



Catalogue of Exemplary Practices in Adventure Travel and Ecotourism



CANADIAN
TOURISM
COMMISSION



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DE TOURISME



Catalogue of Exemplary Practices in Adventure Travel and Ecotourism

**Prepared by Pam Wight & Associates
on behalf of
the Canadian Tourism Commission**

March 1999

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Issued also in french under the title:

Catalogue des pratiques exemplaires du tourisme d'aventure et de l'écotourisme

ISBN 0-662-27933-6

CCG cat. no. C86-98/1999E

1. Adventure and adventurers – Canada. 2. Ecotourism – Canada.
3. Package tours – Canada. 4. Tourist trade – Canada. I. Canadian
Tourism Commission. II. Pam Wight & Associates.

G155.C3C37 1999 338.4'7917104648 C99-980230-5

For printed copies, please contact:

Canadian Tourism Commission - Distribution Centre
235 Queen Street, 8th Floor, West Tower
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0H6

Telephone: (613) 954-1724

Fax: (613) 952-2320

CTC Internet address: <http://www.canadatourism.com>

Prepared by:

Pam Wight & Associates
14715, 82nd Avenue
Edmonton (Alberta)
T5R 3R7

Telephone: (780) 483-7578

Fax.: (780) 483-7627

E-mail: pamwight@superiway.net

(in cooperation with Marie-Andrée Delisle & Associates)

Design: Custom Digital Libraries – Claude C. Kateb

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IN THE CATALOGUE**

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Canada has the natural and human resources to support a thriving and competitive ecotourism and adventure travel industry. Every province and territory presents a unique series of opportunities and tourism products which appeal not only to domestic, but to important international markets, who are interested in travelling in all seasons, and are the fastest growing of any tourism market segments.

While the demand is known to exist, the supply side of the ecotourism and adventure travel industry (operators, the core of the industry) are striving to provide the type of overall product demanded by internationally experienced and knowledgeable travellers. This involves being conversant with a number of aspects, including: effective marketing, provision of an appropriate menu of activities, quality interpretation, value for money, desire for a participative experience, quality customer service, environmentally and culturally sensitive operations, all conveniently packaged within the context of effective business management. Since the bulk of the adventure travel and ecotourism sector are very small operations, this presents a significant challenge.

The industry is generally challenged to keep abreast of the numerous relevant issues, from trends to factors for success; from marketing to operational efficiencies; from sustainability issues to business practices. Their constraints are numerous, not the least of which is *time* to research and investigate all those aspects.

1.2 Objectives of this Assignment

The Canadian Tourism Commission is keenly aware of the potential of the industry. They commissioned the preparation of a compendium of exemplary practices carried out by adventure travel and ecotourism operators, as a tool for transmitting successful lessons. This is a leading edge concept, being implemented in some other industry sectors, and in other international destinations.

The principal purpose of this assignment is to document exemplary practices among ecotourism and adventure travel operators, which will enable sharing a range of successful practices within the industry, and among various players: operators, key stakeholders and the tourism industry. This Catalogue of Exemplary Practices is intended as a tool to enable operators to review the applicability of a wide range of successful, practical, approaches to their own operations.

Specific objectives were to

- enable industry to emulate exemplary operators by continuously implementing planned change and measuring performance
- act as an enabler for achieving and maintaining high levels of competitiveness
- provide a practical tool for use by operators, which provides not only key pointers for successful practices, but also “how to” activities, and a results orientation

- provide a series of practices by which operations may benchmark themselves for continuous improvement purposes
- illustrate and demonstrate the benefits of partnerships within and outside the sector
- showcase quality Canadian ecotourism and adventure travel operations representing a range of activity/product types across the country

The use and application of principles and practices learned from the cases studies can lead to other operators having access to an exemplary pool of successful ideas and actions. This catalogue may thus help to stimulate a grassroots effort in adventure travel and ecotourism throughout Canada to improve the sector in quality, success components and competitiveness.

1.3 What is Exemplary Practice?

Originally, this report was to catalogue “Best Practices”. There is no single set of best practices that will work everywhere, every time, because best is not best for everyone. Best is a contextual term. Every organisation is different in some way - different missions, cultures, environments, and technologies. What is meant by “exemplary” are those practices that have been shown to produce superior results; selected by a systematic process; and judged as exemplary, good, or successfully demonstrated. The practices are then adapted to fit a particular organisation. The practices that are best for a company are those that are appropriate for the particular stage of development in which the firm finds itself. They will change as the company itself changes.

It may seem a semantic detail, but we are in agreement that this report catalogues *good* practices, which are practiced by *exemplary* operators. They do not have the best (meaning perfect) solution to “*your*” company, problem, or situation. However, the habit of exemplary operators - an ability to seize the core insight of a best practice, then use it as a performance catalyst, is transferable.

It is unlikely that any one operator will be able to read this catalogue and reproduce the practices intact, and apply them in their own operation. However, we hope that the practices discussed will stimulate many busy operators: - stimulate them to thought, stimulate them to action, stimulate them to new ideas. We hope that readers will feel both stimulated and dissatisfied when they review their own operations, which may then trigger a rethinking process which may be positively applied to particular aspects of their business.

1.4 How We Obtained the Information

The information in this catalogue was generated in the following way:

- tourism agencies and organisations in all provinces and territories (governments, industry associations, tourism education councils, Canadian Tourism Commission committee members, product club organisers, aboriginal groups, etc. - almost 100 contacts in all) nominated the names of operators in each province and territory, who might be evaluated for practices. We thank those organisations which provided assistance in shortlisting potential exemplary operators; they are listed in Appendix A.
- literature review, to examine tourism and other sector case studies of best practices, as well as information on benchmarking, accreditation, standards and indicators of success

- development of Core Competency areas of practice (these are represented by the nine subsequent chapter headings)
- development of criteria to evaluate operator submissions, for each Core Competency
- development of an operator survey with two categories of questions: those which could be used to evaluate the responses; and those which provided details of practices
- contact with all nominated operators in every province and territory, by email, fax, and mail, amounting to well over 300 operators

The firms that were surveyed are involved in ecotourism or adventure travel. They were self-described to be in these categories. Very often, they responded that they had one emphasis or another, but had components of *both* ecotourism and adventure travel as part of their product, or even had a number of different kinds of product. There was no attempt made to evaluate the firms differently on the basis of these categories.

Not all contacted operators responded: many were very busy during February; others felt they did not want to share their practices; others may have felt constrained for methodology reasons (e.g., not all operators in this sector are comfortable with written analysis and communications). However, almost one third of the operators contacted responded. Not all respondents are included in the catalogue for a variety of reasons: a number missed questions or entire sections of the survey; some provided very perfunctory answers (thus whatever the actual quality of their operation, there were few examples of best practices communicated); others responded a considerable time after the response deadline in February. It should be noted that these operators may have good operations, but evaluations were made based only on the information requested and supplied.

However, our thanks go to *all* operators who responded, for taking the time to contribute, and our hope is that in the very act of considering the survey questions as they related to their operations, all operators will have begun to obtain some benefits. Certainly, many of the exemplary operators who responded indicated that they had already benefited - they are real learning organisations! All companies who responded are listed in Appendix B.

1.5 Contents and Organisation of the Document

The Catalogue is organised in a straightforward manner. Each subsequent chapter corresponds to a Core area of Competency for any Ecotourism or Adventure Travel business. Core Competencies are strategic business capabilities that provide a company with a marketplace advantage. Within each Core Competency or chapter, is a brief descriptive framework, which organises the contents of the chapters. The editorial discussion on good practices (as well as the *Good Business Practices*, and *Good Business Tips*) have come from consultant knowledge and a variety of expert sources, which are listed in the Bibliography.

The chapter subheadings represent exemplary practice topics. For each of these, a series of examples from operators are provided. These may be in the body of the text or in boxes, but all are essentially quotes from operators. All the company names are written in italics. The practices described are entirely compiled from the survey responses, thus many of the operators who are mentioned frequently submitted outstandingly helpful responses. These exemplary operators are listed in Appendix C, in the form of a basic company description.

This catalogue does not attempt a comprehensive review of all the best practices elements of a business. It is essentially generated from the survey responses. Thus it selects and organises from the exemplary practices *provided by operators*. In some sections, therefore, there will be more, or less information, depending on the pool of responses.

It should also be noted, that some of the exemplary operators who responded are already reaping the benefits of the catalogue. Despite being busy themselves, and despite the fact that some provided detailed folders of helpful information for us, they also made a number of comments indicating that the very act of responding to the survey highlighted areas of their operation which they felt they could reexamine for improvement purposes.

Desire for Feedback and Improvement

Esprit Rafting Adventures: “Thanks Pam, although time consuming, answering the questionnaire was very insightful. I would love to hear any feedback or comments you may have for us.”

Smoothwater Outfitters: “Regardless of your choices for inclusion in the catalogue, I would appreciate some feedback should you have some time. You are well versed on the industry and it would be helpful for us to know how we compare with other operators who are perhaps more established or larger in scope.”

This truly represents Best Practice in operation - real learning and improvement-oriented organisations.

2. Business Management

2.1 Plan and Manage Your Business Activities

For many small businesses, business management and planning is done on a casual basis, through the owner's daily contact and communications with employees, clients, suppliers, partners and associates. Plans and research remain in the owner's head, or get expressed in decisions and directions given to employees. This is, in fact, business planning, even though it is not expressed formally on paper. However, most exemplary operators put their business plans and other activities onto paper. They use this written plan as a guide for future activities and decisions, for informing staff and monitoring progress.

Each chapter expands on these and other aspects of good business management (such as marketing, training, etc.), but fundamentals of the management aspects of good business practice include:

- financial stability and funds to support growth are generally required for a business to survive
- agreement over the basic purpose of the business you are in, and future objectives
- resources should be committed to planning, down to individual action plans
- regular reviews of organisational structures
- internal management information systems must provide essential data to control your business
- investment in people resources can achieve internal strength and stability

2.2 Have a Vision of Where Your Company is Going

Exemplary businesses tend to have a clear idea of what their company was developed for, - its identity, philosophy and values. For example, the aim of *Remote Passages* is "to help develop a better understanding of the world we live in through educational programs for all ages."

Have a Comprehensive Vision

Bathurst Inlet Lodge is clear on this: "Our vision is to share knowledge and love for the North, its history, environment and cultures, while improving the employment and economic potential for the people of Bathurst Inlet, allowing them to remain in the land they love so well. Our goal is to offer the best interpretive program in all the North, while becoming profitable enough to pay dividends as well as salaries to our partners."

Other companies may also be clear about their vision, but in a less formalised way. Companies may describe this with different names, but it amounts to having a vision, and living the vision, and enabling that philosophy to be shared among all members of the company.

Some Live their Business

Wilderness Spirit does not have a mission statement, but says. "We are what the marketing trade calls 'lifestyle operators'. If we did have a mission/vision statement and were poets, it might read like Robert Service's Ode To The Yukon - 'It's that great big broad land way up yonder, it's the forest where silence has lease, it's the beauty that fills me with wonder, it's the stillness that fills me with peace'." In other words, they are *living* their business.

This sentiment is echoed by other companies - "we live and breathe *Smoothwater (Outfitters)*. We innovate. We seek growth through quality enhancement, not through put". *Canoe Arctic* says "I have resisted expansion of my business. Bigger does not mean better or even more profitable. I want to continue guiding my own trips in the Barren Lands each summer... My business is more of a way of life than something where my goal is simply to make money."

Not Just a Business - More a Philosophy

Niagara Nature Tours don't attempt to conduct a certain type of tour. Rather, they host tours which provide insight into the lives of the Niagara Peninsula - human and other. "All in attempt to excite people into caring about nature and the environment. In an attempt to excite them to carry home some new thought about changing their community, making a difference in their community. All because this company has been founded by an environmentalist/naturalist/biology person, and is supported by guides and volunteers who are dedicated to really trying to make a difference for the environment and future generations, not just because it's a mandate, but because it's a way of life and a commitment. Niagara Nature Tours is not just a business or a job for us. It is more a philosophy as to how to do business than a type of business!"

Some of the fundamentals of developing a vision and values include:

- have a clearly stated vision that reflects long-term purpose, identity, philosophy and values (identify what is fundamentally important to your organisation)
- ensure the vision is shared by all employees
- have a set of values against which to plan the business

Good Business Practice: Build staff commitment to the company vision and strategic plan.

Good Practice Tip: Make sure you discuss the vision for your business with your team - communication is vital.

2.3 Use a Business Plan for Guidance

While some operators did not have a written business plan, or other guidance documents, virtually all of the exemplary businesses we examined have developed a written business plan and find time to look at their business, and plan ahead. The plan sets out the vision of where they are going and business goals and targets; in other words, it sets the stage for what is fundamentally important to their company.

We know that companies often say they don't have time to plan. However, no matter how urgent the pressures are, proactive management will be more successful over time, than reactive management. Planning shifts the management focus away from a reactive one, to a proactive one. This means that the operation runs the business, rather than vice versa.

Some of the fundamentals of business planning are:

- have a long term planning process with clear corporate objectives
- have a written business plan which details planned allocation of resources to fulfill the corporate objectives
- have a business plan that works towards achieving your vision
- have developed planning processes that consider long and short-term strategies and actions

The business plan should aim to achieve a good balance of long term strategic direction and change, and tactical, short term management. It should also be reviewed on a frequent, regular basis.

Use a Written Business Plan and Review Regularly

Bathurst Inlet Lodge has a written in-house business plan. "It is reviewed/revise twice a year, usually in the fall to plan the next year's program, and in the spring to deal with the realities of projected income based on bookings for the coming summer, prior to contracting charter air services."

Good Business Tip: Planning does not have to be complicated - keep it simple.

2.4 Develop an Operational Plan

Having an operational plan for each functional area, linked to the corporate plan, can assist efficiency related to a range of topics: for example, meeting client bookings, operating on time, preventing service bottlenecks, scheduling with confidence, dealing with emergencies, and having the information/resources available to reschedule operations without causing much disruption.

An operational plan outlines what is required for the day to day running of the organisation, and how the organisation will achieve its objectives. For example, the plan might cover a schedule for tours, for cleaning and for equipment maintenance. It would identify staffing and resource needs for each job. Achieving optimal efficiency in operations and services can enable companies to reduce costs and improve on quality. All businesses have a strategy for organising and managing their resources.

Good Business Practice: Good scheduling requires accurate information about the constraints on operational efficiency.

As some examples, *Naturally Superior Adventures* has an operational plan which is constantly being updated or improved; *Bathurst Inlet Lodge* has a brief, practical, 'operations manual'; and *Remote Passages* has an 'Operations Manual', a 'Safety Procedure for Guiding Staff', and a 'Dealing with Difficult Customers' manual.

Good Business Practice: Commitment to the planning process is more important than keeping to a fixed plan. Be flexible and adjust your plans as events demand.

2.5 Develop Financial Procedures and Controls

Financial evaluation is concerned with how the company develops and administers appropriate procedures for the purpose of measuring performance, budgeting and informing decision making. Without some degree of financial stability and some funds to support growth, your business may have difficulty surviving. Some good practice basics are:

- prepare an annual budget based on plans for the year (for revenues, operating expenses, overheads, capital improvements)
- keep appropriate records of all income and expenses
- produce regular financial reports
- can compare actual results against budgeted future
- have a payroll system that works
- budget for future facility upgrades, expansions, acquisitions, etc.
- obtain quotes for significant purchases

The company should have committed resources (whether financial or human) to the planning process, down to individual actions. Some basics are:

- ensure your balance sheet is sound
- generate sufficient funds from the operation to fund growth
- have an accurate picture of cash position
- develop and implement an appropriate financial plan

Good Business Practice: Always make sure you understand your financial position.

Have Financial Procedures and Evaluation Processes

Bathurst Inlet Lodge indicates they have a financial evaluation process in place, and: “constant consultation with our bookkeeper and accountants to keep track of expenditures and budget”.

Companies may have financial performance systems and:

- prepare monthly statements for comparison with budgeted revenue and expenses
- discuss performance with managers using the information, regularly
- understand exactly which products and services make money (and the size or profit)
- review financial resources against plans, regularly

Good Business Practice: Over a year you should be able to clearly identify which products make you money and how much of it. Make sure you know what business areas are marginal, and that you have a reason for maintaining them.

Good Business Tip: You cannot have too much performance data but you must analyse and use it effectively.

2.6 Information and Organisation Management

Technology and Human Resource Management

All businesses have systems in place to manage and control operations. But not all of them try to integrate human resources and technology as an essential strategic management approach to operations. Part of operational practice is integrating technology and human resources within operations.

Good Business Practice: The right strategy is the best mix of organisational people and technology to meet business needs.

Good Business Tip: Try to integrate technology and human resources as an essential strategic management approach to operations.

New Technology

Investment in technology should be based on the strategic needs of the business.

Good Business Practice: Make sure you tackle the root cause of a problem. Don't invest in technology to get around, or to rescue the consequence of a problem.

Technology is often an effective way of managing operational records (e.g., numbers of visitors in given periods, school vacation schedules, etc.). Its application involves an inter-disciplinary approach. Technology should be used to *support* the skills of the people in an integrated way, and should be linked to the operational efficiency of the business. *Earth Rhythms*, for example, has customised computer templates and email newsletters, for information management and customer contact.

Technology can deal well with information needs, such as:

- a system for recording and updating market information
- customers information on the value they place on your service
- the activities of competitors in the market place
- product sales details; what, to whom and where

Internet and E-mail have Varied Uses

Remote Passages has a new computer system, internet and e-mail. It uses email as a means of providing quick access to detailed information about their programs to clients enquiring by telephone - and this has cut down on their number of mailouts. Clients use their secure page to send their reservations, which are quickly confirmed - this is especially useful in the off-season. There is an in-house database system which keeps track of reservations, customers and distribution of information.

Wilderness Spirit finds email invaluable (they find most clients have some sort of email connection) and keeps in touch right up to a few days before the trip to make sure that clients are comfortable with the required equipment, etc. *Fresh Tracks* have developed a new database program that makes them virtually paperless. All or most transactions are processed through e-mail. Their website also reduces their paper marketing costs.

Consider Electronic Bookkeeping, Databases, and Communications

Call of the Wild: "We are more computer reliant than most companies! We use electronic book keeping, a powerful database to track our customers and do labels, as well as mass email merges from time to time. We have set up our website to collect information (name, address, etc.) and import it directly into our database so we don't need to

type anything. Then with the push of a button it will print an envelope and an Information letter. We have set up a spreadsheet to do our food shopping lists, complete with quantities, prices, and aisle numbers.”

Boreal Wilderness Guides has acquired a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping tool, to improve on government maps that are unreliable due to their age, or have errors, or don't show seasonal aspects. This makes for a tremendous resource-based information tool for them.

Good Business Practice: Ensure the application of new technology and other new aspects are linked into the operational efficiency of the business.

Adopting new technologies is useful when updating equipment, updating software, or acquiring new software.

Good Business Tip: Good returns on technology investment arises when a business is changing and it applies the technology to the new direction.

Human Resources Management

The harnessing of peoples' skills is as important as employing appropriate technologies. Exemplary companies view their staff as a resource rather than a cost. They invest in training to increase skills of the staff, and encourage teamwork and a sense of ownership of the company's vision and values (this is also dealt with partly in Chapter 5). Reviewing training plans throughout the year in the context of changes in business targets and practice is useful, as well as assessing the benefits and outcomes of all training actions.

Some of the fundamental components of human resources management are:

- have a set system for introducing new staff (including student practicums) to your operation (an induction process)
- training in multiple skills can assist flexible working practices
- staff need to become increasingly versatile with new technologies
- have a staff record management system (with contact details and interests/skills)
- have a procedure to communicate regularly (with staff and from staff)

Exemplary companies are particularly oriented to motivating staff, developing shared values and excitement, and developing employees. At the organisation level, staff commitment is needed. The management team must understand and agree about the basic purpose of the business that the company is in, and the growth objectives for the future.

Good Business Practice: Don't organise your company to suit individual personalities - structure it to do the job effectively.

Owners and Employees Should Have Mutual Respect and Embrace the Vision

Niagara Nature Tours (NNT): “all of our guides, and those that choose to volunteer for NNT, are embraced by us because they are naturalists/environmentalists and all around good people. We make a point of surrounding ourselves with good-natured, good-humoured, ethical people that treat others with respect and patience. That is not only for the good of our clients, but for ourselves as well! We also want to work with people that “walk the talk”, and do volunteer work to help local conservation efforts, either on behalf of NNT or on their own.”

In-house training may be particularly important, as smaller companies need to employ individuals who are able to handle many types of tasks in a busy office. *Seacoast Expeditions* tries to “find staff with math, language, computer and communication skills, as well as those with initiative, since the daily pattern in the industry can range from feast to famine” - they find such employees hard to come by. Thus they are tackling the problem, in part, by working on refining their initial (hiring) interview procedures.

Good Business Practice: Decentralise decision-making and control.

Good Business Tip: Investment in people resources can achieve internal strength and stability

2.7 Ensure Safety, Risk Management, and Compliance

All companies should meet the legal and compliance requirements in each destination area for operating their type of business (which may relate to licensing, operations, taxation, environment, safety, or health considerations). These requirements will likely vary from one jurisdiction to another. Compliance may involve:

- registering the business
- meeting all licensing/legislated requirements
- meeting all insurance requirement (liability, fire or other possibilities)
- meeting all safety requirements
- meeting all first aid and other training and equipment requirements

Safety and risk management is concerned with how the company provides a safe working environment and working methods, for the benefit of both staff and guests. *Quoddy Link Marine* says safety is extremely important: “we believe the vessel, our experienced captains and safety briefings place our passengers at ease, allowing them to fully appreciate each cruise.”

