrals account for 40% of our new business
- we theme our cruises so we can tap into different niche markets, then feature special people—like famed author Margaret Atwood—whose names also carry their own marketing caché

Which markets are you in?

We are strong in the educational experiential markets for people who are already familiar with the cruise product, but would like a more intimate experience on a smaller vessel with access to more remote areas.

Internationally, the UK and Germany are attracted to our cruises because of their long history of exploration in the North. Australians seeking adventure to fill up their six weeks of vacation are a new emerging market for us.

How do you contribute to Canada's competitive landscape?

We fill out the map of Canada and work to educate travellers and international tour operators alike about our northern and eastern destinations and the merits of small ship expeditions.

For international resellers, we represent a way for them to complete their reach into unique and authentic travel experiences to remote lands and cultures.

As a cruise product, we also provide a sample set of the places we visit, and we find that our travellers fall in love with certain places along the route and return for a deeper experience.

What are the benefits of planning experiences vs. packaging tours?

Travellers become stakeholders in the places they visit when they are allowed to genuinely connect with the landscapes, wildlife, people and culture. They then become more aware of issues affecting the region and become advocates for preserving the cultures and environment for future travellers. We see people change—it's incredibly rewarding to be part of this transformation through travel.

Any advice for others?

- Make it authentic—people will know when it's real and when it's not.
- Involve the people in the local communities and stakeholders, as they are the best resources for finding the types of authentic experiences that resonate with travellers.

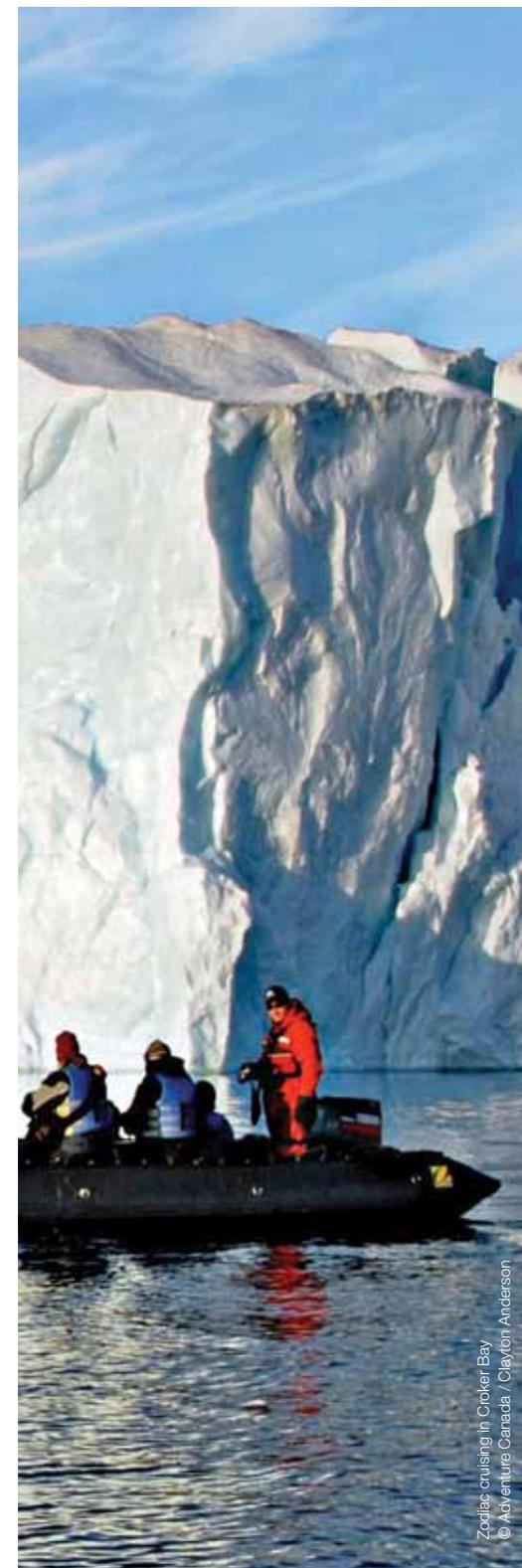
Thank you for your time!

Contributed by:
Clayton Anderson
Manager, Marketing and Business
Development

“The arrival of Adventure Canada is an event in an Arctic community. While there are other cruise ship companies, not one is heralded with greater enthusiasm because of its relationship of reciprocity with the community.

