

Product Development Best Practices Mission
October 23-27, 2007
Canadian Badlands, AB

COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH BEST PRACTICES

FINAL REPORT

Product Development
October 23-27, 2007



Prepared by:

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Tourism Atlantic, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
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INTRODUCTION

This mission focused on tourism product and the challenges facing the industry in offering new products and services that increase the overall profitability of the sector and further develop the attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination. This mission visited a destination that has recognized, through research and other methods, its potential to market and develops additional tourism products (i.e. a destination that takes a proactive approach in recognizing it has greater potential before a product is considered to be struggling).

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Product Development Best Practices Mission was to provide information on:

- Initiatives include the product development process, proactive development approach, development opportunities to appeal to the “new tourist”, market research, new forms of tourism, research capacities, overcoming product development obstacles, broadening market base, repositioning, etc.
- Locations are those that have recognized their potential to attract a larger market base through further product development and marketing.

The Canadian Badlands region is working to develop new products to position itself as an icon destination similar to the Canadian Rockies. Traditionally a forgotten, overlooked area of the province, the Alberta government is now recognizing its untapped potential as an Alberta travel icon and destination corridor (an alternative choice to the traditionally popular Calgary, Banff, and Lake Louise).

Drumheller, the heart of the Canadian Badlands, was once a coal-mining town and is now a regional centre with an economy based largely on tourism. This location used to be primarily themed by dinosaurs and landscapes, but it is broadening towards a rich layering of themes in an effort to attract a range of markets (i.e. recreational, western heritage, aboriginal, etc.)

Medicine Hat, located in the southern area of the Canadian Badlands, is developing products in an effort to buy-in to the Canadian Badlands initiative and to compete with the mountain product. This area is developing new tourism experiences/products, such as eco-tourism, to expand to new markets.

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PRIMARY EXPECTATIONS

The following provides a summary of the participants' primary expectations for the Best Practices Mission (taken from their applications):

- Define the process of how the product development began through to finish
- What were the major obstacles?
- Who was involved?
- An opportunity to see how rural Atlantic Canadian locations can switch focus and develop authentic product that has an appeal to the “new tourist”
- How to identify and understand tourism product opportunities
- To gain knowledge in the techniques used by various destinations in planning and developing new forms of tourism
- To gain insight into the many trade-offs that are considered when developing a tourism product.
- To be aware of the key decision makers and stakeholders involved with new product development
- To learn key aspects of business plan development and application to potential opportunities
- To determine key factors contributing to successful tourism product development.
- To understand the steps in the tourism product development process
- What makes a successful tourism product?
- To determine critical success factors in developing and positioning new tourism products

MISSION ITINERARY – OCTOBER 23 – 27, 2008

Tuesday, October 23rd

- Morning: Participants travel from Atlantic Canada to arrive in Calgary
- 2:30 p.m.: Travel to Drumheller
- 4:30 p.m.: Check into hotel Super 8
- 5:45 p.m.: Travel to dinner at O'Sheas Eatery & Ale House

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6:00 p.m.: **Roundtable discussion: How to identify and understand tourism product opportunities that will capture a larger market share**
Presenter: Cindy Amos, Executive Director
 Canadian Badlands Ltd.
 Doug Jones, Mayor of the Town of Oyen and Chair of the
 Canadian Badlands Ltd.

Wednesday, October 24th

8:30 a.m.: Meet in hotel lobby to depart for Civic Centre

9:00 a.m.: Arrive at Civic Centre, Drumheller
 Presentation: Product development success story – Mining to tourism town
Presenter: Ray Telford, Economic Development Officer
 Town of Drumheller

10:30 a.m.: **Presentation: Overview of the Canadian Badlands Initiative**

- **The vision**
- **Steps taken to initiate the development/getting the buy in**
- **Research undertaken to confirm that there was market potential**
 - **Effectively measuring product development opportunities**
 - **Types of research required to determine product development opportunities**
 - **Measuring timelines, responsibilities, funding models**
- **Studies undertaken to assess the development potential and identify the opportunities**
- **Implementation of study recommendations – what has been done**
- **Current status in the building of the Canadian Badlands Initiative**
- **What is next?**

Presenter: Elizabeth Kuhnel, Manager, Alberta Economic Development

12:00 p.m.: Working lunch

1:00 p.m.: **Presentation to continue**

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- 2:30 p.m.: Tour of Drumheller Valley with tour guide
- 4:00 p.m.: **Presentation: Recognizing your destination has greater potential and how to determine significant future growth potential – The proactive approach**
- Presenter: LaVerne Erickson, Chair, Travel Drumheller
- 6:00 p.m.: Dinner at The Quarry

