

An aerial photograph of a white motorboat with a green stripe, floating on clear turquoise water. The boat is positioned near a white sand beach. Several people are visible on the boat and in the water. In the background, there is a large, flat, white sand area, possibly a lagoon or a beach, with some rocks visible in the distance under a blue sky with light clouds.

The Ultimate Transformational Experience Guide

7 STEPS TO CREATING BETTER VALUE
FOR YOUR GUESTS AND YOUR BUSINESS

OCTOBER 2020

Queensland
AUSTRALIA

Why this guide is essential for Queensland tourism and events operators

This guide introduces you to a new era of travel – ‘transformational experiences’. Our aim is to help put you at the forefront of a global travel movement and increase your bookings and revenue.

Delivering transformational travel experiences will delight your guests, improve your social media and travel platform reviews and rankings and build loyal advocates for your business and region. You will also squarely align your business with Queensland’s purpose-led brand philosophy of ‘travel for good.’

Use this guide to:

- Learn what Queensland’s brand means in practice
- Gain new insights into the changing needs and expectations of travellers
- Understand how to design and deliver exceptional transformational experiences
- Deepen engagement with your guests
- Differentiate your experience through innovation, and enhance your competitive advantage



When this journey started, we could not foresee the impact COVID-19 would have on so many in our industry. For our travellers, COVID-19 has amplified the quest for transformational experiences.

We offer this guide not despite the pandemic, nor because of it, but as the best way forward for our industry to overcome and thrive amidst the many unpredictable events we continue to face.

Who has this guide been designed for?

In developing the guide, we have sought to ensure it is relevant to all Queensland's tourism and event operators, regardless of size and type.

While it has been designed with a logical flow to inform you on how to transform your visitor experiences, if the document looks daunting and you are not convinced it is worth your time and effort, we suggest reviewing your operation against the self-assessment tool on page 25.

This will give you an indication of how well you are currently doing, or not, in delivering truly transformational experiences and will certainly give you an indication of the areas of your operation that may require particular attention.

Acknowledgements: Tourism and Events Queensland wishes to thank the team at Forrester for sharing their expertise and providing information for this manual. A special thanks to Jayne Jennings from JJ's Strategic Consulting for her invaluable editing. Thank you also to the tourism businesses featured as case studies for their generous assistance with providing information and images.

Contents

01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Why transformational experiences?	How has Queensland's brand evolved?	What do your guests want?	What does it mean for your guests?	Where do I start?	How do I know it's working?	How have others done it?
Introducing transformational experiences and their relevance to Queensland's tourism and events industry Rise of the purpose-led economy	The evolution of the Queensland brand What the Queensland brand promises travellers Bringing the brand principles to life	Build your understanding of our global travellers What today's travellers want Understanding your guests	Core guest expectations - what we want your guests to feel and say about their travel experiences	The guests' Five Stages of Travel Your guest journey self-assessment Guide to the stages: - Dreaming - Planning - Booking - Experiencing - Sharing	Early indicators of success Best of Queensland Experiences Program	Case studies and examples

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WHY TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCES?

Introducing transformational experiences and their relevance to Queensland's tourism and events industry.

Rise of the purpose-led economy.

Why transformational experiences?

In this new era of travel, people are actively seeking experiences that enrich, awaken and transform them, and, eventually, the world. They want to ignite something new within themselves by consciously connecting with and appreciating our extraordinary planet, its people and cultures.

Together we can inspire the now-and-next generation of travellers to be transformed by the experiences of Queensland.

By meeting travellers' needs for transformational travel experiences, you will build a stronger, more sustainable business; enable Queensland to claim a purpose-led, distinct and future-proofed global position; and together we can inspire positive change in our communities and planet.

This guide will enable you to transform your experience offering and business to meet and exceed the needs of the travellers of today and tomorrow.



Transformation

A process of profound and radical change.

- Business Dictionary



Transformational experiences

Those that challenge a person's assumptions, preconceptions, beliefs and values, affecting how they understand themselves, others and the world.

- Tufts University



Transformational travel experiences

Intentionally travelling to stretch, learn and grow into new ways of being and engaging with the world.

- Transformational Travel Council



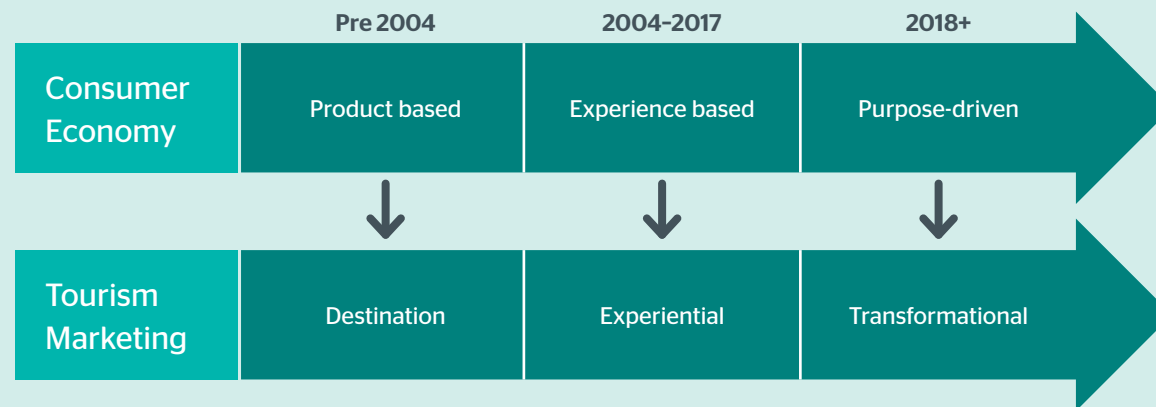
We're in a tough market domestically and internationally and to thrive we need to do a lot more than simply meet guest expectations - we must exceed them! To exceed my guests' expectations my event has to be much more than just great musical acts, it has to be environmentally responsible, it has to genuinely benefit the local community and it has to provide my guests with a sense of escape from the everyday and a deeper connection with not only family and friends but increasingly with themselves and the world around them.

Greg Donovan, Big Red Bash

Rise of the purpose-led economy

The consumer landscape has evolved to embrace a purpose driven economy, one based on achieving the right balance between people, place, planet and profit.

Transformational travel directly responds to consumers changing expectations and represents an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage in a shifting consumer landscape.



As part of an extensive review of the Queensland brand, TEQ partnered with global brand and insights consultancy Landor, to explore global consumer trends and innovative brand strategy and positioning. The findings shaped the development of the travel for good purpose-led brand position. Key insights included:

- Global consumer research* shows travellers are increasingly seeking purpose-led brands that align with their personal beliefs, authentically demonstrate progressive values and spark meaningful change in society
- Brand purpose is particularly important for Gen Z and Millennials, with future generations expected to follow
- Queensland can authentically own the travel for good position and gain a strong competitive advantage through transformational travel experiences

In a post COVID-19 context, the opportunity is unchanged to appeal to travellers heads and hearts, emotionally engaging with their desire to be changed by the experiences of Queensland and to appreciate and safeguard the places they visit.

*Spotify & Culture Co-op Global Research (2019) Culture Next Trends Report - using first-party data from 4,000 respondents across eight countries, including Australia; Accenture (2018) To Affinity and Beyond: from Me to We, The rise of the Purpose-led Brand - A global survey of nearly 30,000 consumers; Booking.com (2018) Sustainable Travel Report - Survey of 12,134 respondents across 12 markets, including Australia.



HOW HAS QUEENSLAND'S BRAND EVOLVED?

The evolution of the Queensland brand.

What the Queensland brand
promises travellers.

Brand principles in practice.

The evolution of the Queensland brand

The Queensland brand has evolved to position Queensland globally in the new era of transformational travel and to embody the essence of our purpose, to travel for good.

This brand purpose captures how Queensland will present itself to the world as a deeper, more meaningful and engaging travel destination where the experiences delivered will change travellers and the world for the better.

Transformational travel offers our guests a fresher and deeper experience of Queensland's stunning tapestry of natural wonders, peoples and cultures, welcoming communities and experienced tourism and events operators. These experiences are further enriched by the ancient wisdom of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples and their cultures that bring a greater depth, richness and meaning to the Queensland story.

A Queensland-inspired appreciation of life will not only positively change the way your guests feel about themselves, but it will change the way they see and interact with the world.

Your Queensland brand

Queensland's brand is not a tag line or catchy slogan, it's how people think and feel about Queensland and the promise it offers.

Your Destination brand

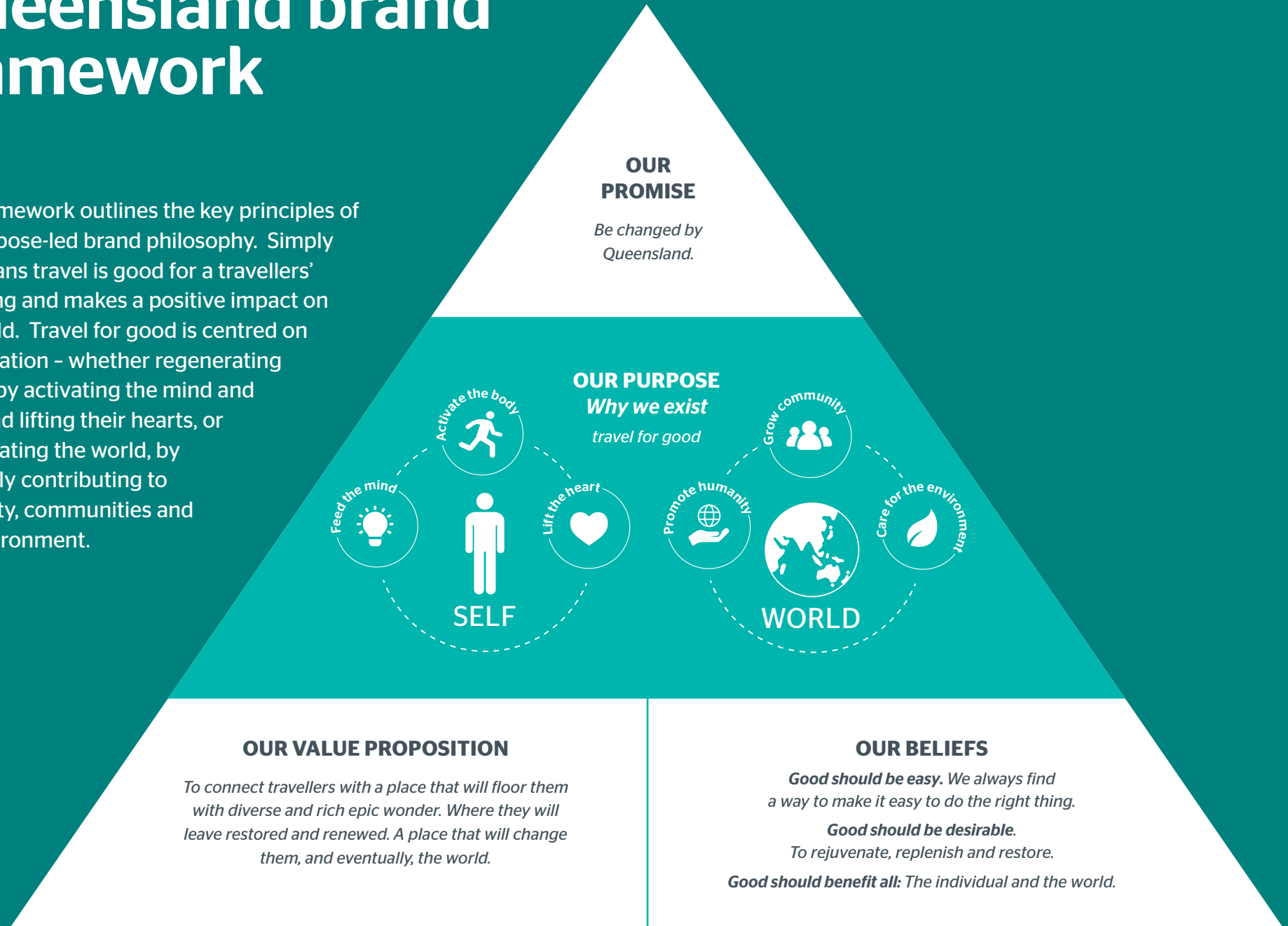
Your destination brand is making a promise to prospective guests about what it has to offer, the distinctive values, attributes and personality that set your destination apart from others.