Safety in Equipment, Service and all Details

Canoe Arctic provides clients with “the highest quality equipment and service we can, to be safety conscious, and to convey that (information) to my clients as (being) my highest priority, and finally by being highly organized and professional in everything connected with the trip they are taking. Nothing can be left to chance in these situations where we are hundreds of miles from assistance. Attention to detail is paramount.”

Fundamentals of safety and risk management are:

- identify and address all occupational health, safety and welfare issues
- ensure all people working have the qualifications and safety training they need
- regularly review and address all security and safety issues, to ensure the personal security of all staff, volunteers and visitors
- written procedures to cover emergency situations (e.g., fire, flood, earthquake, evacuations, wildlife problems, sickness, etc.)

Safety Equipment, Trip Leader, and Trip Log Used for Improvements

Inside Out describes some of their safety procedures: "All trips include a First Aid Kit (easily accessible during an emergency) and a mobile phone to contact the nearest Emergency Response Team in Kananaskis Village. All guides are either River Rescue and/or Wilderness First Aid Trained with many years of outdoor expertise. Typically each trip has a Trip Leader whose job is to ensure that all equipment is in good and safe working order, that First Aid Kits are available and well stocked. The Trip Leader also ensures provides a Safety and Instruction talk to all the clients prior to trip departure. He/she also ensures that everyone in the group stays together and does not wander off from the group. In the case of Rafting, the Trip Leader is the last boat in the group and ensures that the group of boats travel together in case of an emergency, so that several Guides can assist with the process rather than just the one lone boat. Ropes, River Rescue Principles and equipment are used in case of emergency. The Trip Leader also completes a River Trip Report/Log after each trip reporting any trip incidents, equipment to be repaired, river management issues/recommendations, and weather conditions."

3. Product and Delivery

3.1 Quality Assurance

The tourism experience of the client at the destination is the essential tourism product which ecotourism and adventure travel operators are providing. The nature of this product may vary considerably, but all should involve some form of quality assurance. This may mean:

- having the evidence or information in place to provide customers or partners with, so as to support claims of product nature and quality
- having the right calibre of person and system in place, to be responsive to customer requests, before and during their trip
- having the quality of the product independently assessed

It is not just the companies who attract international markets who have to consider aiming for world-class standards in all operating areas.

Good Business Practice: Your customers don't see your organisation as you do. Make sure they understand and picture what makes your approach create quality tourism products - which may be beyond their direct experience - even before they arrive

3.2 The Way the Company Operates in the Field

The actual experience of guests relates to the way the company and its representatives operate during the trip. This will be a direct reflection of the company vision and philosophy. *Earth Rhythms* maintains "we don't do tours - we create experiences".

Guiding Principles May Influence All Company Operations

Niagara Nature Tours (NNT) has chosen to adopt Ecotourism principles to guide the company "it has an expectation of gratification that is measured in terms of education and/or appreciation rather than in thrill seeking or physical achievement". Their tour leaders range from teachers, master's students, horticulturalists and naturalists to scientists and professors, and they weave educational information into all of the programming. "The corner-stone of our company is education. But if education is a corner-stone, then enjoyment is a touchstone for us! We know that if people *enjoy* themselves on one of our outings, there is a better chance they will retain some information about the natural world, and perhaps in the future try and protect it.

Resource protection and sustainability is at the foundation of our company, and is inexorably tied in with "the nature of our operations". Our company's goal is to achieve the well known social/environmental reputation that The Body Shop has, based on *our* proven social/ environmental track record. (It's a trite but easy way to explain our goals.) I believe we are batting 1,000 re our reputation so far!"

In fact, the solid reputation which Niagara Nature Tours has developed is paying off solidly in demand for their services by high-profile organisations, e.g., local and international media, universities, innovative product for government organisations (such as a nature-computer camp), Conservation Lands, Parks commissions, transit authorities, writers, Canadian embassies, and the Smithsonian Institute. The

owner believes such interest is directly attributable to the company's reputation for imbuing the actual product on the ground with its strong environmental/ educational/ scientific ideals.

A good sense of humour under virtually all conditions is also a great asset!

Keep a Sense of Humour

Nahanni River Adventures: "Apart from the quantifiable objective skills and knowledge we require: the engaging personality of a TV host, the patience of Job, ability as a story teller, endurance of an ultra marathoner, adaptability of a mechanic/engineer/seamstress/carpenter/nurse, judgement of a jet pilot, planning ability of a field commander, counselling skills of a psychologist, attitude that the work is a "labour of love", aptitude to continue to grow, and desire to work longer and harder than most people would consider humanly possible."

3.3 Develop High Service Standards

Internal Standards

Developing and implementing service standards is required to meet the needs of all key stakeholders, whether clients or partners, or local authorities, etc. Central to the standards should be the needs and expectations of customers. Quality standards apply in all parts of the organisation, and may relate to equipment, dress codes, answering phones, meeting and greeting visitors, follow up on enquiries, employee induction, or facility operating instructions (e.g., telephone system, opening, credit card payments, refunds and exchanges, etc.).

Implementing service standards may involve:

- knowing customers' expectations and the level of service you wish to provide
- ensuring all staff know quality standards and what role they play in ensuring these standards are met
- ensuring staff can recognise when services (or goods such as souvenirs, guide books, food and beverages) do not meet quality standards
- ensuring the quality systems reflect the changing needs and expectations of customers
- having standards for suppliers, and assessing their performance on an ongoing basis (e.g., building and renovation, printing, goods, partner companies)

Standards Give Confidence

Quoddy Link Marine: Our vessels operate under the strictest Canadian regulations as they pertain to passenger vessels. Our Captains are experienced and certified. Our narratives cover several topics unique to the area and are delivered by trained guides. We ensure our product operates under all environmental guidelines/regulations and take extra steps to limit our effect on local wildlife. We have incorporated many other components into each cruise to make it a unique whale watching experience, but to also limit the pressure which comes from the whale being the only "item on the menu".

Esprit Rafting has very stringent policies for staff, which cover a variety of topics. The most prominent is a 100%

Staff Manuals Help

Smoothwater Canoeing has a staff manual that details their

philosophy and what their company Practices from staff in a variety of situations both on and off site. It is presented to staff at the beginning of their employment and is open for discussion and revision as

drug free workplace, which they say is not very common in the adventure travel/rafting industry, and is apparently very controversial amongst staff from other outfitters.

Boreal Wilderness Guides say an important aspect which their clients love, is the fact the staff - being highly trained and licensed guides and outfitters; professionally trained interpreters; proficient in wilderness recreation teaching, scientific research and outdoor leadership; and trained in wilderness first aid, CPR and winter and summer survival skills.

Standards for Outside Partners and Suppliers

It is equally important to be satisfied that current or potential partners have standards which match your own, particularly if you are packaging with them.

Have Standards for Partners

Inside Out packages with Mountain Biking, Horse Riding and Jet Boating companies. All companies must have Public Liability Insurance, First Aid and CPR Certification. These companies also have the philosophies of safety as their major consideration, and making their trips Learning Adventures.

Bathurst Inlet Lodge works out its standards together with its partners. “We do not work with companies that are unwilling to bring any benefit to the people/businesses of the North, and feel that these companies are taking advantage of the small communities by travelling into their land without any benefit other than to the charter companies that deliver them to the rivers.”

Voyageur Quest has standards for its suppliers (canoe rentals, dogsled, ski rental etc.). The program is written out in a contract form. One example of standards includes: Dogsled: one person per sled, four dogs per team; Orientation: (75 minutes) to cover sled safety, mushing, commands, harnessing etc.; Route site inspection; and the company guide is on site to monitor this quality.

Naturally Superior Adventures currently have partners and are working on a number of partnerships with other companies. Their key focus is “to be associated with a quality company.”

Good Business Practice: Have appropriate standards for all partners and suppliers

3.4 Codes and Standards of Behaviour

Codes of Conduct - For Operations

Besides quality standards related to staff and partner/supplier activities, standards could address conservation, environmental management, interpretation, safety, etc. This may involve developing codes of conduct or other practices. A number of operators have Company Codes of Conduct which they adhere to, often based on industry codes.

Code of Ethics for Whale Watching

Mariner Cruises operates under a Code of Ethics and Federal Whalewatching Guidelines

Fundy Tide Runners and *Quoddy Link Marine* are signatories to the Bay of Fundy's marine tour operators' Code of Ethics. This Code was developed to foster trust and cooperation between operators, and to ensure the ethical viewing of wildlife.

Quoddy Link Marine says “while we occasionally receive comments that we did not get close enough to the whales and other wildlife, the majority of passengers comment on their appreciation of the respect we show for the wildlife we view. They return knowing they have experienced wildlife while not interfering with it.”

Good Business Tip: Specific codes of conduct help customers and staff

Codes of Conduct - For Guests

The experience overall is enhanced by appropriate behaviour in the field *not only by company personnel*, but by the visitors themselves. Exemplary companies brief their guests on what is expected from them, and some even develop a formal code of behaviour for the guests, too.

Some companies find that by highlighting their own environmental responsibility in their literature, they attract a more aware and responsible type of clientele, and this so has a double benefit. *Scott Walking Adventures*: says guests can ask for our code of ethics and our code of behavior.

Earth Rhythms provides a Getting Prepared package to visitors before they arrive. This lays out appropriate and expected environmental or cultural behaviour.

Brief Guests in Advance about Responsible Behaviour

Esprit Rafting: “We don't have a formal “code of conduct” for our clients, however they are briefed in advance on rules such as no drinking or drugs prior to their activity. We ask that our groups help us to be “part of the solution, not part of the problem” when it comes to environmental issues such as separating organic waste after meals (to feed Pontiac Counties greatest compost pile) and ensure that all rubbish, in particular cigarette butts, make it to the garbage rather than in the bush. Much of this “code of conduct” is established by example. We highlight our “Environmental Responsibility” prominently in our brochure. It really seems to generate ecologically aware clients for us.”

Good Business Tip: Markets are interested in what is appropriate behaviour in a new environment.

3.5 Presentation, Interpretation, and Guiding

The types of guided experience will vary between adventure operators and ecotourism operators. However, many of our exemplary *adventure* operators indicated that they incorporated ecotourism elements or principles into their adventure product. The experience of the client then includes opportunities to *understand* natural areas in each particular experience.

Best practice interpretation and education may involve using:

- a range of information sources: reference books and publications, professionals and/or naturalists (scientists or natural area managers etc.), museums, zoos, documentaries,
- recognised oral history

- interest groups (conservation, Interpretation Canada, etc.)
- recognised training courses
- suitably experienced and/or formal trained guides or leaders, who know about the natural or cultural values of the area being presented

The methods of interpretation could include:

- pre-tour briefing, talks, or demonstrations
- guided tours
- self-guiding trails
- displays
- audio-visuals
- publications
- education programs
- specialist talks
- interaction with outdoors environment
- interpretation includes recognised conservation values and significance of the areas visited
- interpretation addresses relevant natural area management issues and possible solutions (e.g., problems associated with feeding wildlife, conserving water, etc.)

Provide a Range of Interpretive Techniques

Niagara Nature Tours has developed programming that includes the *arts & sciences*. Their programs combine both educational and interpretive components to enhance their trips, including:

- hiring storytellers, musicians, local artists and crafts people, either incorporated into the trip, or demonstrating through hands-on workshops
- using specially designed (by appropriate scientists and artists) laminated information flash cards later, to help reinforce in pictures, diagrams etc., what they show people in the field (e.g., scientific sketches of *complete* fossils; or pictures of small unseen wildlife which have been identified by habitat only, in the field)
- using tape recordings of animal, bird, amphibian calls as either background sounds or as a teaching tool
- reinforcing with music and story in background tapes (using local/Canadian talent)
- costumed re-enactment at historical sites
- using samples from nature for displays and talks (everything displayed has been collected ethically or from a ministry, which leads into a discussion about the ethics of collecting)
- working with licensed local falconers for birds of prey demonstrations, which allows for photography, art programming, and great excitement and passion
- using few handouts unless they are really useful - for environmental reasons. However, all company handout are on 100% recycled, unbleached paper. When it enhances interpretation/education, each person/ party is given handouts, pamphlets, booklets etc., from various regional conservation bodies, to help reinforce the trip experience (e.g., the Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Backyard Habitat booklet shows how to plant for birds and butterflies, and how to create habitat in you own back yard)
- carrying a theme through a tour which helps build and layer the information being offered

"Please note the word offered. Although we are passionate, we try and not lecture at the group, trying instead to explain by giving examples about ourselves, local situations etc. e.g., slide show tie in with the specific talk we requested at the winery; gardening tour shows examples of the plants they used in their window box workshop; the "weeds", they just saw on their Edible Wildplant walk, are in the salad they are eating!; the geologist will talk about geology throughout the whole day, explaining that geology influences every part of the tour they are experiencing - and the people thought they were just going on a winery tour! So we explain the influence of geology on growing the grapes, we show them examples out in the field, and then explain how the wine they are tasting tastes the way it does because of where it's grown. These techniques allow people to use all their senses on the tour, smell, touch, taste, thinking, seeing.

Good Business Practice: Interpretation and education represent value-added experience for most customers.

Guide Training

Guide training is an important practice (see the chapter on Training and Human Resources); the element of understanding and education seems to be integral to the product which the client experiences. This aspect is enhanced by low guide:client ratios. For other destinations with interpretation standards (e.g., Australia), the ratios are advised to be less than 1:20 for the duration of the interpretive activity, but ideally less than 1:10 is advised. For many Canadian exemplary operators, the ratio was well under this. *Seacoast Expeditions*, a whale and wildlife watching company, has a maximum of 12 passengers per zodiac, with 2 crew per trip, one of whom is a trained naturalist.

In order to provide quality interpretation, guides should have formal and/or informal training, including in interpretation, communication, or hospitality skills. They should also be continually encouraged to further their skills through training. *Sawyer Lake Adventures* adheres to the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council standards for its guides, particularly the Outdoor Guide course, in its multi-ecozone adventure.

Fundamentals for enhancing the interpreted product include:

- use an interpretive theme that links the marketing of the product with delivery of the activity (to enhance visitors knowledge, experience and satisfaction and influence appropriate behaviour)
- adjust the theme to meet different client interests and needs
- use methods of interpretation and presentation that respect cultural significance, difference and sensitivities
- ensure all themes and messages are based on research using reliable primary and secondary sources
- regularly accommodate the special needs (foreign language groups, children, the physically or intellectually challenged)
- continually improve the communication, interpretation and customer service skills of all guiding and education staff/volunteers

The quality of interpretation and education can help to differentiate one's product.

Bathurst Inlet Lodge says the educational aspects of their program are the *main* component, and what separates their program from many others which only offer "guiding". We provide interpretation in natural history, history, geology, marine biology, the Inuit culture, issues facing the North, and much more. The owners (Inuit and Kablunak) are experts in their own right, and are involved in the interpretation. In addition, there is a Northern staff naturalist, who has been involved with the Lodge since 1972.

Interpretation Provides Tremendous Value Added

Warner Guiding feels that "while the wilderness, camping, riding, photography, history, and sharing nature are key, *I think our emphasis on interpretation is our greatest benefit that we offer the client* - although good food, friendly guides, good horses, and exceptional scenery is always important."

3.6 Provide for Guests' Preferences: Know their Likes and Dislikes

When asked about customer *dislikes*, operators usually mentioned factors beyond their control - such as the weather, cost, views which included power lines, water temperatures in spring, etc. *Walden's Guiding and Outfitting* gave a fairly typical response "we honestly don't know if there's anything our clients don't like. We've never had any complaints and many of our clients come back time and again to take another adventure with us."

When asked about what it was that customers *liked* the most, operators provided a huge and varied range of examples. Some maintained that it was the quality of the scenery and the natural environment; others, that it was the staff, the food, the "extras", the interpretation, the equipment, the facilities, the attention to details. Best practice operators know what their guests want and like, and respond to this knowledge - and are seeking to exceed these expectations.

Professional Product

Boreal Wilderness Guides: they love the fact that staff are highly trained and licensed, proficient, very ecologically knowledgeable, use only first class equipment, and offer very unique tours found nowhere else in Canada.

Smoothwater Outfitters: our equipment is first class and well maintained. Our staff is knowledgeable and we have developed strong expertise in what we do. Our food is excellent. Guests appreciate that what we advertise we deliver. They also like the diversity of our programming and our commitment to the health of our ecosystem, which they glean from our often public advocacy activities.

CanoeSki Discovery: personalized service, planning and organization and itinerary and logistics; attention to detail, well-planned and nutritious meals, knowledgeable staff and personable interpreters and guides.

Traversée de Charlevoix felt their guests liked "our hiking trail, the quality of the log cottages, the natural setting, and most of all, the efficiency of the organization founded on over 20 years of operation. Reservation facilities, flexibility, the luggage and food delivery service, the car transfer from departure to arrival point, and equipment rental opportunities, and the professional, experienced guides."

Personalised Experiences

Ocean Explorations: small, personal groups

Big Sand Lake Lodge: guests continually comment on the friendliness of the staff and their expertise. They also continue to be amazed at the facility, which in effect is its own little town built in the remote Canadian Wilderness.

Smoothwater Outfitters: clients like that we are a small, intimate lodge with an emphasis on friendly, personal service.

Mountain Quest: clients like the fact that they get to do behind the scenes experiences. They really enjoy the feeling of specialness they get when they are experiencing things that 99.9% tourists never dream of. There is great appeal to getting away from the herd.

Lazy M ranch: Our clients feel like they are part of our family. It feels like home! It also gives urban guests a real feel for how an Alberta cattle ranch works! We are *not* a dude ranch-we are *real*. Think this is one reason our repeat visitation is so high.

Good Business Practice: Continually ask your guests, in various ways, how they feel about your operation, and how you could improve their experience.

In fact, as some exemplary operators have recognised, *the likes and dislikes vary with the client group*. As *Wilderness Spirit* points out “Highlights depend a great deal on where a client calls home - *European* clients love the wilderness and appreciate the solitude/isolation of a canoe trip; they are thrilled (and nervous) when we encounter a large predator. They are also very interested when we come across a pictograph or any other indication that Canada’s aboriginal people or early explorer’s have passed that way. *Canadians* tend to take the wilderness more for granted, but seem to enjoy the thrills of whitewater canoeing.”

Remote Passages: our *suppliers* value reliability, organization and the level of service we offer their clients. Those *who refer us locally* do so because they feel they can count on their guests having a good experience with us; others also value our well-informed pro-conservation presentation. *Walk-in clients* like our educational programs, safety awareness and presentation.

Of course, most operators described many different aspects of their experience that they knew their customers liked.

Multiple Aspects Liked By Clients

Société Duvetnor: the quality and beauty of natural sites that we value, the quality of service offered, the originality of the product and the lodgings (in particular, the historical lighthouse), and finally, the exclusive feeling, attributed to the limited number of visitors, and the impression of being a special client. The message of conservation, and the discreteness offered during the entire trip are also appreciated.

Earth Rhythms: attention to details, and: surprises (unexpected details) *that are meaningful to their visit*; outstanding value; unique locations: insights: interpretive skills and understandable presentations; all-inclusive prices; no hassles; quality of suppliers; and personable personally talented guides.

Quoddy Link Marine: the modern, well-maintained, comfortable vessel; the multiple interests (apart from whale watching); the ability for them to physically handle whale baleen, giving them a greater appreciation of these mammals, while also illustrating our narrative; and the value-added items (smoked salmon, warm drinks and binoculars)

Expéditions Eau Vive: the quality of equipment (we use the best available: tent, bivouac, inflatable air mattress, ABS canoe, etc., always in good condition); the menu (we take into account the energy requirements, the expectations of overseas clients who want local food, and quality); our philosophy (we inspire our guides through training, to surpass expectations)

3.7 Have Experts Appropriate to the Topic

While trained and personable guides can offer a wonderful diversity of insights and an enjoyable experience, certain groups require or would benefit from other leaders, who are experts in various fields. Exemplary operators respond to this need.

Naturally Superior Adventures use naturalists from local ministries; an archaeologist/birder from the nearby community; brought in an expert for a course on building traditional skin sea kayaks; and bring in guest sea kayak instructors for their paddlefest weekend instruction seminars.

Trade Your Expertise

Esprit Rafting uses outside experts where appropriate or needed. And they also trade such services; “we have an “environmental consultant” who consults for us in exchange for kayaking lessons. Experts in other fields are brought in to provide more training/information for our guides - in exchange for other services we offer.”

Seacoast Expeditions, a whale and wildlife watching operator, has a university-educated naturalist (biologist or geographer) on every tour to answer questions, point out wildlife and provide natural history information. They also act as a crew member to deal with safety and comfort issues.

Experts Come from Many Fields

Voyageur Quest use experts from many areas, technical, traditional, art and aboriginal: First Nation speakers, drummers, trappers, renowned wilderness travellers, Canadian folk musicians, naturalists, etc.

3.8 Know your Improvement Areas

It is difficult to improve, if you don't know the areas in your company where that is needed! Operators were asked what the main weaknesses of their operation were.

While some operators chose not to comment on this question, or only made a brief comment related to a concrete item (e.g. a facility), the exemplary operators were *not afraid to analyse their operations thoughtfully, and with a view to a constant improvement mode*. This thoughtfulness was reflected in many other good practice areas of their operations.

