CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS IN INTERPRETATION AND EXPERIENCE DESIGN & DELIVERY

Storytelling & Sense of Place

- Springboard or leverage an understanding of place in storytelling
- Collaborate and build ongoing partnerships to understand and share stories of country, community and continuing culture with locals as well as visitors
- Aim to create immersive and deep emotional connections with visitors

Vision & Mission

- Keep organisational goals sharp (vision, mission, clear on objectives)
- Laser focus on target markets (personas, user/visitor journey mapping linking to the interpretation plan)

Transforming accessibility

- Increasingly important in its broadest sense – delivers on inclusivity
- Removal of some of the physical obstacles to access has been a priority for many visitor experiences, including infrastructure investment in removal of stairs or the building of new wide, flat walkways

Engagement & personalisation

- Too much reliance on text (including interpretative signage) and not engagement
- Personalise the offer, warm up the visitor offer and make everything speak

Self-Guided

- Create opportunities for visitors to connect personally with content and create their own journey
- Self-guided tours increasingly using interactive technology. For example, Danish Architectural Centre where on arrival visitors are given an interactive 'Welcome Home' digital card enabling visitors to register thoughts and preferences to key questions as they explore the displays

Holistic journey – unified and connected visitor experience across the WHOLE experience

- True multi-channel visitor experience with fully connected systems to provide single view of the visitor whether its online or offline. Powerful and becoming critically important for visitor engagement and loyalty
- ALL components that make up the experience are equally important, this includes the toilet facilities, the café and the retail experience, just as much as the tour guide etc.
- The pre and post tour/experience opportunities are also often overlooked. Great opportunity to reinforce the dialogue with and engagement of visitors to help build/promote advocacy. It's also an opportunity to extend the narrative and interpretative experiences for 'virtual' visitors who may never make it to the physical space
- Adopt a 'design thinking' approach, which is customer or visitor centric

Interactive Technology

- Augmented Reality (AR)/Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology allow visitors to explore spaces in new ways and enhance engagement
- There is a growing visitor expectation (in Australia and internationally) for this technological component in order to deliver exceptional experiences

Retail & Food Experience

- Scale and quality of both the retail and food experience is growing exponentially at the major sites
- Here too the experience needs to reflect the changing expectations of visitors around aspects like the use of local produce in the food offer, locally-produced art and craft or environmentally friendly gift mementos etc
- Critically too this is another opportunity (which is often overlooked) to 'tell the story' – the authentic story

Constant evolution

- Need to constantly review and evolve – both by understanding visitor behaviour within the site as well as by following global and domestic trends
- Remain flexible, open-minded and adaptable to keep pace with visitor expectations

Visitor Centres

- Whilst the traditional tourist Visitor Centre has struggled to remain relevant, in many countries more innovative 'visitor centres' have sprung up in the context of organisations, business enterprises and natural heritage sites, which are doing a really good job at delivering on all of the above insights
- Evolving the traditional destination visitor centre model to integrate these insights and address visitor expectations by shifting focus towards more authentic engagement, infusing a sense of place and creating meaningful connections to the experience are the keys to success

Tour Guides

- All of the above applies to the guided tour. However, a tour guide's communication needs to be innovative and a service that adds depth and value in ways that technology cannot – it is inter-personal interpretation and should therefore be infused by personality
- Guides need to invite visitors 'in' to actively contribute to constructing the experience and provide avenues for them to do so. This requires communication at an individual and group level, before, during and after the tour
- Remember, visitors are taking tours during their leisure time while school students can easily become bored or disinterested. Given this, adopting strategies such as smart humour, mind blowing facts and juicy gossip are more likely to encourage curiosity and inspire them to find out more