Thursday, October 25th

- 8:30 a.m.: Depart for Dinosaur Park
- 11:00 a.m.: Arrive at Dinosaur Park
- Presentation: Repositioning of parks to target upcoming audiences (discussion on the Best Practices Study that was completed and touch on what has been implemented, results, and what is being worked on)**
- Presenter: Fred Hammer, Provincial Parks Area Manager
Former Dinosaur Park Manager
- 12:00 p.m.: Lunch at Patricia Hotel Restaurant
- 1:30 p.m.: Tour of Dinosaur Park
- 2:30 p.m.: Travel to Medicine Hat
- 4:30 p.m.: Arrive at Coast Medicine Hat Hotel (meeting room)
- Presentation: Importance of Collaboration**
Business plan development and application to potential opportunities (community – community basis)
- Presenter: Aaron Domes, Visitor Services Supervisor
Nicole Bullivant, Canadian Badlands Marketing Committee
- 6:00 p.m.: Check into Coast Medicine Hat Hotel
- 7:00 p.m.: Dinner at Kelsey's Restaurant- Group dinner

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Friday, October 26th

8:15 a.m.: Travel to Medicine Hat College

8:45 a.m.: **Presentation: Eco-tourism**

- **How to develop a tourism experience to expand to a new market**
- **To gain knowledge on the emerging eco-tourism product and how it may be implemented to respective Atlantic Canada regions.**
- **How to effectively capitalize on this strengthening product**
- **Details of the 2004 CBL Eco-tourism Study Assessment (what has been implemented, what is being developed as a result, etc.)**

Presenter: Paul Radchenko, Program Coordinator
Medicine Hat College

10:00 a.m.: **Presentation and site visit: Growing business and market: Medicine Hat Attractions Tour (will be visiting highlights of the tour as well)**

Presenters: Corlaine Gardner, Chief Park Interpreter
Medicine Hat Interpretive program
Barry Finkleman, General Manager
Clay Products Historic District

11:30 a.m.: Lunch at D'Carlos Restaurant for lunch

12:45 p.m.: Travel to Calgary and debrief

4:00 p.m.: Check into Delta Bow Valley

Saturday, October 27th

Morning: Travel from Calgary to Atlantic Canada

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MISSION LEADER

Deborah Doucette, Account Officer
Tourism Atlantic - ACOA

PARTICIPANTS

New Brunswick

Marie-France Doucette, Le Pays de la Sagouine, NB

Newfoundland and Labrador

Randy Letto, Destination Labrador, NL
Gary Hennessy, Town of Grand Falls-Windsor, NL
Perry Bingle, Humber Economic Development Board, NL

Nova Scotia

Charlene Tuttle, Cumberland Regional Economic Development Authority, NS
Hal Theriault, Digby Area Tourism Association, NS
Lisa MacIsaac, NS Tourism, Culture & Heritage, NS
Don Sheehan, Amos Pewter Ltd., NS
Scott Dawe, ACOA, NL

Prince Edward Island

Doug Deacon, Island East Tourism Group, PE
Heather Peters, Swept Away Cottages, PE
Shane MacDougall, Central Development Corporation Ltd., PE
Bill Kendrick, Briarcliffe Inn/Experience PE
David Anderson, Resources West Inc. PE

MISSION ACTIVITIES AND PRESENTATIONS

- 1. Roundtable discussion: How to identify and understand tourism product opportunities that will capture a larger market share, concentrating on the organizational development aspects and identification of the need and potential for a strong organization.**

Background

Covering a broad swath of southern and eastern Alberta, the Canadian Badlands are a unique place to explore. Eons of compressed sea deposits have been carved by glaciation and subsequent erosion into a striking landscape of strangely-sculpted badland formations and rolling prairies bisected by coulees and deep river valleys.

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This rapid erosion has exposed rich deposits of fossilized dinosaur bones and coal, the latter prompting a short-lived but colorful era of mining. The stories of coal mines, dinosaur finds and other natural and human histories are well told in the Canadian Badlands' many fine museums, ranging from the world-class Royal Tyrrell Museum to small-town collections of Aboriginal and pioneer artifacts.

Ranching and farming – much of it sustained by Canada's largest irrigation system – remains a backbone of the economy, witness fields of colorful crops and grazing herds of cattle and even bison. You can sample this warm, western way of life at guest ranches, rodeos, livestock auctions and farmers' markets.

