A Guide to Experiential Tourism

by Andra Joefield
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1.0 Introduction

Over the past two decades, tourists have become increasingly more sophisticated and educated, leading to a shift in what they desire/expect from their vacation destinations. Although it is still considered the “norm” for holiday makers to arrive in their destination and relax on a beach in their resort for the duration of their vacation, many tourists have begun to venture outside of the four walls of their all-inclusive hotels to gain a greater knowledge of their host destination’s people and culture. This new type of tourist requires the stimulation that is offered to them in the relatively new concept of “Experiential Tourism.” Cohen (1972) stated that this type of tourist looks for authentic experiences.

“People don’t take trips, trips take people”- John Steinbeck

1.1 Experiential Tourism Defined

According to Canada Minister’s Roundtable on Parks (2005): “Experiential tourism is an outgrowth of a global movement toward experiential learning, whereby people create meaning through direct experience.” They further state that “experiential tourism shows rather than describes.”[1].

“Experiential tourism is the opposite of mass tourism that traditionally focused on package tours and vacations with low levels of personal involvement. Experiential tourism shows rather than describes. It encourages visitors to actively participate in the experience and promotes activities that draw people outdoors, and into cultures and communities. In this sense it is very personal and individual. Essentially, experiential tourism must engage all the five senses of a traveller.” ~Abhinav G., Vice President Reconciliations (Research & Clearance), American Express [2].

“For me, experiential travel means blending in and really feeling (experiencing) a place – the sights, the sounds, the smells, the food, the people, their way of life, their language and culture –
not as a tourist with a digital camera, but by taking the time to explore and engage. Even if at first it feels uncomfortable, you’ll come away with an experience of a lifetime, not just some pretty pictures.” ~ Rob Shortland, CEO, whl.travel [3].

“Experiential Tourism engages visitors in a series of authentic, memorable travel activities, revealed over time, that engage the senses, are inherently personal and make connections on a physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual or social level.” ~ Nancy Arsenault (2004).

“Experiential travel is that which moves you, connects you with the people and the culture of that place such that it enriches you and changes you; and has a positive impact on how you perceive your environment and interact with your loved ones even after you have returned” ~Panache World.

1.2 The Shift toward Experiential Tourism

Krippendorf (1987) stated that the change would not be in tourism but in the tourists themselves, stating that this change would require “time, patience and education.” He believed that the development of “tourist needs” coincided with those of human needs. Krippendorf used the Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid by psychologist A. H. Maslow to demonstrate that after the tourists’ needs for physical recreation (eating, drinking and sleeping) were met they would seek out ‘emotional recreation’ with self-realisation and self-development in the form of experiences, human interactions and creative activities. Krippendorf’s 25 year-old analysis has proven to be accurate in predicting the move from traditional ‘sun, sand and sea’ tourism to experiential tourism.

According to Peak and Skift, the term “experiential travel” is the idea that expresses the concept of “more immersive, local, authentic and/or active travel.” Peak and Skift (2014) stated that the demand for experiential travel is “…the most significant, systematic trend in worldwide
tourism today…” Increased social media use and technology is credited with the rise of experiential travel demand. Persons who see their peer groups achieve their travel goals are inspired to purchase a travel experience of their own. “It’s about how we experience those places viscerally and how they change us…” The new type of traveller wants to be inspired by their destination and desires a “transformative journey” which experiential tourism facilitates. A survey conducted by the American Express (cited by Peak and Skift); the results revealed that 72% of the respondents would rather spend money on experiences than things. [4]

Baran (Travel Weekly 2014) in an article ‘Tour Operators Respond to Hunger for Authenticity’ acknowledges experiential tourism and states that the industry has “…witnessed a fundamental shift in the way tours are being imagined, marketed and sold…” Baran stated that tour operators have sought to inject more local experiences into their packages in order to remain relevant. The article illustrated that tourists are increasingly seeking more authentic local experiences and fewer traditional tourist itineraries. Further, Terry Dale, President of the U.S. Tour Operators Association (USTOA) observed that in 2012 in the active-member survey, experiential tourism was rated as important or very important to their overall growth by 85% of the respondents. [5]

"In order to stay relevant in today's marketplace, tour operators DO need to offer experiential travel focused on the local people and culture," ~Terry Dale (CEO of USTOA)

Experiential travel is being recognised worldwide as the next step in tourism. Tour operators in Canada, India and Northern Ireland have increased experiential packages within their own countries as well as tours to outside destinations. Governments and tourist boards such as Canada Tourist Board (CTB) have also gotten involved.