The local residents offer what they are known for—traditional way of life, Inuit games, the arts—and in return, Adventure Canada gives the community an interactive musical performance. The atmosphere of fun and enjoyment that pervades both passengers and staff carries over into the community.”

Kyra Vladikov Fisher
General Manager
Uqqurmiut Centre for Arts and Crafts,
Pangnirtung, Nunavut



Northern Edge Algonquin: An eco-lodge that doesn't sell rooms

Algonquin Park, Ontario

www.NorthernEdgeAlgonquin.com

CTC: Tell us about yourselves.

The Edge is a solar-powered nature retreat located on Kawawaymog Lake, northwest of Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario. Living off the grid, we deliver experiences for FIT, corporate and school groups who stay at our 30-bed lodge and travel on overnight canoe and sea-kayak trips in Algonquin Park and beyond.

Our guests learn from inspiring adventure guides, wilderness arts teachers, yoga and retreat facilitators and guest presenters from around the world. They dine on organic, locally grown food—some grown in our own gardens. Our handcrafted surroundings, designed in harmony with our forest home, offer the opportunity to slow down, connect with nature and inspire one another.

Share with us an experiential program you are proud of.

Quest for Balance is a four-day program that combines yoga and sea kayaking. It helps guests appreciate the peace and serenity of nature, while balancing their body, mind and spirit. They learn new ways to lead a balanced approach to living, wrapped up in exquisite meals, local microbrewed ales from Highlander Brew Co. and wine from our family-owned Viewpoint winery. Our guests even participate in a “make-your-own-pizza” party in the forest, cooking in a roman black-clay oven.

Who are your ideal guests?

First we have *Authentic Experiencers*, people who appreciate a bit of the exotic combined with nature. They embrace learning and being creative.

Then we have *Rejuvenators*, people who are seeking to restore a sense of balance in their busy lives. They embrace the idea of unplugging from technology, meeting new people, and stretching themselves a bit.

Finally, we appeal to spiritual seekers who come to learn from shamans from Africa and Peru, Tibetan monks from India and spiritual teachers travelling in Canada.

Ethically, our guests appreciate our solar-powered lifestyle, focus on local cuisine and being with nature. They don't see the lack of TV, air conditioning or Internet as a hindrance. Rather, it is to be appreciated.

Tell us about your partners.

Our team is anchored by chef Gregor Waters, who has a personality rivalled only by his bold tastes and kitchen creativity. Our local partners include:

- Wendy Martin, our yoga partner, plus our outdoor educators, sea-kayak instructors, canoe guides and guest facilitators
- as owners, Martha leads the spiritual retreats and Todd facilitates the corporate retreats



© Northern Edge Algonquin / Todd Lucier
www.northernedgealgonquin.ca

Tell us about your marketing.

We market almost exclusively on the web. This allows us to adjust product offering, quickly introduce new experiences, and share photos and videos. Guests get a good sense of what to expect.

We've never fit into the traditional DMO boxes; they sell to mass markets and sectors—we sell to individuals. We sell direct to our long-haul niche market travellers.

We focus on what they will feel, how they will engage with people and nature, rather than talk about the amenities. For us, the traditional trade has never been a cost effective way to sell.

The Internet opened up the world to us. Our secret weapon is cultivating relationships with travel bloggers to help create an online buzz and tell our story. It's credible, personable and affordable.

“The Edge is absolutely magical with opportunities for self discovery, relaxation, and a deep connection with nature and beautiful people. I was astonished by how truly wonderful it turned out to be and the impact my visit had on me, physically, mentally, and spiritually.”

Lisa, Quest for Balance, 2010

Which markets are you in?

Internationally we attract visitors from the USA, UK and Germany—people looking to connect with nature. Our biggest market, however, is our fellow Canadians, fellow Ontarians.

How do you contribute to Canada's competitive landscape?

Our offer is our differentiator. We reach out and invite people from all over the world to experience Canada.

The mere fact we don't "sell rooms" differentiates us and starts the conversation with our guest; then the sales come. We also package multiple experiences so some of our guests commit to revisiting up to eight times for a "series" of experiences.

We promise to turn people on through nature, which means turning off your cellphone and computer—and people want to do this. In this day and age, there is a burgeoning market for retreats and peaceful escapes from our busy personal and professional lives.

What are the benefits of planning experiences vs. packaging tours?

We are hard-wired for this and can't imagine doing business any other way. At first we didn't see ourselves as being in the tourism industry because we weren't "packaging travel." We've always started planning by asking "What type of experience can we offer?"