Your brand

Your brand is everything. It is the sum total of how people perceive your business and what it has to offer. It is the promise of an experience and the emotions that it will create.

Queensland brand framework

This framework outlines the key principles of our purpose-led brand philosophy. Simply this means travel is good for a travellers' wellbeing and makes a positive impact on the world. Travel for good is centred on regeneration - whether regenerating people by activating the mind and body and lifting their hearts, or regenerating the world, by positively contributing to humanity, communities and the environment.



Brand principles in practice

SELF



- Mental wellbeing.
- Grow and evolve by discovering, learning and having a deeper understanding.
- Create and innovate.



- Physical wellbeing.
- Feel energised, active, motivated and challenged.
- Encourage healthy, positive lifestyles.



- Emotional wellbeing.
- Feel a sense of belonging and connection to others.
- Contribute to something greater than yourself.

WORLD



- Make the world better.
- Promote progress, freedom, equality, diversity, tolerance.
- Eliminate poverty and discrimination.



- Participate in an engaged community based on shared positive values.
- Bring people together in an inclusive, proud and supportive society.



- Care for, contribute to and protect our natural environment.
- Educate and raise awareness to create advocacy and action.



"We provide visitors with stories and knowledge that enable them to connect to country authentically through the eyes of the local Aboriginal people. Visitors learn about land and sea country, the seasons, the plants, the animals and the bush medicine."

Juan Walker, Walkabout Cultural Adventures



"We provide an unforgettable, highly customer-focused tour of the Great Barrier Reef to small groups of like-minded guests who are looking for a unique, personal Cairns reef tour experience."

Alan Wallish, Passions of Paradise



"So many people are on the same mission and want to be there beside us holding our hand. I enjoy spending time with our guests as I can help inspire them that the most important thing is looking after this planet."

Peter Gash, Lady Elliott Island



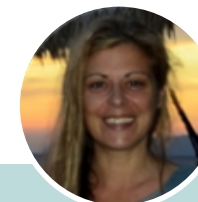
"Supporting people and organisations such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service who are looking after our guests is the right thing to do."

Greg Donovan, Big Red Bash



"The Master Reef Guides program is resonating with people of all ages and cultures and creating a community that wants to make a difference to the environment and sharing that with others."

Fiona Merida, GBRMPA, Master Reef Guides Program



"Learning to care for the environment comes from a deeper understanding of the environment and we achieve that through the interpretation we provide."

Vicky Jones, Red Dirt Tours





WHAT DO YOUR GUESTS WANT?

Build your understanding of
the new traveller.

What today's travellers want.

Understanding your guests.

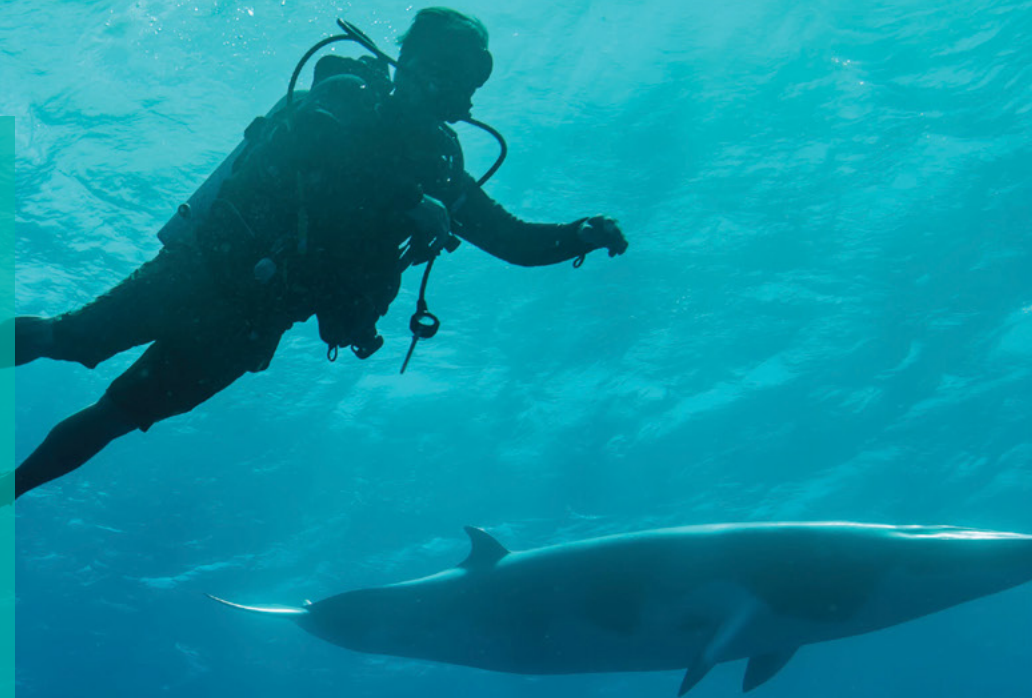
Globally, travellers are seeking transformational experiences

The world is getting smaller. The belief that everyone is different is being challenged. In terms of guests' needs and wants, while there are still some nuances across countries, we are more alike than we are different.

So whether your market is domestic, international or a combination of both, there are some common themes influencing the daily decisions of the people you are looking to attract to your business.

Use this section as a starting point to better understand the current and emerging needs, behaviours, and motivations of travellers and where to adjust your operation or event to deliver the desired experiences.

Spotify & Culture Co-op Global Research 2019, 'Align with Consumers' to Win Their Hearts and Wallets Reports 2017



Rising consumer expectations

Consumer expectations for better experiences are being demanded across all industries, retail, hospitality, commercial, services...when one industry raises the bar, all industries must rise to the occasion.



Experiences over possessions

- Preferences for experiences over possessions.
- Spending on services is growing at a faster pace than spending on durable goods.
- The opportunity to deliver an exceptional experience is no longer limited to your offering on the ground. Consumers are demanding exceptional experiences from when they start dreaming about their next holiday, through to when they book, experience, and once they return home.



Demand for purpose-led brands

- Consumers are going beyond product features and prices – seeking purpose-led brands that align with their own personal beliefs and values.
- 65% of our future global travellers expect brands to play a more meaningful role in society.
- Sustainable tourism demand is growing across our existing and future travellers.

What today's travellers want

You may already recognise your guests' changing travel aspirations. Here's a snapshot of the preferences of these emerging travellers to better help you understand the transformational experiences they are seeking. Recognising that travellers are more alike than different, TEQ has adopted a global approach to segmentation, with a focus on the following segments; Solo, Couple, Family and Visiting Friends & Relatives. The health crisis and the unprecedented disruption caused by COVID-19 has profoundly impacted consumer needs, with three key shifts emerging across all segments. These include higher expectations for hygiene and safety practices, making wellbeing a priority, and the need for value and flexibility to offset economic concerns, income instability and continued border control / travel restrictions changes.

Solo Traveller

The exhilaration of a new adventure, personal growth and freedom are what travelling solo is all about. Travel allows me to reclaim my sense of self, find purpose and be part of something greater than myself.



Planning:

- Planning is a critical, with solo travellers seeking validation from trusted recommendations to build confidence in destination of choice and selecting must-do experiences.

I seek:

- New, different and fulfilling travel experiences that allow me to reconnect with myself and forge a deeper connection with people, places and culture.
- Value for money experiences – affordable options that give me the experience I want.
- Heightened reassurance for hygiene and safety as well as booking flexibility so I can travel safely and freely.
- To connect with like-minded people who share my interests and passions and seek recommendations on what to do from locals and travellers alike.

What I avoid on my travels:

- Unnecessary risks that may impact my health, safety or wellbeing.
- Experiences that are touristy and don't have a laidback local feel.

Couple Traveller

Travel enables my partner and I to reconnect, relax, and grow and evolve together by discovering new experiences and having a deeper appreciation for people, places and culture.



Planning:

- Plans longer holidays 2-4 months in advance and balances these with impulsive short-stay getaways.

I seek:

- Unique and life-changing experiences that enable us to contribute, care for and be a part of something greater than ourselves.
- Experiences to reconnect and bond with my partner.
- To unwind on holidays, and bring balance to our busy lives.

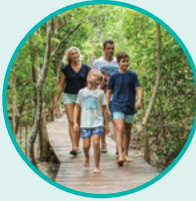
What I avoid on my travels:

- Inauthentic travel experiences that are out of touch with the locals – gimmicky, mainstream, overcrowded.
- Any experience that may harm nature or cause damage to the environment and community.
- Service providers that do not implement sustainable operating practices.

What today's travellers want

Family Traveller

Family holidays are our time to slow down, take pause and reconnect. Travel is about sharing in experiences the whole family will enjoy, and creating memories we'll cherish for years to come."



Planning:

- Plans holidays about three months in advance, with holidays planned around public/school holidays.



I seek:

- To spend time with, bond and connect with my family through a once in a lifetime trip with experiences my children will enjoy.
- To teach my children to be good people and expose them to experiences that will give them a well-rounded view of the world.
- To feel welcomed and accepted to freely immerse my family in a place without any risk or hassle.
- Value for money experiences.



What I avoid on my travels:

- Experiences that aren't child-friendly, or are unclear if they have options that will suit my family.
- Anything that puts the comfort, safety and wellbeing of my family at risk - unnecessary hassle, poor service, travelling long distances without breaks, uncertified operators, inaccessible locations.

Visiting Friends & Relatives Traveller

I travel to create lasting memories with my friends and family and experience new things together.



Planning:

- Plans most holidays around public/school holidays. It is typically the host who plans the holiday.



I seek:

- To reconnect with myself, my family and friends through travel and experiencing new things.
- To relax, unwind and create lasting memories with my loved ones.
- Experiences that meet the needs of everyone in my travel party, and impress friends and relatives who are visiting.
- Uncrowded and responsibly managed destinations and experiences that ensure the safety of myself, my family and friends.



What I avoid on my travels:

- Unnecessary risks that may impact the health and wellbeing of my family and friends or myself.
- Experiences that are touristy and don't have a laidback local feel.
- Uncertified service providers.

Understanding your guests

Some ways to build a better understanding of your guests:

- **Collect additional information** during the booking process such as *'how you heard about our business'* or *'why did you choose our business.'*
- **Spend time getting to know** your guests during their time with you.
- As part of the farewell process, **solicit feedback** from your guests and look for trends in online reviews.
- Consider surveying guests to better understand why they chose your business, what matters to them and how they felt about their experience.
- **Make use of material** offered by Tourism Australia, Tourism and Events Queensland and your Regional Tourism Organisation such as traveller personas and demographics (to get the most up to date visitor insights go to <https://teq.queensland.com/research-and-insights>).