❖ Canada- perhaps has the most developed experiential tourism product. The Canada Tourism Commission (CTC) in a 2009 publication proclaimed that Canada was repositioning itself “as a destination where travellers can create extraordinary personal experiences.” CTC has released several worksheets and training videos in an effort to help tourism businesses attract visitors. In October 2011 Tourism Café’s, Nancy
Arsenault and Celes Davar of Earth Rhythms carried out a tourism-training workshop (The Cutting Edge Experiential Travel Training) for operators, communities, businesses and government colleagues in Manitoba, Canada. The aim of the workshop was to “help tourism businesses learn how to develop tourism products that celebrate what's special in their community” according to Arsenault. Since then travellers to Canada have seen a rise in authentic experiences being offered in British Columbia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Nunavut and several other provinces.

❖ India- Ashish Kumar (The Sunday Indian 2012) comments that experiential tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism sectors in India. According to Kumar experiential travel experienced a 20% growth rate in 2011; likewise, the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) pronounces that a growing number of tour operators in the country were making this niche market their sole business. Kumar further states that travel agents and tour operators in India were creating experiential packages which included river rafting, trekking and mountaineering, wildlife and desert safaris, skiing, hot air ballooning, paragliding, scuba diving etc. in order to attract more domestic and international tourist. [6]

Arggawal (2013) list 6 areas of importance for the growth of tourism in India;

1. Cultural activities in India
2. Festivals in India
3. Traditional art of India
4. Literature in India
5. Culinary in India
6. Wildlife of India
AFAR, an American travel publication which focuses on Experiential Tourism publishes seven (7) magazines annually and has become a go-to guide for travelers. The magazine encourages readers to explore the world, its people and cultures through photographs and first-hand stories from travel-writers. Articles in the magazine cover the entire globe with journals about costume play cafes in Tokyo, sand castle competitions in San Diego and dining in Puerto Rico just to name a few.
2.0 Experiential Tourism in the Caribbean

The topic of “experiential tourism” has begun to appear more frequently in conversations in the Caribbean. Although the name is a relatively new one to the Caribbean some businesses have been inadvertently providing this type of product for many years. In 2011 Judy Karwacki of Small Planet Consulting presented ‘Haven’t Been There, Done That: How Experiential Tourism is Transforming the Travel Experience’ at the Caribbean Sustainable Conference in Bermuda. In her presentation, Karwacki listed 7 reasons why the Caribbean should develop experiential tourism; [7]

1. Diversify from the softening Sun, Sand and Sea market
2. Respond to market trends
3. Competitive advantage
4. Attract more high end, educated, socially, culturally and environmentally conscious travelers
5. Increased length of stay and spending
6. Word of mouth and repeat business
7. Promotes low volume, high value tourism

Karwacki expanded the seventh point with the use of a chart (see chart 1 below) which demonstrated the significantly *higher expenditure* of immersed or experiential travelers versus Passive, Entertaining and Engaging Travelers. ‘Low Volume, High Value’ tourism will help to create the intimate and personalized experiences travelers are seeking; it also allows greater control of environmental resources while generating enough income for further development within the industry. Karwacki stressed the importance of understanding the travelers’ preferences and budgets beforehand in order to best cater to them in order to build a repeat client base.
2.1 Experiences to be had in the Caribbean

2.1.1 Hotel Chocolat (Saint Lucia) at Rabot Estate aims to connect cocoa growing with luxury. The boutique hotel, in addition to providing luxury accommodation grows its own chocolate and produces chocolate bars from it. Elaine Glusac an Afar writer, in a February 2012 article wrote of her experiences at the hotel. Glusac raves of how she along with other guests learned (from Stan an Agricultural Consultant) about the processes of how farmers graft saplings and nurture pods from blossoms while walking through the plantation. Additionally, she explained that Jon Bentham (Chef) taught them how to place the cocoa pods on marble tables with a mortar and pestle and instructed them to grind the beans until they were a paste. Glusac was then encouraged to “Try It!” which she did. [8]
Experience Checklist:

✓ Use of the 5 Senses

_Sight_- Seeing the cocoa plants as she walked through the plantation
_Sound_- Hearing Stan tell stories about the farming methods used while interacting directly with a local
_Smell_- the fragrance of the fresh cocoa beans being grinded
_Taste_- The taste of fresh chocolate paste
_Touch_- Feeling the cocoa beans and paste as they were being grind by hand

✓ Participatory (Doing not Watching)

Glusac was able to gain first-hand experience of making the chocolate herself instead of simply watching the chef do it.