Wilderness Spirit feels their primary weakness relates to a lack of business/marketing experience, and is less product related. They feel that Manitoba is not well known for its wilderness canoeing, and increasing Canadian and international awareness is quite challenging. They propose to address this, in part, by consulting with those with significant marketing experience.

Naturally Superior Adventures- we need to be able to respond faster to customer inquiries during off season and follow-up trips more promptly in season - we are growing fast and do not have efficient systems in place and are trying to be a full service operation to all silent sports in our area so net revenues could be better.

Delegate Authority

Esprit Rafting say they have current growing pains related to how busy they have become (they may operate trips for more than 120 days in a row). They know that while owners could previously manage everything, must also learn to let go of some control. They feel their biggest challenge is passing their ideals and vision on to capable managers (this view echoes some of the Chapter one good practices - that decentralising decision-making and control enables growth and empowers staff)

Good Business Tip: Almost any business has room for improvement!

4. Customer Service and Relations

4.1 Prepare Guests for their Experience: Pre-Trip Contact

Exemplary operators emphasised that satisfying the customer is a key feature for success. Part of this involves preparing the customer for the particular experience, in part to targeting the “right” visitors. The “wrong” target market is unlikely to be as satisfied. Besides appropriate marketing activities, one can ensure a potentially satisfied customer by telling them some of the specifics of your experience.

This may involve providing a range of details on the company brochure, which could be related to: sample days; equipment; clothing; level of experience and/or competency required; food; amount of travel time; accommodation details; etc. It is also helpful to provide guests with a suggested packing list, if particular clothing, or helpful extras, would enhance the experience. Conveying the values of the operator is useful, and this might be done by providing pretrip/tour/activity material that reflects: the activities; interpretation provided; natural values; care/conduct codes.

Some fundamentals about pre-trip or marketing literature is that it should be accurate and lead to realistic expectations, and that promotional material (e.g., brochure, displays and videos) represents the experience typically provided. Elements reflected in the material should include:

- principal activities undertaken
- interpretive and/or educational services provided
- natural or other values of the region visited
- typical equipment and infrastructure used
- size of groups involved and capacity of accommodation used, if relevant
- steps to prevent damage to the environment or community visited (e.g., codes of conduct or behaviour guidelines)

Voyageur Quest provides: a brochure outlining who the company is; a detailed itinerary describing activities day by day and answering common questions; a detailed clothing list and suggestions; a registration form asking questions about allergies, medical condition, dietary restrictions, and special requests; and a suggested reading list.

Although it might seem like a detail, the availability of company staff to talk with interested customers more than in “regular business hours” is important, especially when dealing with people who might be on vacation in the destination, or calling from other time zones. This is reinforced by the comments of one operator, who described the customers dislikes as “*I think some of our guests wish we were able to answer the phone 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week !*”

Prepare Guests: Telephone, Writing, and Initial Briefing

Esprit Rafting indicated that they not only have knowledgeable office staff, and convenient transportation services from urban locations, “*we also answer our phone with a real person from 6:00am to after Midnight.*” They first prepare guests on the telephone about what to bring and what to expect. This is followed up by a written confirmation and equipment list. Upon arrival at the basecamp, guests go through a Meet and Greet session. First thing each morning they have a trip meeting followed by a thorough safety briefing where guests have an explanation and then fill out a Participation Agreement and Medical Questionnaire. *Throughout all this our groups are well prepared and our literature is quite complete.*

In fact, these customers were expressing a need, which was apparently not met. At the very least, a voice mail should be available (which was not the case with all operators contacted).

Be Available By Phone at Markets' Convenience and Send Information

Traversée de Charlevoix: We answer the phone from 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week. Everything starts with the materials that we send to all the people who ask for information. Also we take time on arrival, to explain to clients about the many interesting details for their excursion. The location of the equipment (e.g., cellular telephones, or seal skin) are also much appreciated, since not everyone wants to invest in buying such items.

Sawyer Lake Adventures not only has a brochure which provides details about the operation and itinerary, but also has a “*Pre-Trip Preparation*” series of questions about guests’ expectations around various facets of the experience, to enable the company to better customise and satisfy individual preferences.

Good Business Tip: Asking customers questions before they come can help ensure a satisfying experience, and begin the process of acquiring market information.

Fresh Tracks always send out a pre-departure kit to clients 70 days prior to departure that describes the trip in detail. where to meet, what to bring, itinerary, suggested reading, etc. They also contact clients by telephone 3 to 5 days prior to departure to answer any last minute questions. “We really strive to go above and beyond the call of duty with clients by providing tons of information to them and making their travel to their destination as easy as possible., We sometimes pick up groups at the airport and take them to their hotel as a surprise.”

Send a Customised Guest Preparation Package

Smoothwater Outfitters: “our clients receive a full package, which contains information pertinent to the trip, recommended clothing/equipment lists, assumption of risk forms, directions and map, and miscellaneous items. We also require disclosure of medical info, food allergies and dietary requirements. Once on-site, they receive an orientation to our facility and participate in pre-trip meetings with leader/instructors. They often assist in pre-trip packing, etc.”

Nahanni River Adventures: “we have an extensive web site (over 200 pages). Much of it is geared to educating participants beforehand, with background literature and links. We also encourage a steady dialogue with our office to have questions answered as clients prepare. For those enrolled in canoe trips we encourage participation in skill courses before the expedition.”

Earth Rhythms prepares and educates its customers in advance of their vacation by providing every visitor with an information package called “Getting Prepared”. These information packages are designed for each individual tour or experience and include general information and an itinerary regarding the experience as well as a section on “what we ask from you “. It addresses issues related to toiletries, equipment and clothing, cooperation, and behavior.

Good Business Practice: Your customers don’t see your operation as you do. Make sure they understand what makes your approach result in quality tourism products, even before they arrive.

Good Business Tip: Use the pre-visit contact as an opportunity to respond to individual preferences.

4.2 Maintain Client Relationship: Post-Trip Contact

Repeat visitors are what most companies strive to have. Besides an excellent experience, this often required good post-trip contacts. *Timberline Tours* sends their pack trip guests Christmas cards and pictures if there are any, as a friendly reminder. *Niagara Nature Tours* says “I know clients appreciate us sending them follow-up information (e.g., addresses where they can purchase something we saw on our tour, but which wasn’t available at the time).”

Sawyer Lake Adventures follows up with clients, usually with a unique gift. For example, they sent “several Great Grey Owl feathers to a client (found several months after his visit), since he had expressed a keen interest in the bird. Another example was sending a tanned pair of mukluks to a client who really liked a pair which one of the staff owned.

Newsletters with Interesting Topics Avoid a Hard Sell Approach

Borealis Outdoor Adventures says: “Contact is kept friendly and we avoid hard-sell sales approaches. Mostly, we keep our customers apprised of cycling news of interest to them (we make note of their interests while they are on tour) and let them know what we’re doing in the off-season (right now, for example, we’re carrying on a lively correspondence about the merits of winter camping) and plans for upcoming trips.”

Learn From Repeat Visitors

Traversée de Charlevoix keeps clients happy, even if they have a disappointment on their trip: “If clients can’t finish the Traversée (hiking trail), we offer them the possibility of returning to do it again for free. Not only will this repeat visitor likely bring a friend, but the positive word of mouth will be invaluable.”

Bathurst Inlet Lodge has learned from 30 years of correspondence, and a 25-30% ratio of returning guests, what their guests like: “the personal touch, and the dedication to service that we constantly provide. They love the beauty of the area and the opportunity to get to know on a personal basis the Inuit who are co-owners with a vested interest in the Lodge. They also appreciate the learning opportunities that are provided, and the fact that the people providing them are of high quality and sterling reputation.”

Consider Running Undersubscribed Trips

Esprit Rafting says they have always relied heavily on repeat and word of mouth bookings. “Over 65% of our group organizers have been with us before”. In terms of how this has changed over the past few years: “As we get bigger we get a similar % of repeat group organizers who bring with them more first time participants. We feel that our product is our best form of marketing”. Also, “we rarely (almost never) cancel trips, even if we loose money running them. We learned this lesson in our 1st year when we ran a rafting trip for just one person. He paid us \$59.00 for a half-day trip. We paid for 2 guides (\$100/guide) so before we even pulled out of the driveway we were \$141.00 in the hole. Later “Ted” was so impressed he circulated our information through his office (the GST training center) and generated over 100 more guests for us. This type of thing happens to us all the time. The guides get to work, the client is happy, and usually we get more business”.

Good Business Tip: Successful companies will maintain a strength in core markets through high levels of customer service.

4.3 Listen to Your Customers: Complaints and Commendations

Having an appropriate response procedure can make all the difference to clients - both those who complain and those who express thanks or appreciation. *M&W Guides* review any complaints, respond in a written form, then check back with the client as to their satisfaction with the outcome.

Boreal Wilderness Guides first tries to resolve a complaint by demonstrating how they have rectified any problem identified; then they offer a future tour at 50% off; and finally, they remit the cost of their original tour.

Thank Clients Where Appropriate

Inside Out follows up with a call to thank clients for the letters of appreciation. They also ask permission to use it in future marketing endeavors.

One operator said they always responded promptly to complaints but had never thought of responding to client thanks - which they will now do, after reading the survey.

Encouraging customers to give all kinds of feedback can be useful for improving operations. Informal feedback on client satisfaction may be sought by: discussion with clients; visitor books; regular meeting/debriefs on operations between management and groundstaff; agent feedback; articles by visiting journalists; general observation; and reviewing and responding to letters/phone calls from clients.

Invite Feedback

Traversée de Charlevoix receive letters of congratulation and comments left in the last of their log cottage/cabins, where they leave a comment book (they have a trail hiking operation).

Don't Just "Hear" Client Comments - Use Them

Chockpaw Expeditions listens to clients comments and read evaluations. They hold regular meetings to improve the product and service, and keep files on all clients so that they can refer to the previous year at the time of booking.

Reward Guests & Encourage Repeats

Voyageur Quest receives dozens of letters/pictures from guests. Letters are posted at our office and pictures put in our guest photo album. We operate a photo contest at the end of every year. The guest who send s the best picture wins a free trip of up to four days.

Good Business Practice: Respond to complaints or commendations as quickly as possible, and take corrective action where necessary.

4.4 Meet or Exceed Customer Expectations

Some operators feel that the beauty of the landscape does a lot of the work in exceeding customer expectations. However, most comment on other aspects that they can control, too. *Gros Morne Adventure Guides* feels most guests' expectations are exceeded just in the destination. "Most folks will also comment above the quality of the guides and service we provide." *Rivers and Oceans*: "We operate trips in incredibly beautiful areas. The areas do most of the work for us as they surpass any beauty we describe in our literature. Our philosophy is to meet and exceed customer expectations. Our guides endeavor to understand each guest's expectations at the outset of the trip and work towards that."

Others feel that staff are largely responsible for client satisfaction.

Friendly, Helpful Staff are Key

Lazy M Ranch Country Vacations says "We generally exceed customer expectations, as we are always striving to provide 'their best vacation ever!' The only way we achieve this is our philosophy of 'treating guests as part of the family-and as we would wish to be treated!' This has never failed!"

Naturally Superior Adventures: I think that at this point we exceed most customer expectations. We work quite hard to be knowledgeable and friendly and ensure our staff (guides, shuttle drivers, instructors) are the same.

Jasper Adventure Centre: Front desk staff going out of the way to be friendly and helpful, the guides show a personal interest and enthusiasm.

Personalising the trip in a range of ways delights the client. *Clearwater Raft Tours* says "our trip is extraordinary in a couple of ways: the client doesn't expect to be so pampered on a wilderness trip; and the location of the river is so remote that it creates a mystique all on its own. We introduce river, waterfall, cliff activities, and hiking to caves and rock outcrops that even people from the area didn't know existed. We also provide a small gift at the end of the trip that reminds them of the unique qualities of the region."

Others find that providing something which is truly representative of the local area - an authentic experience, a local food, etc. - helps that "special" feeling that guests desire. All the exemplary operators agreed with one principal - don't promise what you can't deliver - whether for marine mammal watching, wildlife viewing, climbing, or whatever. Numerous examples were provided.

Provide a Local Flavour

Michie Creek Mushing: "We try to include a "Northern" flavour in our tours - northern specialty foods. We also showcase local artists work and on occasion have offered craft workshops as an option". And they work hard and provide excellent service.

Ancient Voices Wilderness Camp: "As an example, we had a group of boy scouts from California stop by for an overnight visit to our camp...we brought the Ta Tra Dancers (our local First Nations Traditional Dance Group) to welcome and entertain for them."

Don't Promise What you Can't Deliver: - Sell Honestly

Walden's Guiding and Outfitting: We make a point of never promising anything we can't deliver. For example, when people ask if they'll see Northern Lights, we tell them they might see them but it depends of conditions. Then if they do see them, they are pleased and if they don't they are not disappointed. In addition, we try to provide great food, quality gear, etc.

Wilderness Spirit make an effort to sell their trips honestly. "This may appear obvious but it is an essential part of ensuring happy clients."

M & W Guides: We have gone back to personalized service (smaller staff); specialty services --- kids, families, women's groups --- and *quit* promising people the summit. Our two complaints received in the past 10 years are as a result of assuring people that they will reach summit X or climb it by X amount of time. The changes were made due to the realization that this is a people job and "costs" in people values - energy. This is a very demanding field with high risk (personal safety/liability and high burnout).

Don't Exaggerate, and be Very Professional

Canoe Arctic: "I best meet or exceed client expectations by preparing my clients (initially through information mailed to them) for the *actual conditions* that they will encounter on their trips (no exaggerations), then providing them with the highest quality of equipment and service, to be safety conscious and finally by being highly organized and professional in everything connected with the trip they are taking."

Quality Facilities

Société Duvetnor. We are already surpassing these expectations by the quality of facilities (cottages, lighthouse), the quality of reception (office, boat), the thoughtfulness and the considerate exchanges we have with our clients that only give us praise. We try to be as precise as possible with our information. Our brochures are up to date, our web site is revised regularly. And, it is easy for us to detect the expectations of our client during the trip, since we practically live with them during their trips to the islands.

Take a Personal Interest in Clients & Personalise their Experience

Canoe Arctic tries to convey that to clients that they are his highest priority

The owner of *Niagara Nature Tours* tries to be intimately involved with all aspects of the operation, including the tours. She finds this helps in relaying interesting information to the clients when they are “selling” tours, and relaying excitement and enthusiasm.) “ I take part in every tour that I am able to, in order to judge its quality, in order to see how the clients react to our tour, and to the guides (myself included), and how the guides interact with the clients. I also feel that because I, the owner, personally handle all of the arrangements, the client feels they are getting special attention and that our company really takes them seriously. I also feel that because the guides know that they are professionals and educators, and take ownership representing NNT, the clients feel their enthusiasm and pride. I believe we are setting a professional standard and are not seen as “just guides”.

Wilderness Spirit tries to maintain some of an area’s mystery so that clients can *discover it for themselves* (with a little steering). “Whether it is as simple as a unique flowering plant or an aboriginal pictograph we help clients experience the thrill of *finding out for themselves*. As many of our clients are being introduced to wilderness canoeing on one of our trips we help them learn the skills required to feel confident when paddling a canoe.”

Anishinabe Experience: “we strive to ensure their visit is a personal experience. We try to obtain an idea of what their expectations are and what we are going to offer. Therefore, we have no misunderstanding. We explain everything we do and the meanings.”

Bathurst Inlet Lodge: “We meet and exceed expectations with just plain hard work, and putting the needs of our guests above our own. By ensuring a personal touch and approach, trying to meet the needs of *each* guest, spoken and unspoken. By training our staff to value and approach them as individuals, or friends, rather than customers. We try to inspire our staff by example, and trying to help them overcome cultural differences so they are able to see our guests as individuals, and to treat them as they themselves would wish to be treated in an unfamiliar environment. The lodge works with staff, with love and mutual respect, to help each guest realize his/her “arctic dreams”.

Horizon Nature Adventure: “there are many different examples, e.g., one of our nature trips with a well recognized lawyer’s firm, we added many things such as personalized name tags on bottles of wine, a photographer. During the day we took a picture of the groups and that same evening a picture for each participant was in their room. Details are important”

Good Business Tip: Every guest likes to be treated in a special way, and have a personalised experience.

Exceed Expectations

Wilderness Spirit questions clients about their interests/expectations and steer them towards trips that can satisfy those interests. As we also question clients about their food preferences we can usually *exceed their expectations* on that front. It may seem odd but a good meal followed by desert does wonders for people’s ability to ignore sore muscles or inclement weather.

Western Canadian River Adventures uses the following tools to exceed customer expectations:

- Guest Experts – The value added function of bringing these guests helps to increase the enjoyment of the trip. They open up new areas of interest for clients. This approach has not been used by many operators.
- Gourmet dining – We use Dutch ovens that enable us to prepare food that they might not expect when camping. These include meals such as prime rib, lamb souvlaki, roast ham and fresh baking. We also offer a vegetarian option
- Sweatlodges – We set up sweatlodges that many guests have never experienced before. This enables clients to experience some of native culture while giving them the opportunity to cleanse themselves
- Library – The library serves as a resource guide which guests use on hikes. It also contains sighting lists (e.g. Bird list) that the group contributes to
- Music – We sing music if people are interested. A guitar is brought along for entertainment

Over Deliver - in Many Various Ways

Horizons Unlimited: "We deliver what we promise. We then add things that are not in our information. We offer a barbecue at the "boss" place after the program. We give our guests several things that they can take home. We supply excellent equipment. If there is a problem, we take action to correct it."

Borealis Outdoor Adventures: "We get to know our customers personally and develop packages that they want to see. Then we make sure they get plenty of unexpected "extras" - inexpensive little gifts at the beginning and end of each tour."

Timberline Tours: "I am always trying to improve – I give out free mementos. I provide sweaters, gloves, and raincoats, so that the guest is comfortable even when they think they will be OK. They are always thankful after the ride."

Nature Tours of Yukon: "Offer more than promised, include a meal or drink as a surprise, even this is not part of the package."

Mountain Quest says "We always under promise and over deliver. One small example; on a 1-day interpretive walk, we specify that lunch will be a hearty trail lunch. They're expecting a nondescript bagged lunch. The sandwiches are huge with ample amounts of all the fillings. Fresh baked cookies and muffins follow and then the guide, who has been messing around with a camp stove for a while, produces a chocolate fondue with fresh fruit and Belgian chocolate. At the end of the day, each client receives a little bag of Bernard Callebaut chocolates with a thank-you card on them. We have many more examples of this such as an unexpected bottle of champagne. On our longer trips (multi day), the guide has a \$30/person discretionary budget that the guide can use as appropriate to treat the clients. This may be a gift, an unexpected dinner at a restaurant, an extra boat trip or anything else the guide deems appropriate."

Earth Rhythms: -Surprise them with details that they did not expect, such as: Information packages in their rooms; Thank you gifts to conveners and key contacts with each group; staff constantly accessible to all clients within the group, during the event.

Traversée de Charlevoix: "We like to exceed our customer's expectations by providing little extras: pre-trip materials, arrival briefing, borrowing equipment, luggage and food delivery, cans of fresh water daily. Some purchases at stores en route, for clients who are missing something. They appreciate us providing dishcloths and dishwashing liquid, a tablecloth and such things which are quite unexpected in wilderness."

4.5 Customise Product to Meet Particular Market Needs: Special Provisions for Particular Groups

Customising trips responds to market needs for: a greater degree of self-actualising; lack of time on vacation; varied interests; desire to sample many things; and the wish to feel special and have personal needs met. *Fresh Tracks* has a catalog with 55 pre-set packages. They use this catalog mostly as a shop window, and subsequently do many custom itineraries to best suits clients' needs and wants.

Most exemplary operators are very much able to respond to client needs for custom itineraries. *Earth Rhythms* not only customises, but prepares information packages which are customised for each individual tour or experience (with information, itinerary, what to bring, and expected, and behavior.

Be Flexible

Clearwater Raft Tours says "we have the flexibility and the ample time to tailor any trip to meet a clients needs, be it opting to fly from Saskatoon to La Loche, or meeting our clients at the river if they choose to drive themselves, or package with other companies along the route that they request specifically, e.g., a paper-mill tour."

Every time a potential client calls, *Niagara Nature Tours* works with them to accommodate their needs and wishes, as well as offering ideas as to what they think is appropriate for their group. “We are willing to customize each tour as to the client’s interests.”

Decide what you Don't Do

Mountain Quest mainly does very personalised programs: Many prospective clients would rather just plunk down their money and go on a canned program. We do not offer that and pass them on to other operators. Many also wish that they could join a group on one of our programs, but because we don't have scheduled departures, they are unwilling to pay what it costs to initiate an “on demand” departure for themselves.

Apart from the able bodies who have preferences, there are other types of challenging groups with special needs. Exemplary operators meet such needs. For example, *Seacoast Expeditions* has fulfilled wishes for children with terminal diseases, taken mentally handicapped passengers, and a blind person with dog.

Horseshoe Canyon has a U-Drive Tour which will accommodate all persons who are able to ride, strapped in by a seat belt, on a vehicle. This includes the disabled, the elderly, children, and infants. It is a pleasure to see a family come whose members have a variety of physical abilities and ages, and they can participate via the U-Drive Tour, together. The Interpretive Centre is wheelchair accessible. The windows of the Centre are positioned so that individuals in a wheelchair and children can see the panoramic view.

Adapt or Design Equipment to Deal with Special Needs

Chockpaw Expeditions: “We can accommodate any age level, any level of disability, physical, mental, emotional, social. Staff are specifically trained for this and extra staff assigned as needed.”