Much of the Canadian Badlands is lightly populated, with sporadic towns and three mid-sized cities. Yet the cultural life is rich, featuring professional theatres, festivals throughout the year and innovative artwork that reflects the compelling landscape.

Recreational opportunities are equally abundant. Choices include camping in protected provincial parks, fishing or boating in lakes and rivers, badlands hiking and cycling, golfing, and watching for distinctive birds and animals under the expansive skies of the Canadian Badlands. (*Courtesy of www.canadianbadlands.com*)

Contacts

Cindy Amos, Executive Director, Canadian Badlands Ltd.

Doug Jones, Mayor of the Town of Oyen and Chair of the Canadian Badlands Ltd.

Brief Description of activities / presentations

Cindy Amos and Doug Jones met with the group to discuss the "Canadian Badlands Ltd" organization and the benefits of having a unified approach to tourism for the entire region.

The presenters gave a fantastic overview of the role of the Canadian Badlands Ltd. and the importance of using all available resources, including lobbying members of government to further the agenda of the organization. Doug described how he used his influence with several provincial government officials to get things done to the benefit of the entire Badlands region. He was also instrumental in fostering the many towns that got on board the Canadian Badlands brand.

Cindy spoke as well to the model that was used to encourage the various towns and regions to join the Canadian Badlands Ltd. partnership. Using a \$0.10/resident levy, with a maximum of \$5000, buy-in was increased substantially, legitimizing the organization. There is still resolved to have all towns/regions in the partnership, which would allow one unified voice in decisions in the region.

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Participants noted that while the presentations were very interesting, it was difficult to absorb all the information after a long day of travel from Atlantic Canada. As well, the restaurant setting for the presentations made it difficult for the participants to hear all the information that was being shared.

2. Presentation: Product development success story – Mining to tourism town

Background

The Atlas Coal Mine National Historic Site is one of the most complete coal mining museums in Canada. Of the 139 coal mines that existed just outside Drumheller, the Atlas Mine is the only one still in existence. Exhibits are rustic and simple at the Museum, and there is an interpretive program.

Tours and educational programs make a visit to the historical attraction fun and fascinating. The Atlas Coal mine has experienced an increase of 150% in visitation (over three years), totaling up to 26,000 paying visitors. 200 people per day climb the “tipple” – a wooden structure to raise the coal to load on the trains.

Contacts

Ray Telford, Economic Development Officer, Town of Drumheller
Virginia Haahr, Manager, Travel Drumheller
Linda Digby- Manager, Atlas Coal Mine

Brief Description of activities / presentations

Ray Telford, Economic Development Officer with the Town of Drumheller welcomed the group to the area. He spoke to the group about the “Tourist in Your Own Town” program, which encourages locals to experience their own community, by engaging local businesses to offer discounts to those exploring in their own town. He also spoke of the 2004 Ecotourism Study which demonstrated the opportunity that exists in the Canadian Badlands.

As well, a Fixed-Roof Accommodation study was undertaken to gauge the inventory of rooms in the area, and therefore the ability of the area to provide visitors to with a place to stay - thereby encouraging visitors to stay longer. The population of Drumheller is approximately 8,000, with yearly visitation at 390,000.

Ray also spoke of a program called, “Alberta Best” which provides customer service tips and advice to the tourism industry.

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Virginia Haahr, with Travel Drumheller spoke to developing the region as an “icon”. As well, Virginia noted the importance of the regional school system adopting in its curriculum a background of the Drumheller area, including its mining and dinosaur histories. As well, the marketing brochure for the area is not member-driven, rather it is paid for through buy-in for advertisements. Virginia noted that the locals are tiring of the dinosaur theme (similar to “Anne” in Prince Edward Island).

Regarding extending the shoulder/off-season, Virginia indicated that the Royal Terrell Museum is open year-round, and the Rosebud Theatre holds performances throughout the year. During the school year, there is a large draw of students visiting the area. As well, the Atlas Coal Mine offers a “haunted” coal mine during the Halloween season, an excellent example of developing existing product in the area.

Linda Digby, Manager of the Atlas Coal Mine, was a very passionate speaker. She has devoted much time and energy into the restoration and development of the coal mine. The Atlas Coal Mine is the last existing mine in the area, and much work has been done to preserve it.