✓ Creating Memories

In creating her own chocolate bars Glusac created a lasting memory that prompted her to share the story of her experience. It is unlikely that the same enthusiasm would have been garnered had she not had the immersive angle of making chocolate bars.

✓ Takeaways

Elaine Glusac did not mention whether or not she purchased or received any memorabilia but Hotel Chocolat provides a wide range of tangible take-aways such a chocolate bars, bags, gift cards etc.
2.1.2 Oistins Fish Fry (Barbados) - Simon Briggs of the Telegraph in 2010 wrote an article about his experience at this “Barbadian institution.” Briggs recounts his experience with Barbados and West Indies cricket legend Joel “Big Bird” Garner who was born and raised in the neighboring Enterprise village. Briggs describes it as a moonlit beach party where Garner told him stories about his childhood while taking in the tastes and scents of flying fish, barracuda, lobster, dolphin etc. He continued to tell of the sounds of reggae and calypso music as well as the opportunity to watch locals, including Garner play dominoes. [9]

Experience Checklist:

✓ Use of 5 Senses

*Sight*-locals prepare meals in front of you

*Sound*-Hearing local music such as calypso, soca and reggae

*Smell*- the scent of fish being grilled

*Taste*- The taste of local cuisines

*Touch*- Sand between his toes
✓ Local Interaction & Cultural Immersion- Briggs was able to gain an authentic Barbadian experience at Oistins which is a local hot-spot while interacting with a well-known Bajan who was able to share stories with him.

✓ Takeaways- Oistins has a number of stalls offering visitors the opportunity to purchase souvenirs.
3.0 Profiling Experiential Tourists

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) developed an Explorer Quotient (EQ) profiles in 2012 to determine the needs of the categories of experiential travelers. The purpose of this was to identify the psychographic variables of the customers in order to determine how to craft experiences for them. The EQ first evaluates which of the current and potential markets the destination has such as Canada, the UK, USA, Europe (France, Germany etc.), Australia, Mexico, Asia (China, Japan, South Korea). [10]

The explorers are then separated into 3 categories; Free Spirits, Cultural Explorers and Authentic Experiencers.

3.1 Free Spirits

“Free Spirits are highly social and open-minded, whose enthusiasm for life extends to their outlook on travel. They are experimental and adventurous; they indulge in high-end experiences that are shared with others.”

Their personality traits, according to EQ are extroverted, driven, open, fun-loving, and adventurous and account for 13% of the global market.

The demographics identified for this type of explorer are:

- Male (46%) Female (54%)
- Education: Average
- Household Income - higher than average
- Age 18-34 (40%), 35-54 (40%) 55+ (20%)
- Life stage - Mature (13%), Families (37%), Young No Kids (25%), Middle-age No Kids at home (25%)
The EQ further lists the Top and Bottom Defining Values of the Free Spirit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Defining Values</th>
<th>Bottom Defining Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Joy of Consumption</td>
<td>● Buying on Impulse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Social Mobility</td>
<td>● Skepticism towards Advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Attraction for Crowds</td>
<td>● Aversion to Complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Pendent for Risks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Happiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Need for Status Recognition</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Cultural Explorers

“Cultural Explorers are defined by their love of constant travel and continuous opportunities to embrace, discover and immerse themselves in the culture, people and settings of the places they visit.”

Their personality traits, according to EQ are open, accepting, non-traditional, enthusiastic, and creative and account for 12% of the global market.

Demographics:

- Male (43%) Female (57%)
- Education: Higher than Average
- Household Income: Average
- Age: 18-34 (28%) 35-54 (43%) 55+ (30%)
- Life stage: Mature (19%), Families (27%), Middle age-No kids at home (34%) Young-No Kids (20%)
The EQ further lists the Top and Bottom Defining Values of the Cultural Explorers

**Top Defining Values**

- Importance of Spontaneity
- Cultural Sampling
- Adaptability to Complexity
- Pursuit of Novelty
- Personal Control
- Personal Escape
- Personal Challenge

**Bottom Defining Values**

- Confidence in Big Business
- Conformity to Norms
- Ostentatious Consumption

### 3.3 Authentic Experiencers

“Authentic Experiencers are typically understated travelers looking for authentic, tangible engagement with destinations they seek, with a particular interest in understanding the history of the places they visit.”