Gros Morne Adventure Guides had a special chair designed by a provincial rehabilitation centre to adapt into their sea kayaks, to take children with disabilities out to experience kayaking. They only promote this through word-of-mouth at present.

Naturally Superior Adventures: the voyageur canoe was purchased partly to handle disabled people including elderly & very young— one of our instructors has a special interest in teaching sea kayaking to disabled people

The ability to adapt programming to respond to client or other needs might be just as important *during* the trip, as *before* it starts.

Meet the Needs of the Group and the Circumstances

Crowsnest Vacation Creations: We have the ability to restructure programs very easily according to weather or customer mind changes. It is important to communicate carefully with what customers can expect. Be apologetic when appropriate; people are very forgiving when honest mistakes are made as long as there is no attempt to lie.

Canoe Arctic, as part of its safety procedures, has a satellite telephone and VHF radio on all trips, in case of medical emergency, and to rendezvous with chartered aircraft at the end of each trip. In addition, they provide the air charter company with a written record of their route, and the day and hour to meet on the return flight to Fort Smith. But they do not limit their canoe trips to a single final rendezvous point. Instead, they provide a number of previously-scouted rendezvous locations scattered over the latter half of the canoe routes because “I know that weather condition, desires and capabilities of my clients and a variety of other circumstances can affect our rate of travel”. Additionally, in the event of a complete communications breakdown, the system of predesignated locations works very well.

Good Business Tip: Have the flexibility to respond readily to changes in customer requirements.

5. Training & Human Resources Development

5.1 Human Resources are Your Most Important Asset

Exemplary operators assess staff knowledge, and where necessary, develop a training program to cover basic information about the area, as well as appropriate behaviour for *all* staff who have contact with the clients (bus drivers, hostesses, reception); these operators also know the need for a specific training program for their guides.

Successful companies recognise that people are an expensive investment and worthy of maximum attention, especially if their contribution is to be optimised. Full employee commitment cannot be expected without commitment in return. Some of the fundamentals related to human resources and their skills are:

- view people as a resource rather than a cost
- encourage teamwork by encouraging all staff to collectively contribute to the operational strategy
- make a public commitment from the top, to develop all employees to achieve business objectives
- regularly review training and development needs of all employees
- take action to train and develop individuals at the time of recruitment and throughout their employment, to increase skills of company operatives
- encourage multiskilling
- evaluate training and development activities, to see how well staff are meeting the needs of the operation, and modify where necessary

Having qualified and trained staff contributes to the professionalism of the organisation, and helps ensure a quality experience for guests. All staff matter in this respect, whether in the kitchens, the reception, or the guides. Of course, the guides are the main “front line” staff in adventure and ecotourism, and their capabilities of ensuring a safe, enjoyable and fulfilling experience are critical.

All Staff Require Training for Quality Assurance

Expeditions Eau Vive uses training as a method of quality assurance: “The training of our personnel is indispensable for the survival of our company. The first stage is before the season begins, a training workshop lasting a week is organized each year. Over the course of this week, different points are touched upon: reception, managing of a group, river safety, first aid, animation, management and preparation of meals, procedures to safeguard the environment. This training session is *mandatory* to work for us: it ensures that all the guides apply the same procedures when facing the environment.”

Best practice in every business activity requires effective input and management of employees, temporary, seasonal or permanent. Business plans should set out how training and development needs are to be identified and met, and companies should dedicate specific resources to training and developing employees. However, with seasonal or temporary workers, scheduling and employment may be harder.

Many adventure and ecotourism companies are small or seasonal. Because of the nature of their business, it may not be possible to employ all their staff all year. Managing under these circumstances may be a challenge. Useful practices include ensuring that staff are trained in multiple skills, to assist flexible working practices. In addition, it is helpful to assist staff to become increasingly versatile with

new technologies. *Bathurst Inlet Lodge* says “none of us can depend on tourism for a living here in the North. We all work at other things.”

Good Business Tip: Encourage Multi-tasking, and new skill development, especially for seasonal employees.

5.2 Belong to Professional Organisations

Membership in professional associations can lead to staff acquiring new skills or accreditation, and new interests and contacts. This can have the added advantage that networking brings, as well as new and relevant information for the profession. *Wanipitei* belongs to the Ontario Camping Association, Ontario Recreational Canoe Association, and the Canadian Recreational Canoe Association. Boreal Wilderness Guides, for example, belong to Interpretation Canada, Manitoba Wildlife Society, CTCA, MRCA, CANSI, Manitoba Best (Manitoba Tourism Education Council), Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association, Manitoba Aboriginal Tourism Association, Manitoba Metis Federation, Licensed guides and outfitters (Manitoba Natural Resources) and others.

Niagara Nature Tours’ guides have very many varied backgrounds, and they are professionals so do belong to associations. In addition, the company itself belongs to the Festival and Events Niagara, which is an association of event management professionals that evolved from within the special event industry through the facilitation of the Niagara Economic and Tourism Corporation, to share resources, explore co-operative marketing opportunities and increase credibility and tourism with the Niagara Region. They also belongs to Canadian Women in Science, Brock University.

Good Business Practice: Participate in industry organisations and associations.

5.3 Create a Team

The attitude toward staff varies from operator to operator, however, exemplary operators have a special relationship with their staff, who develop loyalty, motivation, and passion, and contribute to the company’s success. Staff are a resource for any company, and all levels and types of staff have ideas which may assist the company, if they are enabled to have input.

Enable Unique Staff Abilities and Experiences to Contribute

Niagara Nature Tours: we all work together to develop our programming, but we encourage each tour leader to add their own personality and spin, on the tour they lead. We do not want any guides just memorizing a script. We want our life experiences to be part of the tour. E.g. I talk about my mother being a Farmerette visiting for the summer from the Ottawa Valley, and all her adventures in the Niagara Peninsula during World War 2 (as they relate to our tours)

Bathurst Inlet Lodge: “Practically all our staff have visited us in the south or accompanied us on holidays, and we do not lose an opportunity to teach based on this. Much of our dealings with our staff are based on love and mutual respect; they are an extended family to us. We work *together* to make the Lodge a success, and to help each guest realize his/her ‘arctic dreams’.”

Involve Front Line Staff in Suggestions and Decision Making

~~*Voyageur Quest* says: “Guides are extremely involved in decision making. Guides submit trip reports to Director after every trip and list their feedback and suggestions. Guides are encouraged to be proactive in making our program better. Suggestions that are feasible are enacted immediately.”~~ In addition, they holds company-wide meetings - at the end of every season, where the whole company spends a week end meeting, discussing what

Seacoast Expeditions have regular staff meetings to solicit feedback from staff about company policy, as well as a mid-season evaluation, and informal daily contact.

Good Business Practice: Motivate staff by involving them in the decisions that effect their working environment.

5.4 Training: Formal and Informal

There is a strong move towards recognising the importance of training, especially if operators are to compete in national and world markets. Training and development of staff should be effectively planned in an organised way. It is not only those companies who compete at the international level who need to have excellence.

Good Business Practice : Dedicate specific resources to training and developing employees.

In-House Training

Exemplary companies were involved in providing training programs for staff, or facilitating this training. Not all training has to take place outside the company. Companies can hire outside experts to come in, or can design courses or other training models themselves.

Good Business Practice: All employees have their own personal development plan.

Walden's Guiding and Outfitting say "we are always fine-tuning our trips".
Wanipitei says "all staff receive an extensive staff manual and participate in staff training each year. We do internal training."

Create Your Own Training Session

Scott Walking Tours: We have a workshop/training session with our guides and have role playing and sessions on how to improve our adventures.

External Training and Accreditation

Whether in-house or external, every training event should be planned, and in line with the company business plan and training objectives. All expenditure on training can be wasted if the results are not measured, and modified accordingly.

Make it Easy for Staff to Get Training - Flexible Schedules, Course Subsidy, Regular Salary

At *Esprit Rafting*, most staff are paid by the days they work. Usually training courses are done during days off. The company reschedules to ensure staff are not missing their share of workdays. They provide free food and accommodation for staff during training courses plus a discounted rate for their course. They pay tuition fees in advance for staff to be deducted from their "staff book". Salaried employees get their regular salary whether they are working or training.

Subsidise or Assist External Training and Accreditation

Wanipitei says apart from the staff manual and annual in-house training, "staff may obtain their certification/training while not in our employ, but we subsidize the cost of courses."

Good Business Tip: Consider external standards as a basis for measuring training achievement.

5.5 Create Your Own Standards

Challenges of training include the fact that for some activities in adventure travel and ecotourism, there are no industry standards or training. Some operators get around this in innovative ways, and create their own.

Create Your Own Standards and Training, When None Exist

Chocpaw Expeditions says there is no official certification for dog sled expedition guides. "Therefore, we developed our own. Guiding sledding expeditions brings the added responsibility of cold weather travel and dog handling skills. My guides state this to be far more demanding physically and mentally than any other guiding they have done".

5.6 Provide Feedback on Performance

There is a need for staff performance appraisal, in order to assist the company measure results and performance overall, as well as individual staff to evaluate their performance. Sometimes developing specific goals helps:

Develop Personal and Group Goals

Esprit Rafting holds pre-season "goal setting" meetings as well as mid season performance reviews. This year they are hoping to do monthly reviews. They know it is "very time consuming yet important".

Expéditions Eau Vive has a philosophy to inspire their guides, obtained through training, to surpass the expected and the technical requirements of their jobs. A guide must also let participants enter into a contract with themselves, and through nature, encourage them to live fully in the present.

Some of the fundamentals of appraisal include:

- give feedback to staff on the contributions they make to the organisation
- the formal feedback process can be used to identify training needs, possible promotion opportunities or salary increases
- negotiate with staff appropriate career opportunities and salary levels based on their performance

Good Business Practice: Regularly use appraisal interviews or staff review to reassess training needs.

5.7 Recognise, Reward, and Provide Incentives

Everyone likes their efforts to be recognised and valued. When companies provide something tangible, their contributions are known to be valued. Acknowledgment of staff contribution can be done in a variety of ways.

Let Staff Know About a Job Well Done

Traversée de Charlevoix says that if letters or commendations from customers mention a particular employee, they ensure they pass on the message to him/her, as an acknowledgment of a good job done.

Good Business Practice: Have systems for rewarding employees who consistently achieve more than their planned results.

A Prize Shows Staff are Valued, and Creates Incentives

Esprit Rafting says “we have a weekly award called “Feat of the Week” which is a weekly good job or deed of the week acknowledgment for our staff. The staff member with the most accumulated “FEATS” wins a \$500.00 travel voucher.”

6. Resource Protection and Sustainability

6.1 Be Sensitive to the Environment

One of the key operating principles of exemplary adventure travel and ecotourism operations is that they tread lightly upon the natural environment. This may involve such activities as:

- an environmental management plan to encourage the sustainable use of resources and avoid environmental damage
- established procedures to minimise impact on the environment, such as minimising resource consumption and waste
- establishing green purchase policies
- procedures related to hazardous materials or overcoming environmental hazards
- a visitor management plan to balance environmental conservation and visitor enjoyment
- supporting conservation initiatives by others

Exemplary operations make an effort to move toward a range of appropriate behaviours in all facets of their operation in the natural or built environment. Often, the degree to which such activities are undertaken reflects the company mission and vision.

Often Behaviour Reflects Company Philosophy

Churchill Nature Tours: Our goal/ philosophy for any nature tour is to create or expand interest in nature. Which builds understanding, fosters appreciation and promotes conservation and protection

Mountain Quest: “Our mission is to make people feel closer to nature and to better understand how they are connected to it so that they make a more proactive stand for conservation.”

Ecomertours Nord Sud says “the educational side of our cruises are very important. Our motto is: *We protect what we love and we love what we know.* This motto is a part of all our activities.” The operation of *Earth Rhythms* is “based on environmentally sustainable principles, because the natural environment and in particular ‘learning about the natural environment’ are at the core of many of the experiences designed. In this regard, *Earth Rhythms* practices what it teaches and exercises environmentally sensitive behavior in every aspect of its operation.”

Aim to Educate Clients on Conservation and Clients’ Role

Quoddy Link Marine: “we hope and try to ensure that our tours provide our passengers with an educational experience that emphasizes the need for a healthy and diverse ecosystem not only in our area of operation, but worldwide. While much of our narratives focus directly on certain species and other points of interest, we also attempt to educate our passengers on how all aspects of our environment are inter-related. The health of one directly or indirectly affects the other and ultimately the health of the human race. While whales, seals and bald eagles are the visual and tangible reminders of what a healthy ecosystem can produce and what will be lost through irresponsibility, they are only a small part of a much larger equation, much of which cannot be seen and which therefore are not fully appreciated or understood. Through these tours we directly and indirectly support and promote local as well as worldwide conservation efforts through education.”

6.2 Conserve and Manage Energy, Water, Waste, and Transportation

Exemplary operators are conscious of their own, internal consumption patterns, related to energy, water, and materials conservation, waste and sewage minimisation, transportation and other practices.

Even Tour Operators Have a Built Facility for their Office - Where they can Conserve Resources

Earth Rhythms operates out of a 'R-2000' home and uses principles of sustainable tourism in every thing it does whether they offer experiences through Riding Mountain National Park, deliver wild game feasts, or put on a cultural experience with Aboriginal people. For transportation, they encourage not only suppliers, but also customers, to carpool or to use a few larger vehicles rather than many small vehicles. Also, when serving and preparing meals, all plastic, glass, dishes, cutlery and cookware that is used is washable and reusable, not disposable. This includes napkins that are made from cloth instead of paper. Further, what can not be re-used will be either recycled or disposed of in an environmentally responsible way.

Smoothwater Outfitters believe that they are "seen as part of a visionary movement toward reduced consumption of resources, sustainable economic activity and the conservation of critical wildlife habitat and sensitive ecosystems." *Remote Passages*, a marine-based firm, practices no-trace camping; garbage from all programs are returned to base; and floating garbage (where possible) is retrieved and disposed of.

Promote and Practice the 3 Rs

Wanipitei: Our programs all promote waste reduction, reuse and recycling. Programs are camping based, so energy conservation is only an issue with air travel. With respect to cooking, etc., we practice minimal energy use. At our lodge we are off the Hydro grid and use a combination of generators and alternate sources such as battery storage of power, solar, etc. Make every effort to combine transport needs with other programs, businesses etc. to minimize. All programs practice minimum impact camping. Minimization of garbage at all times as well

6.3 Develop Policies for Purchases and Suppliers

Some environmentally sensitive actions can be encouraged by companies who not only have policies or procedures for their own operation/facility, but wish to deal with companies who have similar approaches and activities. *Borealis Outdoor Adventures* purchases local goods and services where available, favoring suppliers who minimize packaging. They also frequent Farmers Markets, which provide both excellent sources of supply and additional adventure for guests.

Select Supplies with Environmentally Sensitive Practices

Wanipitei: For purchase of bulk supplies we try and purchase from suppliers who minimize packaging and are environmentally conscious. This practice often comes into conflict with an attempt to purchase supplies locally as environmental products may not be available.

Earth Rhythms practices ecological sustainability by insisting that all suppliers of goods and services fulfill the concept of the 'Three Rs' (reduce, re-use, and recycle). This is especially important due to the fact that Earth Rhythms is a 'partner-driven' enterprise that primarily designs experiences and therefore depends for most products (food, accommodation, arts and crafts, etc.) on other businesses and enterprises. In order to ensure that the company's experiences do not threaten the ecological sustainability of the destination areas, Earth Rhythms will only use suppliers that respect and practice environmentally sensitive *behaviours*, e.g., all suppliers are asked to pack goods in returnable, re-usable containers.

Horseshoe Canyon Tours have planted native grasses and flowers and encourage their use by offering native plant seeds for sale. They emphasise the sale of other natural products Centre (e.g., sunflowers seeds or green unshelled peas) rather than processed snacks.

Most of the operators contacted had camping accommodation, although a number had fixed roof (farms, lodges, cottages, partner hotels, etc.). But *all* companies have built facilities for headquarters. Some fundamentals of conservation to consider, particularly for fixed roof operations and partners/suppliers which have built facilities, are:

Category	Sustainable Practices
<i>Water</i>	Minimize water use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use rainwater or other sustainable supply • use tap aerators, low flow showerheads, low flush toilets, • written advice to clients to minimise water use • policies encouraging reuse of linen by guests
<i>Energy</i>	Minimize energy use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use sustainable supply of energy • implement such practices as using fluorescent rather than incandescent lights, load management for peak loads, energy efficient equipment, heat recovery, energy audits motion sensor switches installed
<i>Sewage & Waste Water</i>	Minimize sewage & effluent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grey water reuse • disposal in remote areas only used where there is no alternative • wastewater and effluent treatment systems do not discharge into the natural environment • cleaning chemicals are selected to be biodegradable • human waste is carried out and disposed of at an appropriate facility
<i>Waste</i>	Minimize waste <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • materials are purchased to minimise packaging • disposable items not used • bulk purchases • both staff & clients participate in recycling programs • collection and removal of all litter encountered is practiced • all promotional material is produced on recycled paper
<i>Transportation</i>	Transport involves minimal energy use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopt such measures as: tour routes planned to minimise distances; clients encouraged to use fuel efficient transport (courtesy transfer, bicycles provided, public transport information provided) • staff are encouraged to carpool or a special bus is provided • vehicles are regularly maintained • fuel efficient options are used
<i>Noise</i>	Operations enable clients to experience the natural soundscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vehicles are not left running when idle • generators not used at campsite unless they cannot be heard in visitor areas • service and maintenance facilities are located away from public areas, or are soundproofed
<i>Air</i>	Operations involve minimal air pollution
<i>Light</i>	Where natural lighting is inadequate, lighting is minimised to that required to increase the visibility of signs and displays and to provide for safety and security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • external lighting is minimised, only necessary for orientation, security and safety • floodlights not used in public areas • clients provided with personal portable lights to avoid fixed lighting outside
<i>Vegetation</i>	Preserve and promote indigenous vegetation where appropriate
<i>Site Disturbance</i>	Minimize site disturbance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disturbed areas are rehabilitated to restore ecological processes • development & ongoing use of the site involved minimal clearing of native vegetation and avoided disruption to wildlife movement and breeding patterns • specific programs implemented to protect vegetation & landscaping uses native species
<i>Scenic</i>	Operations do not dominate, or cause apparent scenic alterations

Fresh Air Adventure uses and encourages a variety of conservation measures. On tour, they carry their food, etc., in cloth bags made by their company, instead of plastic. This company has a Philosophy and Practices related to the environment, contained within their Business Plan and Management Plan. Similarly, *Voyageur Quest* has a number of measures: including recycling; toilets on a low water gravity feed that use only 4oz of water per flush; hand pumping of water to the sink minimises waste; bulk purchases; and other measures.

Environmentally Friendly Practices Are Possible Throughout Your Operation

Remote Passages implements a number of practices: *Waste Reduction* - minimize throw away items, e.g., use glass tea cups instead of paper or styrofoam, recycle clients' bottles and cans, reuse bond paper on second side, use cloth hand towels instead of paper; *Energy Conservation* - use dimmer switches and low energy light bulbs; *Water Conservation* - use dishwasher which conserves power and water, control leaks in outdoor hoses used for washing equipment; *Transportation* - have new technology in outboard engines which use less oil and gas (direct fuel injection), engines are regularly well-maintained for peak performance; *Green Purchase* - Brochures and letterhead are printed on recycled paper, chlorine-free when possible/practical, although this is always more expensive, and often difficult to source.

6.4 Minimise Impacts on Wildlife

Exemplary operators were conscious of wildlife-related issues. Very often, wildlife is a prime motivator for ecotourism, and really enhances the experience for adventure travellers; thus practices which are concerned with the well-being of wildlife have a double benefit - to visitors and to wildlife.

Some ways that operations can minimise disturbance to wildlife, include developing appropriate formal policies/guidelines that are clearly understood by all staff, such as:

- wildlife viewing avoids ongoing repeated, regular and sustained disturbance
- wildlife handling is inappropriate in most instances
- interpretive experiences that demonstrate/actively involve traditional hunting are undertaken by aboriginal individuals and do not include rare, threatened or endangered species
- feeding of wildlife is not undertaken and is actively discouraged
- interpretation of wildlife conservation issues, biology and behaviour is provided as part of the tour
- codes of ethics adopted by certain groups (e.g., commercial whale watchers) are practiced
- maximum numbers of viewers (vehicles or boats) allowed within certain distances of wildlife
- maintain radio communication for orderly management and safety
- contributions to development of policy, standards or projects related to wildlife
- provide research assistance

All groups to *Bathurst Inlet Lodge* are guided by people who are very conscious of the danger to wildlife and people. They control the actions of guests by limiting where they can go, how they approach nests or wildlife, and how long they stay in any proximity to wildlife. "Photographers are the most difficult, with escalating desires regarding the photography of wildlife. We attribute this in part to the fact that many published photos of wildlife are of captive animals, yet the photo caption does not say this. People think they can acquire the same sort of photos in the wild."

Keep Group Sizes Small

In order to keep environmental impact as minimal as possible, *Earth Rhythms* operates only with small travel groups, especially when operating in the backcountry. In general, the ratio of guides to visitors is 1:12 or 2:15. However, backcountry experiences involving horses for transportation have ratios closer to 2:4 (i.e. guide, outfitter: participants) for such activities as wildlife viewing and photography.

Remote Passages has guidelines for working around whales and other wildlife (when approaching wildlife, vessels are required to slow down ½ mile from animals and move in at slow speed; maintain 50

meters from whales and watch for behaviour which indicates the vessel may be disturbing the wildlife). *Voyageur Quest's* wildlife viewing guidelines include silent paddling and no speaking.

