

How to re-enchanted tourism

By [Dr Peter E. Tarlow](#)

7 Dec 2020

With the now real potential for a vaccine, we can begin to think about tourism post the pandemic.

After Covid-19 becomes a tragic chapter in the history of the tourism industry, leaders will have to find ways to rebuild the industry and to increase both the number of people travelling and regain profitability.

The hoped-for and desired boom of 2021 can be very positive, but the tourism industry must be careful not to repeat the failures of the pre-Covid-19 tourism world and once again create a world of over-tourism. It behooves us all to remember that in English we derive the word "travel" from the French word for work, "travail" and all too often travel has become work.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

Travel during Covid-19 is not easy, but it behooves us to remember that even in the pre-Covid 19 world travelling was often difficult. The threat of crime and terrorism forced people to pass through what at times seemed like an obstacle course to board a flight, changes in frequent flier programs, rules and even flight schedules meant that travel was often more a hassle than a pleasure.

Once the pandemic occurred travel, when it existed at all, often became a nightmare. If we are to rebuild travel and tourism in 2021 then it is more important than ever to find ways not only to ensure visitor safety but also to enhance and re-enchanted the visitor experience.

Due to the pandemic nations around the world suffer from weak economies and disillusionment political leadership. In much of the world, globalisation has been discredited and organizations such as the United Nations have become irrelevant. These new realities, however, only present part of the story. Furthermore, from the travel and tourism industry's perspective, these extraneous events are passive actions: that is that they are things that happen to the industry, but not necessarily within the industry's control.

If the travel and tourism industry is to rebuild and to succeed once again in these challenging times, it must do more than merely see itself as a victim of other people's decisions; it must also examine itself to see where it too can improve. That means that pricing must be fair and that all aspects of the travel industry must find ways to enhance the experience rather than create illogical or bureaucratic restrictions.

Perhaps the greatest threat to the leisure industry (and to a lesser extent to the business travel industry) is the fact that travel had lost a good deal of its romance and enchantment. In its rush for efficiency and quantitative analysis, the travel and tourism industry might have forgotten that each traveller represents a world unto him/herself and quality must always override quantity.

Especially in the leisure travel industry, this lack of enchantment means that there are fewer and fewer reasons to want to travel and to participate in the tourism experience. For example, if every shopping mall looks the same, or if the same menu exists in every hotel chain, why not simply stay at home, especially after the pandemic and the fact that we have now become accustomed to a world of social distancing regulations? Why would anyone want to subject him/herself to dangers and hassles of travel, if rude and arrogant front line personnel destroy the journey's enchantment?

Although there is still a need for personal business travel the fact that the world has survived with electronic meetings for almost a year, means that the travel industry will have to work doubly hard to win back customers.

Once the pandemic ends and travel and tourism begin we all need to find ways to put a bit of the romance and enchantment back into each part of the travel and tourism industry. **To help you do so *Tourism Tidbits* offers the following suggestions.**

- Never forget that we dare not take our customers for granted. The visitor does not have to go on vacation nor travel to our destination. When we begin to take people for granted, then, in the end, we destroy our greatest asset, namely our reputation.
- Emphasize the unique in your community or what is special about your business. Do not try to be all things to all people. Represent something that is special. Ask yourself: What makes your community or attraction different and unique from your competitors? How does your community or business celebrate its individuality? If you were a visitor to your community would you remember it a few days after you had left or would it be just one more place on the map? If you are a business why ask yourself what makes your customer's experience special?

For example, do not just offer an outdoor experience, but individualize that experience, make your hiking trails special, or develop something special about your beaches or river experience. If, on the other hand, your community or destination is a creation of the imagination then allow the imagination to run wild and continually create new experiences.

- Create enchantment through product development. Advertise less and give more. Always exceed expectations and never overstate your case. Never oversell and under-deliver! The best form of marketing is a good product and good service. Provide what your promise at prices that are reasonable. The public understands that seasonal locations have to earn their year's wages in a few months. Higher prices may be acceptable but gauging never is.
- Enchantment begins with a smile and comes from the people who serve the public. If your employees hate tourists then the message they are giving is one that destroys a sense of being special. In the past managers were at times more interested in their own ego trips than in the vacationer's experiences.

An employee who is unique, funny, or makes people go away feeling special is worth thousands of dollars in advertising. Every tourism manager and hotel GM ought to do every job in his or her industry at least once a year. Often tourism managers push so hard for the bottom line that they forget the humanity of their employees. Be with the visitors and see the world through their eyes.

- Assess the areas of your tourism experience that destroyed enchantment. For example are people subjected to lines that are too long, a lack of shelter from the weather, sun, wind, cold etc.? Did we have rude service personnel, employees who neither listened nor cared or owned a complaint? Have we thought of creative solutions to traffic jams and airport hassles, or a lack of adequate parking? Each one of these small annoyances destroyed the enchantment of travel in the past and must be confronted if we are to rebuild the industry of tomorrow.

If so, these are some of the elements that transform a positive travel experience into a negative one.

- Check for ways that you can create enchantment. Work with specialists in such areas as lighting, landscaping, colour coordination, exterior and interior decorations, street appearances and city themes, parking lots and internal transportation service. Utilitarian devices, such as the San Francisco trolley cars, can be vehicles of enchantment if they enhance the environment and add something special to a particular place.

- Coordinate festivals and other events with the ambience of the place. Festivals often do best when they are integrated within the community rather than taking place outside of town. In-town festivals that are part of the community's genre not only add to the charm but also can be a boom to local businesses rather than a reason for money to leak out of the community.

- Create a safe and secure atmosphere. There can be little enchantment if people are afraid. To create such an atmosphere local security professionals must be part of the planning from the beginning. Tourism security is more than merely having police or security professionals hanging around a site. Tourism security requires psychological and sociological analyses, the use of technology, interesting and unique uniforms and careful planning that integrates the security professional into the enchantment experience.

Enchantment-oriented communities realise that everyone in the community will have a part to play in creating a positive tourism experience and one that will create a unique and special environment not only for the visitor but also for those who live in the community.

- Be a bit outlandish. If the other communities are building golf courses, then build something else, think of your community or destination as another country. People do not want the same food, language and styles that they have back home. Sell not only the experience but also the memory by being different from other destinations.

The best holiday present will be the conquering of Covid -19 and re-enchant tourism than 2021 can be a year not only of hope but of rebirth for the entire tourism industry.

Wishing everyone a happy holiday season and a very successful 2021!

Source: [eTurboNews](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Peter E. Tarlow is a world-renowned speaker and expert specialising in the impact of crime and terrorism on the tourism industry, event and tourism risk management, and tourism and economic development.