

Delivering Experiences



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‘You are in the business of giving visitors a great experience and enabling them to take special memories home from Northern Ireland.’



If you have designed your experience well then delivering it should be a pleasure. You are in the business of giving visitors a great experience and enabling them to take special memories home from Northern Ireland. So, with a well-designed experience in place, now is the time to create attitudes within you, your staff and your associates that will ensure success in the pursuit of excellence.

This section is comprised of tips in four areas of service that will help you deliver world-class experiences. Try to see these as an indication of the types of attitudes and actions that will help achieve excellence, not a definitive list. As you develop your experiences they will all have different contexts for high quality delivery and as the provider you will get quickly get to know what these are.

Demand High Standards

It's not in our nature to cut corners. Just look at the number of world-class artists, sports people, entrepreneurs, entertainers and many more to come from NI over the years. If you truly love what you do, surround yourself with a team of motivated, skilled people who share your passion. Work with only the best. Set challenges that will push everyone to their limits. And create something exceptional.

*William remembered
all our names...
every day!*

- Only recommend the best. Be a visitor at home. Gain first-hand experience of everything that your area has to offer and recommend only the things that made a lasting impression.
- Learn from others. Experience first-hand how they engage with visitors. Benchmark, set goals and strive to constantly raise your game.
- Engage experts. Your suppliers are experts in their respective fields. Ask them for ideas on how you can offer your visitors even greater levels of excellence.
- The Merchant Hotel in Belfast went to extraordinary lengths to acquire an extremely rare bottle of Wray and Nephew Rum, which became one of the key ingredients of its now famous Mai Tai cocktail – one of the most expensive drinks in the world... while it lasted!



‘Sometimes you need to go the extra mile to create something that is truly exceptional.’

Put yourself on the map with some original thinking. Look at what other attractions are doing. Take inspiration from them. Always try to add an authentic Northern Irish twist and then tell your story to the world.

You have to be in it to win it. Believe in yourself and enter for relevant awards. If you are lucky enough to win, make sure everyone knows it!

Sometimes you need to go the extra mile to create something that is truly exceptional. This may involve putting in extra hours, travelling further and calling in more favours. But the results will be worth it.

Test the experience yourselves? How do you stack up against others? Think bigger than just the guy down the road. Remember your visitors will compare and rate you based on the experiences they have gained elsewhere, many beyond Northern Ireland. Is your experience ‘best in class’?



Pay Attention to Every Detail

There is really no end to the lengths to which you can go in attempting to ensure that your experience is tailored to your visitor's every need. However, you must be careful not to destroy your profit margins and not to suffocate the guests with kindness.

Paying attention to details should be done with a light touch and sincerity. It is up to you to judge what to do and when and this will vary according to the personality of each visitor. The following is only a selection of tips.



- First impressions really do count. Make sure you have time to organise your premises properly before the arrival of guests.
- Check-in can be a chore. Make it a pleasure. A cup of tea and a tray-bake while your guests check in.
- Remembering someone from a previous visit speaks volumes about how you value your guests.
- Simple things make such a difference. Does the layout of a room make the best of the view? Could your guest toiletries better reflect the character and quality of your business?

*Offer to put together
a picnic packed with
local fare and recommend
a scenic place to enjoy it.*





- Create a mailing list to keep in touch with visitors throughout the year. Send a handwritten Christmas card, birthday or anniversary greeting
- Offer hand-made truffles with after-dinner coffee, tray-bakes with afternoon tea, or a take-out lunch for family guests setting off on a daytrip.
- Know your guest's favourite tipple and have it ready for them on arrival.



- Make friends with the best restaurant in town to ensure that your visitor always gets the best table.
- Befriend a reliable, visitor-inspired taxi driver.
- Leave nothing to chance.

Motivate and Empower your Team

So you know the visitor & have planned the experience around them – but do your team? If you employ staff or family or if you are working in partnership with others you must strive to ensure that they share your values and understand exactly what the experience is trying to achieve. You can't be everywhere so it is vital that you are surrounded with people you can trust to deliver the experience in the same way you would.



*We caught
our first fish
thanks to Johns
local knowledge*

- Keep everyone in the loop. Ensure they each know their role and where they fit into the experience.
- Set them standards. Ensure your team has adequate time to prepare, train and practice delivering their part in the total experience journey.
- Celebrate your people and make the most of their talents. Ask your chef to open up the kitchen to share recipes and tips on the traditional way of doing things!
- Empower your staff to deal with every situation. Develop an ideas culture. Reward staff for generating and sharing visitor inspired concepts.



At the bottom of the Thompson Dock with someone who really knew what he was talking about



- Maximize every opportunity and partnership: your staff, your suppliers, and your partners.
- **Consider offering a monthly award to the staff member who has contributed the most creative visitor inspired idea. Don't just talk about ideas. Put them into action.**
- Value your staff and they will value you and your visitors. Celebrate their ideas and show how they have made the business better for you, for them, and for visitors. This will keep your team motivated and your visitors inspired.
- **Encourage staff to play an active role in your business. Define a shared vision.**
- Define staff roles. Ensure your team is satisfied, committed and rewarded.
- **Keep everyone informed with developments in your business and in Northern Ireland tourism in general.**

- Happy, empowered, knowledgeable and informed people will care more for the visitor and will be committed to excellence.
- **Meet regularly with your team to generate ideas on how they could do things better.**
- Encourage them to be visitor inspired. Reward and celebrate the best ideas.
- **Transform your staff into tourism experts.**
- Encourage staff to share visitors' insights, complaints, queries and suggestions
- **Discuss how your team will deal with problems if they arise?**

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Communicate Constantly

More often than not the cause of problems in any situation involving people is lack of communication. To avoid this you must develop a culture of open, friendly communication between you and your customers. People enjoy being asked what they think and, if done on the right way, you will learn everything you need to know about your business from your clients. This can be done before, during and after their visit.

*We had a wonderful time.
The staff were very friendly.*

9/10



top 10 must see

- the c
- car
- joan
down



The Giant's Causeway, Co. Antrim

- Find out what brought your guests to Northern Ireland. Find out why they chose to visit you. Find out what they hope to see, enjoy and taste.
- Ask visitors in advance what they are most looking forward to seeing in Northern Ireland.
- Help them get the most out of their stay. Suggest an itinerary.
- **Put together a Top 10 list of the classic must-see landmarks** in your area and ask visitors what they enjoyed most about the classic landmarks. Their experience is bound to uncover another story. You never know, you might just learn something.

- **Build these stories and guest tips into your Top 10 to share with tomorrow's visitor.**
- Think about your relationship with your visitor every step of the way. Get to know what they hope to get from their trip to Northern Ireland. Find out why they chose here ahead of other destinations and ensure the reality exceeds their expectations.
- **Spend time with your visitors. Get to know them and exceed their expectations.**
- Knowing your visitors' holiday goals and taking care of their every need will show just how committed you are to making their stay extra special.
- **Spend time with them if you can. Share your love of Northern Ireland over a brief chat at breakfast or a nightcap.**

- Give people a reason to choose you. Start a database and send regular updates to your existing customers. Tell them what's on, what's new and why they just have to visit.
- **Speak to your guests and encourage them to share their holiday highlights.**
- Be brave and ask them how you could improve things. Ask what you could do to make them want to return every year.
- **Develop a satisfaction survey and encourage every visitor to complete it. Take on board their suggestions. Adopt their best proposals. Make improvements on your improvements and then play to your strengths.**
- Create a customer survey and invite visitors to provide you with feedback.