Focus on Understanding the Wildlife Habitat Rather Than Viewing the Wildlife

Quoddy Link Marine: To discourage unrealistic expectations of viewing rare wildlife, we promote our excursions as "Whale Search and Nature Cruises". Unlike "whale watching" the name does not suggest or imply you will be guaranteed to be watching whales. Our brochures and other promotional material always state that we do not guarantee whales or other wildlife. Individuals are also advised of this at the time of inquiry or prior to booking. *Quoddy Link Marine* is a signatory to the Bay of Fundy's Marine Tour Operators' Code of Ethics. This Code was developed to foster trust and cooperation between operators and to ensure the ethical viewing of wildlife. We also work with other tour vessels to track and report wildlife. This has significantly increased everyone's viewing success rate. This information is shared between tour vessels and sea kayaking businesses.

Besides the examples of minimum impact on wildlife practices, there are a number of destinations globally, which have instituted specialised minimum impact policies. These include minimal impact boating guidelines, minimal impact hiking, minimal impact vehicle use, minimal impact whale and dolphin watching, and no trace camping. The latter are more common in Canada.

Be Aware of Various Types of Habitat Sensitivities

Sawyer Lake Adventures is unusually sensitive to the specific needs of the many types of habitats and wildlife. Their guidelines, therefore, are not "firm", but vary with the species, the age of animal, the season, and so on (e.g., mother with young, breeding season, etc.). In addition, they are sensitive not simply to the animals themselves, but to animal travel corridors and use areas. Thus they consider feeding, bedding, antler rubs, scrapes or roosting spots, and the need to visit at a time of day when the wildlife are not using them.

6.5 Minimise Impacts on Natural Environments, and Guide Visitor Behaviour

Environmentally sensitive practices can help preserve environments which are susceptible to visitor and local use. *Clearwater Raft Tours*, the only licensed operator on the Clearwater River, was found to have less impact than any other user group (e.g., canoeists, schools, etc.), through their positive practices (this was concluded by an independent firm hired to conduct an environmental study of the impact tourism had on the River over the last ten years, by The Saskatchewan Department of Environment and Resource Management). *It is possible to make a difference by one's practices.*

Most of the exemplary operations are very conscious that the natural environment is the resource on which their operation is based, and have implemented numerous best practices related to minimum environmental impact. *Gros Morne Adventure Guides*, for example, follows the Tourism Industry Association of Canada Guidelines for Sustainability. *Chocpaw* monitors the area they travel, keeping records of fauna and flora and misuse, and where possible, they remediate.

Guide Visitor Behaviour by Education and Example

Niagara Nature Tours interpreters carry domestic ginger in their pockets with a pocket knife. When they are on the trail and see wild ginger, guests can see the plant, smell the rhizomes, and guides cut a little piece of the ginger from their pocket, so each person gets to taste it. "Guests see by example that we do not dig up the plants to let them taste it, and then we can explain about the ethics of edible wild harvesting."

Earth Rhythms prepares its customers before their vacation by providing a "getting prepared" package, including a section about appropriate environmental or cultural behaviour. Despite this orientation package, the company believes that it is best to learn environmentally sensitive behavior by example, therefore places emphasis on practice and educating customers during their on-site experiences. This includes hands-on practice in 'no trace camping and touring'.

Minimal Impact Practices Vary by Destination

Bathurst Inlet Lodge is an Arctic lodge: We begin by establishing (with the visitor group as a whole), the guidelines and procedures we will use, by emphasising the fact that we will not jeopardize either wildlife or humans, and that we want to ensure that *all* in the group get the same opportunity to see wildlife, so we organize stalks as a group. Our guides *know* the land and the wildlife, and are able to do this efficiently. When starting a stalk or landing in the vicinity of any nests, we review the rules of the stalk and get agreement from all in the group. If necessary, we gently approach anyone who is breaking the rules and personally point out the possible results. Only rarely do we have a problem. As part of our general operations plan we keep records of wildlife sightings and nests, etc. (have done this for 30 years). We know, for instance, that there has been no reduction of peregrine nests on the islands we visit, and that some nesting cliffs have been constantly used for 30 years. In addition:

- We are careful about our use of paths, and try hard not to establish them, by taking different routes if possible.
- No garbage is left behind. All our guides are trained to look for this, and to pick up anything that is dropped, even used tissues.
- We bring in lots of eggs at the beginning of the season, so the local people do not need to visit gull nests to acquire the eggs which have been a traditional delicacy to them. They are happy to have the substitutes.
- We supply freezer space to the families in our community, so caribou meat can be kept and eaten fresh, limiting its waste. We have flown in a community freezer at Lodge expense, for the same reason.
- Community clean-ups are done each year, with people on the Lodge payroll while doing this. Even the children are involved and encouraged to help, with little rewards or allowances provided.
- Young teenagers are often paid by the Lodge to ensure that the sled dogs in the community are supplied with drinking water in the summer. If people seem to be neglecting their dogs, we mention it, and it is rapidly resolved. Lodge staff handle all rabies vaccinations for the sled dogs in the community, ensuring that all are vaccinated.

Horseshoe Canyon steps to preserve natural areas/their image:

- Prepared walking trails and request that visitors stay on them.
- Roped off natural vegetation areas to discourage visitors from trampling the natural areas.
- Provide refuse containers
- Provide ashtrays for visitors to place cigarette butts to prevent this form of litter
- Planted eleven acres of land into native grasses.
- Placed wooden steps for pathways where erosion could occur
- Advise that no wild flowers should be picked
- Do not use Coke or other highly commercial signs to attract sales.

Horseshoe Canyon Tours, a firm which provides U-Drive ATVs and interpretive materials for use on their own private canyon lands, have a major concern related to maintaining an unspoiled natural attraction, yet encouraging people to visit and enjoy its wonders. They have all visitors (hikers and ATV renters) sign a statement agreeing to follow environmental guidelines when they enter the Canyon.

At present they have difficulty enforcing these rules because in other parts of the Canyon, landowners do not have any guidelines and allow unsupervised access, have no concern about the vegetation degradation by hikers and canyon viewers, nor do they monitor littering, or rock graffiti.

Their rules include cautions not to remove any fossils, plants, artifacts or rocks from the designated Natural Reserve and no indiscriminate mountain bike riding through the badlands.

Good Business Practice: Having a system in place to identify environmental impacts and review environmental performance, helps prevent problems.

Be Sensitive to Habitat Variations

Sawyer Lake Adventures takes considerable time planning trips, because they are aware that not all areas can handle the same amount of visitation or type of use or traffic, or mode of travel. For example, we have an “elk rub” that is located in a bS + Lj1 ecosite with a ground cover of sphagnum moss. This is a delicate type of ground cover; thus we only go into it barefoot and/or with moccasins. This has allowed more trips to a sacred “rub area”.

6.6 Support Regional Conservation Efforts

Exemplary operators not only are conscious of trying to ensure that their operations minimize negative environmental impacts, but they are conscious that by creating support for conservation initiatives (in the region and much further afield), they will be contributing to needed environmental benefits at a greater scale.

Support for local/regional conservation initiatives could include:

- monitoring impacts
- regeneration of disturbed areas
- education programs (schools and visitors)
- concession rates for educational tours
- involvement with conservation groups
- site hardening
- guests/clients are encouraged to participate in conservation initiatives
- proactive in-house research
- long term partnerships with local conservation groups, which provide mutual tangible benefits

Many exemplary operators support conservation projects in which they and the regional community have a stake. *Mountain Quest* hosts a web page for the Central Rockies Wolf Project. *Soci t  Duvetnor* administrators were the first to push to have the marine park Saguenay-Saint-Laurent expanded (from 500 square km to the current 1138 square kilometers) and they have intervened on behalf of other environmental causes.

Scott Walking Adventures is committed to the environment and its preservation, and are members of the Sierra Club, Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy, Nova Scotia Adventure Tourism Assoc. and the Nova Scotia Ecotourism Development Foundation.

Remote Passages supports clean-up efforts on coastal beaches by sending their vessel to collect garbage collected by beach clean-up crews. They drop off Forest Watch crew from local environmental groups.

Enable Visitors to Contribute

Remote Passages developed a Postcard campaign aimed at government and industry to make them aware of commercial-scale rainforest logging and public concerns regarding the loss of local wilderness areas. This connected visitors to local environmental issues. In addition, they assist local research which is funded by their clients' \$1 research donation – there is interesting data posted, and clients learn about the research on their excursion.

Niagara Nature Tours was active during the formation of The Conservation Lands of Ontario (CLO) and helped formulate a contract between their company and the local Niagara Parks Commission (NPC), which they follow faithfully. In addition to contract requirements, they also contribute financially for each tour done on Conservation lands, or any other non-profit organizations' lands. They donate to a number of causes, and the owner and staff volunteer time for many events. Examples of volunteer activities include:

- developed and led tours for the CLO, and a slide-show programme for which the Conservation Authority collected the revenues; led tours for their special events and open houses; collected, set-up and stayed with display booths for special events on weekends, when the Authority could not fund staff to attend. In return the CLO allowed company material to also be on display; Niagara Nature Tours helped the CLO when it was in the product club stage, and escorted and guided the CLO author of *44 Country Trails* book, and helped edit the copy;
- wrote and submitted tour ideas for NPC lands, including value added ideas such as restaurants, wineries, shops, galleries etc.; provided publicity for the NPC lands during interviews for newspapers, magazines, cable TV, and radio; followed contract guidelines for the NPC, until the CLO contract took legal precedence, where the company provided 10% of the gross sales of each tour to the NPC; monitored the natural resource and impact of ecotourist activities, using a specific set of guidelines, on CLO properties.

Join a Conservation Group and Be Active

Lazy M Ranch Country Adventures: We are presently involved with the '*Bighorn Wildlands Coalition*' which is attempting to have a portion of the eastern slopes designated/legislated as an area similar to that of the Kananaskis Country. It is *very important* to educate the public about the commercial situation of our rapidly disappearing mountainous regions. Not a fanatical campaign by any means!!

Voyageur Quest contributes to a number of regional conservation efforts by being a proactive member of the Algonquin Forgotten Trails Association - which strives to protect the environment. They actively lobby the MNR in Ontario with respect to protecting the wilderness at the North west of Algonquin Park - including visits to the Minister of the Natural Resources, letters to the Premier and Deputy ministers, and seasonal visits to the Bracebridge MNR office.

Esprit Rafting has been very active in the local river protection association "Friends of the Pontiac Rivers" as well as their tourist association.

Expeditions Eau Vive is also on a committee for the protection of rivers. In collaboration with the Canoe Club of Pierre Radisson (Huguette Forget) they have organized a basic level, translated by a series of Eskimo (maneuvering) courses in the pool for the winter. The monies received are used to finance the Committee For The Protection Of Rivers Of The Outaouais. We have also lent out equipment to this committee, for their activities.

Some companies help resource conservation by assisting research activities.

Facilitate Research

Mariner Cruises accommodates biology students.

Remote Passages: Monetary support for local research organizations and projects (contribution collected with ticket payment goes 100% to research organizations).

Ornitours works toward conservation of the snow geese, wetland protection, protection of dead trees as nesting grounds, destruction of Purple Loosestrife, and respect and ethics for the average citizen. They work in collaboration with the Canadian Wildlife Service to flush the snow geese out of the fields during the spring.

Seacoast Expeditions supports a number of researchers and organisations involved in conservation of the local resident killer whale population.

Boreal Wilderness Guides have a strategic partnership with Taiga Biological Station, to bring ecotourists to the research station to learn about the boreal forest. In return for his help, we donate money to the station for research and maintenance”.

A considerable number of exemplary companies donate dollars to research or to conservation organisations.

Contribute Financially

Blue Heron Nature Tours contributes \$10.00 for each guest to a local fund to be used for the conservation of the Manitou Sand Hills.

Windigo Wilderness provides a percentage of trip fees to support local conservation groups with projects in their area.

Sawyer Lake Adventures contributes a small percentage of revenues towards a conservation cause, in this case, projects related to ecosystem and/or endangered species preservation.

Earth Rhythms' contributes financially (~2% of net income) to specific scientific, conservation and cultural programs, and acts as a lever to obtain further corporate and partner funding to dedicate to these targeted programs. They are developing more structured conservation program donations. Current programs include the following:

- wolf deprecation compensation program at Riding Mountain National Park
- Smithsonian biodiversity plot monitoring programs
- university graduate student research studies
- aboriginal land use studies

Western Canadian River Adventures: We contribute the 2% of gross revenues in projects that directly help conserve wilderness in these areas. They also demonstrate what this money is achieving through the newsletter and the web page (which demonstrates the concrete contribution, as well as being appropriate marketing), including:

1. a wolf sponsorship program to assist biologists in information gathering and tracking.
2. the Bighorn Country Wildland Coalition (N. Saskatchewan River area), which lobbies in the interests of preserving forests in areas of biological importance or where ecotourism operators are located. The owner also sits on the Committee
3. the Yellowstone to Yukon initiative. Its focus is to preserve larger ecosystems through a network of protection mechanisms, e.g., Parks, Federal forest lands and conservation easements.

Despite such significant contributions (financial and in-kind) to conservation causes, exemplary operators are continually looking for further ways to contribute.

Look For Ways to Improve your Contributions

Quoddy Link Marine provides monetary donations to local conservation organizations, participates in and have pledged future assistance to such activities as beach clean-ups, and in 1998 began an annual charity cruise in which 50% of the proceeds are donated to the Local Conservation Council. *We have also identified ourselves to the local conservation group as an organization willing to provide further support should instances or efforts arise in which we can be of assistance. We do recognize, however, that there may be future opportunities to play a greater role in conservation issues.*

6.7 Other Ways to Contribute

Exemplary operators reflected the fact they are genuinely caring about the environments and communities which support their operations, and some found interesting ways to contribute.

CanoeSki Discovery has compiled a five page document entitled “*Wilderness Environmental Ethics and Responsible Ecotourism*” including a discussion of issues regarding the sustainability of Saskatchewan. They developed canoeing areas for inclusion in the Canoe Saskatchewan website, and participated in a Government of Saskatchewan Parks Branch brochure development project: “Canoe Safety and Ethics”.

Ecomertours Nord Sud says “the educational side of our cruises are very important. Our motto is: ‘we protect what we love and we love what we know’. This motto is a part of all our activities. The entire crew is sensitive to the respect of the environment, the wildlife, and the flora of the islands and rivers that we visit. We are a part of the active observation network of the sea mammals of the Lower St. Lawrence affiliated to the biosphere of Montreal (Environment Canada).”

Operators can also provide a constructive contribution to the management of natural areas they visit by such means as:

- giving fees to natural area managers
- providing information exchange, etc.
- providing visitation data on request (to relevant natural area managers)
- assisting with such activities as: monitoring environmental impacts, visitor facility maintenance, garbage removal, provision of interpretive materials/displays, encouraging appropriate behaviour by other visitors, rehabilitation of areas, policy and planning assistance

Good Business Practice: Contribute dollars of in-kind toward the environment that support your operation.

7. Social and Community Contribution

7.1 Take Ownership of Your Region of Operations

Not all companies can be based (i.e., live and work) in the region in which they operate, particularly if they operate in more than one location. However, working with local communities, providing them with direct and indirect benefits, and actively conducting operations as if supporting the community were of great importance, can lead to a more sustainable, rewarding experience for the operator, the guest and the local people.

Some good practice fundamentals of working with local communities include:

- employ local residents
- be active in your local organisation/association
- use the services of local people and businesses wherever possible
- purchase the goods and services of local providers wherever possible
- make facility available for appropriate community activities and events whenever possible
- actively encourage “ownership of our facility within the community by seeking community involvement and input into what we do
- consult with members of local communities
- have a policy of communicating activities and direction to the broader community
- invite families and others with particular interests to special occasions
- use appropriate locally produced materials and services in any construction or maintenance of facilities
- actively liaise with other community groups promoting our region as a tourist destination

Personalise the Story of the Region

Niagara Nature Tours says: It is very important to us that we let people know that we are local, and if we were “born and raised here”. Or educated here. People come away knowing that we are of the Niagara Peninsula and that we want to protect it for future generations and Mother Earth - that even though it's not Costa Rica or the Galapagos, it still has wild areas and ecosystems worth protecting and enhancing. The Niagara Peninsula and southern Ontario have such a bad reputation for pollution and industry that it's a new way for people to view us. And I think we are exciting and challenging peoples imaginations. One memorable day, at the end of a two day tour for public school students and parents, an emotional father came and thanked each of our guides. He said that although he had been to Niagara Falls many times in his life, he “had never been to Niagara Falls.” He had taken part in two days of our programming of natural history of the Niagara Falls.

Some companies suffer from the resentment of local people and local operators, when they “come in” from outside, and are perceived to be exploiting the region. This view can be lessened if operators either contribute direct benefits locally, or enable their guests to visit (and spend money) locally.

Encourage Guests to Spend More Time Locally

Anvil Cove Charters have always encouraged our guests to visit the rest of the Islands. Tours to Gwaii Haanas Protected Area don't bring a lot of economic benefit to the community unless guests visit the rest of the Islands. It is one of the big problems that the local community has with the majority of operators here, who are not local, that they do not have their guests visit other parts of the Islands.

Incorporate Authentic Local Elements

Michie Creek Mushing, a northern company, showcases local artisan's work, emphasize Northern food, and describes the history of dog mushing in the Yukon wherever possible. *We provide a northern reading library – everything from Jack London to books on dog care and training and archeological history of the area. We inform clients of events such as the Winter Carnival, dog sled races, and festivals, which they may want to include as part of their tour. We provide suggestions for local shops and stores where they can purchase “Northern” products.*

Other, more committed approaches used by some exemplary operators include:

- provide tangible support (e.g., financial contribution, technical assistance, and in-kind) or participation to at least one local not-for-profit group/association and/or special event that contributes to the welfare of the regional community in which you operate
- support, volunteer, and contribute to local communities and events (e.g., donated prizes, infrastructure development)
- provide information to clients on how they can minimise negative impacts on the local community and its heritage
- establish local (discounted) rates for access to your tourism product
- provide free or discounted tourism experiences to local schools/educational institutions and special interest groups
- offer industry placements or work experience to students at local schools
- give the local workforce access to training that will improve their chances of more highly skilled/paid operational jobs (e.g. development of training programs, grants, in-house training)

7.2 Consult with and Involve Local People and Groups

Letting those who live in the local community know about your operation, your future plans and your vision in the region is a sensitive practice, and local people may have some useful suggestions, too.

Work With Key Local People

Wilderness Spirit: We have always relied on locals over the course of our operation as a matter of practicality and principle. Wherever we operate, we come across one or more local people who are indispensable. In the North it is especially true that the local people will simply do what you need done in the most efficient way. We find the north to be one large network in which everyone knows who can get things done and when. Even if we did not believe that we should provide local benefits wherever possible, we would do some from a purely practical point of view. Things simply work better if you have good personal relations with the people who live in the area you are working in.

Some fundamentals of incorporating a cultural component into operations or guest experiences include:

- train guides and front-line staff to minimise group impacts on local cultures in culturally sensitive areas
- provide clients with information or guidelines on appropriate behaviour in culturally sensitive areas, to assist sensitive interchange on a visit to a heritage site or community's culture
- avoid visiting sites which have restricted access due to cultural sensitivity

In areas where adventure travel and ecotourism companies operate, local communities may often include a substantial aboriginal element. Sensitivity to aboriginal culture, and appropriate practices, is required.

Some fundamentals of incorporating practices sensitive to aboriginal peoples, into operations or guest experiences include:

- consult with the aboriginal peoples, or other cultural group, about the nature and scope of your operation
- brief staff about means of respecting and showing sensitivity to aboriginal culture and heritage
- provide clients with accurate information and/or interpretation that provides the potential for better understanding and appreciation of the aboriginal heritage, culture and people of the area
- regularly involve aboriginal people in making strategic decisions, where relevant
- if there is an aboriginal component to the tour, involve appropriate aboriginal representatives in the development of interpretive materials that relate to their heritage
- offer aboriginal employees access to training in guiding (especially communication skills)
- employ appropriate aboriginal staff with an understanding and knowledge of local aboriginal heritage, to act as interpreters and/or trainers of guides in this field

Tap into the Desires and Aspirations of Aboriginal Populations

Tours Innu has a constant link with Société Touristique Innu and its members (bands council, enterprises, etc.). The direction of *Tours Innu* corresponds to the desires of the local aboriginal population, and relates directly to their social and economic development objectives. *Tours Innu* also contributes to the promotion and the safeguarding of the First Nations culture.

Good Business Practice: Initiate communications with the local community.

7.3 Employ Local People

Employing local people or using local services and businesses are some of the first principles of good practice. In addition to providing benefits to the region, it can enhance the quality of the guest's experience.

Investing in local resources can not only provide cash injections to needy regions and contribute to an authentic flavour of the region for guests, but it can inject other benefits to the region, such as local pride and self esteem, and be a factor in community social health.

Employ Local/Regional Staff and Experts

Bathurst Inlet Lodge: Our owners (Inuit and Kablunak) are experts in their own right, and are involved in the interpretation. In addition, we supply a staff naturalist (a professional biologist) who lives in Rankin Inlet in the winter (when the lodge is closed), and who has been involved with the Lodge since 1972. We are also joined by the retired Anglican Bishop of the Arctic, who is an arctic historian, linguist and expert on the Copper Inuit. Bishop Sperry shares stories of the North based on his extensive experience (since 1951), and his years of service to the people of the arctic, both in the NWT/Nunavut and in Arctic Quebec.

