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A new way to think

School of Tourism & Hospitality Management

**Using research to foster
pro-environmental behaviour**

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Why research on influencing tourist behaviour?

"Low support from customers is one of the main barriers for progress towards sustainable tourism."

"Industry schemes seem to underestimate the need for sustainable action on the demand side."

Budeanu, 2007

The majority of tourists appear to be reluctant to change their behaviour to support sustainability goals.

CREM, 2000; Grankvist, 2002; Yan et al, 2006



Zoos

Zoos Victoria Vision:

'To be the world's leading zoo-based conservation organisation'

Excerpt from Mission: (website Jan 2011)

'Providing innovative recreation and learning experiences that inspire visitors to take conservation actions that make a measurable and positive difference.'



Heritage Attractions

The Sovereign Hill Charter: (website Jan 2011)

'Our purpose at Sovereign Hill and the Gold Museum is to inspire an understanding of the significance of the central Victorian gold rushes in Australia's national story, and at Narmbool of the importance of the land, water and biodiversity in Australia's future.'



Accommodation Providers

Jembi-Rinjah EcoLodge's mission: (website Jan 2011)

'To maintain a unique tourism and educational facility offering a tranquil experience whilst ensuring an ecologically sustainable future through practices based on a 'tread softly, live lightly' philosophy.'

The Great Ocean EcoLodge: (website Jan 2011)

'We pride ourselves on the quality of the experience we share with our guests and work continuously to raise the bar for responsible travel.'



Tour Operators

Intrepid: (website Jan 2011)

'Intrepid is committed to travelling in a way that is respectful of local people, their culture, local economies, and the environment. With your participation, we can help conserve the areas we visit and bring positive benefits to host communities.'

'You can give something back to the wonderful places you've travelled to! '

'By contributing to one of the many projects we support, you can make a difference in local communities - in health care, education, human rights, child welfare and in environmental and wildlife protection.'



Destinations

Tourism Tasmania: (website Jan 2011)

'The following web pages offer information on how to provide a rewarding experience that will last in the minds of your visitors long after they leave.'

'Strong experiences can profoundly influence your visitors. Experiences can change the way they view their lives and the world around them. They can have a long-lasting impact on the way your visitors think and on what they believe. This can even lead to changes in their behaviour, for which some interpretive programs, like those in sensitive natural areas, are aiming.'

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Protected Area Management Agencies

Parks Victoria: (website Jan 2011)

'To work in partnership with industry, government and the community to facilitate appropriate and sustainable tourism on and for public land.'

Excerpts from PV's tourism role:

- effectively communicating and promoting the role public land areas play in tourism.
- licensing and working with tour operators to ensure they play a key role in ... promoting values and appropriate behaviours

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Non-Government Organisations

The Cape Otway Centre for Conservation Ecology (Jan2011)

'We understand not only the importance of caring for ecosystems but also the imperative for inspiring and engaging others in conservation.'

Two key areas of activity are:

Stewardship: Inviting people to participate in conservation activities and research, and helping them to reconnect with nature.

Education and Capacity Building: Raising environmental awareness and building local capacity for conservation efforts.

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Events

Bluesfest: (interviews late 2010)

'We see the importance of increasing public awareness of all environmental issues and to lead by demonstration'

Peat's Ridge: (interviews late 2010)

'At Peats Ridge Festival our passion is to marry music, art and sustainability to nurture, educate and entertain our audience in pursuit of true sustainability.'

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1. Industry has the goodwill ...

- to positively impact the understanding, attitudes and behaviour of visitors
- to manage and promote responsible on-site behaviour and
- to foster post-visit pro-environmental behaviour

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Examples

Attitudes

- Positive attitude toward treading softly
- Favourability toward protection of heritage
- Support for protected area management agencies
- Support for wildlife / habitat protection
- Favourability toward choosing eco-friendly travel products / options

On-Site Behaviours

- Not feeding wildlife
- Staying on the track
- Using the shuttlebus
- Keeping dogs on lead
- Carrying out rubbish
- Not removing artefacts
- Not approaching / harrassing marine wildlife
- Reducing/re-using/recycling while on-site
- Sustainable purchases (e.g. Beads, Snare-ware)

Examples

Off-Site Behaviours Specific to Site

- Participating in a public meeting
- Signing petitions
- Lobbying politicians
- Writing letters of support
- Joining a "friends" group
- Volunteering at a park or zoo or project
- Sponsoring an animal
- Donating money

Other Off-Site Behaviours

- Reducing/re-using/recycling at home
- Creating wildlife habitats at home
- Making sustainable purchases (e.g. recycled TP)
- Responsible pet ownership
- Talking about / encouraging others
- Making eco-friendly travel and leisure choices

Industry has the will, but does it have the ways and means ...

- to positively impact the understanding, attitudes and behaviour of visitors?
- to influence and foster responsible on-site behaviour? and
- to foster post-visit pro-environmental behaviour?