Keep building this understanding of your guests to:

- exceed your guests' expectations
- build better word of mouth
- increase bookings
- respond to changing needs of your guests

D4

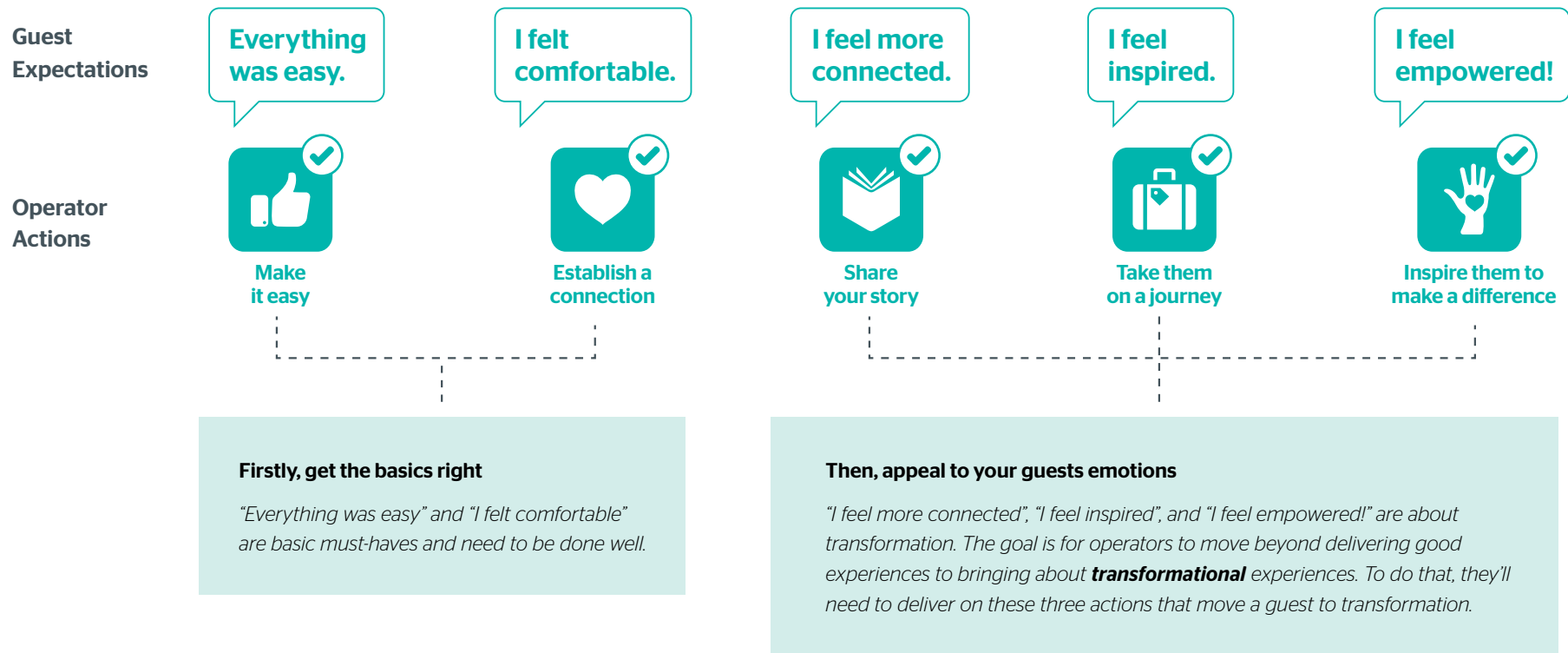
WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOUR GUESTS?

Core guest expectations –
what you want your guests
to feel and say about their
travel experiences.

The core guest expectations and what this means for you

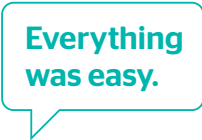
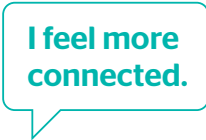
Your guests are seeking transformational experiences. As a tourism or event operator, your role is to take them on a journey that helps them make that transformational connection, with themselves and the world.

The following core guest expectations represent a synthesis of Queensland's travel for good brand principles and contemporary consumer experience needs. They provide you with a checklist for meeting the needs of your guests, starting with getting the basics right for a really good experience and then moving on to the next level focussing on what you need to do to deliver truly transformational experiences.



Deep dive: core guest expectations

These core guest expectations are what you would like your guests to feel and say about their experience with you – their expectations of the experience you deliver. As a tourism or event operator, you put in place the elements to bring about those transformational travel experiences that realise the Queensland brand purpose, travel for good, and deliver the very best guest experiences.

Operator Actions					
	Make it easy	Establish a connection	Share your story	Take them on a journey	Inspire them to make a difference
Guest Expectations					
	I made all my bookings online. The information was very clear. I knew what to expect and what I needed to bring.	They were warm and friendly. It was tasteful. They cared about me, my health and safety, and my well-being. They understood my needs and my preferences. They cared about the things I cared about, including the environment.	I felt a part of something bigger. Their story and what they do – their culture, community, how they live as part of the environment – I will carry that back home with me.	I didn't know how fascinating Queensland could be. I learned something, and that has changed me. The whole experience was fantastic, but there was so much more to it—the people, the culture, the community—it's a beautiful laid-back place and I'll be back!	I feel re-energised, mentally, physically, and emotionally. I feel motivated to embrace a more active and healthy lifestyle. I feel confident and empowered. I'm changed, and I can make change happen!

05

WHERE DO I START?

Your guests' Five Stages of Travel.
Guest journey self-assessment.
Guide to the stages: Dreaming, Planning,
Booking, Experiencing and Sharing.

Getting started

Now that you have a better understanding of what your guests want from their travels, and how the Queensland brand is responding to these evolving traveller needs, this section will help you identify any specific changes you might need to make to your operation to deliver truly transformational experiences and build better business success.

1. **Your guests' Five Stages of Travel:** Start with the five stages of travel your guests go through: Dreaming, Planning, Booking, and Experiencing. Underlying all stages is Sharing.
2. **Guest journey self-assessment:** We include a self-assessment for you to think about the experience you currently offer your guests.
3. **Guide to the stages:** The guide takes you through each stage of travel and helps you identify changes you can make to deliver transformational experiences for your guests.

01

Your guests start their travel experience long before they're with you physically.

Their travel needs can be divided into five stages which enables you to better understand their needs and what you need to do at each stage to deliver a truly transformational experience.

The five core guest expectations:

- *Easy*
- *Comfortable*
- *Connected*
- *Inspired, and*
- *Empowered*

apply across all Five Stages of Travel

YOUR GUESTS' FIVE STAGES OF TRAVEL





HOW WALKABOUT CULTURAL ADVENTURES DELIVERS TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCES THROUGHOUT ALL FIVE STAGES OF TRAVEL

DREAMING



Dreaming is where travellers imagine or aspire to the possibility of escaping their everyday.

Through simply crafted images and words, the Walkabout Cultural Adventures website and social media content communicate a feeling of warmth and genuine connection with the local Aboriginal people and their country. The central messages are the opportunities for guests to feed their minds by learning about cultural history and practices and the natural environment and the personalised approach of the tours.

PLANNING



Planning is where travellers investigate what a trip might be more concretely, although they haven't committed yet.

Guests are well informed of what to expect with tour highlights and suggestions on what to bring to make the most of their experience. The website introduces the tour guides, sharing personal insights and their aspirations. This content assures guests of an authentic experience with the Kuku Yalanji people and creates a sense of anticipation for the experience ahead.

BOOKING



Booking is commitment. The potential guest becomes your confirmed guest.

The website steps guests through the booking process and shows real time availability, enabling instant confirmation. Snippets about what guests will experience and learn on the tour build anticipation. Juan and his team gather information about guests before arrival to enable them to tailor to their needs and deliver an exceptional experience. Guests are asked to note any dietary requirements, country of origin and any special requests.

EXPERIENCING



Experiencing is the heart of your offering.

Guests are blown away by how Juan and his other tour guides personalise the experience. Juan and his team focus on 'reading' guests to ensure they readily understand the subject matter. Guests hear family stories and insights about the land and sea country, the seasons, the plants, the animals and the bush medicine. Juan believes through sharing his stories and practices he is inspiring care for the environment and growing community by preserving the knowledge and continuing the connection between the people and the land.

SHARING



Sharing is where you and your guests connect with future guests. They share both the good and the bad of what they experienced with you, becoming advocates or detractors.

Juan uses Facebook and Instagram to provide knowledge about the local environment and history, words of inspiration and information about other local businesses. This content maintains a connection for past guests and inspiration for those yet to book. Comments are welcomed through direct feedback and social media. Juan responds to feedback and is enthusiastic about his guests taking away knowledge of the Kuku Yalanji people and the area.

02

GUEST JOURNEY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Read each statement. Decide how well you agree with it. Assign a score to each box based on:

Strongly Disagree = 1 Disagree = 2 Neutral = 3 Agree = 4 Strongly Agree = 5

The score is simply an indication to you on how well you are doing in effectively engaging and connecting with prospective guests during all stages of their travel journey and where you may need to focus your energies on improving your guest experience.

DREAMING 	PLANNING 	BOOKING 	EXPERIENCING 	SHARING 
☐ Our business has a strong brand message that reflects travel for good principles. ☐ We create, leverage and share content in a range of forms (e.g. written, video and photo) in relevant languages (where appropriate). ☐ We leverage and disseminate content across a wide variety of platforms relevant to our global markets (e.g. website, social media, travel review sites). ☐ We work with our industry partners to understand our guests and extend our reach. ☐ We partner and support broader tourism initiatives to extend our reach.	☐ Our digital presence (e.g., website, social media, etc.) helps guests imagine the transformational experience they will have with us. ☐ Our physical and digital presence accurately reflects our brand message and brand purpose which incorporates travel for good principles. ☐ Our digital presence has all the content for a guest to feel confident booking with us (e.g. pricing, safety, dietary, what to bring). ☐ Our website is easy to navigate. ☐ Our website is search engine optimised and in the preferred search engines of our target markets. ☐ Our digital and physical presence is tailored to market nuances (e.g in language, content style, and channels) most relevant to our global guests.	☐ We make it easy for guests to book with us in their channel of choice (e.g. website, mobile phone) and preferred payment mechanism and currency. ☐ Our booking process is easy and captures all the information we need. ☐ Our website has all the information our guests need during and after booking. ☐ We confirm booking details and make our refund, cancellation and rescheduling policies clear to our guests. ☐ We share reminders and help build guest anticipation in the lead up to the experience.	☐ We understand and accommodate for what the emerging traveller is looking for in their transformational travel experiences. ☐ We make it easy for our guests to enjoy our experience. ☐ We make our guests feel comfortable and looked after. ☐ Our experience educates our guests and connects them to something bigger. ☐ Our experience inspires our guests. ☐ Our experience re-energises our guests. ☐ Our experience leaves guests with a deeper understanding of Queensland and a renewed appreciation of our planet and their place within in it.	☐ We empower our guests to capture our experience's transformational moments. ☐ We effectively encourage our guests to share their experiences. ☐ We address and leverage feedback both positive and negative. ☐ We encourage our guests to stay connected and involved with us even after they have left. ☐ We have an online space relevant to the guests preferred social platforms that enables guests to share content and drive a sense of community.
Total /25	Total /30	Total /25	Total /35	Total /25

02

GUEST JOURNEY SELF-ASSESSMENT

When you have finished, add your scores for each column.

If you scored in:

Red = You should consider making some improvements in this journey stage - refer to the stage by stage guide for suggestions.

Yellow = You are doing ok in this journey stage; some additional work would be helpful.

Green = You are doing well in this journey stage but know that 'good is the enemy of great' so don't rest on your laurels and ensure you look to continually improve to exceed your guest expectations.

DREAMING 	PLANNING 	BOOKING 	EXPERIENCING 	SHARING 
5-10	5-10	5-10	5-10	5-10
11-21	11-25	11-21	11-25	11-21
22-25	26-30	22-25	26-35	22-25
See page 26 for more on Dreaming	See page 28 for more on Planning	See page 30 for more on Booking	See page 32 for more on Experiencing	See page 42 for more on Sharing

03

This section will equip you with practical tips to improve your business by delivering transformational guest experiences at each of the **Five Stages of Travel**.

At each stage, you'll get:

- **Questions** to help you think about the traveller's experience from their perspective.
- A **guide** to help you to design and deliver an exceptional experience by addressing the core guest expectations.
- **Examples** of tourism and event operators delivering aspects of the stages.
- **Links** to further resources, if you would like to learn more.