Linda spoke of the importance of layering of experiences for the visitor. Specifically, she spoke of esthetic, escapist (story-telling), educational (school groups), entertaining, and emotional layering. By providing a multi-layered experience, the visitor is enriched by their visit. As well, Linda spoke of the “Oh, wow! So what?” factor. In other words, you can show a visitor something unique or interesting, but you have to have follow-up to give the visitor a true experience. For example, there are actual cars on rails that were used to take the coal and miners up into the mines. It’s neat to see, but visitors are also invited to take a short trip in the car on a small track that has been set up on the premises to enrich the experience and understand what it would have been like for the miners.

“Ignite the staff” was also a theme that Linda spoke to. Combining passion, creativeness, laughter, learning and hard work gives staff a sense of ownership in the success of the mine. Especially in a seasonal market, this can be a difficult challenge, as most summer employees are students and their employment is a job to them, not a career.

Participants enjoyed hearing each of the presenters, with their take on what has been done and what still needs to be done to reinvent the Canadian Badlands as a tourist destination.

3. Presentation: Overview of the Canadian Badlands Initiative

- **The vision**
- **Steps taken to initiate the development/getting the buy in**
- **Research undertaken to confirm that there was market potential**
 - **Effectively measuring product development opportunities**
 - **Types of research required to determine product development opportunities**

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- **Measuring timelines, responsibilities, funding models**
- **Studies undertaken to assess the development potential and identify the opportunities**
- **Implementation of study recommendations – what has been done**
- **Current status in the building of the Canadian Badlands Initiative**
- **What is next?**

Background

Alberta Economic Development Authority (AEDA) works in partnership with the provincial government to provide recommendations and long-term strategic advice on key economic issues.

Members of AEDA include business, academic and municipal leaders from across the province.

Formed in 1994, AEDA excels at building consensus on issues that affect Alberta's growth and prosperity in all economic areas. Its work helps to increase the province's ability to create new opportunities at home and abroad.

The Authority also provides large and small business a direct working link to the Alberta government and strives to ensure industry's voice is heard when public policy is developed

Contacts

Elizabeth Kuhnel, Manager, Alberta Economic Development

Brief Description of activities / presentations

Elizabeth Kuhnel provided some valuable information on how the government looks at economic development in the Canadian Badlands. She noted that because it is such a large geographic area for visitors to cover, it is necessary to have a more than a few attractions for the visitor, in other words, "increase the number of attraction factors." She spoke of the "four times" rule, that means that in order to attract a visitor who must drive an hour to arrive at an attraction, the attraction itself should provide four hours of entertainment.

Elizabeth emphasized the importance of partnerships between communities to educate them on the importance of being more visitor-friendly by offering workshops. Important areas that can sometimes be overlooked are parking and beautification.

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4. Presentation: Recognizing your destination has greater potential and how to determine significant future growth potential – The proactive approach

Background

Nestled in the cozy valley of a river that winds through fields of wheat and magnificent badlands, Rosebud is a peacefully picturesque community with rural roots and country charm. There are fewer than 100 residents, most of them involved in the business of theatre and the school. A closer look reveals Rosebud to be a vital tourist and fine arts attraction visited by over 40 thousand people every year.

Located on Highway 840, Rosebud, Alberta is situated 100 km northeast of Calgary and 35 km southwest of Drumheller. The Rosebud Fine Arts High School was founded in 1977 by LaVerne Erikson after the success of the Rosebud Camp of Summer Arts.

Contacts

LaVerne Erikson, Chair, Travel Drumheller

Brief Description of activities / presentations

LaVerne Erikson, founder of the Rosebud Theatre in Rosebud, AB, spoke to the group about the development of the Theatre and described how it had grown from a summer camp to an internationally recognized professional theatre. LaVerne emphasized the importance of having not only a dream, but a vision, which included a plan of action to make the dream a reality.

In lieu of relying on government financing to support his ideas, LaVerne came up with an ingenious idea of involving actors, their families and other supporters to have them invest in the Rosebud Theatre. One example was having investors “borrow” equity out of their homes using RRSPs. As the Credit Union had provided interim financing for the theatre company, investors were encouraged to use the Credit Union for their mortgages, thereby engaging the financial community into the partnership. LaVerne also successfully lobbied the provincial government to legislate a new partnership that would allow the theatre to take advantage of both corporation and non-profit company’s benefits. As well, accessing venture capital allowed the investor to get a 30%/year tax write-off leaving only 10% at risk, and ultimately creating cash for the successful theatre company.

The Rosebud Theatre company generated so much capital, that they expanded into the real estate market, using their equity to grow further. LaVerne emphasized that any plans the theatre made did not rely on government funding, but they would apply and if they were approved, that was great, and if not, there was always another way to obtain the dream. This revelation was particularly poignant for the group from Atlantic Canada, as the focus is generally on what can be done to access government funding.