Develop Local Pride Through "Ownership"

Big Sand Lodge: Several years ago we were approached by local social agencies wanting to know what this project Big Sand Lake was all about. It seems the social problems in the community had decreased as the employment at the lodge had increased. The staff had genuine pride in the lodge and it was reflected in their behavior in the community.

In addition, there can be considerable benefits to the operator in investing locally:

Try Innovative Local Staff Recruitment Schemes

Esprit Rafting: I am so glad you asked this question because this is something we are extremely proud of. We have always had local support staff, but last year I realized a distinct lack of guiding job applications from our local area. To become a guide with us there are a series of courses as prerequisites. They are: Guide Training Course (\$500.00), Swiftwater Rescue Technician 1&2 (\$550.00), Wilderness First Responder (\$550.00) and ability to kayak, hence a kayaking course (500.00). For a grand total of \$2100.00. Local kids have to leave home at age 16 or 17 to continue their education because there is no CEGEP (Junior College) within 150km of our area. Therefore, by the time they turn 18 they don't have the time or money to invest in themselves to get their courses even though we pay very well once they are up and guiding.

After analyzing the situation I placed an ad in the 2 local papers for what I called the A.L.O.T. program (Adventure Leadership and Outdoor Training). I invited 16 and 17 yr. old kids and their parents to an open meeting at our basecamp. The plan was that we would take 4 interested kids who would work 6 hr shifts doing basecamp chores in their spare time in exchange for \$50.00 in credit towards their required training courses (that works out to about \$8.33/hr). Everyone told me I was crazy, that you can't get quality work from teenagers. They were so wrong!!

Instead of taking 4 kids we took 11!! It was too hard to narrow it down. The experience they gained with us was fantastic! Their parents knew they were in a safe DRUG FREE environment as they gained valuable role models. They worked hard at the basecamp and excelled on their courses. The one with the most shifts won an all expenses paid 2-week trip with us in Mexico (Rafting, Rainforest and Ruins) and 3 others flew down on their own and we hosted them for a week of kayaking in Mexico (Mexico week of Rivers). Many of these kids would never have access to travel internationally had they not been involved in the A.L.O.T. program. Two graduates from the A.L.O.T. are now 18, have completed their training courses and will work as guides for us this summer. We are very proud of them and their successes! We shall continue and expand the program this summer.

I think that this type of work exchange can be done in many different area of our society, not just with us and not just in tourism. A little bit of creative thinking can go along way, especially in an economically depressed area such as the Pontiac.

7.4 Purchase Local Goods and Services

Using the services of local businesses and communities can create tremendous goodwill and support, and can contribute to a sustainable local economy by allowing many of the benefits generated by the company to flow back into the community. Having a "purchase local when possible" policy is ideal. A number of operators do this, and strengthen the "local flavour" for customers at the same time.

Horseshoe Canyon Tours plans to serve Saskatoon pie, baked by a local chef in 1999, and to buy local products for sale, such as buffalo jerky. *Big Sand Lodge* provides the opportunity to purchase native crafts such as hand beaded moccasins. *Sea North Tours* makes a point of *not* competing with other small local businesses in the area. "For example, we do not sell souvenirs of any kind, but will wholesale any we produce to the local retailers, and do not provide food, beverages, or land tours; rather, we leave that to locals."

Feature and Buy Local Services and Products

Wanipitei says "we always use local services in the areas in which we operate. Usually, food, accommodation and transportation."

Niagara Nature Tours: "If shopping is part of the tour, we do our darndest to make sure we go to local craft people, artists shops, not the mass produced stuff. We want the goods to be hand-made in Niagara. We use local music, Canadian music tapes for background music and always mention who the artist was, and tell them we have the information as to how they can purchase it if they ask us."

Local Activities Enhance the Guest Experience

Scott Walking Tours: We always tap into local ceilidhs, plays events wherever we can, on our adventures. We always try to stay in locally owned inns and shop in locally owned stores with local crafts and products. We eat the local food wherever possible.

7.5 Share with, or Contribute Other Benefits to Local Communities

A number of local benefits can be in kind, through discounts, community services, sharing facilities or skills, hosting events, volunteering, partnerships, or other creative kinds of activities. These can be in the community in which the company is based, or at communities in the destination region. Exemplary operators provided a range of examples of contributions.

Volunteer

Wildland Tours provides a local scholarship; are active with parks, education and interpretation; and do volunteer work. *Société Duvetnor* offers voluntary services to tourism and environmental committees. *Borealis Outdoor Adventures* looks for opportunities to meet with community leaders and service clubs and offers to conduct safety/educational programs if our schedules permit ('all our tour leaders started out as cycling instructors'). "By contributing our knowledge to community activities, we nurture our image as cycling advocates and build relationships in the communities we serve."

Niagara Nature Tours volunteers for many causes (e.g., to do the children's programme at the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Association's annual open house). The owner has founded and is involved in a grass roots organization *Friends of the Richmond Street Forest*, to try and save a local Carolinian forest. The company tries to highlight the forest's plight, distributes literature and passes on donations, during appropriate events. They attend rallies, and are media spokespeople on behalf of both their company and local organisations (e.g., Peninsula Field Naturalist's Club) when appropriate. The company volunteers time, guides and speakers for Raptorfest's annual events. The staff also guide and volunteer for *Friends of the Forest* needs, and volunteer time for different social, environmental, and conservation causes.

Assist Local Parks or Conservation Authorities

Naturally Superior Adventures expressed their appreciation to Park staff with sea kayak instruction for them. They plan on devoting more effort to positive park/information centre staff understanding and relations in the future.

Good Business Practice: Participate in local community organisations.

Donate Money, Time or Services

Donate to Local Causes: Provide Discounted or Free Services

Inside Out provides trip donations for local fund raising events. 'we also provide discounted rates to youth and charity groups. This includes discounted rates to the Morley Native Reserve's Life Skills Program; we have facilitated joint rafting trips for a variety of needy/youth/aboriginal groups with mainstream guests. People end up mixing with people they may never have had any prior contact with, therefore helping to breakdown stereotypes/barriers.'

Canadian Rockies Rafting provides discounts to seniors groups, community groups, and disabled clients. "Local people get big discounts, almost free".

Mariner Cruises offers free trips to locals and school groups.

Wilderness Tours sponsors local boy scouts and girl guides, and have a youth scholarship program.

Niagara Nature Tours contributes to Music World Camp, hosted by local musicians for budding young musicians. We lead tours for them with our guides, for usually half a day every year. After doing this for three years, their director in turn, attended our annual event last year and played her flute gratis.

Seacoast Expeditions provides free passes to use in fundraising and provides occasional opportunities for high school work experience students

Canadian Rockies Rafting: Prizes donated for Medical Relief, Farm Aid, wood crafting operations and projects

7.6 Adapt To Unique Local Conditions Over Time

Exemplary companies indicated that they had made changes in their operations over time, to take local communities and other land users into account. *Wanipitei* is increasingly trying to add cultural components to northern trips which directly involve local inhabitants. They are also encouraging more guest interaction, for example, billeting clients with local residents, experiencing traditional food, crafts demonstrations, and tours, etc.

Get More Involved in Communities Over Time

Esprit Rafting: As we grow we have more opportunities to get involved in community happenings. When we make donations to local groups we donate product rather than cash. It gets people that much more familiar with the wonders of their own backyard. We have also proven to be a major player in local search and rescue. We have enough equipment to outfit a 50-person water rescue team. We have been called numerous times by the local police officials as water rescue experts. Last summer we performed a successful extraction from a local gorge that was inaccessible by local police fire and ambulance. The summer before we were called to assist with 2 body recoveries - in the same day! It is great that our under-resourced area has worked out such a good partnership of mutual aid.

Traversée de Charlevoix is a company which provides cottages for hut to hut hiking, and these have suffered from vandalism, in part because of other users (hunters, ATV and snowmobile users) feeling their own activities are threatened. Their approach has been patient, and diplomatic, involving discussions around the fact that all users should be able to co-exist. They offer others users groups the use of their log cottages, (which previously suffered from vandalism and destruction). This encourages all users to share a sense of ownership. The company knows that this is a long term challenge for them, with a number of problems to overcome. For example, in order that hunters not feel a sense of conflict, and vandalise company property, they have agreed to refrain from using the area in autumn, and leave it to hunters. They hope that in the future, the rights of all users at all times will be respected. To assist in

mutual understanding, they are trying to recruit staff that come from the areas with the most vandalism, to create alliances, and to promote regional pride. They feel that when the entire local population understands the benefits that tourism brings, as well as understands the costs of vandalism, that great progress will have been made toward this.

7.7 Minimise Impact on, and be Sensitive to Communities

Many of the exemplary companies have extended their environmentally sensitive attitude to local communities as well. Each year, *Smoothwater Outfitting* sponsors a clean up weekend in June, where they offer free canoe rentals and prizes in return for campsite clean up on designated routes.

Although some communities welcome interaction with visitors, and the opportunity to gain economic benefits from tourism, that may not always be the case.

Avoid Unwelcome Community or Cultural Contact

Horizons Unlimited discourages their guests from visiting the local native community, unless they have an invitation, because in that instance the natives don't appreciate non-natives in their village uninvited. The company also asks clients not to camp in certain areas that are considered "special" to the native people, as well as to refrain from picking berries from certain areas that natives consider "their gardens". *We do our best not to disturb the native traditional lifestyle.*

7.8 Enable Guests to Experience Local Communities and Culture

Whether or not enabling guests to experience the local community is incidental or a deliberately programmed activity, it enriches guest experiences, contributes local benefits, and enables a measure of intercultural understanding to take place. A range of interesting examples were provided.

Seacoast Expeditions: Our reservations staff try to help people with all their questions about Victoria to the best of their ability and make referrals for accommodations and suggestions for other activities and attractions.

Program with Local Artists, and Attend Local Events

Niagara Nature Tours: We have files of all the local events we can find out about. If a tour is coming into the area during one of these events we would ask if they would be interested in attending that event e.g., Marshville Fall Fair. Whenever possible we try and keep our tours to areas off the beaten track. Our invitation is *Come and explore 'Niagara's Outdoors' Discover its secret places.* Therefore the places we try and go to are places, restaurants, fruit stands etc., that only local people generally know about - and sometimes not many of them are even aware of certain special places! (Of course we frequent the usual tourist areas as well). Regarding the culture, our programming itself tries to include as many artists as the client will be willing to pay for, as well as suggesting Native dancing, drumming, catered meals, storytelling etc..

Ecomertours Nord Sud: "We make stops everyday. While visiting the villages we use local guides who explain life in the village, the history of its development. Our biology guide explains the flora, the wildlife and the ecology of the environment based on their knowledge of the local area.

Partner with Aboriginal Communities and Businesses

Wilderness Spirit: When our trips start or end on a First Nations' land we make people aware of it and encourage them to look around. When we operate in Nunavut clients will be given opportunities to spend time in local communities before and after trips. The costs of accommodation also make it most practical to participate in community homestay programs when visiting remote communities. These programs have the added benefit of giving clients a chance to experience the Aboriginal people's living conditions.

Boreal Wilderness Guides: we are bringing 20 German ecotourists and billeting them on the reserve for three days. Each native family will receive \$100.00 per tourist day during the tour. This helps provide employment in regions of 90% unemployment

Anishinabe Experience says “all activities and services provide our guests with an understanding of our culture, traditions, and the beliefs of the Algonquins and the Pikwakanagan. Our restaurant provides the chance to taste our foods, the craft store the opportunity to purchase local arts and crafts etc.”

Explore and Experience the Local History

Expéditions Eau Vive advocates knowledge of the history of the area: Certain terrain that they use include former logging sites, where they still find artifacts of old boats used log-running. “The knowledge of the history of the location and of the terrain is indispensable for giving value to the environment. The guides have, as a mission, to retell the history and natural history of our country, by facts or legends, and this understanding of the importance of nature in the development of the country is essential when visitors to respect us and the environment.”

Good Business Tip:

Guests usually find opportunities for real local contact to be a tremendously enriching experience.

8. Packaging

8.1 Package your Own Product

Clients do not always want only the basic product and itinerary that companies specialise in (e.g., rafting, hiking, etc.). They very often want variety, and other options, such as the additional services provided (e.g., meals, transportation, accommodation options), as well as choice in such aspects as length of trip, location, degree of challenge, and so on. This means that operators need to have some flexibility in their scheduling, staff capabilities, and good pre-booking client contact to determine such client needs, so as to be able to satisfy them and convert interest into a booking.

Operators who are reluctant to tackle packaging may not even know about the opportunities they are missing. Some of the elements of packaging are dealt with in other chapters, particularly Customer Service and Relations, which discussed customised trips.

Fundamentals of packaging include:

- knowing your current or potential target markets, their needs and preferences
- testing and evaluating packages both in terms of the individual components and as a total package, for length, time of day, seasons, number of people, and satisfaction, for each type of activity
- developing appropriate pricing for the package, by knowing the detailed prices of package components both variable and fixed
- developing appropriate product description related to activities, duration, activity level, difficulty level, and any items not included which clients should bring

Larger operations, or those with varied product opportunities, may be able to package their own product, but in all likelihood, they will find it useful to package with others. This brings an added value to one's product, since it gives the buyer a greater chance to experience Canada's various regions and experiencing opportunities, to their ultimate greater satisfaction.

8.2 Package with Complementary Operators

Operators were asked if they engaged in any packaging with other companies. A surprising number did not. Perhaps they feel that they are not in that "business" (packaging), but in their "own" business. However, by researching their markets, they will likely find that clients want to have a varied experience. If this variety is not part of the company's offerings, then an opportunity is lost if operators are not prepared to work with others to achieve the product the client seeks.

Some of the fundamentals of packaging with others include:

- developing appropriate written agreements, payment times, limits of responsibility, cancellation fees, etc.
- associating with operators and partners who offer complementary product
- associating with those who share the same values and similar standards
- responding to market needs and trends
- ensuring all partners have appropriate licenses, consumer safety measures, and liability insurance coverage

There are many opportunities for operators to associate with others, to provide varied packages and respond to the needs of various market segments. Such opportunities exist whether operations are small, or larger. Some operators do not package, possibly because of reasons related to permit requirements, or a feeling that they wish to keep all the profits (rather than understanding that all partners benefit) or the fear they may lose their direct contact with the client, or simply lack of knowledge.

In an industry which has somewhat of a reputation for erroneously conceiving its competition to be “next door”, it was encouraging to see many exemplary companies partnering with complementary operations, but also with similar operators in the same destination.

Exemplary operators packaged in a variety of ways, mainly with complementary operators, transportation providers, or accommodations (if they themselves did not have fixed roof accommodation). Some gave modest examples of packaging, such as one product in the morning, and one in the afternoon, to make a day’s itinerary; others were more comprehensive. In many cases, some innovative partnerships were created.

Mariner Cruises takes the Brier Island Eco Tour (Walk on the Wild Side) and packages it with an afternoon whalewatch.

Rivers and Oceans provides a cooperative program with Nimmo Bay Resort who provide helicopters and lodging to complement their own expedition equipment and guides. They also do “Ranch and Raft” in conjunction with Echo Valley Ranch Resort.

Cross-Market in your Association

Lazy M Ranch packages by cross-marketing within their professional association - Alberta Country Vacations Association. They have created a “Great Canadian Cowboy” package with *Willow Lane Ranch* of Granum, Alberta. They also have a package with “*Ram River Outdoorsman*”, a fishing, hiking and interpretive guide company.

Fresh Air Adventures share activities with members of their regional tourism association, and they share advertisements at trade shows. They also cooperate with local food and lodging businesses.

M&W Guides: Word of mouth, predominantly through the staff of the hotels and equipment retailers. We provide discounted climbing experiences to the staff at the hotels, restaurants, etc. We have found this to be a huge marketing tool.

Naturally Superior Adventures: We are also working to develop a commission structure for local motel operators who book customer day trips with us. *Earth Rhythms* agrees “one of the most under-used opportunities by today’s adventure travel operators is that they don’t work with sales managers or GMs of major hotels, who would love to do business with “market ready” and “product ready” companies who can add business value, business volume, and revenues to their operation. Sales managers want to sell, and are very quick to respond to opportunities. The more traditional route of working with travel agents and wholesalers seems to take much longer and is much more costly.” *Mountain Quest* agrees: “what works really well is to set up a close relationship with the major business/retreat hotels.”

Good Business Tip: Packaging with other operators enables customising according to clients' preferences.

Work with Local/Regional Hotel Partners

Earth Rhythms: We will be working with one hotel (director of sales) to directly access an international market through direct contact with international agents from that country. Rather than going through the lengthy and expensive process of Rendez-vous, various international trade shows, etc., we are forming an alliance directly with the sales manager of a local 5-star hotel, through which we sell several products. We create the product and the promotional material for the hotel corporate and convention planner, who marks the product up to a retail price & sent it out to all convention inquiries. This works for both of us, because the hotel is actively selling the package and they get a value-added service. The hotel wants more volume (and they volume at specific times; outdoor adventure companies have product and seasonality which fits with urban hotel low occupancy times). Together, we position products based on the international reputation of the hotel, and both receive income from it.

Western Canadian River Adventures works with a horseback outfitter in their North Saskatchewan River trip to provide a day of trail riding as part of the trip. A set of standards has not been set up for this as yet. The incorporation of one day of trail riding is the first time I have heard of this being done. They will meet us a third of the way into the trip to provide a change of pace to the trip.

It is possible to partner with attractions or others. *CanoeSki Discovery:* We have developed a three-day package with Wanuskewin Heritage Park with one-day teepee camp and aboriginal interpretive program at the Park and a two-day historical canoe trip on the South Saskatchewan River. *The Great Canadian Travel Company* says "we often include other operators programs within our itineraries. We also sell into other's programs and/or market their programs to our clients."

Work with Non-Conventional Partners

Inside Out provides a program with Hostelling International which combines their services with the Alberta Wilderness Association. They will be embarking on a new program to deliver Soft Adventure Programs/Services to hostel guests. They jointly contributed towards a joint brochure. The benefits of a packaging partnership extend to joint marketing benefits.

Bathurst Inlet Lodge: We work in partnership with *WhiteWolf* and *Nahanni River Adventures* on raft and canoe trips on the Burnside. They market these trips, we provide canoes and air transport, they provide rafts and group leaders, we pick up the rafts and transport them over a 4 km. portage at the Bathurst Inlet end of the Burnside. We also provide programming at the end of the trip. It is a healthy and mutually satisfying arrangement.

Package with Those who Share the Same Philosophy

Wanipitei: We offer some joint programs with other outdoor adventure operators whose philosophy and approach matches ours. We at times run trips 50-50 splitting costs and revenues, staffing etc. In addition we may jointly book clients on each others trips on a commission basis.

Take the Time to Investigate Potential Partners' Programs

Voyageur Ventures: We offer accommodation with *Terratima Lodge, Sheiling Mountain Lodge, Shunda Creek Hostel*, and with the planned Tipi Camp at the National Historic Park. We also package with the *Lazy M Ranch, The Centre for Outdoor Education, and Ice Haven Expeditions*, and have instructed with their programs and they have been with ours. They know that their standards are compatible and of equal value to the clients. We have offers of partnerships with 7 other outfitters – awaiting time to explore each other's programs.

8.3 Package with Similar Operators

Exemplary operators provided interesting packages with other operators who are their so-called “competitors”, but with whom there can be reciprocal agreements and a number of partnership arrangements (from cooperation without partnerships, to joint ventures).

Network with & Assist Local/Regional Operators & Make Referrals

Nahanni Wilderness Adventures shares license agreements, as well as sharing referrals

M&W Guides: Smaller operators survive through networking, passing on other operators' names, etc. We don't all have advertising budgets, and this is important to tourism in the valley. Our clients, who come for 1/2 day rock or family climbing experiences, generally ask about a day of rafting, mountain biking, etc., so we pass on small operators' names. We also subcontract guiding services to the heliskiing industry in the winter.

Also, it is important to keep the business "in the valley" so even if it is a competitor, we pass on the work if we are unable to service the dates/itinerary of the request.

Smoothwater: When we get inquiries outside our area of expertise or interest, we willingly refer those people to other local businesses that specialize in those areas. We network very successfully within the non-governmental environmental community, among canoe clubs and the travel press

Fundy Tide Runners: We have a very cooperative relationship on-water, working with the other whale watch operators in our area. We share sighting and location information. This is similar to *Seacoast Expeditions* on the west coast, which has “a sighting network service that is innovative and unique - both in the methods that information is disseminated and also in the way that it brings so many competitors into daily contact with one another.” They also refer clients to other operators who want a less adventurous or larger covered type of vessel.

Have a Strategic View of Competition: It's Not Next Door

Voyageur Ventures: We have relationships and have co-programmed with many of our direct competitors. We do not perceive them as competition as we each have distinct competencies and together we can offer certain groups the level of service they demand. We also have service exchanges with many of our community providers – from veterinarians to electricians.

Destination Marketing May Lead to Further Cooperation and Packaging. For example, *Voyageur Quest* is working with four competitors to form a brand destination and regional association to market co-operatively. Similarly, *Anishinabe Experience* says “we are five operators at the moment, developing an

itinerary that will cover the historical and cultural perspective of the Ottawa valley. This product should be available for the 1999 season.”

Good Business Tip: Partnering with similar operators may lead to reciprocal benefits flowing from partners and abilities to respond positively in busy periods.