GUIDE TO THE STAGES



Operator actions to meet core guest expectations



Make it easy



Establish a connection



Share your story



Take them on a journey



Inspire them to make a difference



Dreaming

INSPIRE & ASPIRE

Dreaming is where travellers imagine or aspire to the possibility of escaping their everyday.

Travellers reference advertisements, publications, social media, positive word of mouth from friends and family, tourism websites, travel and lifestyle programs and memorable advertising campaigns or content to trigger their imagination.

You support Dreaming through the experiences you deliver to guests and the content you develop that showcases those experiences.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How do you start getting guests to think about you?
2. Are guests looking to you as much as your competitors?
3. How do your experiences compare with some of your international competitors?
4. How should your guests be thinking about you?
5. Do you engage with others in your industry?
6. How can you reach more guests in a way that resonates with them?

Dreaming



INSPIRE & ASPIRE

Use your online content to build your profile and inspire through your story. Partner with your physical and digital communities to spread the message.

Who does this well?

Family run and operated, Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort uses social media and their website to communicate with travellers online. Their core story of the spectacular marine life and unspoilt coral reef and their commitment to sustainability runs strongly through their content.

During COVID-19 they were extremely active in the Dreaming phase, with content that allowed them to tell a deeper story while remaining top of mind. Using their Instagram channel owner, Peter Gash spoke to the current situation and how the resort would continue to be cared for and kept pristine, ready to welcome visitors when it was safe to do so. In this channel they launched a series called 'Island Talks', edutainment style of content exploring the wildlife visitors will meet and the types of experiences available.

Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort is a great example of keeping the operation top of mind and creating a sense of connection throughout the year and during unexpected events such as COVID-19.



Address basic core guest expectations:

- 1. Drive digital content and marketing:** social media, regular blog content. Reinforce how you bring to life the Queensland brand purpose travel for good story through the content you post.
- 2. Keep an eye on your peers and competitors:** if they're getting more guests, re-assess and understand what you can do to bring more guests through your door, but also continue to find inspiration from the ways your peers and competitors locally, nationally and overseas are driving content and look for ways to do more.



Make it easy



Establish a connection

Appeal to your guests' emotions:

Define your story and extend its reach:

- 3. Craft a purpose-driven brand message:** define your brand story - what you want your guests to imagine when they think about you. Use the Queensland brand purpose, travel for good, as the groundwork (inspire, show how you are caring for the environment, growing community, promoting humanity). Inject your own personality and play to your story and your values.
- 4. Embrace your industry:** work with other local businesses, local councils, RTOs, international trade and media partners and TEQ (head office and in-market teams) to understand what your guests are looking for and extend your reach.
- 5. Share your profile:** look for opportunities to profile your experience in magazines and relevant lifestyle programs and visiting journalist and familiarisation programs.
- 6. Support broader initiatives:** regional, community and state-level initiatives all build awareness, drive interest and inspire - extending your reach significantly.

Additional Resources: TEQ: "Brand Queensland"; TEQ: "Queensland's Content Framework"; TEQ: "Brand Development to Build Business"; the Queensland Government's "Digital scorecard"



Planning

INVESTIGATE & IMAGINE

Planning is where your prospective guests start investigating the various options for the holiday they have been Dreaming about.

Your role is to move them from 'Planning' to 'Booking' by **appealing to their emotions**: help them imagine how you can provide them the ultimate transformational holiday experience they are craving.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How do you appeal to your guests' values in order to differentiate your experience?
2. How do you communicate your unique selling proposition and that real taste of Australia in a competitive global market?
3. How do you address concerns your guests may have that would prevent them from choosing you?
4. How do you help them imagine the highlights of the experience they would have with you and how it will transform them?
5. Your guests are planning a holiday, not just a single experience - how do you link to other local experiences to enrich their visit and build a sense that they are about to discover a community?

Planning

INVESTIGATE & IMAGINE

Your website, social media platforms and guest reviews will have the most influence on potential guests.

If you appeal to your guests' desire for transformational experiences through your website, social media and reviews, they are more likely to book with you.

Who does this well?

"Curate your stay" is the invitation on Calile Hotel's website. The content and images weave storylines around wellness, moments of discovery, unexpected adventures and encounters to give a sense of anticipation of what is possible when staying at the Calile. To inspire guests to stay a while, a 'friends of Calile' program offers guests who book direct a 10% discount at a selection of James Street's stores and restaurants that share a passion for the customer experience.

"In a life that's full of inputs sometimes the best thing you can do is hit the pause button. We understand that your day needs to be more than just a sequence of necessary events. Let us help you turn your downtime into uptime."

Calile is a great example of putting the guest at the centre of the experience in a way that appeals to their senses, encouraging bookings and advocacy.



Address basic core guest expectations:

1. **Website basics:** ensure your website is tasteful and attractive, makes use of imagery, and is optimised for multiple platforms and search engines relevant to your target markets.
2. **Take note of the tone of voice used in your website:** it sets guests' expectations for what you offer. Make sure it's welcoming and appropriate to your experience.
3. **Make it easy:** to find information about your experience and any options you offer. Include a 'book now' button on your website to drive guests to the booking phase.
4. **Link to reviews:** make it easy for guests to read reviews of your service. They will do this regardless.



Make it easy



Establish a connection

Appeal to your guests' emotions:

Help them imagine and anticipate the experience and how they will be transformed by it:

5. **Bring the experience to life:** tell them what the highlights of the experience will be. Use emotional language, imagery, and video to help them feel and anticipate these highlights and how they may be transformed by the experience. Use quotes from other guests to add authenticity.
6. **Share the story of how you are part of a larger community:** whether that is regional or cultural, and how your experience ties into the larger community.
7. **Tell your guests about your values and what you do to support them:** be genuine and authentic and reflect your passions. This may include sustainability, managing the environment, supporting the community, etc. Include content for how your guests could get involved or contribute, perhaps during their stay or as part of their normal lives.
8. **Make use of social media:** to highlight the story of the experience you offer guests and how that transforms them. Your posts are more effective if they reflect your own passions and values aligned to the experience you offer your guests. Ensure your social media channels are relevant for your selected international target markets.



Share your story

Additional Resources: Creating Memorable Moments



Booking

COMMIT & ANTICIPATE

Booking is commitment. The potential guest has chosen your business and becomes your confirmed guest.

The booking process needs to be as easy as possible and in the guest's channel of choice.

This is also the stage where you should confirm the booking, share key information to plan for the day/experience, and help guests anticipate the emotions the experience will deliver.

A good booking process and clear information help reinforce for your guests that they have made the right choice.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How simple and easy can you make the booking process in your guest's platform via their channel of choice (e.g. website, mobile phone) and, preferred payment mechanism and currency?
2. Do you confirm the booking? How do you enable, respond to, and confirm special requests?
3. How do you ensure guests know what to expect or bring on the day/experience?
4. How do you continue to build anticipation?
5. How do you link in with other local experiences and start to build a sense of community?

Booking

COMMIT & ANTICIPATE

Make booking as easy as possible and make sure you send a booking confirmation.

Who does this well?

TreeTop Challenge's introduction of an online booking system in response to negative comments about delays in the arrival process, 'made it easy' for guests, transforming their experience. The booking system for the ropes course staggers guest arrival times and staff are rostered according to demand. Previously, guests could arrive at the same time and face queues. Now at an allocated time, guests receive their safety equipment and information briefings and can make the most of their time on the ropes course. The change has resulted in a marked increase in positive online reviews.

This is an example of focusing on guest needs to ensure they have an exceptional experience, and want to return and recommend the operation to others.



Address basic core guest expectations:

1. **Website basics:** ensure your website is tasteful and attractive, makes use of imagery, and is optimised for multiple platforms and search engines, relevant to your target markets.
2. **Take note of the tone of voice used in your website:** it sets guests' expectations for what you offer. Make sure it's welcoming and appropriate to your experience.
3. **Make it easy:** to find information about your experience and any options you offer.
4. **Address your guests' potential concerns:** (health, safety, language, comfort, flexibility, cancellation, dietary, physical, environmental impact) and how you alleviate these.
5. **Know your guests' payment platforms:** (e.g Unionpay, Alipay, Credit Card) and provide appropriate currency conversion for guests to easily convert to home currency.
6. **FAQ's:** ensure your website answers the most frequent questions guests including refund, cancellation and change policies and respond to guest questions and feedback through all channels.
7. **Mind other channels:** most guests will book through your website, but some may reach out to you via social media or email to book. Ensure you respond to these in a timely manner.



Make it easy



Establish a connection

Appeal to your guests' emotions:

Your booking confirmation can start to build anticipation:

8. **Share your story:** use the confirmation email as a way of sharing more about your business, your story, your passion and values.
9. **Use imagery:** build anticipation for their experience with you through imagery, stories, blogs – either within the confirmation email or a link from the email.
10. **Connect your guests to 'your local':** your guest's holiday will be enriched if they feel part of your community – connect your guest to local events or other local businesses, be personable, share stories of other local operators they might want to explore.



Share your story

Additional Resources: Best Practices for Websites



Experiencing

INSPIRE, ENERGISE & CONNECT

Experiencing is the heart of your offering. It needs to resonate with guests beyond what they expected, encourage them to visit again, possibly try more next time, and inspire guests to tell others about you.

This stage is what your guests have come for. It is when you need to ensure you've addressed the core guest expectations. Think about the experience from their perspective, the high points, the peak moments and any low points or pain points and how you can manage those to deliver a truly transformational experience.

“

How you greet your guests, what they see and what you tell them creates an impression of you and your operation and will set the direction for how they feel about their experience with you overall.

”

Experiencing

INSPIRE, ENERGISE & CONNECT

Your guest's experience with you is a series of moments that can include high points, peak moments to be celebrated and low points to be minimised and managed.



Pre-Experience

- With many guests booking month in advance, the time between Booking and Welcome is an opportunity to stay in touch and build curiosity and anticipation.

Welcome

- How you greet your guests, what they see and what you tell them creates an impression of you and your operation and will set the direction for how they feel about their experience with you overall.

The Experience

- The experience itself is a journey with many stages.
- If you understand the journey, its peak and any pain points for guests, you can improve, enhance and ultimately exceed guest expectations.

Farewell

- When your guests look back on your experience, they will remember most clearly the highlights
 - what they did, what they learned, what they do now as a result of their experience.
- The end of the experience is a new beginning for your guests.

Experiencing

1. PRE-EXPERIENCE

This stage is focused on providing any information the guest needs to be adequately prepared for their experience – and taking it to the next level by building anticipation.

Be sure you continue to provide useful and required information in the lead up to your guest's experience with you.

Keep your guests engaged, informed and eager for the experience ahead.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. Do you stay in touch with your guests between booking and their experience with you?
2. Do you use the opportunity to stay in touch as a way to help them further enrich their visit?
3. Do you share your story, building curiosity and laying the groundwork for inspiration?

Experiencing

1. PRE-EXPERIENCE

Use the time between Booking and the Experience to stay in touch and build curiosity and anticipation.

Who does this well?

As part of the booking process for **Cruise Whitsundays' Reefsleeper** – a fabulous night under the stars on the outer Great Barrier Reef – the team at Cruise Whitsundays gather information from guests to ensure their enjoyment, wellbeing and safety. The information provides a first point in building a relationship with the guests. When onboard, the team engages guests with further information on the experience and what to expect and then over the course of their 24 hours together create lasting connections.

This is an example of using the various touch points with guests from first contact to build a relationship that endures through the experience and inspires positive advocacy and repeat bookings.



Address basic core guest expectations:

1. **Send a reminder:** this is the time to manage expectations, help them keep track of their trip details, and reassure them. Send a reminder a few weeks prior to re-confirm details and special requests and let them know you are looking forward to their visit.