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Participants commented that LaVerne's ideas were extremely interesting, and even asked how he'd come up with his financing ideas, challenging the participants to think outside their normal thinking. It was an incredible amount of information and new ideas to take in, after a long day it was difficult to absorb all the information. Many participants requested LaVerne's contact info so that they could contact him directly to further discuss his concepts.

5. Presentation: Repositioning of parks to target upcoming audiences (discussion on the Best Practices Study that was completed and touch on what has been implemented, results, and what is being worked on)

Background

About two hours east of Calgary, Alberta, the gently rolling prairie grasslands suddenly drop off, plunging the visitor into a whole other world of hoodoos, pinnacles, coulees and buttes. Many who visit these badlands for the first time describe this sudden transition as if they have taken a wrong turn and somehow ended up on the moon. Strange land formations rise up on all sides; sculpted by wind and water into hauntingly beautiful shapes sunbathed in terra cotta, bronze and amber.

A trip to Dinosaur Provincial Park is also a 75 million-year foray back in time. This region was then a subtropical paradise populated by turtles, crocodiles and sharks -- and featuring lush vegetation similar to the coastal plains of the south-eastern United States today. Here, on the shores of the Bearpaw Sea, dinosaurs once hunted and mated -- and ultimately met their demise, leaving an amazingly rich fossil and bone record for us to discover today. (Courtesy of <http://www.tpr.alberta.ca/parks/dinosaur/flashindex.asp>)

Contacts

Fred Hammer, Interpretation & Education Program Supervisor, Dinosaur Provincial Park

Brief Description of activities / presentations

Fred Hammer of the Dinosaur Provincial Park met with the group at the Interpretive Centre and spoke to the group about the programs and services available to visitors to the park. In addition to the spectacular scenery, the park also boasts an incredible campground and winding guided tour by bus throughout the park.

To attract new and repeat visitors, the park has done a study to determine their market focus. For example, most the campground sites are tenting site only, but the park is seeing a larger number of baby boomers who travel with fifth wheels or full-sized

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motorhomes who are looking for water/sewer/electrical hook-ups. The park has very limited availability for these travelers. This shortfall will have to be addressed if the park is to continue to attract visitors.

During the tour of the park, Fred informed the participants on different points of interest along the route, adding to the tour with interpretive and historic facts. Fred also drove the group to the Patricia Hotel for lunch, a unique and authentic local restaurant where guests choose a AAA steak from the menu and then are invited to grill it themselves on the open pit. Participants particularly enjoyed this unique experience. It was clearly not a contrived atmosphere, but rather an authentic experience for the participants – again demonstrating the value of authenticity and building on strengths to attract visitors.

6. Importance of Collaboration Business plan development and application to potential opportunities (community – community basis)

Background

Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park straddles the border between the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan on the southern part of each of the provinces. The signing of the Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park agreement by the Alberta and Saskatchewan governments in 1989 created Canada's first and only interprovincial Park. The Park is a raised portion of the Canadian Plains that is incredibly lush and filled with history.

Various Park activities and facilities attract visitors from all Canada as well as the northern United States.

Contacts

Aaron Domes, Visitor Services Specialist, Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park
Nicole Bullivant, Visitor Centre Coordinator, Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park

Brief Description of activities / presentations

Aaron Domes and Nicole Bullivant used a great concept to get their message to the participants on the mission: The Big Bang! Using contacts already available to you, think differently about how to use these contacts, whether in the specific industry or not, do develop and create new opportunities for a business. Following the Big Bang model, first you “Wish upon a star” - figure out where you want your business to go. Secondly, it is necessary to “Know your solar system” – be realistic about what you have to work with. Next, “Set up your telescope” and see what opportunities are out there that may have been missed. There may be opportunities to partner in order to market your product. “Constellation Coop” is the next step, where forging partnerships with

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traditional OR non-traditional partners can create business opportunities. Next, “Draw your own constellation” – make yourself unique; take a chance to do things differently even when things are working well. Finally, “Avoid a solar eclipse” and be sure to be realistic and focused in your plans.

Another idea that resonated well with participants was the “coffee shop” relationship. Those you run into everyday may not be aware of what you are doing and may be able to provide insight or offer suggestions that you may not have even thought of.

Although this presentation was at the end of a long day of presentations and travel, Aaron and Nicole were very enthusiastic and were successful in engaging the group with their presentation. Several participants noted that they felt this was one of the best presentations of the mission.