Their personality traits, according to EQ are Steadfast, understated, responsible, interested, and rational and account for 9% of the global market.

**Demographics:**

- Male (54%) Female (46%)
- Education: Higher than Average
- Household Income: Average
- Age: 18-34 (16%) 35-54 (31%) 55+ (53%)
- Life stage: Mature (42%), Families (19%), Middle age-No kids at home (11%) Young-No Kids (28%)
The EQ further lists the Top and Bottom Defining Values of the Authentic Experiencers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Defining Values</th>
<th>Bottom Defining Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Personal Control</td>
<td>● Joy of Consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Importance of Spontaneity</td>
<td>● Living Virtually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Culture Sampling</td>
<td>● Importance of Branding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Everyday Ethics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Skepticism towards Advertising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Ecological Concern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Explorer Quotient goes on to describe the traits of the three explorers from various markets. The Caribbean, which is diverse in what it has to offer to tourists, would do well to develop similar profiles to help to determine what tourism products to offer to whom. The EQ Traveler Quiz allows the traveler to determine what type of traveler they are based on a series of questions.
4.0 Key Ingredients for an Experiential Tourism Product

Travel PEI (2012) emphasizes that experiential tourism products should be **personal**, **unique** and **intimate** as well as **authentic** and **participatory**. In addition Travel PEI and Travel Manitoba (2012) both strongly suggest engaging as many of the five (5) senses (sight, smell, sound, touch & taste) as possible. The use of these senses enhances the visitor’s experience and allows them to associate a particular smell, sound etc. with the memory of that unique destination. As an example, Travel PEI offers “Lobster Fisherman for a Day” [11, 12]:

- **Smell** - the salt-water air
- **Sight** - crisp blue water and red cliffs
- **Touch** - the feel of pulling a live lobster right out of the trap
- **Sound** - the sound of the seagulls circling the boat looking for lobsters
- **Taste** - taste of fresh lobsters eaten on the fishing boat

Local Shaun Sandiford fishing with a visitor in Barbados

(Source: barbadosfreepress.wordpress)
“When we experience an event, our brains tie the sights, smells, sounds, and our own impressions together into a relationship. That relationship itself is the memory of the event.”
~Ashish Ranpura

In addition to engaging the senses, 6 dimensions should be considered when crafting an experiential tourism product [13];

1. Significance- Meaning, Status/Identity, Emotion/Lifestyle, Price, Function
2. Duration-Initiation, immersion, Conclusion, Continuation
3. Triggers- Five Senses, Concepts, Symbols
4. Breadth- Product, Service, Brand Name(s), Environment, Promotion
5. Intensity- Reflex, Habit, Engagement
6. Interaction- Active, Passive, interactive

Smith (2005) lists 5 key of experience-design principles [14];

- Theme the experience
- Harmonize impression with positive cues
- Eliminate negative cues
- Mix in memorabilia
- Engage all five senses.

4.1 Worksheets to Aid Experiential Product Development

Travel Manitoba (2012) provided several worksheets and checklists for entrepreneurs in the in “Experiential Tourism” business to follow and measure their product against. One such worksheet if “Ingredients of a Well-Crafted Travel Experience” which lists twelve (12) ingredients [15]:

### Experiential Travel Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>The Benefits and Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Authentic people and their stories are at the heart of any well-crafted experience.</td>
<td>Authentic, local people provide stories from their experiences, real history, and accurate information about local traditions and culture. These people are often seniors or elders in your community, who have a passion for sharing their stories and are credible. Shared stories bring out the magic and the memories of experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The experience is supported by positive cues.</td>
<td>Positive cues are things you do to help the experience be congruent with the place where it occurs. E.g. In a park; in a museum; at a community historic building; at a picnic shelter. Doing this leaves indelible impressions in the minds of travelers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Multiple Interactive methods and tools are used to assist in the learning process.</td>
<td>Daily activities or traditions (berry-picking, wood-carving, ranching, restoring streams, cooking with local foods, monitoring bison ecology, applying science to prescribed fire, catering good food for local events, making pottery) used to create an experience whereby guests can actually take part in activities – not merely watching a demonstration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4. Carefully thought out program themes and title that intrigue the visitors are very important. | Travelers are seeking unique themes and uncommon experiences:  
  - Lighthouse Picnics (walking out to a headland by a lighthouse to have a picnic near Ferryland, Newfoundland; local food and whales).  
  - Morning Tea With Moose (canoeing and having tea in... |
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5. **Use of as many of the senses as possible will lead to better immersion and intensity for the traveler.** | Algonquin Park, with moose nearby)
- Owner For an Evening (owning a race horse for an evening race at the Charlottetown Race Track, PEI)
|   | It is easy to look and see; it takes more creativity to find innovative and inexpensive ways to incorporate other senses. The more senses, the more memorable, and the more justification for a higher price point. “See, Smell, Hear, Taste, and Touch”
| 6. **Smaller groups provide better enrichment and hands-on learning.** | Small groups provide better opportunities for: stories to be told, enriched and authentic learning to take place, close contact with the experience provider (more intimate), and often involve a higher price point because it tends to be more exclusive and have more preparation (labor cost) in preparing the program.
| 7. **Experiences involve a shift from dependence on a guide’s knowledge, to facilitation by the interpreter or resource specialist so that travelers are more dependent on themselves for their own learning** | As in teaching, this is a shift from the framework of an interpreter or resource specialist being “a sage on the stage”, to being “a guide on the side”. Travelers feel a greater sense of ownership of the experience and have their own authentic stories of learning as a result of taking part in the experience.
<p>| 8. <strong>Relevant takeaways (memorabilia) are provided during the experience. They are tangible reminders of the experience.</strong> | Takeaways increase the value (and therefore price point) of an experience. They become the basis for personal pride and “word of mouth” marketing after the experience. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Simple activities, carefully planned, that focus on one or two main activities for travelers to take part in, are best.</th>
<th>Simple activities provide better retention of learning, and they provide more opportunities for travelers to have conversations with the experience provider.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Techniques that tap into the different learning styles and multiple intelligences provide for deeper learning and a much more engaged participant.</td>
<td>Howard Gardner’s categories of multiple intelligences includes: visual, kinaesthetic, interpersonal, verbal-linguistic, intra-personal (reflection), visual-spatial, musical, and naturalistic. Providing different methods for learning create more opportunities for engaged, active travelers. In the end, one or more of these learning methods for each guest may be triggered, creating a better memory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Develop and enhance with WOW aspects - Integrate regional foods, a remarkable vista or place, talented storytellers, and interactive learning - together, they have a combined effect.</td>
<td>Increases the overall price point of the experience; intensifies the experience. This type of experience crafting helps to meet the multiple interests, motivations and needs that travelers have. Additional community partners are involved in delivering the entire experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Personalization or customization of the experience leaves travelers with a feeling of deep appreciation.</td>
<td>Make your tourism experience personal and relevant for each group or visitor that arrives. They appreciate and value attention-to-details and being responsive to “their interests”, and will pay a higher price because of the higher perceived value. They will recognize the special efforts you made, and are more likely to recommend the experience to others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Travel Manitoba also provides two (2) templates for crafting experiential tourism.

### 4.2 Template 1: Steps in Crafting an Experiential Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Your Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDEAL GUEST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify who your ideal guest might be for this experience. This will likely be based both on your site/business/organizational capacity as well as who you would like to select as your ideal guest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Major Market Segment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Niche</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Custom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Think EQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELEVANCE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is an entry point to a possible experience that is relevant to your site/organization, or community?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Métis culture?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The mission, purpose of your business or site?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An ecological story?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local cultural tradition?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A local food?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An archaeological find?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESOURCES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you have available as resources that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
you could use in creating an experience?
- People - resource specialists?
- Materials needed? Tools to use? Props needed?
- Onsite infrastructure appropriate to experience?
  - Natural - water or land base

**THEME OR STORY IDEA**

You’ve got a great idea that you wanted to make it come alive. So, create the story, the narrative.
- Brainstorm. Put some ideas down. Explore.
- Put these together into a storyline that connects them together and in the context of your site/business/organization.

**MEMORIES**

What memories do you want guests to take away?