Appeal to your guests' emotions:

Nurture this new relationship:

2. **Provide staged touchpoints:** as the date for their experience gets closer (e.g., 6 months, 3 months, 1 month, 1 week). Balance practical information and inspirational content.
3. **Share a story with your guest:** making sure it relates to your experience, your businesses mission and/or your local community.
4. **Help your guests have a true local experience:** by sharing local insights, a local guidebook or giving them your top things to do and see while they're in the area.
5. **Let them know what's happening in your community:** and how your guest can contribute. Think environmental, social and community messages that share, educate and inspire.
6. **Continue to engage your guests:** through social posts, keep them dreaming in the lead up to your experience.
7. **Communicate to all guests:** not just the primary booker.

Additional Resources: Best Practices for Websites



Make it easy



Establish a connection



Share your story



Take them on a journey

Experiencing

2. WELCOME

The day has arrived. Your guests are finally embarking on their experience with you.

After waiting for days, weeks or months, they're excited to be here with you. Use these moments to introduce yourselves, get to know them, and start to share what makes you special. Transformational experiences mean your guests will be changed by what they see, hear, learn and do with you today. That starts... now!

KEY QUESTIONS

1. Have you given guests a warm welcome appropriate to their culture (and in language if applicable)?
2. What have you done to get to know your guests?
3. How will you personalise each guest's experience based on what you know?
4. Have you made guests feel safe?
5. What have you done to get guests excited?
6. How have you built anticipation for what's ahead?
7. Have you laid foundations for the transformation to come?

Experiencing

2. WELCOME

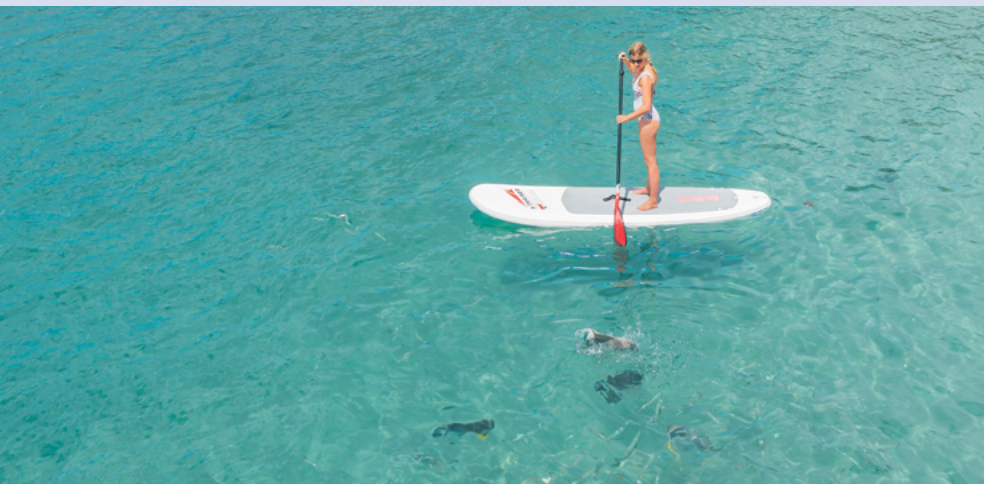
How you greet your guests, what they see and what you tell them creates an impression of you and your operation and will set the direction for how they feel about their experience with you overall.

Who does this well?

Stephanie and Adam take time to read their guests and learn their story and interests. That knowledge determines what stories they share and how best to deliver experiences that will delight guests. No tour is the same.

This is an example of using the welcome to gauge guest's needs and emotions, with the aim of delivering an exceptional experience for every guest.

– Steph & Adam Hinks, Aquascene Charters



Address basic core guest expectations:

be friendly, allay anxieties, establish tone:

1. **Consider what they see:** the appearance of your operation needs to be clean and tidy and reflect the character and tone of the experience your guests have booked.
2. **Welcome your guests:** introduce yourself and your business. Your words and tone of voice should be friendly and suited to your business.
3. **Confirm what they booked and any special requests.**
4. **Capture any additional information as warmly and efficiently as possible:** consider alternative options of capturing information digitally beforehand.
5. **Tell them what is going on:** what to expect, what happens next (in language, if applicable).
6. **Address any health or safety topics that might be pertinent:** What they see (cleanliness of equipment, safety checks and handovers) and your tone/attitude will leave as much or more of an impression as your words (in language if applicable).
7. **Address (verbally and visually) any sustainability or environmental topics:** that might be pertinent to your operations.

Appeal to your guests' emotions:

Lay the groundwork for today's experience – and taking that forward for the future:

8. **Get to know your guests:** how did they find out about you? What are they hoping for today? Use this information to personalise the experience and build curiosity and anticipation.
9. **Introduce your personal story, passions and values:** this is the beginning of their experience with you, and you lay the groundwork now for helping them learn about the community, the locality, the culture, etc. What you establish and introduce early will open their minds to learning and discovering through the rest of the experience.
9. **Build on the “what we're doing / what happens next / here are your choices” part of the welcome:** to share with them what they will gain or learn or how they may be changed from any of those experiences.
10. **Use storytelling techniques:** their experience with you may include multiple story threads – perhaps you have a shorter story to start with, or you embark on a longer one that reveals over the course of their experience. For non-English speakers include in-language story telling.

Additional Resources: TEQ: “Storytelling Toolkit”



Make it easy



Establish a connection



Share your story



Take them on a journey



Inspire them to make a difference

Experiencing

3. THE EXPERIENCE

The moment your guests have been waiting for and your opportunity to exceed expectations.

Create moments they'll remember forever, talk about with everyone they know, and take forward as a new way of living and being.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. Does your experience exceed guest expectations?
2. Does your experience align to your business purpose?
3. Does your experience align to your web content and tone promise?
4. Do you establish connection, educate and inspire new ideas and ways of thinking, and help your guests take initial action?
5. Are your guests leaving changed from their experience with you?

Experiencing

3. THE EXPERIENCE

Transformational experiences are built on a series of moments which have been crafted through careful and deliberate design and management of the guest experience.

Who does this well?

Juan has been helping visitors connect with his Kuku Yalanji country in the Port Douglas Daintree region for 19 years. He is a passionate storyteller and uses stories and actions to open the hearts and minds of his guests to a deeper respect of nature and connection with the country around them. Through his stories and hands-on activities, guests learn about his Aboriginal culture and the land and sea country and share moments that inspire them to take this knowledge and make a positive difference to the environment. This is an example of the power of storytelling in creating genuine connections with guests and taking them on a journey that inspires change – and loyal advocates.

– Juan Walker, Walkabout Cultural Adventures



Address basic core guest expectations:

Be friendly, allay anxieties, establish tone:

1. **Make it safe:** guests want assurance that they will have a safe and reliable experience.
2. **Be personable:** guests want to have an experience with you that is friendly and genuine.
3. **Put yourself in your guests' shoes:** think about the experience from their perspective, and how you can make their whole journey easy. Guests will remember the points that stand out (whether highs or lows). Minimise friction, emphasise the highs, address issues when they come up, stay warm, empathetic, and friendly.
4. **Help them share:** guests want to share their experiences with others. Make them aware of key moments and enable them to create content to share.
5. **Educate them:** guests want to learn from their experiences. Educate them on their journey and give them facts they can share with others.
6. **Be sustainable:** be conscious and mitigate your impact on the environment and the local community.
7. **If you don't control the entire experience:** consider providing feedback, pass on guest feedback, help your network improve their operations and send them this guide!



Appeal to your guests' emotions:

Craft a series of moments that move your guests on a transformational journey:

8. **Build connection:** share the stories that tell them more about your culture, place and community and touch their hearts (in the language of non-English speakers as applicable). Provide the insights that make them feel like they, too, have insider knowledge.
9. **Inspiration starts with curiosity:** find a way to build discovery into the experience – what your guests discover for themselves using their different senses will impact them more. Continue to share stories that talk to why this matters, and the impact that can be made.
10. **Move from inspiration to action:** design something your guests can do to contribute or take part. Make sure they know why their involvement is important. This first step should be something easy, perhaps participate in a cultural activity (food, dance, music, role-play), perhaps nurture the earth through planting or cultivating or feeding something, or create something small to take away with them, that acts as a small triumph and souvenir to remember it.
11. **Help your guests capture these moments along their journey:** your guests want to share those moments that have inspired and empowered them with friends and family and their wider communities. Help them take the best photos or videos to share.



Additional Resources: Creating Memorable Moments; TEQ: "Creating WOW Experiences" (5 Modules with videos and worksheets); TEQ: "Storytelling Toolkit"; TEQ: "Experience development: Delivering world-class experiences"

Experiencing

4. FAREWELL

The experience itself is ending, but your guests should be leaving you inspired and energised to make changes in their lives, and to share their new story with others.

Help them get started.

“Farewell is where your guests are finally brought back to reality. Help them disembark.”

KEY QUESTIONS

1. Do you remain fully focussed on your guests until farewell?
2. Do you conclude the experience by encouraging your guests to reflect, appreciate and share?
3. Do you leave your guests with a warm close?
4. Do you ask your guests what they enjoyed and what you could have done better?
5. How do you stay connected with your guests?

Experiencing

4. FAREWELL

When your guests look back on your experience, they will remember most clearly the highlights – what they did, what they learned, what they do now as a result of their experience. The end of the experience is a new beginning for your guests.

Who does this well?

Small group sizes and creating a rapport with guests that has them feeling like family are important to Peter and his crew. Throughout the trip guests enjoy face-to-face attention, chatting with Peter and crew about the marine life and the Hervey Bay region. As the trip draws to an end, appreciation of the guests for visiting Hervey Bay and choosing their business is a big part of their closing message. Guests also receive a follow-up email thanking them for coming on the tour and some links to make it easy for them to leave a review if they wish. There is no hard sell needed – the quality of the experience tends to inspire guests to comment. Peter and his team thank everyone for their review or feedback – the same personal touch as they receive on board. “Guests know if you are genuinely passionate about what you are doing. We strive to deliver a high-quality experience that leaves them with lasting memories and a sense of connection to our region.”

– Peter Lynch, Blue Dolphin Marine Tours



Address basic core guest expectations:

See your guests safely and comfortably on their way:

1. **Wrap up your story:** highlighting what you hope they have taken from the experience. Encourage their conversations about their experience.
2. **Invite your guests to share: encourage your guests to share their transformational moments:** ask them for feedback.

Appeal to your guests' emotions:

This is also the time to help your guests maintain the connection, inspiration, and momentum they gained from their experience:

3. **Create next steps:** give your guests an easy, actionable and immediate way to take the next step in their transformation, whether that is through a donation box, gift shop, or information they can take away with them to explore.
4. **Welcome your guests to an ongoing community:** your guests are now part of your community – invite them to follow you on social media. Follow up with your guests and share photos. Stay present and keep them in touch with the work you are continuing to do. This may be the end of your guests' time with you but it could be the start of a whole new online relationship that keeps them connected with you providing ongoing advocacy for your business.

Additional Resources: TEQ Review pro: “How Tourism Operators Can Encourage Online Reviews”; Free resources from Tourism Tribe: Online Reputation Management; TEQ: “Queensland’s Content Framework: Best practices for social content”



Make it easy



Establish a connection



Share your story



Take them on a journey



Inspire them to make a difference



Sharing

REFLECT, REACT, & TALK ABOUT

Sharing is where your guests connect with future guests. They share both the good and the bad of what they experienced with you.

You can - and should - shape what guests share. Identify the highly emotional 'transformational' moments in your experiences. Help guests capture the positive ones and actively encourage sharing these.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. Do you empower your guests to capture signature moments?
2. Do you encourage your guests to share their experiences?
3. Do you address feedback (both positive and negative) well?
4. After they've left, do you continue to check-in with your guests?
5. How do you encourage your guests to stay connected to and involved with the community, passions and values you introduced them to during their experience with you?