7. Presentation: Eco-tourism

- **How to develop a tourism experience to expand to a new market**
- **To gain knowledge on the emerging eco-tourism product and how it may be implemented to respective Atlantic Canada regions.**
- **How to effectively capitalize on this strengthening product**
- **Details of the 2004 CBL Eco-tourism Study Assessment (what has been implemented, what is being developed as a result, etc.)**

Background

Medicine Hat College was the first in the country to develop a 4 year degree program that emphasizes the best practices of sustainable tourism. This approach involves travel and the impact that visitors will have on a host community and its environment.

Why ecotourism? Tourism is one of the world's leading industries so its impact on the natural world is significant. More pressing however, is the fact that nature and adventure tourism is the fastest growing sectors of this industry. It's as hard for us to know what "good tourism" is as it is for anyone else considering a safari trip or tour of Africa.

Ecotourism explores the potential ties and economic benefits between nature and adventure tourism and discusses how conservation and community involvement play a significant role in its future development. (*Courtesy of* <http://www.mhc.ab.ca/etol/default2.htm>)

Contacts

Paul Radchenko, Program Coordinator, Medicine Hat College

Brief Description of activities / presentations

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Paul Radchenko, Program Coordinator provided an excellent presentation that provided insight into Eco-tourism. Beginning with the development of the Atlantic Gateway, and the opportunities it will bring to the region, Paul discussed the definition of what Eco-tourism can mean, and what areas of the world are beginning to turn their focus to this area. As well, Paul discussed some areas that have been flagships in terms of ecotourism for the world.

Paul had the participants get involved by dividing the participants into groups based on their home province of residence. As a task, each group had to come up with an area that could be developed or built using the ecotourism model.

8. Presentation and site visit: Growing business and market: Medicine Hat Attractions Tour

Background

The Medicine Hat Interpretive Program is a partnership between the City of Medicine Hat and the Grasslands Naturalists. The Nature Centre has seasonal displays, live creatures, and a bones, fossil and insect collection. The Nature Library is extensive. Talks, slide shows, and big-screen videos take place in the theatre. Interpretive staff is always eager to provide information and assistance with any aspect of regional history. The Interpretive Program's professional interpreters put together informative and fun tours of the Park or anywhere in southeastern Alberta. Many schools take advantage of our Alberta curriculum-based programs. Public programs, each dealing with some interesting aspect of the prairie environment, are presented throughout the year - at least one per week in summer. Almost all are free.

The Friends of Medalta Society, in the context of the Medicine Hat Clay Industries National Historic District, is overseeing the restoration of a huge complex of buildings spanning two sites which showcase the companies, people, machines, and the products made in Southern Alberta during the early and mid 20th century. Each year interpreters show thousands of people how the casting, jiggering and pressing of stoneware pottery were done. Over the past seven years in excess of 70,000 visitors have been hosted!

This facility is a tribute to a time when the determination and craftsmanship of ordinary people created an unparalleled industrial ceramic industry. Today an equally determined team of people are putting their heart and soul into this exciting restoration project. You will be amazed at the progress being made in rebuilding the original sites to their former splendor as well as the associated communities of collectors, artists and historians which have blossomed around this world-class project.

Sitting in the midst of the vast Canadian prairies, Medicine Hat has the two magic ingredients that make a ceramic industry viable: quality clay and abundant natural gas to fuel kilns. Early this century Rudyard Kipling visited our city and coined the phrase "The city with all hell for a basement". He also made note of the industrious people that

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lived here. This project celebrates these people and the companies they built. These companies dominated the economic and social dynamic of the community.

Contacts

Corlaine Gardner, Chief Park Interpreter, Medicine Hat Interpretive program
Barry Finkleman, General Manager, Clay Products Historic District

Brief Description of activities / presentations

Corlaine Gardner escorted the group on a tour of Medicine Hat, providing many interesting facts on the area, including its buildings, people, parks, etc. Corlaine provided detailed information on the history of the area, and the types of interpretive programming offered through the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program.

Barry Finkleman also accompanied the group on the bus and told the group of the history of the Clay Products Historic District, and took the group on a tour, depicting an era long past. Work on the buildings was well underway with plans to restore the entire area to its former operations, with space for artifacts, interpretive programs and an area to sell Medalta clay products.