Most eco-lodges sell rooms, and we could do that, but we are selling experiences, "where the room and meals are included," which virtually doubles our capacity to generate revenue. Taking people offsite quadruples our income potential—people are buying a carefully crafted experience, not a "canoe or kayak trip."



© Northern Edge Algonquin / Todd Lucier

A huge benefit is that our guests have meaningful experiences and they share their stories on TripAdvisor, Facebook and elsewhere on the web. This has raised our profile among traditional accommodation providers, especially on TripAdvisor.

Any advice for others?

- Focus on the relationship with your guests, figuring out what they want to experience and with whom, then design. Too many businesses focus on selling their infrastructure.
- Learn to describe your ideal guests and focus on providing benefits that match their motivations for travelling.
- Choose your team carefully—staff and partners. We know that they may buy their travel with our company, but their memories are linked to the people they engage with. Your staff and community partners are vital.

- Focus on authenticity, find out what is special in your community and bring that to your guests front and centre.
- Finally, create space for conversations.

Thank you!

Contributed by:
Todd and Martha Lucier
Owners and Operator

The Fairmont Empress: Creative programming reaches new markets

Victoria, British Columbia

www.fairmont.com/empress and <http://www.friendsoftheempress.ca>

CTC: Tell us about yourselves.

Majestic, beautiful, iconic, *The Empress*, as she is fondly referred to by the locals, overlooks the inner harbour of British Columbia's capital city, Victoria. Since opening in 1908, the *Grand Dame of Hotels* has been a gathering point for royalty to celebrities. Most important, it is a place for people from our own community to enjoy.

Our goal is to turn special moments into lasting memories.

Share with us an experiential program you are proud of.

We launched our **Friends of the Empress Program** in 2009 to create year-round reasons for people who are staying at our property to experience the magic and majesty of *The Empress*.

Every month we offer specialty programs in the hotel, or on the property, that have a theme, a distinct target audience and promise a fabulous experience. From a Winter Whiskey Warm Up and to Battle of the Chefs to Royal Subjects Tea and an Apprentice Pastry program for children, our experiences celebrate our heritage, culinary talents and spa facilities.

Who are your ideal guests for this program?

The local community—people who live in our city, the island, the province. We wanted to send a message to the locals: you are welcome any time.

Tell us about your partners.

We are looking for people with passion! We know our bricks and mortar will never change. It is the intangibles that make the difference, the interaction between our guests and the people they meet.

For the *Friends of the Empress* we partner with people who will bring an experience to life:

- chefs, artists, musicians, sommeliers, experts or we bring in celebrities
- companies that complement our brand such as the Royal BC Museum, Five Star Whale Watching, Olympic View Golf Course, and local food and wine producers

We like to take our team, go to the fields with our chefs, and see for ourselves where the cheese is made and the squash grows before we bring it to you.



Tell us about your marketing.

We focus on value and don't compromise on the price.

Word of mouth is huge, plus:

- monthly e-newsletters
- special section on our website
- we always invite the media to a special table at major events
- social-media channels

As the program matured we found locals wanted to stay overnight and treat themselves for a getaway in their own town. We responded by introducing a great room rate with our programs for our *Friends of the Empress*, which is generating room nights from locals who would otherwise never stay with us, and which comes back to our core business.

“Listen to your guests, their feedback is like gold dust for developing experiences.”

Theresa Dickenson,
Food and Beverage Manager

How do your experiences contribute to Canada's competitive landscape?

Our experiential programming creates an invitation for locals to bring their guests. We know the VFR market is significant, and hoteliers only partially benefit from this market. By having programs that welcome locals and visitors alike to enjoy the Empress, regardless of where they are staying, contributes to the entire community.

Which markets are you in?

The programs are launched in the local market first. Once they have been offered and we know their level of success, we can create some programs that can be replicated with corporate markets. We may need to change the experience provider, but we have lots of talent on our island to tap into, so that is not a problem.

“Change the paradigm, get creative, take calculated risks—what have you got to lose? If fact, you have everything to lose, by not trying!”

Angela Rafuse-Tahir,
Director, Sales and Marketing

“Find a way to unleash the passion, talk about it, then relentlessly feed the sparks and make sure people have a sense of belonging to the change.”

Martin Leclerc,
General Manager

What are the benefits of planning experiences vs. packaging tours?

It's fun! We love it, our guests love it and the media love it. It creates a culture of innovation and gets people excited, that's rewarding.