8.4 Interesting Ways Of Partnering and Working

Exemplary operators were involved in a number of interesting partnership arrangements, with all kinds of organisations, groups, and others. *Société Duvetnor* says “we are major partners in the *Month of the Bird*, which brings urban amateur ornithologists to the Bas Saint-Laurence region, for several weekends of observation. We offer ferries to our islands, and have established agreements with a supplier of sea kayak excursions in a series of islands that belong to our corporation. We have mutually agreed standards and restrictions (related to accessing the bird colonies and respect for wildlife) to assure the protection of the marine birds. A modest fee from each excursion participant is used for wildlife conservation.”

Work With Non-Traditional Partners

CanoeSki Discovery works with the University of Saskatchewan, Extension Division, Community Education Programs

Boreal Wilderness Guides: We have developed a strategic partnership to bring ecotourists to the research station to learn about the Boreal Forest. In return for this help, we donate money to the station for research and station maintenance. We have created a similar partnership with a member of the Bloodvien First Nation and other Aboriginal Communities for guests to visit them.

Bathurst Inlet Lodge: We developed a Teachers' Course that was offered through the University of Calgary and the Arctic Institute of North America. This worked well for several years (it should be noted that the University underwent a series of severe cuts and was subsequently unable to continue to deal with the registrations and advertising through their systems)

Expéditions Eau Vive: We created partnerships with the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and this product won first place at the Great Prizes of Tourism in Québec. We join up the clientele of the museum, and make the link with history; a canoe excursion that integrates history and animation, i.e. the history of the “coureurs des bois”. For an adventure company, the fact that we are associated with a great player like this Museum, gives us a lot of credibility, and interesting business contacts.

Tours of Exploration are exclusive travel representatives for World Wildlife Fund Canada and Coastal Ecosystems Research Foundation. They are tour operator for Toronto Zoo polar bear and whale viewing programs. They have worked with many museums, aquariums, University Alumni & special interest organizations.

Rivers and Oceans: We did a joint venture with the New York high fashion clothing company, Donna Karan. It involved testing their new product lines in our expeditions. There was an extensive media campaign as well.

Being mutually supportive is a characteristic of exemplary operators. *Niagara Nature Tours* says, “by inviting different companies to take part in our annual Mother’s Day Woodland Wildflower Celebration, we are offering them a very unique venue. This seems to form a special bond between our companies because it is such a special day, and then we support each other through the rest of the year whenever possible.”

Similarly, *Remote Passages* says “we provide lots of support to group guides when they are in the area - fax services, lend missing camping equipment, crisis support. We exchange information on season, operations, equipment and policy development once or twice a year with quality whale watch operators in Telegraph Cove and Victoria with whom we have an established working relationship (*Stubbs Island* and *SeaCoast*).”

Share Resources, Information, Marketing, Services

Inside Out works with other operators via:

- Reciprocal Web Site links
- Reciprocal information sharing i.e.: Marketing concepts, opportunities, Government funding opportunities, Small Business Management issues
- Joint Marketing initiatives i.e.: Sharing Trade Show Booth costs and displays, Brochures, Mail/Fax Broadcasts about joint or individual services/programs

Freewheeling Adventures: Reciprocal bookings; brochure space in exchange for bike storage

Cooperative Marketing May Lead to Further Cooperation

Naturally Superior. We work with other operators on Lake Superior to jointly work 1 booth at trade shows in the US. Here we work on selling the superior coastline and as we are primarily in one section and they are primarily in another we work together to sell the whole coastline. We assume that a customer doing a trip with them one year is likely to do a trip with us the next. We also work with our quasi competitor to put on an annual sea kayak symposium.

8.5 Distribute Through the Travel Trade

The travel trade is important, particularly for those who are not engaged in packaging themselves. For example, *Seacoast Expeditions* says “we don’t create packages, but receptive/tour agents do, and include things like accommodation, transportation, food services, other attractions, with the whale watching operation.

The Travel Trade is an Important Partner

Wilderness Spirit. We are developing ties with well established Winnipeg based travel companies that are strong on soft travel but need to add an adventure travel component to their portfolio.

Inside Out. We have operated mostly with local travel agents and receptive tour operators and are now researching and contacting suitable agents/operators across Canada/US to partner with.

Voyageur Quest. Our wilderness trips are available through most Canadian receptives and through many international tour operators and wholesalers.

Traversée de Charlevoix has a turnkey package for wholesalers and travel agents, which includes the reception of groups at the airports.

Fresh Tracks Canada. We do mailouts of catalogs to travel agents throughout Canada and The US via Alltours, an in-house courier service. We also do training with agents that are high volume.

In addition to the travel trade, Earth Rhythms seeks out “unconventional” meeting planners and event organizers. “There are lots of them (in companies, in communities, and with different associations) and they don’t call themselves meeting planners or event planners. They need our services – but didn’t know that we existed. We can provide them with customized services, our most lucrative product from a return-on-investment and profit margin perspective.”

Niagara Nature Tours has a relationship with the Niagara Parks Commission (NPC), via their Group Sales office. “We had developed ecotours along the Niagara Parkway. They have published four of these tours in their brochure, with our 1 800 number, so that clients can call us directly. They mail this brochure all over the world, and go to trade-shows all over the world. If clients seem interested in natural history, they suggest our tours. When they get inquiries that they think will help us, they call to give us the contact name and address. They do all of this for free! We in turn include the appropriate NPC venues that fit with our tour. This is an amazing partnership for us.”

Good Business Practice: Get to know your travel trade partners, their needs and preferences.

8.6 Create Your Own Packaging and/or Marketing Group

It seems to be increasingly common to find that operators are working with other operators (similar, complementary, or in the same destination), to package and/or to market. Thus, there is a very dynamic series of associations by quite a range of players, which may include ecotourism and adventure travel operators.

Société Duvetnor has ties with the north shore of the St.-Laurence, which are developing. They, and other owners of several islands in the St.-Laurence, are members of Le Quebec Maritime, a CTC product club, which works together for strength. “We are also active in developing an accreditation program in ecotourism for the operators of the Bas-Saint-Laurent region, which would unite shelters, hostels, and attractions under the same brand. Ideally, this program, if successful, should grow to accommodate the entire length of the St.-Laurence, and even the whole province.”

A Group has More Strength than an Individual

Esprit Rafting: We have created a co-op called The Adventure Zone with Carmen Trails International Hostel, Great Canadian Bungee, National Capital Cycling and The Ottawa International Hostel. We sell a discount card where guests can pick and choose which operations to visit. It is a good relationship that proves the sum of us together is greater than the individual parts.

Voyageur Quest: Working together with four competitors to form a brand destination and regional association to market co-operatively. Presently working on putting together a cross Ontario wilderness operator consortium.

Niagara Nature Tours: “We recently joined The Conservation Lands of Ontario and they have national and international market place presence at trade shows for consumer, travel trade and corporate buyers. The Conservation Lands indicated there will be referrals for all Product Club members. We will be able to hot link our web site when we get it, with theirs. There will also be written literature with our companies name and contact information in it, that they distribute. Similarly, Brock University Conference Services have said that when we gets our web site, they will hot link us with their web site.”

Enhance Your Credibility While Networking

Mountain Quest found that some of their most effective networking has been to serve on industry boards and committees

Earth Rhythms: Place yourself on the agenda of others where you can get market intelligence. I asked to become a member of the Brandon Economic Development Board's Tourism committee (the *only* receptive operator or travel business rep) for the entire 900 members of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce area. I was successful in being invited. Now, I am getting access to the information and contacts that I need in order to develop both marketing and sales tactics which differentiate us from our local competitors.

I am a regular speaker at conferences. By providing larger perspectives about tourism at these conferences, our company also receives lots of profile in front of lots of people. From this, we regularly get a business card and a request to follow up with bus tour companies, hotel sales managers, other tourism businesses, etc.

The Great Canadian Travel Company has a sister company, Market Square Tours, that tours outside Canada, which is a helpful partner. They attend trade shows in many other countries and are able to make contacts with tour companies and also offer both inbound and outbound tours. "This has helped us to develop an international reputation."

Very often, small, northern, and particularly aboriginal tourism operators have extra difficulties, related to isolation, lack of nearby operators with whom to package, language, costs, seasonality, transportation, distances from training opportunities, etc. In particular, while such operators are often very comfortable with clients on the ground, they have relative weaknesses or difficulties with respect to marketing and packaging. Some of these problems may be overcome by using unique cooperative packaging initiatives such as are described below.

Consider Marketing in a Cooperative Marketing Group

Fresh Tracks is an inbound soft adventure operator specializing in 55 adventures in BC, the Yukon & Alaska, which tend to be more on the luxury end of the scale. This company is not a ground operator, but rather obtains the clients. All the trips are contracted out to 28 outfitters, who provide the packaged adventure with naturalists, guides, etc. provided. The outfitters provide all the services, food, activity, and accommodation. They develop a relationship with outfitters that makes it easy to cooperate, but both parties sign a contract to be clear on expectations, etc. *Fresh Tracks* gets weekly updates on availability, changes, etc., so that the outfitter can conduct their own marketing and sales in addition.

They have many criteria when choosing operators to be involved with our catalog (and hundreds of calls from interested outfitters). They often choose outfitters based on an interesting itinerary, excellent organisation, and easy to get to. They have standards for outfitters, including: liability insurance; licenses to operate in the area; equipment, and guide training/certification in wilderness first aid and rescue. The outfitter must be well-established and guarantee that trips will not be cancelled. Quality of trip and offerings are key. (It should be noted that as yet, the standards have few aspects related to resource conservation or community contributions).

Fresh Tracks takes care of the marketing, and is assisted by being a sister company to a travel agency. They do mailouts of catalogs to travel agents throughout Canada and the US via Alltours, an in-house courier service. They also train high volume agents. *Fresh Tracks* mostly obtains direct bookings, and have a toll free number available anywhere in North America. "We market through the web which is our primary marketing strategy, and secondly in various outdoor magazines such as *Outside*." They also have a database of 7,000 names to whom they send a catalog as well 2 newsletters a year.

"The most effective method is the web which makes our product have easy access as well, a terrific presentation of products." They invest approximately 30% of revenues to marketing, and feel the introduction of a full colour catalog and an expanded web site have contributed to their growth. More than 70% of *Fresh Tracks*' markets come from the US or Europe, and 15% are repeats. Clients like the fact they are offered variety and assistance in making their choice, including research.

Good Business Tip: Partnerships can greatly enhance your marketing opportunities.

Create a Group: be Guided by its Values and Direction

Tours Innu is a native receptive tour operator, specialising in ethnocultural tourism, developed by The Société Touristique Innu. The society is a non-profit organisation founded in 1991, and responsible for the development of tourism in several aboriginal nations from all over Quebec. It aims to offer an authentic quality tourism product during four seasons, focusing on authenticity, nature and culture. This society is actually a membership organisation of the native groups, councils and businesses, themselves. They spent a number of years researching interest in aboriginal product at national and international travel forums before developing *Tours Innu*.

The society has developed standards for its operators, and all members have to be approved. They have a training program for native personnel, and a strict accreditation system for service providers. These standards provide a guarantee that all trips will involve a certain quality, security and personal respect. They have an extensive list of safety and quality criteria.

Standards include: hospitality; environment; aesthetics (outside and inside); noise pollution; emissions standards; non-polluting energy sources; no trace use and camping; water use and grey water disposal; sewage; and infrastructure standards.

Tours Innu markets approved products. The types of native offerings include lodging (up to 15 people in all kinds of accommodation from igloo to hotel) visits to traditional ancestral sites, guided tours for small groups, northern expeditions for small groups, FIT excursions, with length ranging from 8 days to shorter visits to aboriginal sites. The product content may include cultural exchanges, traditional and reconstructed native site visits, nature excursions, trap-line visits, medicinal plant studies, storytelling, traditional meals, handicraft demonstrations, etc. A number of add-on services and excursions are also available. The intent is to enable clients to experience an adventure of cultural sharing, and the values and way of life of the First nations.

Tours Innu's function is to act on behalf of the accredited ground operators, in cooperation with Société Touristique Innu, to package market-ready products and make contact with overseas wholesalers who have the clients (i.e., their contact is with the tour operators or agencies, not the client directly). However, *Tours Innu* does provide qualified escort guides from Quebec or Montreal, with different stops in the itinerary. Their products are featured in over 20 European brochures.

9. Marketing and Promotion

9.1 Know the Marketing Process

It is a common perception among small companies in the tourism industry, that if only they could do better (or more) marketing, they'd solve many of their problems. By marketing, they mean expanding their promotional efforts. But marketing is a process of evaluating market attitudes, perceptions and needs and acting upon this knowledge to stimulate demand & to achieve an economic return. It involves co-ordinating a complex set of tasks, including:

- *researching* market trends, attitudes & behaviour
- *developing strategies* based on a number of considerations, only one of which is promotion.

The marketing task is to address a number of critical issues:

- successful companies will maintain a strength in core markets through high levels of customer service
- understanding new market opportunities and achieving differentiated tourism products and services to meet customer needs is essential
- capitalising on new market areas and modifying and developing product may also be necessary

Marketing strategy must be based on market knowledge and understanding, achieved through sound research and a flexible approach to the customer base

Good Business Practice: Even smaller companies should have someone primarily responsible for marketing.

9.2 Have a Written Marketing Plan

Most businesses have recognised the difference between marketing and sales, and the need for management of both. Smaller companies need to focus resources and effort, rather than respond to opportunities in an unstructured way. Having a written marketing plan helps guide company directions, particularly if it includes action directions. Some of the fundamentals of good practice in marketing are:

- have a forward marketing plan which is consistent with business plan (marketing activities are directed by the marketing plan)
- base the marketing plan upon a clear marketing strategy, which identifies target markets and how to reach them
- differentiate between the selling and marketing role
- organise resources to support implementation of marketing plan
- know where services have a distinctive/competitive advantage
- ready to anticipate changes in customer needs in the future
- ensure all staff know the features and benefits of all company products and services

Good Business Practice: Action plans should always have a timescale and someone who is responsible for every action.

Good Business Tip: Marketing plans need not be complex - most marketing is based on well informed common sense!

All companies need to understand their product/service strengths and weaknesses in the marketplace, and where the opportunities and threats lie. A number of companies surveyed did not necessarily have a *written* marketing plan, but essentially had the *basic elements* of a marketing strategy and plan. One exemplary company indicated “we have both a Business Plan and a Marketing Plan. We are in the process of implementing the third phase of a 3-phase marketing plan”. This company was small, yet was one of the truly outstanding operators surveyed.

9.3 Know Your Target Marketplaces and Why You Target them

Market research is one of the core areas of marketing. Exemplary companies know their current customers, their characteristics, preference and geographic origins. In addition, it is useful to:

- undertake regular competitor and positioning reviews
- have a system to record and update the company on market information
- regularly, and using a variety of methods, ask customers what value they place on your services and product

Wanipitei knows why they are targeting certain markets. They target middle and upper middle class interested in the outdoors, mostly from Ontario, with some emphasis on USA and Europe. They feel this is a good marketplace because those clients have the disposable income to participate in their programs. Also their programs are all outdoor-oriented so clients need an interest in the outdoors. Ontario has a large population base and their programs are run within 6 hours of southern Ontario. They feel the US is a good market, because the exchange rate is good and there is a lack of wilderness in the USA. They feel that Europe is also a good marketplace, because Europeans have a fascination with Canadian wilderness, especially in countries like Germany, Austria, Switzerland. In addition, to further get to know their markets, they have a client survey at end of all programs.

Good Business Practices: Market research is about up to date knowledge that is relevant and useful.

9.4 Research Your Customers’ View of Your Product/Services

Research is concerned with how we communicate with customers, and modify our procedures and practices to reflect their changing needs and expectations. Exemplary companies regularly conduct market analysis, identifying who their customers are, and what they want, so as to better meet their needs and expectations. Some basics are:

- frequently asking your customers what they think about your services
- regularly reviewing customers’ needs for core product and service areas
- allocating resources towards product modifications and added value features or services

Chocpaw, Voyageur Quest, and other exemplary operators ask their customers regularly (*after every trip*) about what they think about their product. There are other ways of finding out customers' views, and trying different approaches may be helpful.

Research Approaches that work for Some, May not Work for Others

Rivers and Oceans surveys their customers, and gets a 99% response rate.

Canadian Trails sent a questionnaire to a sample of customers with their annual brochure mailing in 1998, and a telephone survey was done in mid-season 1998. The questionnaire produced limited results, but the telephone survey was valuable.

Sawyer Lake Adventures has a visitation commentary sheet, which is a survey, asking not only for a debriefing about various aspects of the experience, but also for improvement suggestions for their operation.

Most managers have a perceived view of the product or service that they sell and the package that the customer buys. Try to remove this and put yourself in your customer's shoes more often. You might be surprised. Finding out what your current customers think of your product is the easiest and most basic way of undertaking market research. Exemplary companies are on a constant quest for information to examine: for improving current product, making modifications, developing new product, and generally responding to market demand.

Good Business Tip: Customers purchase perceived value when they buy your products - the product they buy is not always what you perceive that you will sell!

Listen to Customer's Perceptions and Experiences

Anishinabe Experiences find that customers enjoyed their stay, some wished they had more time. They enjoyed the one-on-one personal service they received. They said they have learned and received an awareness on the Algonquin community Pikwakanagan, and how we are today and how past traditions are still maintained.

While most exemplary operators really listened to their current customers, they also researched the marketplace on an on-going basis, to stay abreast of important or more general trends, via trade magazines, government publications, and other sources.

9.5 Use an Appropriate Marketing Mix

The following section will provide examples of some of the promotional methods used by exemplary operators. Of course, those which work for one operator, may not work, or need to be modified for another.

Literature

Promotional literature should be professional, reflecting the image of the company and the quality of the products. Also, promotional material should be produced in an ecologically sound manner (recycled and recyclable paper, unbleached paper, laminated reusable products, vegetable dye inks, etc.).

Fundy Tide Runners ensures that their brochure is in all the tourism outlets across the province. The province has a network of information desks and information hotlines all over the province. “We also meet at a travel marketplace and relay information and experience to all the people that staff the tourism information sites across the province.”

Some companies find that brochures are not longer as effective for their markets; others find they are very effective. Others used brochures with other practices. Measuring the cost-effectiveness of any practices is really important in order to make decisions.

Brochures Don't Yield for Some

Borealis Outdoor Adventures: We have stopped running pre-packaged itineraries (except for a few wholesalers) and no longer produce “the brochure” - a static publication does no good in a dynamic market. Our marketing costs are much lower than previously.

Brochures Work for Some

Wilderness Spirit: We distribute brochures at visible locations throughout Manitoba and through some popular outdoor equipment stores in Canada and the US. These have been effective at generating interest from all over Canada and the US.

Good Business Practice: Remember your literature reflects the image and professionalism of your company.

Direct Mail

Fresh Tracks sends their Catalogue to all previous customers. A number of companies keep in contact with their clients via newsletters or other mailings (from Christmas cards to Thanksgiving cards). Others have a form of “direct mail” but it is via email. *Canadian Trails*, for example, finds that data-base direct mailing is most effective, since these are people who have previously indicated a specific interest in our tours.

Familiarisation Trips (FAMs)

Familiarisation (FAM) trips often yield high returns, since a travel report reportedly has 5 times the impact that an advertisement has, besides often “convincing” a tour operator of the quality of one’s product. FAM trips for key individuals enable knowledge of the product to be spread in a positive way. They could be formally arranged trips for the travel trade (where the intent is education or familiarisation) or media (where the intent is to provide a tour to the press), or more informal, with local contacts generated by the operator.

M&W Guides, for example, find that word of mouth, predominantly through the staff of the hotels and equipment retailers, is effective. “We provide discounted climbing experiences to the staff at the hotels, restaurants, etc. We have found this to be a *huge* marketing tool, because they are a word of mouth tool.”

Specialty Organisations

Some operators find that contacting specialty organisations works for them. *Canadian Trails Adventure* says “we have contacted all the major tour-oriented bicycle clubs in our target markets, and advertise in

their newsletters where possible. It's very inexpensive and reaches a somewhat pre-qualified group of potential customers."

Destination Publications and Specialty Magazines

For those who target local audiences, destination publications are useful. *Fresh Air Adventures* advertise in publications promoting the City of Moncton. These publications are placed in each hotel room in Moncton, sent to people/ businesses inquiring about holding a convention in the area.

Place Ads in Local Newspapers, if Markets are Local

Canadian Trails places advertisements in travel sections of newspapers, preferably the adventure travel special issues, in target marketplaces.

Seacoast Expeditions Limited says "for many years our marketing strategy was to target the local Victoria market because a large proportion of visitors to the city stay with relatives and friends who live here. Canadians and Americans make up our largest client base and many of them are VFR." Thus they advertise in a daily newspaper in February, to encourage locals to become familiar with them, and initiated a schools promotional package.

Wilderness Spirit advertises in Canada, the US and elsewhere, via *Canoe* and *Kayak* magazine. While this magazine appeals to more established paddlers, many experienced American paddlers prefer escorted trips when running new rivers. "We will be having a lead article about one of our rivers in this magazine next winter, and believe that will be an especially effective vehicle for showcasing Manitoba's rivers."

Trade Shows

Anishinabe Experience has recently concentrated on trade show attendance, for receptive operators and also international shows. They have attended trade shows in Canada and Europe. "We attended shows in Europe as part of the Aboriginal Delegation of Live the Legacy. These shows have proven to work well for us, even though the European Travel industry purchase our services through inbound receptive. It was great, because they got to meet the Anishinabe Experience and discuss products and services directly."