EVALUATION OF MISSION

1. Strengths

- Overall, participants were pleased with the variety of presentations and site visits scheduled during the mission
- Interesting to hear different approaches from the presenters to obtain the same goal
- The recurring theme of authenticity resonated with the participants
- The networking aspect was invaluable (with other participants in the Atlantic region and the presenters in Alberta)
- The presenters were excellent, and the group itself was very cooperative, willing to share their experiences and ask questions
- Site visits added value for the participants, experiencing the attraction/venues as a tourist would (having the presenters accompany the group to the attractions is a plus)
- The mission was very well organized

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2. Weaknesses

- Most participants commented that they would have preferred to not have a presentation the day of arrival in Alberta, as they were already tired from a long day of travel.
- There was quite a bit of travel during the mission, which tended to make it difficult for participants to absorb all the information being presented
- Would have liked to have heard more about the local partnerships
- Not all presentations were applicable to each participant
- Would have appreciated some more hands-on experience as opposed to sitting and listening to presenters

3. Lessons Learned / Recommendations

Overall, group expectations and mission objectives were met. Mission evaluations indicated that 100% of participant's expectations were met or exceeded.

Participants noted the importance of developing partnerships for their products, and to expand on the authenticity of their product, by utilizing what is available in their own area.

The group itself was fantastic, with a variety of organizations and business being represented. Not only did the participants get information from the presenters but from each other, forming relationships what will assist them in their future plans.

CONCLUSION

Participants were pleased overall with the mission. Many noted specific examples of ideas that they learned during the mission that they felt they could apply to their own business or organization.

Some participant comments included:

“From the first-hand experience that we had, there is work to be done to effectively meet the needs of today's traveler. We need to develop itineraries and package our offerings.”

“I think the direct application of what we have seen and learned may be more helpful in my role...the contacts made within other tourism operators and officials who were on the mission will provide invaluable contacts for the future.”

“I will be looking at how to better package the tourism sites here.”

“More educational programming.... More cooperation between stakeholders.....”

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“During this mission, I got a contact at the Royal Tyrrell Museum for the touring devices...”

“...develop more product.....develop new partnerships.....present to local organizations our findings.”

“Build more local or regional partnerships to strengthen existing product and explore expanding products.”

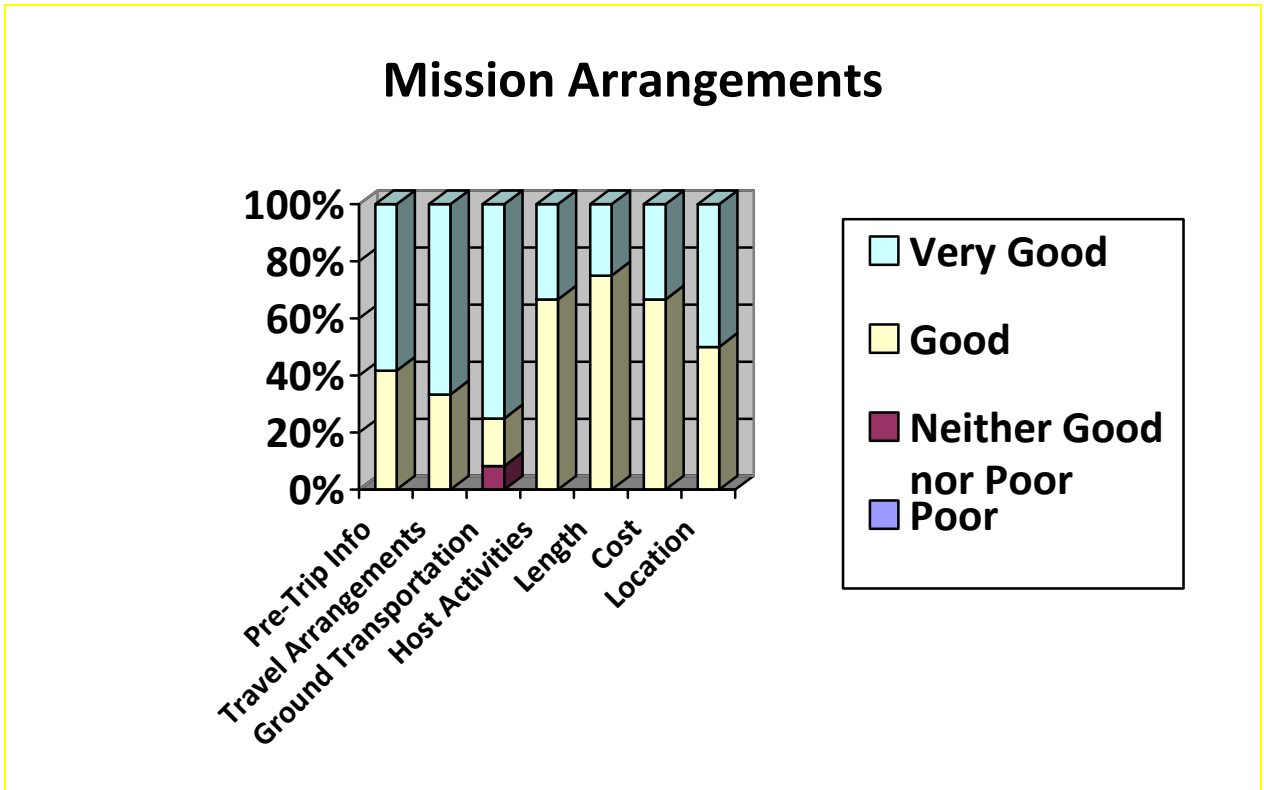
“Reconsider the models for membership/partnership projects.... will make a presentation on infrastructure and capital intensive projects and new strategies learned to key stakeholders.”