**FOCUS**

- What are two or three main interactive activities that the participant will actually do?
- Where will this take place physically?
- What tools, resources, materials are needed?
- Why is this meaningful and relevant to our guests and to our business?
- Make it practical (resources, flexibility, time-frames, weather)
4.3 Template 2: Steps in Crafting an Experiential Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Your Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSEMBLE, SEQUENCE, TEST</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create the individual components within the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience: the props, tools, materials.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase necessary support items. Try it out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See what works.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sequence the various experiences into an</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>order that makes sense from introduction to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activity to closure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Test out the experiences - local group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adjust, tweak.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHECK AGAINST THE 12 EXPERIENCE INGREDIENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the list of 12 ingredients of a great</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience and check that the activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate a clear shift from presentation to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engagement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CREATE A TITLE? (3 or 4 words)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WRITE A SHORT STORYLINE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TAKEAWAY (MEMORABILIA)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can your guests take away as a result of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this experience? Is it tangible - in the hand?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAKE EXPERIENCE MARKET READY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cost out accurately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Price for intended markets</td>
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<td>• Marketing materials</td>
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Explorer’s Edge: Experience PEI (2012) offered the following experiential elements [8]:

1. **Learn something by doing something with someone who lives here.**
   - If you keep this statement in mind whenever considering a potential experience you should be able to easily decide whether it is an experience or a presentation.
   - A presentation is passive - you listen to someone showing you what they do
   - An experience is active - you participate in what the provider is doing

2. **Authenticity**
   - The experience provider is a local person who is sharing what they do with the visitor. It is authentic because it is real.
   - A traditional presentation is usually done by someone who is delivering a prepared script. They have memorized a story and are simply repeating it.
   - An experience provider is telling their own story or re-enacting an historical story and inviting visitors to become personally involved in the story.

3. **Touching the Senses**
   - An experience should engage all or most of the senses of sight, smell, hearing, feel and taste.
   - Memories are created by activities that touch us personally. The more senses engaged, the more memorable the experience.
   - The more memorable the experience the higher the perceived value and the willingness to pay a higher price.
4. **Uniqueness**

- What makes your community unique? There are lots of places with beaches, restaurants, museums, trails, etc. Look at what you have to offer that is different.
- If you are a potential experience provider, what can you create that showcases your own personal uniqueness?
- Partner with someone in your community who can provide a unique experience...an artist, blacksmith, potter, fisherman, jewelry maker, etc.

5. **Exclusive Access**

- Experiential travel is all about getting access to places most people hardly ever get to see....going behind the scenes. When visitors feel they are being provided with privileged access they are willing to pay a higher fee.
- By involving local experience providers who invite visitors into their homes or places of work to participate in a hands-on activity, we are saying... you are special and we want to share something special with you.

6. **Take Aways**

- Ensure that at the end of the experience the visitor takes something away with them. It's either something they made themselves or something you give them. When they get home, every time they see the item, they will remember what a great experience they had in the Evangeline/Acadian region of PEI.
- Including a take away also enhances the value of the experience and allows for a higher price point
- Consider opportunities to provide retail items for sale thereby creating the opportunity for increased revenue generation.
5.0 Marketing Experiential Tourism Products

Dr. Sasithara Pichaichannarong - Director General, Officer of Tourism Development in the Ministry of Tourism & Sports: Thailand suggests 6 P’s for marketing experiential tourism;

1. **Place**: infrastructure and landscapes are to be improved, such as building more bathroom and rest facilities, information centers with telephone/internet services, ATM machines, post offices, roads, direction signs as well as boards telling the history of the communities or products, parking areas with shuttle vehicles (may be carts or bicycles) from the parking areas to tourism sites.

2. **Products** and services are to be diversified and elevated standards such as demonstrating producing process, folk cultural performance, delivery services, massage and much more.

3. **People**: human resources are to be developed such as increasing skills in working, language, product design, work safety, providing services, administration in finance, marketing, environment.

4. **Planning** and management systematic planning clear targets and indicators, integrated implementation among governmental, non-governmental organizations, residents, private businesses and local authorities should be developed.

5. **Presentation**: legends of villages and products are to be presented, displaying product designs and packaging, in an atmosphere of traditional ways of life.

