

CASE STUDY: RURAL TOURISM

-Pre-view: what do you know about rural tourism? Which are the specific features of rural tourism?

Rural Tourism activities take place in non-urban (rural) areas with the following characteristics: i) low population density, ii) landscape and land-use dominated by agriculture and forestry and iii) traditional social structure and lifestyle.

<https://www.unwto.org/rural-tourism>

-View: Let's watch the video about an example of rural tourism in Longreach, Australia. You might find it difficult to get used to the different accents. Try at least to identify key concepts.

-Post-view: Let's go through the transcript and the main concepts. Then, watch the video again.

ELLIOTT: So tourism plays a bigger role.

It's the main **financial driver**, certainly in our town, and a lot of the other small towns in Western Queensland.

The rural industries like cattle and sheep, they play a big role.

But as the years go on and the cattle industry changes, and they need less and less people to look after cattle, a lot of these towns depend on the tourist dollar and visitors coming to the town.

(identification of the problem: previous economic activity fades down).

MILLS: To the Longreach community and probably the greater Outback, it's vitally important.

We live in a very sort of arid environment, and with that comes the challenges of drought that we've seen for what, the last four years.

So in terms of the historical significance of the businesses out here, it's all been about agriculture, for many, many years.

And over the last 30 years, there's been a very **slow but steady climb into tourism**.

And it really came to the fore in the last, probably the last two, when there was no **agricultural revenue**, really, of any standing coming in.

So tourism kept the towns alive.

And it really is that simple.

There's towns all dotted throughout this area that simply wouldn't still be there had tourists not come.

So you know, I don't think it could be any more important than where we're at at the moment.

(extreme climate conditions)

MARTIN: Look, I think tourism is actually vital to communities such as ours, given our geographic location.

You know, small, rural, remote towns.

It's often **a town's insurance policy**, if you like, for want of a better description-- certainly when you go through areas and periods of droughts, which our region's just recently done. And so we're just potentially coming out of a four-year drought.

But industries like tourism, so I'll use that analogy, insurance policy, because unlike

the rain, tens of thousands of tourists are guaranteed to come visit regions like ours, and sustain regions like ours economically as well.

(conceptualisation of the change)

MILLS: We're seen as, we've always been on the way to somewhere else.

And we've slowly developed all of this product around.

So we're actually starting to now be viewed as a destination, which is a massive step forward, in terms of tourism here.

We've all worked really, really hard on that.

So we're all invested heavily in it.

And therefore, we will gain from it.

(active engagement)

ELLIOTT: We've had this feeling that maybe the tourism industry is a bigger part of our community than we think.

So we will measure that and we'll commission research to come up with facts and figures that will help us make decisions in the future.

(data collection)

MILLS: So that's been really exciting part for us, that we've developed into a destination, or we're almost there.

You know, we're four days now, as opposed to coming through for a day and a half.

With that comes the challenges of access.

Being remote-- we're 1,400 k's from the closest capital city, expensive airfares, challenging, with an overreliance on a particular drive market.

So you know, the work's being done now, and has been for the last five years, as to how do we break the back of that?

And that requires some pretty heavy discussions with airlines to say, look, I can go to Melbourne from Brisbane for \$89, but you're charging my people \$500 to come out here. How am I going to grow that side of the market?

To grow that side of the market, we build more hotels, we employ more people.

So whilst we are somewhat in a silo out here because of our destination, we are intrinsically linked to what goes on in the city, and the reliance on getting that kicking.

(transport limitations)

KINNON: Tourism is a growing industry.

And especially out here, on the coast, it's grown, and it's still growing.

But out here, it's about to take off.

And it's been little, little-- like, it's been little.

But there's still a lot of people travel through these little towns, and we get a lot of really good people coming through.

And the industry is just about to take off.

It's a booming industry about to happen, you know?

MARTIN: One of the issues and challenges we always face in rural, remote areas is seasonality.

Our peak times are through the winter months, because of the-- it's absolutely beautiful

out here.

Our daytime's around 25 degrees, with the evening sitting around six degrees, whereas our summer, you know, we can experience 40 to 46 degrees.

But to try and extend our season into what we call those **shoulder months**, either side of those peaks, is always a challenge.

