



Workshop 4 Turning sustainable communication into a visitor experience: Inspiration for innovation in communicating sustainability, morning

Led by **Mylènevan der Donk**, lecturer and project manager, NHTC Breda University of Applied Sciences

Part 1 – Workshop presentation

Mylènevan introduced the focus of the workshop on the question: 'How can you reach the visitor effectively?'. The workshop would focus on examples and tools for thinking differently about existing products.

A copy of Mylènevan's presentation will be available on the STEP website, so here are a few highlights...

Mylènevan took us through a timeline of change in the messages that have been communicated to visitors to protected areas, with a shifting approach from 'keep out' to a welcoming experience.

She introduced the '4 E's' that go to make up memorable experiences: Educational, Entertainment, Esthetics and Escapism¹, and gave several examples of increasing opportunities for fun and quirky experiences. Mylènevan suggested that we can all learn from the Disney corporation, who understand this completely.

At this point, Mylènevan asked workshop participants to think about an issue of concern which might involve a desired change in behaviour.

Ideas included:

- What does it mean that our hotel is situated in a National Park?
- Water quality – the need to minimise nutrients sent to water by boat users
- Thinking about how people behave when on holiday
- Energy use in a remote location – a tourism business has done its bit to introduce ways to reduce energy use but now our customers need to help us.

Why are we seeking behaviour change? Perhaps there are two reasons:

- This will lead to environmental benefits
- This will allow a business to promote itself as a sustainable business

It is interesting to know how the customer is thinking. Research in the Netherlands has shown that 30% of the population are prepared to pay more for sustainable experiences. But only a little bit, and only if other are doing it too.

Mylènevan showed two movie clips from The Fun Theory (www.rolighetsteorin.se), to illustrate how people can be drawn into changing their behaviour by introducing a fun way of doing the thing that you want them to do. The two examples were 'The Piano Stairs' (an alternative to using the escalator) and 'The world's deepest bin' (rewarding people who put their litter in the bin with a fun soundtrack of falling down a deep hole). The films observed people's behaviour and shared the results on behaviour change.

¹ Pine and Gilmore: The experience economy



She then introduced a way of breaking down communicating about sustainability into a number of steps to consider:

- Why are you doing this?
- What will you communicate?
- Who is it for?
- How will you do it?
- How will it be managed?
- Monitoring and evaluation

It is important to think who this is for. Looking at things from different perspectives will appeal to different types of user.

Part 2 – Workshop task

Mylènevan 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. Think about this from the different perspectives of the '4 Es' and how you could appeal to different types of people. Think 'What would Disney do?'

Group 1

Desired change: Inspiring people to have the self-confidence to explore our areas

Thoughts/ideas:

- Locals know the hidden corners – how can they be shared with non-locals
- Encourage discovery – don't use signs
- Drive this through children
- Downloadable phone apps
- Guides and maps
- Using staff to communicate face to face

Group 2

Desired change: Stopping litter in the Polders of Kruibeke

Thoughts/ideas:

- Comic book with stories about creatures who live out there in the Polders
- 'Thank you' from parents of the 'creatures'
- Workshops to make models of the creatures from recycled materials/litter
- Feedback messages about waste collected
- Place litter bins on edge of the area
- Messages to answer question 'Why do I have to bring this home with me?'

Group 3

Desired change: Encouraging people to explore the Biesbosch



Thoughts/ideas:

- The best things are under our noses – many people haven't seen it yet
- Make it a secret - 'Unwrap the Biesbosch'
- Join us in discovering the Biesbosch
- Secret crossings – suggest crossing places to people as way to explore the area
- Use the seasons to reveal a secret – eg spring unlocking its secrets to reveal the flowers
- Sharing the secret – people want to belong to a group
- You can become an ambassador for the Biesbosch – let people into the secret
- OR this is special – the secret stays with you
- Use of geocaching
- Open up special secrets to your supporters first through use of social media – 'we can let you into the secret'
- Special to the Biesbosch – secret underground life of beavers

Group 4

Desired change: Creating awareness that our hotel is located in a National Park

Thoughts/ideas:

Why are you doing this?

- If people are in a new environment, they can see why it is important
- People are in a different frame of mind while they are visiting us

What will you communicate?

- This place is special
- We would like you to make sustainable choices while you are here

Who is it for?

- First time visitors, who are midway between nature lovers, who already understand about this, and the 'hopeless' visitors, who don't really care where they are.

How will you do it?

- Now, we are just providing the hardware – bicycles, canoes, electric bikes, whisper boats
- We need to create a story
- We are members of the Logis Group, who are active in sustainability and involved with Green Key
- What about taking something from outside – part of the outdoor experience of the National Park - and bringing it inside the hotel eg using tile coverings to display fantastic images to display fantastic images of the Biesbosch on the walls of the shower or bathroom – bringing back memories of the day's experience.
- While people are receptive to the special place, communicating messages about water saving.
- Sounds in the shower or bathroom – recordings of birds calling
- Using curtains/walls/beds to project images

Feedback from Workshop 4 to plenary session

No litter bins at all OR as many litter bins as possible – discuss!



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Presentation

Timeline on communication into visitors management

Protected area => no entrance

Allowed to come but with strict rules

Communication on things that visitor doesn't interest. (information about 200 butterfly species)

More friendly (stay on the pad on all times)

Provide an experience (4 elements)

1. Educational
2. Entertainment => successful communication
3. Esthetics
4. Escapism

'Involving people generates more success' is not new. But looking to things from another perspective leads to more results. Fun can change behavior (movie with piano chairs and the largest bin on earth). Be creative! 'What's it for me' has to be part of it.

Cases

Sustainability things to communicate issues:

CASE 1: Recreational zoning

Why: nature preservation

Who: boat owners who anchor everywhere. They feel it is their right to do so.

How: by alliance and tell them what's the importance.

Fun element: We can use a map on which alternatives are indicated. We spread the map through rangers, marina and watersportsclubs. It's important to communicate the results after the campaign (amount of birds that have bred).

CASE 2: Promotion of sustainable energy

What: To stimulate sustainable energy (alliance between community and producer)

Why: to reach the goals as soon as possible, image initiators, energy goal community = energy neutral

Who: inhabitants and businesses

How: combine small initiatives

Fun element: you can adopt a solar panel or buy a share in a wind turbine



CASE 3: Experience sustainability

Why: raising awareness of the fragility

Who: visitors clients

How: through experience.

Fun element: For instance guests can experience how many energy they used during their stay in the ecohotel. Therefor they receive a power counter.

Discussion

No more time available