6. **Promotion** marketing such as public relations on tourism sites, promotion to attract tourists to purchase more through travel agents or tourists themselves or even through advertisement. [16]

Davar (2012) recommends that Experiential Tourism programmes should be structured with an established itinerary in order for visitors to know where they will be and at what time. However in order to maintain spontaneity, he suggests that the visitors should not be given details of exactly what they will be partaking in until they have arrived at the venue. “You'll experience each person, location, and encounter with a fresh set of eyes, a spirit of adventure, and without any preconceptions or expectations.” [17]
Cape Breton Island’s contributions to the experiential tourism guidelines are “12 Essentials of a Cape Breton Travel Experience” which were developed by Forerunner principal, Harvey Sawler (2011). These were adopted as “an immediate response to the need for consistency” and person who have visited Cape Breton are urged to evaluate their experience using these essentials. They are as follows [18];

1. Well themed – Experience matches a distinguishing theme or brand (should match one of the core experiences). The remaining Eleven Essentials stem from the success of the theme.

2. An emotional trigger – The experience causes an emotional reaction.

3. Authentic – Real versus contrived.

4. Accessible – Ease of access to: a) product information, b) purchase, c) site location, and d) mobility at the site.

5. Enriching – The experience leaves the customer changed.


7. Entertaining – The experiences evoke sharing, joy, laughter and fun.

8. Essence of Cape Breton – Embodies our scenery and our culture.

9. Hands On – Customers participate versus a spectator.

10. Sense of Place – Significance of location is relayed to the visitor.

11. Value added – Experiences deliver over and above the promise; has an element of surprise.

12. Exceeds Expectations – The experiences should have a “Wow!” factor.
6.0 Experiential Tourism vs. Community Based Tourism

The concept of Experiential Tourism is often confused with that of Community-Based Tourism (CBT). The two do share some similarities but have some distinct features that set them apart from each other.

6.1 Similarities

✓ When done correctly, experiential and community based tourism both help to protect the natural environment.
✓ Foster intercultural exchanges between visitors and the indigenous community
✓ Require improved infrastructure but aim to add to not replace the existing tourism product
✓ Stray away from the “beaten path” and encourage visitors to engage in activities outside of the normal package tours
✓ Foster more authentic interactions between visitors and hosts
✓ Access to “behind the scenes” areas of the country that are less trodden by mass tourists.
✓ Small groups for intimate experiences
✓ Respect traditional cultures and way of life
✓ Visitors are better able to ensure that their money is benefitting the local community
✓ Includes multiple stakeholders
✓ Ensures quality employment for locals

6.2 Differences

There are also some fundamental differences between experiential tourism and community based tourism.
✓ Unlike CBT, experiential tourism does not rely as heavily on planning and implementation by the local community. Community Based Tourism is owned and operated by the community.

✓ Experiential tourism places heavy emphasis of the use of each of the 5 senses whereas CBT concerns itself less with this.

✓ CBT concentrates more heavily on the development of the host community through tourism. On the other hand, experiential tourism, while helping to develop local communities, focuses more heavily on the experience that the visitor is able to derive.
7.0 Consumer Attitudes Are Changing – Annex 1

In an American Express survey commissioned last year, consumers illustrated their demand for more enriched lives and personal fulfilment through experience and learning. Over 72% of respondents said they would rather spend money on experiences than things. Further, 88% said travel is the number one dream on their life’s bucket list, ranking higher than family or wealth.

“Consumers want to have life-fulfilling experiences when they travel, and they are seeking travel experiences that closely align to their own personal values,” says Laura Fink, VP of marketing at American Express Travel. “For example, we are seeing customers looking for travel experiences that will allow them to interact with the local community; they want to visit private homes, schools, orphanages and smaller villages.”

American Express recently polled a group of its travel “counselors” (agents) to ask them what trends they’re seeing for summer travel. Of them, 34% responded that their customers are “specifically looking to immerse themselves in the destinations they visit and to travel like a local.”

When the same travel counsellors were polled about specific travel priorities, Fink says, “Over 20% indicated customers want adventure travel tours and arts and culture tour experiences. Our travel counsellors are often receiving requests to plan trips that include gondola lessons in Venice and pastry-making classes in France.”

One of the most interesting takeaways from the American Express survey is that this shift in travel behaviors crosses all age groups. With so much focus on Millennial travel trends; there is a tendency to sometimes overlook how Boomers and older Gen X are driving significant demand for more experiential and adventurous travel options. Their definitions of experiential and adventure travel are sometimes just a little different however.

Source: The Rise of Experiential Tourism (Peak and Skift, 2014)
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