Sharing

REFLECT, REACT & TALK ABOUT

How you anticipate, encourage and address what your guests share will drive future guests' perceptions of you. Nurture and build connections with past guests to grow future guests.

Who does this well?

Woodford Folk Festival organisers have established several initiatives to maintain contact with their customer database and build a sense of community around the festival. The festival blog is a regular source of narratives and news for the community. Their social media strategy uses story-telling to drive viewers to their blog and website on a regular basis and encourage the sharing of posts.

They have created a Woodfordia Citizen program to re-engage with their database and through a series of podcasts and livestream interviews with festival organisers, artists, performers, speakers and others they maintain a conversation with existing patrons and reach new audiences via friendly, uplifting conversations. This is a great example on how to keep an annual festival 'top of mind' for people throughout the year with the aim of driving strong repeat visitation and advocacy.



Address basic core guest expectations:

Anticipate, encourage and address feedback and sharing:

1. **Empower your signature moments:** identify your signature moments and empower your guests to capture those moments (e.g. on-site photographer, verbal cue).
2. **Encourage your guests to share:** create incentives (e.g. upload photos to your Facebook page), make sharing easy (e.g. TripAdvisor link in follow-up email) and ask for feedback (e.g. during the farewell).
3. **Address feedback:** celebrate and thank your guests for positive feedback. Respond to and try to ameliorate negative feedback.

Appeal to your guests' emotions:

Check in and continue to engage your guests:

4. **Check in with your guests:** continue the story. Show how your experience and story have evolved since they've been with you (e.g. share specific blog content). Let them know how they have played a role in making that happen.
5. **Engage your guests:** your guests are a part of your story. Show your guests how your story continues to evolve and how they can continue to be a part of it (e.g. donations, polls, signatures).
6. **Create a sense of community for your guests:** provide guests - past, present and future - an online space to connect and exchange comments with you and each other through social media and blogs based on your values and passions and leveraging content that creates open, positive dialogue.

Additional Resources: How Tourism Operators can encourage online reviews ; Best of Queensland Experience Program: All operators in BOQEP receive an individual report providing valuable insights on consumer perceptions and how to improve the delivery of customer experiences to drive business performance.



Make it easy



Establish a connection



Share your story



Take them on a journey



Inspire them to make a difference

What do you promise? What do you deliver?

Create consistency between your brand, communications, and the experience you deliver: Brand and content communicates the essence of your business, the experience brings it to life!

Creating a consistent experience across all dimensions of your business ensures your guests receive the experience your website, brand, vision and content promise. If there is a disconnect and the experience falls short of what is promised, it will lead to negative reviews and impact your business.

Start by fixing your experience

If you only leverage one thing from this guide, make it the Experience section. If you can create an experience that aligns with Queensland's brand purpose, travel for good and sets you apart from your competition, you will garner positive reviews and bookings uplift.

Focus first on fixing pain points and enhancing the highlights of your experience. Test improvements and learn as you go.

Adjust brand and content to reflect the experience

Once you have adjusted your experience and aligned it to Queensland's brand purpose, travel for good, adjust your brand and the content you use on your website, social media and customer communications (e.g. emails), to better reflect your new experience.

Leverage emotion and storytelling in your content to create a strong message to share with your guests.

Update your website and social media

Ensure your improved experience and messaging is reflected on your website and in your social media posts. This shows travellers what to expect from the experience and creates consistency in how you communicate your experience across the different ways guests read about and interact with you.

Checklist

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ☐ Do your services deliver a 'transformational experience'? | ☐ Are your website, social media and communications reflective of the experience you deliver? | ☐ Do reviews contain language such as "changed", "inspired", "community", "energy", "culture", "learned", "thank you", "positive impact"? |
| ☐ Is your brand reflective of the experience you deliver? | ☐ Do the reviews guests leave align with your intended experience? | |

A large, bold, teal-colored number '06' is positioned on the left side of the slide. The '0' is a simple circle, and the '6' has a thick, rounded body with a small, curved tail at the top right.

HOW DO I KNOW IT'S WORKING?

Early indicators of success.
Best of Queensland
Experiences Program.

How do I know it's working?

Your first signs that the measures you are taking are working will come well before you see significant increases in profits.

Look for these early indicators:

01

Your website is working better:

- Increased website traffic: your web hosting service should be able to provide you with metrics on traffic.
- Increased enquiries through web, social, phone, etc. channels.
- Ask your guests when they book: how did you find out about us?

02

Your experiences are resonating with guests:

- Ask your guests for feedback at the end of their experience with you.
- Listen to unsolicited feedback.
- Monitor social media and travel platform reviews.
- Look for key words: “changed”, “inspired”, “community”, “ready”, “energy”, “culture”, “learned”, “thank you”, “positive impact”.

03

Feedback via RTOs, peers, Best of Queensland Experiences Program.

Best of Queensland Experiences Program

The Best of Queensland Experiences Program (BOQEP) is one way that you can monitor your performance and measure the impact of changes made to enhance your guest experience.

BOQEP has been developed to:

- guide operators in delivering exceptional customer experiences and aligning with Queensland's brand;
- provide a measureable benchmark for the business based on current consumer expectations and best practice standards;
- provide operators with valuable consumer insights about their business to drive improved performance; and
- inspire operators through consumer advocacy and prioritised marketing opportunities.

By meeting guests' need for transformational experiences, you can garner more positive online reviews and improve your BOQEP result.

For more information visit <https://teq.queensland.com/experiences/best-of-queensland-experiences>





HOW OTHERS HAVE DONE IT

Case studies and examples.

Case Studies

This suite of case studies provides best practice examples of Queensland tourism operators who are already delivering transformational experiences.

They provide examples of how to bring the six brand principles to life.

While each of these operators may be delivering on all six of the Queensland brand principles, for the purpose of this review we have highlighted those principles that are most central to their values.

We recommend you draw on these case studies for ideas and inspiration in applying the brand principles in your business operations and experience delivery.

You will see that while each operator adapts these principles according to their business values and activity, there is a common focus on delivering exceptional transformational experiences. As a result, all of these operators are part of the BOQEP and score in the high 90s of the customer reviews.

SELF



- Mental wellbeing.
- Grow and evolve by discovering, learning and having a deeper understanding.
- Create and innovate.



- Physical wellbeing.
- Feel energised, active, motivated and challenged.
- Encourage healthy, positive lifestyles.



- Emotional wellbeing.
- Feel a sense of belonging and connection to others.
- Contribute to something greater than yourself.

WORLD



- Make the world better.
- Promote progress, freedom, equality, diversity, tolerance.
- Eliminate poverty and discrimination.



- Participate in an engaged community based on shared positive values.
- Bring people together in an inclusive, proud and supportive society.



- Care for, contribute to and protect our natural environment.
- Educate and raise awareness to create advocacy and action.

Juan Walker

WALKABOUT CULTURAL ADVENTURES

Juan Walker, owner of Walkabout Cultural Adventures, has been helping visitors connect with his Kuku Yalanji country in the Port Douglas Daintree region for 19 years. He started as a tour guide at a local ecolodge, where he discovered a skill and passion for sharing stories about the land and sea with people from around the world. Juan established his own business to offer visitors more tour variety and greater access to his country.



It is all of our responsibility to look after the planet. When you go home take some of these ideas of caring for country back to the place where you come from. Get back in touch with nature even if it is only your local park or creek. Everyone has in them that need to connect with nature and Mother Earth.

Feed the mind

Juan's Walkabout Cultural Tours provide visitors with stories and knowledge that enable them to connect to country authentically through the eyes of the local Aboriginal people. Guests learn about the land and sea country, the seasons, the plants, the animals and the bush medicine. Juan's aim is to open the hearts and minds of visitors to a deeper respect of nature and connection with the country around them. The intimacy of Juan's tours means that he can personalise his guest experiences and make a real connection with them through his stories of country and family and to understand the importance of not taking these things for granted in their own lives.

Lift the heart

The cultural tours have also helped Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who don't have a strong connection with their own country to understand the importance of that connection. Through the awareness and understanding the tours offer, they are re-discovering their own connection with country.

Grow community

Supporting and growing community is a major thread through the operation. As the business grows, the local community is benefitting through the employment of local Aboriginal people who are proud to share their land and culture as tour guides.

Juan works with troubled youths through the PCYC and Department of Child Safety, helping their rehabilitation through connection to country. He teaches Kuku Yalanji language at the local primary school to share knowledge with children in the broader community, not just the Indigenous community.

Important elements in establishing and growing his business included:

- Finding guides who shared his passion and could attain a commercial driver's license to carry visitors.
- Training the guides to have a good understanding of 'country', and importantly on how to 'read' people to ensure they could relate to the subject matter and deliver consistently high-quality experiences.
- Providing international and domestic visitors with an authentic connection to country.
- Sourcing start-up capital and securing appropriate national park access and permits.



Steph & Adam Hinks

AQUASCENE CHARTERS

Stephanie and Adam came to Magnetic Island as teenagers with their families and forged a connection with the island's special places. Now together, and after many years working with other operators in the tourism industry, they wanted to create their own business. Aquascene Charters is a tour experience that allows them to share their passion for their home - the island and the Great Barrier Reef- in a way that has visitors leaving with a greater sense of connection to others and the environment.

“

When you peel back the layers, the reason for Aquascene Charters comes down to our real love to connect with people and the environment and inspire them to feel the same.



Feed the mind

Connection is core to Stephanie and Adam's mission. Taking the guest, with their knowledge and experience of where they are in the world and connecting them to the natural wonder of the island and the Great Barrier Reef.

“Once you make that connection, e.g. the squeal through the snorkel at the majesty of the Reef, you then have their attention, their ears ready to absorb information and a keen willingness to make a difference.”

Lift the heart

Stephanie and Adam take time to read their guests and learn their story and interests. That knowledge determines what stories they share and how best to deliver experiences that will delight. As a small family-run business, Stephanie and Adam together with their children share their home and lifestyle in a genuine and authentic way with their guests as they would family and friends.

No tour is exactly the same, there will be different conversations and a collection of stories that Stephanie, Adam and their children draw on as they spend time together with guests on the island and exploring the reef environment. The tours take guests on their custom designed catamaran to explore secluded beaches and bays and access fringing reef for snorkeling.

Guests learn about the Great Barrier Reef and through the information and passion Stephanie and Adam convey, gain a sense of ownership of the Reef and carry a commitment to its wellbeing and that of the broader environment back home.

“We don't simply show our guests Maggie - we want them to connect with the island, the reef and the people that live here and leave with a desire to make their own home a better place. Our guests are often amazed that their tour is this family showing them their back yard, it really breaks down any barriers to communicating with them.”

Care for the environment

Protecting the natural beauty of Magnetic Island is a commitment the Hinks live by day-to-day. Stephanie has become a certified Master Reef Guide, so that she and Adam deliver a high-quality nature-based tourism experience with strong interpretation values, commitment to nature conservation and reinvestment into the local community. The tours provide a learning platform for the Hinks to educate their guests and encourage them to spread conservation messages on their return home and adopt greener lifestyles.

“We strive to educate our guests, in an enjoyable and engaging delivery, of our message of conservation to preserve this very special place we call home.”

Aquascene Charters seeks to minimise their environmental footprint in every action on a daily basis through use of an environmentally friendly vessel and waste minimisation and recycling practices on board. The Hinks also participate in programs to protect Magnetic Island and the reef and are proud to be 'Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef'.

“By working together, our industry can help protect our amazing planet and preserve its natural wonders.”



Peter Gash

LADY ELLIOT ISLAND ECO RESORT

Operated by Peter Gash, his family and remarkable team since 2005, this island once left barren by guano mining, is being returned to its former glory. Through extensive restoration activities, Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort is an important site for seabird nesting and is known for an amazing array of spectacular marine life and unspoilt coral reef. The introduction of renewable energy has meant massive reductions in the need for diesel and the associated greenhouse gas emissions. The island is on track to be fuelled by 100% renewable energy.