“Sharing vision and brainstorming vision with Board members and staff. Working harder to explain to stakeholders and board members the necessity and importance of staff training, and rapidly developing training programs.”

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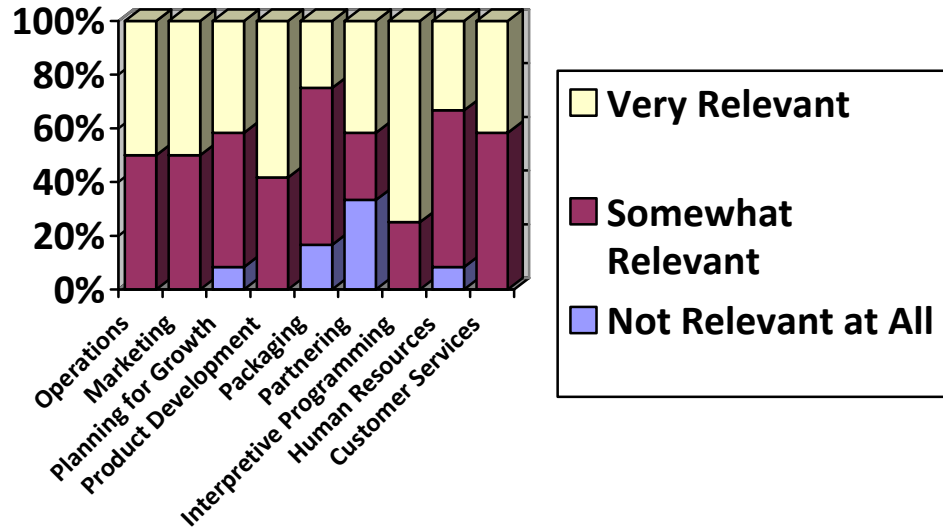
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Mission Evaluation Results

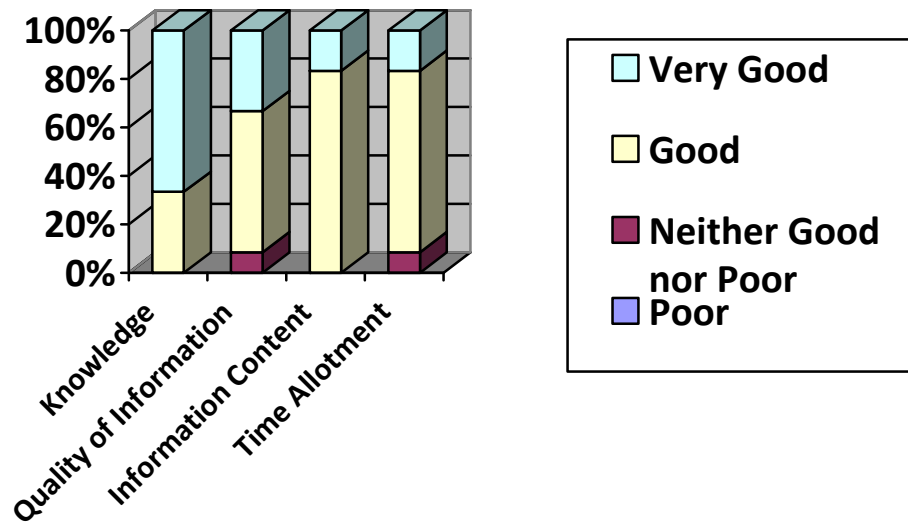


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Relevance to Business



Mission Arrangements



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Appendix B: Participant Contacts

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