We set out with a goal to connect with our local community and we are doing it! In two short years, we have 7,000 people who say, “contact us, tell us what is happening at the Empress.” That's easy direct marketing.

And most important, experiences sell. We know that this is where we can create the best memories that last a lifetime.

Why did you shift to offering experiential programs?

Out of necessity and desire. We needed to generate new revenues, and we knew the market demand for engaging, interactive, authentic experiences that connect with locals was here. We had the people talent and the physical assets to innovate and we could do more than sell hotel rooms and our amenities. And we wanted to shift the perception of *The Empress* with the local community from a place that is for the rich and famous—to a place where everyone has a reason to visit, even for a few hours.



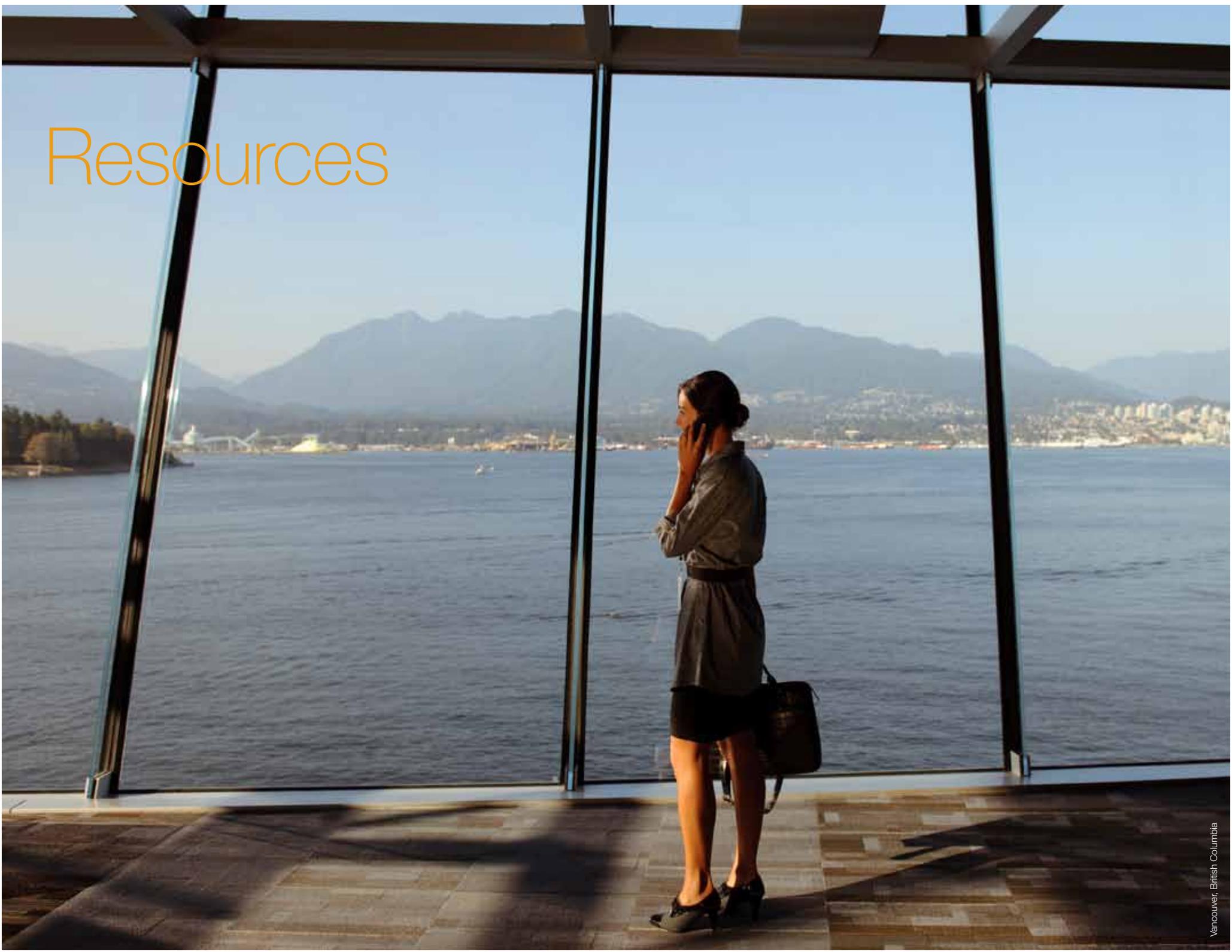
Any advice for others?

