Successful Agritourism

UC SMALL FARM PROGRAM
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Arne Gustafson Hospitality Consultant
My Background

- Degree in Hotel & Restaurant Administration from Washington State University
- Forty years of experience in hospitality operations
- Operated my own consulting practice over the past 18 years
- Specialize in the hotel sector
  - Feasibility studies
  - Advise hotel owners
  - Resort operations
Focus of Today’s Session

- Visitor characteristics and expectations
- Collaboration
Travel Statistics

According to the U.S. Travel Association

1. Travel ranks number 1 among all U.S. industry exports
2. 1 out of every 9 U.S. jobs rely on travel and tourism
3. Travel is the 5th largest private employment sector and 14 million jobs are supported by travel expenditures
4. Direct spending on leisure travel in the U.S. was $526 billion in 2010 and the industry generated $82 billion in tax revenue
5. U.S. residents accounted for 1.5 billion person trips for leisure purposes
The top five reasons for leisure travel were:

a. Visiting relatives
b. Shopping
c. Visiting friends
d. Rural sightseeing
e. Beaches

A survey by Ypartnership found that Americans treasure their leisure time and cited travel as their number two passion, behind family time.
One of the most powerful trends in tourism is “Experiential Travel”.

- People want to be engaged and immersed in their travel experiences
- They want to learn and explore new ideas

Experiential Travel is all about building memories
Visitor Expectations

• Characteristics of Experiential Travelers:
  1. Family involvement; often multi-generational
  2. Desire to learn something new
  3. Story telling is important; they want to be entertained
  4. Active involvement
  5. Authenticity
  6. Social responsibility
     • Giving back
     • Sustainability
Visitor Expectations

- Visitor Expectations will be dependent upon the experience that you offer
  - What is the time requirement for your visitor experience?
  - Are there product demonstrations and tastings?
  - Is there a hands-on component?
  - Does your visitor experience tell a story?
  - Why are you hosting visitors?

*You must match your experience to your visitor.*
Service Issues

- What are visitors looking for in terms of service?
  - Personality; you are part of the product
  - Seamless service; from ticket sales to tour execution to answering questions and post-visit follow-up
  - A value proposition. The dollar value is not so important as the value of the memory
Collaboration – Strength in Numbers

- A destination market vs. a destination attraction
- Government supported programs
  - Not very likely in today’s economic environment
  - Uncertainty of grants and associations
- Affiliation with educational institutions
- Build an association
  - Sierra Oro Farm Trail
  - Tehama Trail
Collaboration- Strength in Numbers

- Product placement in local retail businesses and restaurants
  - Need to provide consistent quality, availability and pricing
  - Provide packages through local lodging
    - What incentive will you provide them to book your experience?
- Identify other sources of visitation to the area
- Develop relationships with other community groups
Successful Agritourism

The ideas for promoting your business to attract visitors are endless. Unfortunately your time is not.

Know your visitor and what they want
Know where they came from
Focus your marketing and promotions
Monitor your results