Results of GCF for Galapagos Islands



- Over \$1 million raised since 1997
- Eradication of feral pigs on the island of Santiago
 - Re-establishment of native plant species
 - Support for national parks patrolling efforts
 - Establishment of local environmental education program including local university scholarship program

http://www.solutions-site.org/cat1_sol116.htm

Quality Assurance and Best Practice Initiatives

- Awards of excellence
- Codes of conduct
- Accreditation and certification
- Monitoring and evaluation

Black and Crabtree, 2007: 10

- Licensing
- Training
- Professional associations

Black and Weiler, 2005

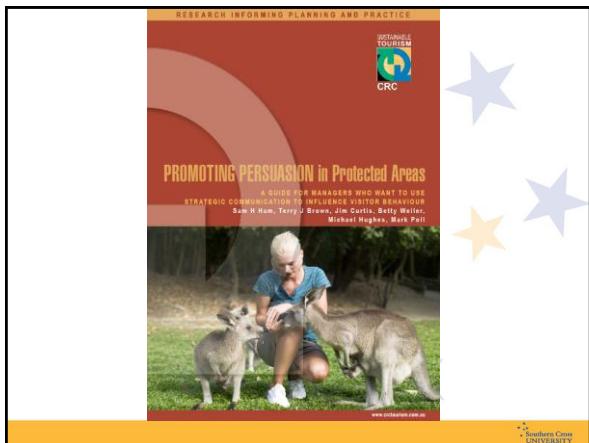
Environmental Schemes that include Managing and Influencing Visitor Behaviour

Eco Certification Program (formerly NEAP)
www.ecotourism.org.au/eco_certification.asp



Eco Guide Certification Program
www.ecotourism.org.au/ecoguide.asp





2. Industry does not do or use research to impact visitor attitudes and behaviour

- It is largely ineffective at impacting the understanding, attitudes and behaviour of visitors
- It under-utilises research-led communication as a tool to manage and foster pro-environmental behaviour and
- It lacks an appreciation for the need for research to inform post-visit pro-environmental behaviour



Industry + Research

Behaviour Research in a Tourism Context

1. Research has evaluated and often demonstrated the failure of management and communication initiatives to succeed at impacting attitudes and behaviours
2. Research has assessed the effectiveness of codes of practice, training programs, accreditation/certification schemes in optimising pro-environmental outcomes
3. Research has teased out issues and relationships between visitor management practices (including tourist communication) and attitudinal/behavioural outcomes



Behaviour Research in a Tourism Context

4. Recently, research has demonstrated some degree of attitude and behavioural outcomes – usually these have been on-site



Examples of communication interventions that have successfully impacted on-site beliefs, attitude and behaviour

- By targeting the non-complier belief that walking off the track leads to getting better views and photos, the intervention converted 70% of Port Campbell NP visitors from intending to walk off the track to intending to stay on the track
- By targeting the belief that taking the shuttle bus would improve the flexibility of the experience, the intervention convinced 54% of Cradle Mountain visitors who intended to drive their car to decide to take the shuttle bus instead

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Other successful communication interventions:

- Appealing to normative beliefs (setting a good example) resulted in a 20% increase in visitors who picked up other people's rubbish at Russell Falls National Park
- Appealing to normative beliefs (less of a nuisance and other dog owners would approve) resulted in a 19% increase in owners keeping their dogs on the lead at Yellagonga Regional Park
- Multiple layers of interpretation resulted in improved attitudes (positive attitude toward nature conservation) at Werribee Zoo's Lions on the Edge exhibit

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3. Tourism research is still falling short of ...

- effectively demonstrating the success and failures of experimental interventions aimed at impacting the understanding, attitudes and behaviour of visitors, especially off-site and long-term impacts
- identifying variables (content of messages and communication media) that explain success and failure
- being able to impact and measure the impact of long-term (post-visit) behaviour

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What is needed?

Scholars have a role to play

- Review and critique theory

Empirical researchers have a role to play

- Apply theory and adapt methods to a tourism context
- Extend theory and look for anomalies in tourism context

Industry has a role to play

- Facilitate experimental research including not just observation, but contributing to planned interventions

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Testing what works best: An example from a hospitality context

Please consider the environment. Hang up your towel so we know not to replace it. Reusing towels decreases the use of electricity, detergents and water. Please reuse your towel

We are committed to eco-friendly practice.
Do your part to save wildlife habitat:
Reduce, re-use, recycle.

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But what works best?

Most guests at this hotel consider the environment and reuse their towel at least once during their stay.
Please join them in considering the environment and reuse your towel.

Many of our visitors are donating here to help save wildlife habitat.
Please join them. Donate now.

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But what works best?

Most guests who stay in this room consider the environment and reuse their towel at least once during their stay. Please join them in considering the environment and reuse your towel.

Most zoo visitors who visit this exhibit and read this sign donate to save wildlife habitat.
Please join them.
Donate now.

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But what works best?

At this hotel we are committed to the environment. When you reuse your towel, we donate a percentage of the money we save in energy use to WWF. Please reuse your towel

All donations are used to help save wildlife habitat.
Donate now.

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But what works best?

At this hotel, we are committed to the environment. We've already donated to WWF on behalf of our guests in anticipation of the savings we'll make through towel reuse. Please reuse your towel

With the money we've raised through donations we've been able to make a real difference in saving wildlife habitat.
Thanks in anticipation of your donation and support.

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Challenges and Constraints

1. Perceived and actual burden on visitors
2. Perceived and actual burden on managers, park management agencies and others
3. Limited expertise, funding and support for this type of research
4. Practicalities of accessing, influencing and assessing the efficacy of interventions pre- and post-visit

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Conclusion

Industry + scholarship + research

Focus needs to move beyond influencing tourists' on-site attitudes/behaviours to pre- and post-visit behaviour

Need to influence decision-makers in the tourism industry

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