

# Tourism 10

## *Ten Tips for Tourism Development*

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Tourism development boils down to fairly simple fundamental considerations. It is such a diverse discipline, however, that tackling it for your community, organization, or business may seem a daunting task. The many seminars and books available may just add to a sense of the task at hand being overwhelming. It needn't be. This article distills many years of reading, learning, teaching, and hands-on practice down to 10 focused tips. These focuses will help you succeed at developing tourism for your business or community.

### **1. Build from your core assets.**

Frequently, when people seek to build their business or community, they tend to look for quantum changes, without first looking at what they already have that can be built upon. This often takes them in new directions, which ultimately can lead to not only failure of the new direction, but also failure of existing efforts because they are no longer receiving the attention needed to sustain them..

Answer these questions from the most basic level and then use the answers as a guide to the core assets from which you should build. 1) What past successes have you not followed through on, built upon, exploited to their greatest advantage? 2) What brought customers to your business or community to begin with? 3) What are your core resources (location, environment, people, competencies)? 4) What are you already doing well? 5) How can you develop alignment between the past, the present, and the future you seek. Chances are that there are a number of core assets from which you could benefit by developing..

### **2. Congruence; be true to yourself**

Businesses and communities often struggle because they are trying to be something they aren't. There is an important distinction between trying to be something that you are not, and applying the best practices of others in order to do what you do better.

### **3. Exist for the customer- put them at the center of your thinking- see through the customers' eyes**

Your business is totally dependent on your customers. Don't ever forget that. And in remembering that, set concern for your customers and attention to their wants and needs as your top priority.

Many people have a tendency to develop dangerous blind spots when they own a business or provide leadership in their community. They see only through their own eyes. And they see from the perspective of benefit to themselves. After all, they are in business for the purpose of generating income.

Customers, though, are coming to you because they want something, and they want it provided according to their desires. They are not interested in what you personally want to provide them in the way in which you want to provide it. If you want a particular kind of customer, you need to get inside the customer's head and see things as he or she does.

### **4. Expect the customers you deserve**

Don't be surprised by the quality of the customers you serve. They will be a direct reflection of the quality of your service. There is a saying, "You get the customers that you deserve." If you are treating customers well, with courtesy, and providing quality and value, expect courteous, enjoyable customers. If you are treating customers poorly, expect customers who you will not enjoy serving.

This can become a declining cycle when a business reacts to "poor customers" by treating them more and more poorly. That results in a continuing decline in customer quality. The business winds up with those customers who will tolerate the experience that they are having.

## **5. Do small things well.**

It is the accumulation of small details that will create the guests' overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their experience.

Many businesses focus on the big, flashy, things that will make them stand out. That is fine as long as all the little details have consistently been dealt with well. Customers will be consciously aware of the big things. They will rave or complain about the big things. But a gnawing sense that comes from an accumulation of small details will ultimately drive the decision whether or not to remain a customer.

## **6. Balance high tech and high touch**

Our society is constantly advancing technically, and your customers will expect all of the latest technical enhancements to their experience. But, they also want to feel like the most important and pampered people on earth, and they want real experiences- high touch. Use technology to enhance the access to the high touch experiences, but don't let it intrude on the experience or serve as a substitute for real experiences.

## **7. Keep it Clean and safe**

Your customers are looking for the best experience possible. So they expect things to be clean and neat. And they seek a sense of safety. Make it easy for your customers to assist in keeping your location clean. Have attractive and clean trash receptacles conveniently located. Make considerable portions of your security efforts highly visible. Have yellow lights flashing on security vehicles whenever they are moving around your facility or parking lots. Make sure your security personnel are neatly uniformed and that they behave professionally. Immediately repair damage and repaint vandalized finishes.

## **8. Know your market**

Information about your customers is crucial to your marketing success. Take every opportunity to gather information about your customers. Where are they from? What kind of people are they? Why did they come to you? How often can they be expected to return if they had a good experience? What is the quality of their experience? There are many creative ways of gathering this information, ranging from formal surveys to enjoyable contests.

## **9. Partner creatively**

You can build a wide network of people who will help you build customers and revenues at little cost through creative partnering. What other businesses in the area would benefit from visits from your customers? What other businesses in the area attract customers who you would like to visit you? Develop partnerships with those businesses. It can be as simple as having coupons at each other's business. It can be as extensive as cooperative marketing efforts.

## **10. Know what business you are in- and remember that it is all show business.**

It is not restaurant, lodging, retail, or attraction. The guest is seeking an experience. They are not looking to just have a meal, or a place to sleep. The purchase that they make they can make any number of places. They will chose businesses to which they are loyal based on their overall experience with that business.

The way in which you present your business to your customers is like grand theater. It is show business. The doors or gates open to the customers, the curtain is up. Everybody has a role to play and there is a consistent atmosphere being presented. Script it and story board it just like a show. Sit in the audience and see the whole show through your customers' eyes. Are you giving an award-winning performance.

## **11. (Bonus) Consistency with innovation: evolve**

Evolution has proven to be an effective strategy for survival in biology... and in business. Continually keep on top of what you need to do to thrive and incorporate that smoothly into what you are already doing. No constant direction changes; just a flow through an evolving business; adjusting to customers changing wants and needs and to changing business circumstances and opportunities.

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