“

So many people are on the same mission and want to be there beside us holding our hand. We enjoy spending time with our guests as we can help inspire them that the most important thing is looking after this planet.

Lift the heart

The Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort team's mission draws visitors who want to make a difference from across Australia and the world.

Peter's vision for Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort is to showcase this magnificent jewel of Australia's Great Barrier Reef and to keep its access and visitation costs at a level that all people can afford to visit and experience its wondrous natural beauty.

“Our business is booming because people want to come to one of the best places on the reef. We gave to the island and it's giving back to us.”

Peter is regularly asked for tips from other tourism and island operators and is happy to provide advice to broaden the reach and benefits, believing that the more you give, the more you receive.

“A rising tide floats more boats. The more people on this positive path will help protect the planet for our children.”

Grow community

Looking after our people sits alongside the environment as Peter's core values and is number one from the perspective of making the business run successfully. His belief is that if he treats people well, they will do the same with him. He derives a great deal of personal satisfaction from the positive work environment and staff morale that this creates. The staff are considered part of the family, not simply workers so Peter puts his money where his mouth is and strives to provide them with the best possible work conditions and wages.

“We get buy-in from our team because of our passion and our shared values for the environment, and also by looking after them. Our crew have more commitment if you empower them to make changes.”

“It feels like a family, I know all their names, what's going on in their lives.”

Peter's goal is that Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort will be a far better version of itself in terms of technology and levels of sustainability.

“We've got to keep striving to be better, minimising our footprint, maximising the education and experience.”

Care for the environment

The driving force behind the business is a commitment to saving the island, reef, country and planet. Peter sees himself, family and partners as custodians, caring for the island and marine environment and educating and empowering people to fall in love with and protect its natural beauty. Their focus is “to minimise his environmental footprint and maximise the visitor experience”.

Guests to the island are asked to commit to a Sustainability Pledge to make a difference and protect and preserve the island's ecosystem. Together with the range of eco-activities and behind the scenes tours, guests learn about the need to respect and preserve nature and are inspired and enthusiastic to be drivers of change in the future.

“Our guests are curious, enquiring and wanting solutions. They inspire me.”



Vicki Jones

RED DIRT TOURS

The steady pull of the outback over many years finally saw Vicki Jones start her own touring company, Red Dirt Tours, in Outback Queensland. Vicki amassed skills and experience across all facets of a tourism business after working in various roles throughout Australia. The in-depth knowledge gave Vicki the confidence to realise her lifetime goal of owning a tour business and the capability to run the business single-handedly.

“

Learning to care for the environment comes from a deeper understanding of the environment and we achieve that through the interpretation we provide.



Lift the heart

Vicki's love for the outback and wealth of knowledge for all things Winton and surrounds comes through in her engagement with guests. Red Dirt Tours offers a range of tours of the local attractions including sites not accessible to the public. Core to her interpretation is passing on an appreciation of natural environment and history in a way her guests understand and get excited about. Vicki uses layman's terms to discuss the science of the environment and makes the content personable and relevant. Guests might come on a tour to see dinosaur tracks, but they come away with a greater understanding and appreciation of the amazing landscapes and the environment around them.

“I like to help people understand what they're looking at – what they see in the sky, in the ground and the history. If you express it simply and make it sound logical, it resonates with the audience.”

Feed the mind

Vicki draws on her previous experience as a Savannah Guide, the 'Protectors and Interpreters of the Outback' in her role as tour guide. Through her crafted interpretation, Vicki shares her knowledge and gives her guests an understanding of the outback landscape and the importance of the protection and conservation of the natural and cultural resources.

Grow community

Vicki considers the local community and other tourism operators as her valued internal customers and is committed to treating them with respect and achieving win-win outcomes. Red Dirt Tours buys lunches from a local pub, uses local accommodation providers and incorporates local attractions within her tours. Adapting to their requirements and changes in their offerings as they grow has been critical to Vicki's success.

“As a local tourism operator and member of a small community, strong relationships are really important to ensure respect and a positive experience for all.”

Care for the environment

Red Dirt Tour's general philosophy that Vicki shares with her guests is to leave only footprints, take only photographs. The operation minimises waste through reusable products and the natural environment is an element of the interpretation within all of Vicki's tours. She introduces her guests to the region's geology and how it has changed over time, the rich bird life and outback flora and the land management of the grazing lands.



Greg Donovan

BIG RED BASH

The Big Red Bash, the world's most remote music festival, draws over 9,000 people across the Outback to see great Aussie acts and re-connect with families and friends. Experiencing the Outback environment and culture and a deep sense of community are core to the event's success. A dried-out bed of an ancient lake and a giant red sand dune as a backdrop form the perfect setting for an outback concert. As legendary Aussie artists fill the desert air with their classic sounds, travellers and locals sit back together and soak up the magic.



“

We all had the same attitude and thoughts about sustainability and how important it is for an event like this to do the right thing, to be seen to be doing it and delivering on that.



Grow community

Greg is committed to doing the right thing for the local community, the volunteers, and the environment. His passion has created a profitable, safe, sustainable and family-friendly event focused on celebrating outback life and culture.

“We want people to feel like it's a community. A little town springs up for a week, 'Bashville', the second biggest town in Queensland to the west of the great divide.”

The event has broad appeal, welcoming like-minded travellers from family groups and grey nomads with a taste for outback adventure, to backpackers working through their Aussie bucket lists and the local community. The sense of community and connection Greg has fostered means travellers keep returning to be part of something rather special in the desert.

Free tickets are provided to all locals, the Indigenous community is involved in the event and the local council is engaged to maximise event benefits.

“We came for the music but were blown away by the atmosphere, the setting and the camaraderie.”

Being part of a unique event and community means the highly coveted 500 volunteer roles are readily filled. *“We put a lot of emphasis on the volunteer experience, making sure it's a really positive and worthwhile experience where they feel valued and are valued.”*

Care for the environment

The event is creating awareness amongst guests of the importance of minimising their environmental footprint and putting environmental sustainability into practice. Guests are responsible for their own rubbish which empowers them to find ways to reduce it and for their own supply and consumption of water. Composting toilets are used on site to deliver a better experience for guests compared with portaloos and to benefit the environment. They eliminate the need for water and produce rich compost. The Big Red Bash is looking to reduce and then ultimately eliminate all single use plastics, with all vendors removing their own waste. ***“We want to be part of the movement towards environmentally sustainable events and encourage event organisers and vendors to get on board.”***

Big Red Bash's forward-thinking event crew is passionate about ensuring the event has a minimal environmental footprint on the pristine local environment. Environmental sustainability is a central element in the event planning and delivery.”

Promote humanity

Back in 2013, Greg invited musicians to entertain competitors and volunteers at the Big Red Run, a 250km marathon fundraiser he organised to raise money for Type 1 diabetes. When the event attracted 500 people to listen to the music, he knew he had the beginnings of a music festival in the outback, and the Big Red Bash was conceived. Giving back continues, as now every year burly blokes in frocks and wigs sprint down the dune in a 'drag race' to raise thousands of dollars for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

“Big Red Bash was born out of a desire to make a difference in our communities. Supporting people and organisations such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service who are looking after our guests is the right thing to do.”

Fiona Merida

MASTER REEF GUIDES, GBRMPA

Fiona Merida is breaking down barriers in her role running the Master Reef Guide program for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Tourism and Events Queensland and the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators. As a former tour guide and marine biologist, Fiona saw a huge opportunity to enhance the experience for visitors to the Great Barrier Reef through sophisticated and memorable guiding and interpretation. Master Reef Guides is a training and leadership programme to assist guides and other staff along the Great Barrier Reef to deepen their knowledge and experience.



It's now cool to be an eco-nerd informed about the environment and climate. The Master Reef Guides are resonating with people of all ages and cultures and creating a community that want to make a difference to the environment through sharing, what they feel privileged to experience every day, with others.



Feed the mind

Master Reef Guides focus is on the delivery of best practice interpretation, master story-telling and experience delivery to connect with and inspire visitors. Fiona encourages operators to look at their own guest surveys, questionnaires and feedback and use those insights to raise the quality of interpretation and experience.

"You'll learn where you are having an impact, what is memorable for your guests – aspects you might be undercooking."

Care for the environment

Fiona's vision is that tourism is only a benefit to the health and protection of the Reef.

"It has long been proven that people will protect what they know – and know what they experience. If we strive to connect each guest with the Great Barrier Reef through our guiding and interpretation, then they can be inspired to make a difference to the future health of not only the Reef but also our planet."

Promote humanity

A foundation of the program is acknowledgement that people are individuals and they learn better from like minded individuals with whom they can forge a greater connection. Master Reef Guides include women and men aged from 19 to 60, from 11 countries and a range of languages. This enables guests to hear messages from someone they can relate to. This breadth of guides also broadens the space for different voices and experiences to share their knowledge and passion for the wonders of the Reef.

"Different people resonate with different people. Master Reef Guides include many unique and different individuals which gives people the opportunity to hear a message from someone that they relate to. That was a really big driver for me, as well as opening the space for other voices."



Craig Pocock

SKYRAIL RAINFOREST CABLEWAY

Skyrail Rainfoest Cableway is globally recognised as an innovative tourism operator and for delivering an amazing and unique rainforest experience. What makes Skyrail stand out is a clear commitment to environmental best practice, conservation and education that benefits visitors, staff and the local Cairns and Great Barrier Reef community. The operation is grounded in a triple bottom line approach: economic sustainability, presenting and protecting the environment and looking after staff and supporting the local community.



We are not just a cableway gliding across the rainforest, we are about story-telling. Unlocking the stories of plants, animals and the history of the oldest rainforest on earth, allows us to achieve our goal that everyone walks away as an accidental ecotourist. We're telling our message in a way we haven't done before and it's getting so much traction with visitors.



Feed the mind

A recent enhancement to the visitor experience is the introduction of a world-first interpretive app and audio guide to more effectively engage visitors and deepen their awareness and understanding of the rainforest. The multi-lingual app provides customised information to guests and uses GPS location and augmented reality technology to deliver an interactive, interpretive experience. By going beyond providing only static information that visitors may not even read, Skyrail are educating them through engagement and entertainment.

Lift the heart

Skyrail operates in accordance with ISO 9001, the world's most widely recognised quality management system to help organisations meet the expectations and needs of their customers. ISO9001 means Skyrail has a clear system in place to gather and capture feedback from staff and customers. The system creates a culture of learning and continuous improvement within the organisation where staff, knowing their ideas will be considered and valued, feel integral in driving positive outcomes.

"We encourage our staff to talk to our customers and communicate feedback and ideas to inform our strategic decisions."

"The customer drives us to continuously innovate. We need to understand how our customer's travel needs are evolving and their value sets are changing so that we continue to resonate with them and deliver experiences that exceed their expectations."

Grow community

Skyrail is part of the fabric of the Cairns and Great Barrier Reef community. As a major operation, Skyrail values its roles as a good corporate citizen and is an active supporter of local charities and schools. Skyrail is also an employer to people within the community and purchaser of local goods and services.

Skyrail has a long term, positive working relationship with the local Djabugai people and fosters their involvement in the organisation. Djabugai people are encouraged to apply for any job vacancies as part of a positive employment program and currently 11 are employees.

"Cairns and Great Barrier Reef is our home. We support the local community wherever we can and we want the community and our staff to be proud of Skyrail Rainforest Cableway."



Grant Cassidy OAM

THE EDGE APARTMENT HOTEL AND THE EMPIRE APARTMENT HOTEL

Grant Cassidy OAM is the owner operator of The Edge and The Empire Apartment Hotels in Rockhampton which he developed drawing on his twin passions of quality customer service and environmental sustainability. The success of both properties reflects the steadfast commitment of Grant and his team to quality outcomes for visitors and the environment.