So things we're doing in local government is to work with the tourism industry and other businesses to grow those season-- those shoulder months.

So we're doing that through **creating events**.

Events are very, very important, because they can bring a whole different market to town, so in terms of a different customer.

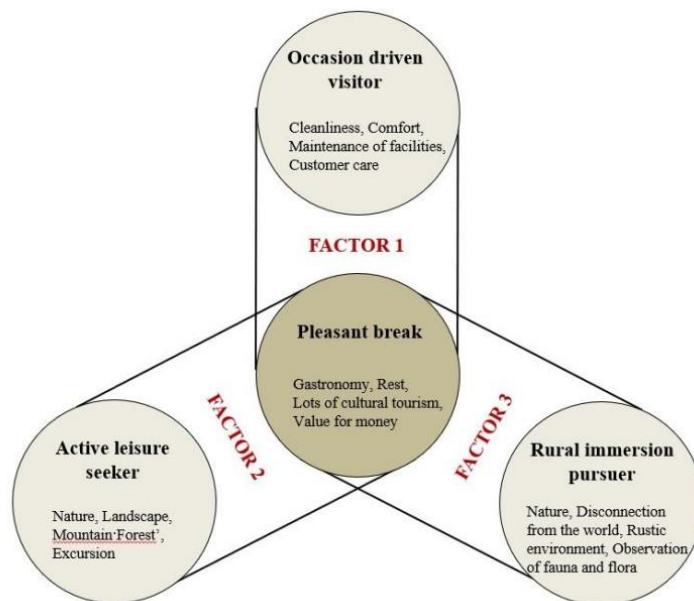
So whether it's music, bronco branding, comedy, jazz festivals, wine, food tourism, it helps us **tap into different markets** of different attractions.

So if we position those correctly towards either side of our peak, it starts to extend that tourism season.

It creates longer employment for businesses like ours and other businesses, and ultimately makes for a much healthier community and a healthier region.

(importance of the event industry)

FURTHER REFLECTION (THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE CUSTOMER)



Source: https://oa.upm.es/66820/13/WOOKHYUN_AN_03.pdf

The results of this study have many strategic implications for both local governments and rural tourism providers. First, at a local government level, it was found that tourists were pursuing various experiences in rural tourism in Spain and there were multiple markets implicated in this research. This means that the motivations for rural tourism are diverse and many ways of reaching rural tourism consumption exist. Local governments should employ the approach of localizing the region. They should develop specific strategies to meet the needs of market subdivisions, concentrating on a specific segment with relevance to their region. Based on these strategies, they should invest in marketing their regions as a distinctive rural tourism destination by creating rural tourism products that respond to the needs of a specific segment.

Second, at the rural tourism provider level, each rural tourism provider should evaluate the derived segment and select a market on which they should concentrate. They should decide their core target audience, carefully contemplating whether they have the ability to provide the appropriate experiences for the core target audience, while considering their surrounding environment. In addition, it is necessary to establish a positioning strategy that can meet the needs of rural tourism tourists, considering the characteristics of the core target audience. These positioning strategies should be used as criteria for developing all services and communicating with tourists. With these criteria, rural tourism providers can not only offer differentiated rural tourism experiences for tourists by developing services that are relevant to their positioning strategies but also communicate with tourists to inform them of the corresponding rural tourism in a consistent manner at all touch points.

“Exploring Rural Tourism Experiences Through Subjective Perceptions”.

RURAL TOURISM, DEPOPULATION AND REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Let's now explore another case of rural tourism and its relation with the concepts of depopulation and regeneration: <https://www.ideasforchange.com/en/blog-archive/future-next-2024>.

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION (FOR OUR NEXT FACE-TO-FACE MEETING):

Think of (or search for) a similar case of rural tourism and be ready to briefly explain it in terms of: a) main economic activities previous to tourism; b) geographical shortcomings; c) in which ways has tourism contributed to the economic development of the local community; d) issues and challenges for the future. (example)

Source that can help:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/751464/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)751464_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/751464/EPRS_BRI(2023)751464_EN.pdf)

FINAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

-Which factors define rural tourism?

-Explain the meaning of the following words as related with tourism: revenue / destination / overreliance / seasonality / boost / investment / shoulder months / depopulation / regenerative tourism