Exploring the Importance of Cultural Tourism Experience Components

A Case Study
Purpose of the Study

To explore the visitor experience aimed at identifying the existing visitor market, their motivations for visiting, and to ascertain satisfaction with cultural experience components.
Presentation Overview

- Background of Whakawarewera Village
- Background of study
- Visitor profile
- Importance of experience components
- Recommendations/Implications
Whakawarewera Village

Background of Whakawarewera Village

• Current community profile
  – Community life- socializing, cooking, tangis, work, natural resources

• Previous and Current tourism landscape
  – Te Puia vs. Whakawarewera Village (1998)
  – Sustainability (Kanning, 2006)
  – Living village as core product
Why is Whaka Village sustainable?

• Community cohesion
• Tourism approached as secondary activity
• Tourists are entertainment for the villagers as much as the villagers are entertainment for the locals
• Lack of tourism knowledge
• Status quo…not a career or considered work but rather considered part of life
Sustainability

• Lifestyle, in general, is based on the concept of sustainability. Culturally they do not try to control or manipulate nature but rather work with it.

• Decisions navigate through many channels of which there are many personal agendas resulting in little actual change occurring.

• Place of escape and dependency

• Authenticity
Authenticity

• “We will offer something unique, something authentic - the only place you will find a living village is in a living village and not an imitation of one” - Jarmie Piripi (Daily Post, 24 Dec. 1997, p.1)

• Means to differentiate due to the split
Front Stage/Back Stage

- Goffman (1959) and MacCannell (1989)
- Front vs. Back Stage
  - Examples
  - Back stage in jeopardy
  - Authenticity - both front and back stages are authentic albeit residents determine what to show and not to show
Participant Observation

- 30-Month Community Immersion
  - 1 year demarcation point
  - Key events
    - Finding key and secondary informants
    - Acceptance into the human landscape
    - Researcher vs. Resident
  - Problems
    - Language
    - Trust
    - Informants/Politics
    - External influences (media)
Whakarewarewa Village
Identification of Issues

- Concerns expressed at the baths
- Plans for changes
- Expressed lack of empowerment
- Led to approaching management about collection of base data
ATLAS Cultural Tourism Survey

- Association for Tourism and Leisure Education
- Global survey
  - N=3796
  - Spain, Serbia, New Zealand, France, Australia, Finland, Portugal, Turkey, and Austria
  - Survey Instrument
ATLAS Cultural Tourism Survey

• Whaka Village Participation

• Data Collection: June through August 2006

• n=353

• Data Collection Methods/Instrument
Survey Limitations

Language limitations
- English, French, German, Korean, Mandarin Chinese

Distribution limitations
- FIT/SIT vs. Coach tourists
Survey Limitations

• Key events during data collection period
  – School holidays
  – Springbok Tournament
  – World Mountain Biking Championship
  – Summer season for northern hemisphere visitors
International/Domestic Mix

- Abroad: 74.2%
- Rest of the country: 20.1%
- Local area: 5.1%
- No Answer: 0.6%
Top International Inbound Markets

- AUSTRALIA (AU): 24
- CANADA (CA): 6
- FRANCE (FR): 7
- GERMANY (GE): 5
- IRELAND (IE): 4
- KOREA, DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC: 2
- NETHERLANDS (NL): 3
- SOUTH AFRICA (ZA): 3
- UNITED KINGDOM (UK): 33
- UNITED STATES (US): 7

Percent of Top Survey Responses
Repeat Visitation

- No: 74.2%
- Yes: 24.9%
- No Answer: 0.9%
Figure 7: Age Groups
Figure 8: Educational Attainment

- No Answer: 10
- Primary school: 9
- Secondary school: 28
- Vocational education: 13
- Bachelor degree: 28
- Masters/Doctorate: 20

Percent of responses
Visitor Expectations

No answer: 14
They were met: 47
They were exceeded: 24
I had no expectation: 11
They were not met: 5

Percent of responses
Satisfaction with Visit

- No answer: 7
- Very satisfied: 23 (highest) to 7 (lowest)
Visitor Satisfaction

- The overall satisfaction level, based on a likert scale of 1-10, is 8.56.
- Seventy-six percent of visitors rate their visit as an 8, 9, or 10 out of 10.
- Forty-seven percent indicate their expectations are met and twenty-four percent indicating their experience exceeds their expectations.
Importance of Site Components

- Interpretation panel: 4.1
- Literature/Brochures: 4.2
- Interactive interpretation: 3.9
- Audio guides: 3.1
- Guided tours: 4.2
- Souvenirs/crafts: 3.5
- Catering facilities: 3.6
- Access for visitors: 3.7

Average Importance
Importance of Components

- Literature/Brochures (4.2)
- Guided Tours (4.2)
- Interpretation Panels (4.1)
- Interactive Interpretation (3.9)
- Access for Visitors (3.7)
- Catering Facilities (3.6)
- Souvenir Crafts (3.5)
- Audio Guides (3.1)
• Current dearth of information
• Local author works not available
• Create guides
  – Village history
  – Village resources
  – Trails/Recreation Guide
  – Village culture
    • Written by residents
Guided Tours (4.2)

• Top reason cited for visit satisfaction
• Personal factor cited; host/guest interactions
• Motivated to visit by physical landscape but satisfaction came primarily from human landscape

• Problem: Conducted in English only
Interpretation Panel (4.1)

• Minimal
  – Some with name only
  – One language

• Balance between authenticity and panels; indicator of commercialization?

• Museum recommended

• Brochures and literature can help
Interactive Interpretation (3.9)

- Problem: Operationalize
- Guided tours provide interpretation
- Independent tourists and coach tourists
  - Lack of understanding
Access for Visitors (3.7)

• Disabled?

• Primary complaint: transparency of location

• Secondary complaint: transparency of lack of access to the entire valley
Catering Facilities (3.6)

• Café
  – Complaints include lack of choices and service

• Traditionally cooked food available
  – Hangi
  – Corn
Souvenir/Crafts (3.5)

- Offerings need to be localized
- Currently non-specialized products available
- Recommend matching brochures/literature and traditional art souvenirs available in the village
Audio Guides (3.1)

• Least important

• Concerns with visitors whom English is not their primary language

• Coach tour problems may be solved through requiring audio guides in the language of the tourists
Conclusions/Recommendations

- Put residents at the forefront of decisions and employment opportunities
- Provide further outlets for knowledge-seekers and utilize locals in doing so
- Further evaluate marketing message
- Re-evaluate proposed changes
- Create strategic management plan
Cultural Tourism Report
Whakawarewera Village

• Full Cultural Tourism report available

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