- Look at your business with new eyes, and decide what you want to be recognized for. Identify your core assets and build from there.
- Start small, take calculated risks, and plan every detail—it matters!
- Never compromise your brand.
- Deliver excellence then listen carefully to your guests. Use this information to design new programs, validate existing, and learn what is at the heart of a great experience for the customer.
- Build internal expertise, this is as much fun for staff as it is for visitors and collaborating partners.
- Success does not come from one person, it comes from the team—the heart of our team is trust.

Thank you!

Contributed by:
The Management Team at the
Fairmont Empress

Resources



Resources to support you

As you embark on your journey you may need some help along the way. Here are a number of CTC and industry resources that can help you.

Online support from the CTC

-  YouTube: www.youtube.com/canadiantourism — embeddable videos for use on your online properties.
-  Flickr: www.flickr.com/canadiantourism — free photography resources available for your website, brochures, etc.
- Brand Canada Library: www.photovideo.canada.travel — free, downloadable photography and video assets.
- Corporate website: www.corporate.canada.travel — free research and tools to help develop your tourism business.

Defining Tomorrow's Tourism Product: Packaging Experiences

A 2004 research report based that provides information on building memorable group tour experiences. These are essential ingredients in building memorable tour packages and a decision-making tool for planners to use in assessing the experiential potential.

www.publications.gc.ca/site/eng/264514/publication.html

Experience Nova Scotia: A Toolkit, 2nd Edition

A practical resource that provides information to craft new experiences based on six core experiences: Seacoast, Outdoor, Culture, Cuisine, Heritage and Urban. It includes a variety of worksheets to help you identify opportunities, develop and market new experiences.

Toolkit and Worksheets: www.gov.ns.ca/tch/tourism/experience-toolkit.aspx

Experiential Tourism Training

Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism (GMIST)

Based in Newfoundland and Labrador, GMIST offers Canada's leading experiential tourism training. GMIST's training is for anyone in the tourism industry or with responsibility for tourism. www.gmist.ca (709-458-3610)

Authors, blogs and researchers

- www.strategichorizons.com/intro.html
Joe Pine and James Gilmore, experience economy experts and authors
- www.beyondphilosophy.com/about-us/team/colin-shaw
Colin Shaw, customer experience expert and author
- www.aimresearch.org/index.php?page=chris-voss
Dr. Chris Voss, experiential service expert and researcher, London Business School
- www.tourismcafe.ca
Canada's industry-led blog dedicated to experiential travel, hosted by Nancy Arsenault, Todd Lucier and Celes Davar

Social networks

If you are looking for a multi-sectoral lens on the customer experience, LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) has four discussion groups that may be of interest:

- Customer Experience Management
- Customer Experience Leaders
- Customer Experience Professionals
- Experiential Marketing and Brand Experiences.

Keeping in touch

We want to hear from you

Was this toolkit helpful? Did you make the shift to selling an experience and want to share your story and success so that others can learn from it? Let us know. Send your comments to experiences@ctc-cct.ca.

The Brand Experiences Team



Ernst Flach
*Executive Director,
Global Marketing*
flach.ernst@ctc-cct.ca
Free Spirit



Charles Bolduc
Experiences Specialist
bolduc.charles@ctc-cct.ca
Cultural History Buff



William Harding
Experiences Specialist
harding.william@ctc-cct.ca
Free Spirit



Frank Verschuren
Experiences Specialist
verschuren.frank@ctc-cct.ca
Rejuvenator



Lesley Anderson
Manager, Brand Experiences
anderson.lesley@ctc-cct.ca
Authentic Experienter



Eliane Verret-Fournier
Administrative Assistant
verret.eliane@ctc-cct.ca
Cultural Explorer

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Andrew Lind, Chair

Jonview Canada Inc., ON

Juanita Keel Ryan

Department of Tourism, NL

Pat Corbett

The Hills Health Ranch, BC

Dr. Marion Joppe

Research Chair in Tourism, University of Guelph, ON

Peter Elmhirst

Elmhirst Resort, ON

Neil Hartling

Canadian River Expeditions & Nahanni River Adventures, YK

Connie MacDonald

Canadian Mountain Holidays, AB

Celes Davar

Earth Rhythms, MB

Joel Peters

Tourism Toronto, ON

Andrew Campbell

Parks Canada, ON

Emmanuelle Legault

Tourisme Montreal, QC

Rebecca LeHeup

Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance, ON

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