



STEP Workshop: Communication on sustainability to visitors

14th February 2012, Biesbosch Museum

Workshop 3 Sustainable tourism: an agent of change and positive deviance

Led by **Manda Brookman**, Director of CoaST (Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project) and One Planet Network, UK

Part 1 – Workshop presentation

Manda reminded us of the '10 rules' developed by Futerra for communicating sustainability that she had shared earlier that day in her main presentation. Futerra is a UK based agency, specialising in sustainability communications for sustainable development and corporate social responsibility.

Manda suggested these rules as a real useful framework for thinking about communicating sustainability. She regularly turns to these rules for guidance and frequently shares them with individual businesses, groups and organisations that she is working with.

She started by taking the group through each rule, elaborating on it, providing a bit more of the thinking behind it and inviting thoughts from the group.

The 10 rules can be found on Futerra's website

<http://www.futerra.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/10-Rules.pdf>

- 1 big picture
make connections, demonstrate long term thinking, blow myths
- 2 technically correct
be trustworthy, provide transparency, give real facts
- 3 be cool
be sexy, mainstream, non-patronising, brave – stand out!
- 4 belong
join a massive worldwide change, start positive conformity, join a success
- 5 only stories work
empathy and emotions are powerful, use stories to hold people's attention
- 6 optimism
sustainable development is achievable, avoid too much guilt
- 7 glory button
'sustainable development makes you a great person and we love you for it'
- 8 change is for all
break stereotypes, use inclusive language and images, push mass ownership
- 9 we need more heroes
introduce icons to emulate – 'be like me'
- 10 personal circle
relate big ideas to everyday life, give them a familiar context



1 big picture

Stuart Burgess has found it useful on Somerleyton Estate to use the past as part of the 'big picture'. How can we learn from the past to influence the future? Can we make a connection? How will this affect the future of that individual?

Marianne den Braven talked about the Green Key Training for staff at the Biesbosch Visitor Centre. The experience there had been that talking about the 'big picture' can be too difficult for people and can also divide them. They had found it very helpful to 'make connections'. Can we show that this is helping? We need to emerge seeing things more clearly.

2 technically correct

We need to be seen as the 'trusted advisers' and not to abuse our position by distorting information or stretching evidence too far. It is essential to avoid greenwash. Manda gave the example of Tesco's campaign to 'turn lights into flights', which they had been forced to withdraw. She suggested looking at another Futerra publication, The Greenwash Guide (which can be found at <http://www.futerra.co.uk/story#go=the-greenwash-guide-3-3822>).

3 be cool

Make what we would like people to do to seem better than the alternative. Manda gave four examples:

- UK-based company Innocent drinks <http://www.innocentdrinks.co.uk/>
- Harbour Lights, an MSC-certified restaurant and takeaway fish and chip business in Falmouth, Cornwall who turned a brave move to have a cod free week into a great story by sending 'Sam the Sustainable Cod' away on holiday for a week. http://www.falmouthpacket.co.uk/news/fpfalmouth/business/9366635.Chippie_s_cod_free_week/
- A water saving campaign which showed a picture of a hippo emerging from the bowl of a toilet, with the caption 'Caution – we have hippos in our toilets'
- Primrose Valley Hotel – '50 things to do in Cornwall without the car' includes 'Do not disturb' - staying in bed for the day with a bottle of champagne! http://www.primroseonline.co.uk/out_and_about/50_things/25.php

4 belong

We have a great desire as human beings to belong to a group. Use words such as 'join in' and 'we' – the wording on laundry cards produced by CoaST uses 'Let's minimise our impact on Cornwall's beautiful environment'.

5 only stories work

This is about telling stories, not giving facts. Manda asked us all to share a memory of a day spent on holiday – lots of quality experiences and time spent in special places and with friends and family. Think about the things that people take away with them from their experiences and interject the message into those things.

6 optimism

Manda called this 'the heaven bit' – paint a positive picture.

7 glory button

Say thank you. Give feedback – 'it's made a massive difference' – 'we like you - you are the best sort of visitor'.

8 change is for all

9 we need more heroes

Attract people by associating the message with images of the sort of lifestyle that they are looking for'



10 personal circle

Make the message resonate, make it very 'now'. Translate it so that people feel include in it. Is the way to achieve change to tell people that they have to change OR to change your message in order to inspire them?

Manda talked (again!) about Futerra and their work on 'Branding biodiversity'

<http://www.futerra.co.uk/story#go=branding-biodiversity-3-3168>.

In communicating a brand, you have to have a clear brand promise and brand values but you also need to think about the messages that you are using to communicate the brand. Here's Futerra's advice....

personalise

Keep your message personal. Use affinity to pets, familiar local species and local pride, and link action to daily lifestyles.

humanise

People matter most to the majority of your audience. Don't be afraid of anthropomorphising biodiversity, or accepting that people want to conserve nature because it makes them feel good.

publicise

Promote what we've got, not what we've lost. Make conservation actions and their results visible and high status. Have more fun conserving nature, and tell everyone you're doing it.

Part 2 – Workshop task

Manda outlined a task for small groups to work on for the remainder of the workshop. Agree on an example of a desired change in behaviour that everyone in the group can relate to. Thinking about the '10 rules' and which one(s) could be used to communicate messages designed to bring about change.

Group 1

Desired change: Getting dog owners to take some responsibility for avoiding or minimising the negative impacts of their dogs on protected areas

Thoughts/ideas:

- Raising awareness amongst dog owners that there is a problem
- Loose dogs are likely to disturb wildlife – this applies to all species and throughout the year
- Commercial dog-walking services are on the increase and contributing to the problem
- People have to feel responsible for the area that they are in
- City visitors are not familiar with the wildlife
- Use of appealing imagery – if you want to see one of these, then.....do this OR you've got a much greater chance of seeing 'this' if your dog is on a lead
- Thinking about dog owners as animal lovers
- Use of face to face communication – Stuart Burgess gave an example of National Trust using participatory negotiation

Group 2

Desired change: Raising awareness of, and interest in, the solar powered tour boat (180 passengers) operated by the Biesbosch National Park



Thoughts/ideas:

- 'Whisper boats' – what can you hear?
- Be proud to look different
- Think about positive images to associate with eg Sun God Ra
- Shout about the biggest solar power boat in Europe
- Use the inside as an art space to communicate messages
- Involve the 'customers', especially schools and young people, in creating the messages
- Change the message – how do you make it 'sizzle'?
- Offer feedback – did you know that this boat trip saved enough fossil fuels to make ??? kg of chocolate?

Feedback from Workshop 3 to plenary session

The STEP partnership is already becoming a champion of sustainability communications and needs to use its own resources better. The workshop demonstrated that partners have the capability to come up with solutions and to think round problems.

BUT 'keeping the show on the road' takes so much time – partners are short of time to 'share the learning'.