“

People are more aware than ever of their impact on the environment which includes how they travel and where they stay. They are looking to embrace experiences that are good for the planet and want to align with businesses who share their values. We are really proud to make such a significant difference and have received an enormous amount of praise and support from our guests and staff since we launched the program.



Grow community

Grant knows his staff and the role they play in driving continual improvement in the business is central to his success. He has created a strong internal community by empowering his team to solve customer problems and proactively look for ways to pre-empt customers' needs and expectations. A programme of regular training ensures the staff are continuously enhancing their skills and commitment to quality, which in turn generates genuine loyalty to the business.

“Empowering staff to respond to customer feedback and problem solve means our customers are happy and staff feel good because they can see the difference they are making to the guest experience.”

Due to his focus on quality, most of Grant's business is sourced through word-of-mouth and referrals. *“Invest in the front end and it will reflect in the back end. Our business is thriving. I can't reinforce enough the importance of consistently delivering uncompromising standards. It's a win-win for the customer, our team and the business.”*

Care for the environment

Grant has become a leader in environmental sustainability in the tourism industry, introducing to the business a new sustainability programme, 'One Planet, One Chance'. Within nine months the programme sent 143kg of used guest soap bars to Soap Aid for recycling and re-use; transitioned fully from single use plastic guest amenities to new refillable large format bottles; and recycled a staggering 68,300 containers as part of the Containers for Change program. Further initiatives are planned.

Promote humanity

Making a positive difference within the community is important to Grant, highlighted in his role as Chairman of the Rockhampton Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal committee. Grant and his staff have pledged to donate 100% of refunds from the container recycling to communities and organisations in need. Recent donations have included \$2,000 in Christmas gift vouchers to drought affected families in Central and Western Queensland, \$2,500 to the Royal Brisbane Hospital COVID-19 Clinical Trial Fund and \$1,000 to the Biloela Tour De Cure Cycling Team.

“We want our customers and team members to be proud of our commitment to the environment and the planet and encourage all tourism businesses to take action.”



Terri Irwin

AUSTRALIA ZOO

Starting as a reptile park in the 1970s, Australia Zoo has grown in both size and scope to become a preeminent wildlife conservation destination in the world. Terri Irwin, with her children Bindi and Robert and team, ensure the mission of crocodile hunter and wildlife warrior, Steve Irwin, 'Conservation Through Exciting Education' continues.

“

If you can reach out and touch, love and be with wildlife, you will forever be changed, and you will want to make the world a better place.



Feed the mind

Australia Zoo is an educational experience for all ages. They offer guided tours, educational programs such as 'Zoo Keeper for the day' and a range of educational resources for schools and universities. The various shows, encounters and tours take visitors on a journey of discovery to learn about the incredible animals and conservation efforts.

“Our goal is to share our passion and knowledge to give guests a greater understanding and appreciation for wildlife.”

Lift the heart

Visitors know that by visiting Australia Zoo, they are making a difference as every dollar they spend supports endangered species conservation projects. Visitors and other interested parties are also invited to donate as a further practical way of making a difference. As Steve once said, “When people touch an animal, the animal touches their heart. And instantly, we’ve won them over to the conservation of that species.”

“We must be the change, seize the moment and speak for the voiceless. Conservation is not just about little woodland creatures, it’s about our wildlife, wild places and ultimately us, humans. Our futures depend on our actions today.” – Bindi Irwin

Care for the environment

Wildlife conservation is at the heart of Australia Zoo’s operation. Terri and her team’s vision is for Australia Zoo to be the ultimate global zoological destination and world leaders in conservation, relating to both wildlife and their habitat. Australia Zoo contributes to conservation and wildlife research projects around the world and has a wildlife hospital and rescue unit.

“One of the world’s largest and busiest purpose-built facilities, Australia Zoo’s Wildlife Hospital is playing a vital role in saving Australia’s native species.”

Conservation messages form a major part of the stories that the team share with guests to Australia Zoo. Additionally, the Australia Zoo website provides ideas and tips to visitors and the community on how to ensure ecosystems remain healthy for generations to come.

Grow community

Australia Zoo brings like-minded people together through initiatives such as the ‘Crikey! Club’ where people stay connected with Australia Zoo and their conservation efforts. The club provides insights and behind the scenes information including updates on rescue missions and an in-depth look at their research projects.

“It’s an exciting opportunity to see what goes on behind the scenes with our family, keep up to date and learn about our new adventures.”

Promote humanity

Steve and Terri established wildlife conservation organisation, Australia Zoo Wildlife Warriors, as a way to include and involve other caring people in the protection of injured, threatened or endangered wildlife. Visitors and wildlife enthusiasts are encouraged to join their global wildlife force and donate to help in their mission. Alongside Wildlife Warriors, Australia Zoo is involved in a range of environmental initiatives to drive change, such as petitions to stop harvesting of crocodile eggs, adopt an animal and sponsor a crocodile programme.

Simon & Gaye Terry

COBBOLD GORGE TOURS

Outback Queensland born and raised, Simon Terry, his wife Gaye and children own and operate Cobbold Gorge Tours on their cattle property deep in the heart of the Gulf Savannah region of north Queensland. Cobbold Gorge Tours was born out of a chance discovery of the magnificent Cobbold Gorge by Simon nearly 30 years ago when paddling up the creek with friends. Amazed by what they found, Simon quickly recognised the potential to share such a unique natural wonder with visitors. The tourism venture bloomed rapidly from 200 visitors in the first year to now 10,000 annually coming to the Gorge and staying at Cobbold Village.

“

We needed to share this discovery with the rest of the world. Every time I go up this Gorge, it's always the same feeling of wonderment of how special this place is.



Feed the mind

Cobbold Gorge is Queensland's youngest gorge and has striking sheer walls, which narrow to a mere two metres wide in places. Access is by guided tour only to protect the unique environment for future generations. It also ensures those who visit are educated about the history and evolution of the Gorge and its surrounding landscape. Guests learn about the best of the Gorge's stunning scenery, the geology of the rugged sandstone formations, the diverse flora and fauna, local bush tucker and the rich cultural history.

The tours are conducted by Savannah Guides, a network of professional tour guides with in-depth knowledge of the natural and cultural assets of the tropical savannahs of northern Australia, north Queensland, Northern Territory and the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Lift the heart

The award-winning Cobbold Gorge Tours and Village are an inclusive operation, a child and family-friendly destination, with tours, activities and amenities designed for guests of all ages to enjoy from infants to retirees.

“We pride ourselves on providing guests with the perfect place to connect with nature and each other.”

Care for the environment

From the start-up of the business, Simon and Gaye have maintained a steady commitment to operating Cobbold Gorge Tours with minimum impact on the environment. Visitors take guided tours through the Gorge on custom-made boats with virtually silent, electric motors.

“The engines are almost silent. But when they are shut off, the guests' chatter evaporates and the still, trancelike magic of this hidden, wild place envelopes us all.”

In 2009, a nature refuge agreement was formalised with the then Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management. It established the 4,720-hectare Cobbold Gorge Nature Refuge, which protects a number of vulnerable and rare plant species including the rare Gilbert River ghost gum and forms important wildlife corridors and catchment linkages.

The use of Savannah Guides is also an important part of Simon and Gaye's desire to care for the environment and encourage guests to feel the same way.

“Savannah Guides are kind of like the Night's Watch of the Gulf Savannah - protecting the realm, assisting guests and ensuring the environment is not harmed in the taking of tours.”

Activate the body

With their guide, guests explore the gorge on an interpretive walk to the escarpment above and then a cruise through the gorge on an electric boat. The recent introduction of Australia's first fully glass bridge allows guests to get a true sense of the majestic, sheer walls as they cross a 13 metre gap in the gorge.

To stretch the body further, Simon introduced a guided stand-up paddle boarding cruise for guests. While the scenic helicopter flight won't work up a sweat, guests get a bird's eye view of the beauty of the gorge and the surrounding landscape. If they take up a heli-fishing option, guests can hook themselves a tasty feed during their stay.



Alan Wallish

PASSIONS OF PARADISE

Family owned and operated, Passions of Paradise have been taking tourists and locals to the Great Barrier Reef from Cairns since 1989. Alan Wallish, Managing Director and Founder, built the first Passions of Paradise, a steel catamaran, in Cairns in 1987 with the simple aim of providing a fun trip to the Reef. Since then, two more vessels have been designed and built to enhance the comfort and enjoyment of visitors. The most recent addition reaches world class reefs within a day trip.



As a single product operator, our fortunes are closely linked to exceeding the expectations of our clientele, and we are constantly endeavouring to become the name that everyone talks or hears about within the industry – a tourism operator that appreciates nature and gives back the environment. The Great Barrier Reef is not ‘What we do’ but rather ‘Who we are’.



Feed the mind

Guests' reef adventure begins with an informative briefing by an eco-accredited marine naturalist. The guests learn about coral reef, fish and bird life and the activities the company is involved in to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Great Barrier Reef. The snorkelling and diving options at two pristine Great Barrier Reef locations allow guests to experience the marine life and coral first-hand.

“We provide an unforgettable, highly customer focused tour of the Great Barrier Reef to small groups of like-minded guests who are looking for a unique, personal Cairns reef tour experience.”

Lift the heart

Passions of Paradise participates in many stewardship activities at their reef sites, working alongside other organisations with a common vision for the health of the Great Barrier Reef. The company became a part of the Coral Nurturing Program project in May 2019. The program involved the installation of six frames at Hastings Reef which can be used as a nursery to grow more corals. The approach is new and unique, allowing fragments of broken coral to be attached to the frames using a new technology, a coral clip.

Passions of Paradise is involved in Crown-of-Thorns eradication efforts and completes surveys on the Reef's health as part of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's 'Eye on the Reef' Program.

Last year the company helped plant 1200 trees in the Daintree Rainforest with the Australian Rainforest Foundation to offset their carbon emissions. Scientific research on sharks and stingrays is supported with donations of almost \$30,000 to the Oceania Chondrichthyan Society since 2007. Passions of Paradise is also the only 100% AWARE partner in Cairns, donating a portion of every dive certification to Project AWARE, one of the largest marine conservation organisations in the world.

“We are passionate about ecotourism and we practice what we preach. We are at the forefront of sustainable reef tourism through our reef education and work assisting in scientific studies and surveys for marine park authorities.”

Care for the environment

Environmental sustainability is the life and soul of Passions of Paradise, and for many years Alan has positioned the business as a benchmark ecotourism operator. Alan and his team pride themselves on being guardians of the marine environment and strive to ensure every guest comes away from the tour with an appreciation of this precious natural wonder through the knowledge and inspirational stories shared.

“We value our passengers, with whom we hope spread our message of conservation and appreciation.”



Conclusion

This guide is designed to help you deliver transformational experiences that exceed your guest's expectations and realise their ultimate travel dreams.

The guide provides you with the knowledge and insights to now:

- embrace the new era of transformational travel and the opportunities for your business;
- align your business with the new Queensland brand principles;
- understand and adapt your business to satisfy the five core guest expectations;
- deepen guest engagement and positive advocacy for your business across the Five Stages of Travel; and
- enhance your competitive advantage.

We hope you will continue to refer back to the guide as you evolve and fine tune your guest experiences. We will regularly update the guide with the latest intelligence and insights to support you.

If after reading the guide you feel you need help in applying the ideas and concepts to your business, please contact your local RTO or TEQ representative. There may be an opportunity for you to access a mentor to work with you in reimagining your experience.

“*Travel occupies the space between dreams and reality, and today's travellers are looking for purpose-driven transformational experiences that fulfil their travel dreams.*

”

Queensland

AUSTRALIA

teq.queensland.com/transformationalexperienceguide

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