

# Responsible tourism marketing

**Dr Xavier Font**  
**International Centre for Responsible Tourism**

# Step 1. Who do I tell?



# Which is your target market?

- Altruistic reasons
- Better product reasons
- Expect it already happens
- Don't want to know, but don't mind if you do it
- Will avoid your product



# 2010 VisitEngland data on English consumers says:

- 58% would want to stay in accommodation with green awards/environmentally friendly practices
- 51% say that if two hotels were the same, they would choose the one with a green award
- 46% don't want to think about being green - they want to relax
- 33% believe sustainability claims are often ways to save money and/or reduce service
- 15% think a hotel run sustainably will be less comfortable than one without green credentials.



## **Step 2.** **Why am I telling?**

Be clear what response or change that you are hoping for from your customers



# To make customers feel good

- Show them how they are “doing their bit”- by you doing it for them
- Customers feel good (or less guilty) facing easy choices. Charitable donations, public transport or recycling information... none of these get in the way of what the customer came for.
- Tell about your local suppliers, origin of produce...



# To raise awareness and change behaviour

- Be specific. Vague messages frustrate
- Show the difference you make
- Give something in return



## To offer something extra

- Design sustainable packages for your low occupancy or usage periods, or think of services that can generate more money in high season.



## **Step 3. What do I say?**

Be clear about the impression you want to create –  
with your sustainability policy,  
photos, text...



# 1. Fun/participation

- What can I do?
- People want the option of being active
- People choose a hotel based on what they can do nearby (or in the hotel)
- Wheelbarrow picnic
- Pick your own lunch
- Learn to do something
- Children's quiz



## 2. Cultural immersion

- Get to know the real, authentic side of your destination
- Reinforce the image of the person I want to be
  - Adventurous, independent, learned, inquisitive, understanding of other cultures...
- “We invite locals to dance in our hotel - but this is not a tacky show for tourists”



## 3. Better service

- Make me feel special!
- You can see things nobody else does

**Fresh, unadulterated, honest food that makes holidaying memorable- you are no longer in the rat race!**



## 4. Empathy/ trust/risk

- We are people like you
- We think alike
- We have the same values
- That's why you'll enjoy your holiday here
  
- We are here for you
- We are a serious business
- Peace of mind
- You are not wasting your money and holiday time

**“We hire bikes- and also tell you about cycling etiquette and how to be safe”**



## **Step 4. Where do I tell?**

Integrate sustainability as part of quality through the channels you already use.



# Certification

- Independent guarantee of your credentials.
- Confidence and credibility
- Not sufficient in itself, you have to communicate what it is and what it means you do better



# Awards

- Only a few companies win awards. You could spend much time on it without any results, and you will need to show something unique and extraordinary.



# Press

- What makes you different, in a way that my customers will want to read about you?
- Links from your website to previous articles, quotes



# The internet

- Your website's sustainability policy page is boring
- "minimise waste by evaluating operations and ensuring they are fit for purpose"
- get used to blogging, Twitter, Facebook and other social networks



## **Step 5. When do I tell?**

You market your company  
all the time.

Help customers make  
informed decisions



## Prior to booking/purchase

- Calories of tea compared to skinny lattes or full fat cappuccinos,
- public transport deals or the CO2 emissions of their journey.
- tell customers how to get there with low CO2, and importantly what to do there without a car.



# After booking and confirmation

- How to prepare for their visit - what to bring, what is acceptable behaviour, dress code (if relevant), how to respect other users that will be there.
- Pre-booking of local food



# On arrival

- There are no second chances to make a first impression
- Live your policy
- Tell your customers- specially self catering



## During the stay/visit

- Now you communicate by making visible the things you do. Here you decide how much you want the communication to affect the customer experience, or just be in the background.
- About towel agreements...



## After the stay/visit

- Stay in touch with your customers. Speaking about sustainability will be more welcomed than a direct promotional message saying “book with us”.
- From trees to the staff family picture