Wilderness Spirit: We have set up displays at adventure tourism trade shows in the US. Unless specifically aimed at paddlers these shows tend to attract the "soft adventure" market. We get some exposure this way and find these shows worthwhile for the connections we can make.

Catch the Eye at Shows

Using a feature to "catch the eye" seems to work:

Société Duvetnor uses a folding lighthouse as their booth, so the structure attracts a lot of attention. "Our brochure is made with a thoughtful, meticulous workmanship. We use an enlarged photo of little penguins in our posters and publicity, which attracts and intrigues at the same time."

Michie Creek Mushing displays dog sledding gear and equipment including a husky in harness, at local tourism trade shows

Inside Out says "having our Raft and equipment displayed at Trade Shows - the raft is very impressive and stands out - draws people in."

Chocpaw says for small town fairs, do displays or rides, and do school demos. "You don't have to be creative with dogs, just drop them out and have them perform and the dogs do the selling. Even at shows, just show up with a dog and your booth is the centre of attraction."

Free Products, Events, or Personalised Promotions

Quoddy Link Marine: We have been involved in promotional contests by restaurant chains (Mandarin) and magazines (Canadian Geographic). Our involvement included providing a free cruise to winners of these contests. In return our company was featured in advertising specific to the contest. This gave us good exposure in key markets for little investment.

Use Trips for Promotional Purposes, and to Generate Good Will

Great Canadian Travel Company: We have often used day trip tours for promotional purposes. We have either taken industry leaders on these tours or offered a *buy one get one free* deal for companies looking for promotional opportunities.

Ancient Voices: We opened our camp with a “traditional feast” in which we invited local business operators, individuals, etc. This feast was very successful in that it gave locals a first hand experience in our camp. We would like to make this an annual event, especially for front line staff of local businesses. We encourage discounted rates for local people.

Lazy M Ranch found the marketing techniques that work best are 'give away trips'. “The word of mouth works the best for us!”

Expéditions Eau Vive finds that what works well for them is to take out a tour operator, as well as their client, for a *promotional* expedition without cost. “Always a winning formula.”

M&W Guides are high profile operators at climbing areas, and help people out, even if they are not their own clients. “In some instances, we have “saved lives”, or at least mitigated injury. This helps us to be perceived as a friendly, approachable company. Also, we take our own children to the climbing areas, and visitors or other climbers remember this and pass on their amazement at the little climbers.”

Giveaways Can Leave their Mark with Customers or Partners

Inside Out offers Gift Certificates at a reduced rate to other companies which form part of their network, to use for their clients, for example, as a fun prize or a thank you gift.

Big Sand Lake Lodge has run photo contests and “early deposit” lotteries for trips, and also run fishing contests.

Niagara Nature Tours: we donate gift certificates and mugs for fund-raisers; we priced the cost of our mugs into a winery package, which meant our mugs went out as advertising with every customer.

Wilderness Spirit: We offer some of our t-shirts/sweatshirts along with discount coupons at events such as the Waterwalker film festival and other canoeing/outdoor events in Winnipeg and at trade shows in the US. Word of mouth is probably the best marketing tool especially in the local market.

Jasper Adventure Centre finds taking tour directors out for lunch to talk about new tours or other options we offer is the most direct way, and we participate in all local events when possible.

Good Business Practice: Customers and partners look for excellent contacts. They buy from people they like!

Appropriate Combinations

All of the preceding methods were used in combination, not alone. Most of the operators used a large range of methods. In addition, it was particularly noteworthy when operators were able to *identify and measure the response that came from each method*. *Measurement is one of the first steps toward evaluating marketing for effectiveness, and its cost-effectiveness*. Some of the exemplary operators were willing to share the range of techniques they use:

Traversée de Charlevoix

- members of the international commercialization plan of the Charlevoix Regional Tourism Association, that participates in numerous shows, exhibitions, and tourist grants, and which organizes media rounds.
- advertise in specialized reviews (*Espaces, Canadian Geographic*).
- in the regional tourist guide (in 3 places.)
- have brochures in specialized outdoor stores and in the Québec Walking Federation
- have a bilingual web site that has been up since last May.
- participate in exhibitions such as the Québec ski exhibition
- commission special events (Direction Greenland, 4 youth from the Charlevoix region were trained on the Traversée, and tested their equipment, in light of their expedition to Greenland)
- organized a large, popular event at the time of the inauguration of the National Trail in Charlevoix
- have a new French and English brochure that has been produced.
- participated in the TV program “Cap Aventure” broadcast on French Channel TV 5, as well as a cross-Canada radio show on Radio-Canada,
- In 1998, we participated in the “Grand Prix du Tourisme” contest, and won the best place in the category Development and Innovation, as well as Tourist personality of the year in Charlevoix
- members of the Quebec Adventure Travel Operators Association (APTAQ), and the Chamber of Commerce.

Good Business Practice: Develop the combination of marketing tools that work best for you, balance them, and know the results of each.

Inside Out

- Brochure distribution of 20,000 brochures to capture the local Calgary and area Travel and Leisure markets (Non-packaged FIT's) i.e.: in popular Outdoor Shops, CAAs around Calgary, the Calgary and Convention Visitors' Bureau Visitors centres (downtown Calgary and Calgary Airport locations) and the various government Visitor Centres around Central and South Alberta.
- Calgary Yellow Page Telephone Information Ad and listing in the Calgary White Pages, and the Airdrie/Cochrane Yellow Pages. - this is our first year.
- Joint brochure with our Rocky View Tourism Partners membership - brochures will be disseminated through 7 major trade shows in Calgary, outside of Calgary (i.e.. Airdrie and Cochrane) and in Edmonton. We have also offered a "discount coupon" in this same brochure. As a member of RVTP we are able to attend these same trade shows to promote our products using the RVTP booth.
- Advertisement in Travel Alberta's Tourism Guide
- Attend membership meetings and functions to network and promote our services and products.
- Joint advertising efforts with various memberships
- Contact relevant Inbound Tour Operators/Incentive Operators to offer services to packaged travellers.
- Use services of a Marketing Consultant with a background in the Tour and Travel Trade
- Fax Broadcasts and/or mail out to Staff Social Clubs in Corporate Calgary and follow up
- Free media coverage
- Have donated rafting trips to various fundraising events in and around Calgary
- Website - We need to develop more links with other websites and Search Engines.
- Participate in joint FAM trips with other outdoor Recreation companies aimed at Hotels, Concierges of Hotels.

Clearwater Raft Tours

- Brochure distribution via sport shows, tourism booths, government cooperative distributions, & mail-outs
- Internet website
- Sport shows
- Partnership Opportunities (Tourism Saskatchewan) via:
a) co-op ads in 7 magazines; b) telephone directories;
c) internet links; d) call-center information services
- Inbound Wholesale programs
- Print Ads
- Promotional give-a-ways
- Government Publications
- Radio/TV
- Word-of-mouth

Western Canadian River Adventures

- Direct mail-out of newsletters to past customers and contacts
- Travel Wholesalers
- Trade Publications e.g. University magazines
- Web Page
- Environmental newsletters e.g. Sierra Club
- Word of mouth e.g. People who recommend new clients receive 10 % commission
- Posters and pamphlets at retail outlets
- Referrals from other operators

9.6 Electronic Marketing - WEB Site and Email

This technique deserves particular mention, because the feedback from exemplary operators is that it is very effective - in terms of generating interest, in terms of cost-effectiveness, and because it works so well in attracting *international* visitors. However, as can be seen in other sections of this report, all web sites may not be created equally - some have better search engines, better links between sites, or may be more appropriate for certain businesses. In addition, a number of companies indicated that their first efforts at a web site were rather utilitarian, and redesign was needed, in addition, the web page required more attention. They are in the process of revamping their sites. Others say they need to develop more links with other websites and Search Engines. They are in an evaluation and improvement mode.

Quoddy Link Marine has a web site. As they say, “results are limited but growing. We are seeing slow growth in the amount of actual “hits” to the site. Determining the amount of sales that these correspond to is more difficult. We believe however, more can be done with our site to increase traffic, i.e., better links to other key sites, increased search engine registration, etc.” This is good business practice - to be constantly seeking improvement.

Index and Link Your Sites

Wilderness Spirit: A primary way our product is distributed is through the Internet, so we are indexed with a number of Internet travel information sites that receive significant travel agent traffic, and we are members of many sites that deal with outdoor adventure generally and canoeing specifically.

Boreal Wilderness Guides does not yet have their web site completed, but have already received a lot of positive feedback simply from having their company information on other appropriate websites (Aboriginal Business Canada, Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters, CTC, local lodges and communities etc.)

Chocpaw says a web site is a tremendous resource. There are a high number of hits daily and follow up Email contacts. *Seacoast Expeditions*: We have recently hired someone to redesign our website and they will be responsible for submitting it to the various search engines so that we come up in the top 10-20 consistently on searches.

Good Business Tip: The effectiveness of web sites is related to user friendliness, search engine listings, links from other sites, and a well managed page.

Know the Effectiveness of your Site

Wanipitei has had a website for 2 years, and activity has increased by 100% in one year

CanoeSki Discovery knows the percentage of their enquiries and sales generated by their web site

Canadian Trails Website is extremely cost-effective This will be our first full year's experience with it, but we anticipate 20% of our 1999 business will come from it, and 50% of our year 2000 business (response is more than doubling)

Fresh Tracks have a very successful web site and in 1998, 52% of sales came from website browsers.

9.7 Develop a Strong Company Image

A distinctive company presence, professionalism and capability, uniform, slogan, image etc. will assist in creating a strong name recognition and word of mouth advantage. *Fundy Tide Runners* says: Our bright orange floatation suits are our best marketers. Not only safe and warm, but also they create a buzz on the wharf. They also excite people when they are putting them on because it gives the impression that you require special equipment to do special things. Similarly, *Seacoast Expeditions* says “we are distinctive in the harbour in that we are the only company running black zodiacs with customers in yellow cruiser-suits. Our boat crews wear red cruiser suits. Our logo also appears on the company vehicles, and all retail stock.

Au Diable Vert uses a provocative phrase or slogan as a marketing tool. *Inside Out* uses their Bear Costume (wearing the company T-shirt) for public community events, to strengthen their name. *Fresh Tracks*' company image revolves around a natural look, with the slogan "Canadian Adventures for the

Untourist." *Ancient Voices* has a "northern outdoors" image, and uses First Nation traditional clothing during ceremonies and special events.

Select a Name, Image or Banner

Esprit Rafting: "we have excellent looking uniforms, and a reputation of being the "David amongst the Goliaths" of rafting in Eastern Canada. We have also won the Canadian Rafting Championships for the past 4 years in a row, and have represented Canada at the last 4 World Rafting Championships. 1998 marked a banner year with both Esprit Men's and women's teams winning the Canadian Championships. We get a lot of mileage and image out of our racing successes. We go under the banner of *Team Esprit Canada*...it gets us lots of media coverage which, in turn, gets us more business."

Some companies such as *Quoddy Link Marine* have developed their logo electronically, and can embed it in electronically into correspondence, whether electronic or hard copy.

Maintain the Theme Through Various Media

Traversée de Charlevoix has merchandise (a T-shirt, or other clothes), which become a trophy or bragging point, for having accomplished a great personal challenge of the Traversée. They are also establishing a diploma system that is given to each participant at the end of the long distance trek. They also have a concept used in their brochure which is continued in their web site and other publicity, the goal being to create a link, an image, of our diverse tools

9.8 Use Innovation to Assist in Marketing

Horizons Unlimited says "I have a photo journalist friend in Germany. He travels around Germany and Switzerland giving slide shows about Canada. He and his wife spent several weeks with us taking pictures. Our business is a big part of his slide shows. I traveled with him in Europe for several days answering questions for the audience after his shows."

Traversée de Charlevoix takes the approach of letting the clients do the promotion. "We invite our clients to write an article for journals or specialized reviews and magazines, recounting the experience they lived, and their activities on the Traversée."

Tours of Exploration networks with conservation organizations, and invites famous personalities to escort tours. *Clearwater Raft Tours* created a promotion on their ten-year anniversary that coincided with the anniversary of the first time explorer Alexander Mackenzie discovered the river.

A number of other innovative approaches to marketing involve creating or participating in events.

Create or Host an Event

In April 1997, *Voyageur Quest* operated a "Wilderness Evening In Toronto". This consisted of renting out a Park Pavilion and setting up: Native Canadian drummers; slide shows on different *Voyageur Quest* destinations; ongoing videos of documentaries made on *Voyageur Quest*; Licensed bar selling Algonquin Beer; BBQ featuring Buffalo burgers and venison sausage; Guides meeting and greeting guests; Give-away of a free trip.

Jasper Adventure Centre: "The latest and biggest is that we helped coordinated the video taping of all 'off ski hill' adventure activities for the Much Music Snow Job '99, a 4 week project which will hopefully get Jasper to be recognized as a winter destination".

Niagara Nature Tours started to host an annual event in its first year. "It's title has evolved into "Mother's Day Woodland Wildflower Celebration". It combines nature, science and the arts. Because we needed lots of participants to have an interesting venue, I had to approach those I needed help from, to ask if they would be part of this vision. The vision was to create a magical, special woodland outing for families, while at the same time enticing and educating them about nature and conservation. The long range goal for those involved, was that in a couple of years the event would be successful enough to pay them for their time. They have hung in there for 4 years this spring. It has indeed turned into a very unique and special event, but is still losing money; and the weather has been against us every year! We are sure this is our year though!!! However, this annual event is a creative marketing technique, because it allows for wonderful PR"

9.9 Participation in Professional Organisations and Associations

Fresh Air Adventure is active in the Albert County Tourist Association. In this way, we have a presence at a number of trade shows. The Association promotes Albert County and its members widely. As well, members of the Association who operate B&B's & Inns place our brochures in their rooms and include it in their mail outs.

Niagara Nature Tours sit on the board for a recently formed organization call *Festival & Events Niagara* which printed 75,000 brochures with our *Mother's Day Woodland Wildflower Celebration* in it.

Good Business Practice: Participate in industry organisations/associations.

9.10 Use of Media, Free Publicity and Word of Mouth

Esprit Rafting says "media is very important to us. We have received local, regional and national media coverage and it has all been FREE, FREE, FREE!!! We have a goal to be mentioned every week during our operating season in our 2 local papers. Years ago, we launched a demonstration to bring some media attention to a local canyon threatened by a hydroelectric project. With local, regional and national news media on site, we rappelled our guides and equipment into a 50m deep canyon and paddled out the raging river. A competitor asked me what type of publicity stunt we were trying to pull? I answered - a good one. The success was twofold, we raised the awareness the canyon deserved and we raised some publicity for ourselves. I see nothing wrong with getting some good publicity for doing some good (media worthy) good deeds."

Pursue Media Attention for Increasing Word-of-Mouth

Seacoast Expeditions Limited specifically pursued word-of-mouth advertising and public relations largely by hosting travel writers, film makers and other media professionals. We have a promotional 2 for 1 sale that we advertise in a daily newspaper in February to encourage locals to become familiar with us. We have arranged to have ourselves listed in some key popular retail travel guidebooks (Fodor's Frommers. Lonely Planet) and regularly maintain/update our listings.

Nahanni Wilderness Adventures engages in joint ventures with Calgary Herald/IMAX. “Our trip was part of a prize package.”

Niagara Nature Tours: “the local talk radio show that has called me for interviews several times suggested a good marketing idea. Knowing that our company had no money to sponsor ads on their radio station, they said they would work with us to find a compatible sponsor. We would do the 30 minute educational, interesting nature shows, and the sponsor would buy advertising as our sponsor. We like the idea, but haven’t had time to follow up on their suggestion. It would be wonderful exposure on a regular basis. One year we donated money to listener supported CJRT radio, which supports folk, blues and jazz musicians, plus storytelling and much more. The donation was done during a fund-raiser and they mentioned our company as a contributor. That was fun and lots of people heard it!”

9.11 Measure Results

Exemplary operators often have a good sense of how well they are achieving their targets, and how well their marketing activities are achieving desired results. One of the first ways of doing this is measuring results.

Wilderness Spirit says “we judge returns obtained from the different ways of advertising to increase our efficiency in that area.” *Wanipitei* has measured that their Word of Mouth yields 70%; magazine advertising, 12%; outdoor adventure shows, 6%; and web site 12%. In addition, a number of operators were able to describe the effectiveness of their techniques.

Measure and Analyse Results

Canoe Arctic: “I code the addresses on all of my advertisements and I ask telephone callers where they saw my ad. Every spring I do an analysis of what magazines my enquiries originated from. I adjust my advertising plans from year to year based on this cost effective analysis. I only continue to advertise in places that produce results.”

As a summary, developing and implementing marketing strategies that work for your company may involve:

- being active members of appropriate local and industry associations within reasonable financial constraints
- ensuring local and other appropriate tourist offices are aware of what you offer
- having a policy of inviting tourist office information staff to site/operation, and educating them in what the operation has to offer
- reviewing pricing and ensuring that all staff and relevant industry bodies are informed of any changes
- reviewing promotional material, ensuring it is up to date and promotes the operation in the best way possible
- contacting relevant industry bodies to ensure they have adequate stocks of promotional material, and have distribution procedures in place if additional stocks are necessary
- briefing local and regional media regularly on activities, including special events and other activities

- exploring all available marketing and communication channels to reach your target markets

Good Business Practice: Selling is only one part of marketing - don't neglect your investment in promotional effort by poor monitoring and control.

10. Product Development

10.1 Have a Product Development Strategy: Design and Develop with Care

Most businesses recognise the importance of having a product development strategy. Good product design is a key to getting value-added content. Some businesses are better organised and have a stronger development culture than others. Adopting a more strategic view of the processes involved is useful.

Designing and developing new product involves a number of critical issues:

- being open to change and innovation
- taking a planned approach
- look at design as the key to the product's added value
- collecting data, testing and evaluation are important
- keeping a focus on customer needs and preferences is essential
- a team approach to product concepts and design is helpful
- a clear strategy for marketing should be developed as early as possible
- take account of developing technologies
- involve all aspects of the organisation

Good Business Practice: Encourage new ideas and involve company staff from the start

Good Business Tip: Investment in good product design is important for success

10.2 Plan the Product Design and Development Process

Most companies allocate resources to the product development process, but:

- do you devote the necessary skills and effort to a strategic approach?
- have you organised the design and development of new product from idea to implementation?
- do you have a product launch strategy linked into the design and development process?

Good Business Practice: Design and development of product should not be haphazard or irregular. It needs to be planned and controlled.

10.3 Respond to Change

Successful companies have shown that strong performance depends on a fast response to rapidly developing or changing customer demands. Such companies are flexible, and responsive; they change their programs, or the ways of delivering their product. Along with solidity of established programs, there is a receptiveness to new ideas and concepts.

Respond to Customer Demand

Seacoast Expeditions changed by introducing an option for customers: they contact them by pager to alert them to the high possibility of a whale sighting. Through most of the season there is a good probability but no certainty of whale encounters. Thus if clients are willing to be available at short notice and pay an extra fee, they are contacted when whales are definitely around.

Increased Personalisation

Voyageur Ventures has added a deeper level of education and historical interpretation to their product. Their delivery now involves much more personal contact, earlier, to get the necessary information to custom design experiences. People want to learn something, to relax deeply, and to be part of something special.

Opportunities from change might relate to varied aspects such as: advances in technology, new services, or environmental pressures and standards.

Learn from Failures: Modify Your Product

Naturally Superior Adventures have a base location on Lake Superior for water-based adventures. They started with the Voyageur Canoe (36 ft) because of the history of the area and because the Voyageur canoe permits a wide range of people with a wide range of skills to be on the lake and appreciate it in a safe fashion. However, they found the Voyageur canoe to be less successful than they had wished. Their response has been to modify the product, and respond successfully to very significant growth in demand for sea kayaking.

Société Duvetnor says "our ecotourism product offering has changed considerably over the last decade. In 1989, when we started in this area, our entire emphasis on day trips. Since then, a significant decline in the volume of tourists to our region (1992 - 1996) has gradually forced us to abandon the day visits. However, 10 years ago, a visitor spent about \$25 in the region, whereas today they are spending about \$80, as a result of longer stays. Without this reorientation, we would have had to abandon ecotourist activities. We also consider these changes conceptually profitable, since by staying several days in a natural protected setting, where the ever-present theme is conservation and biodiversity, the visitor appreciates the setting and takes conservation values with them. So this formula of longer trips replacing short excursions let us more easily attain our objective of sensitising the visitors to the importance of natural environments."

Seacoast Expeditions tried to expand from whale and wildlife watching, to market land based experiences too (boat/hike combinations) but found this unsuccessful. While they were the first operator in the area in 1987 there are now over 18 companies in the area, so there is a very competitive environment. They find it most helpful to expand on their current product, and found that a whale-sighting service is a very helpful addition to services, where customers carry one of the company pagers, when there is a reliable sighting available

Nahanni River Adventures says: "originally, trips were operated more like a 'course' than a tourism experience. We were priced to be attractive to a young, active market that would be willing to furnish food and gear in order to keep prices down. Our evolution to a high end product followed the aging

‘baby boomer’. Our product has taken on an increased educational/interpretive component over the years”.

Markets are Interested in Research Activities and Learning Experiences

Mingan Island Cetacean: We have offered more options as to where participants can join our research and in this sense we have added a great deal of flexibility. In addition, we now offer trips specializing on blue whales in the St. Lawrence so that clients can focus on certain species and certain scientific aspects of our research. We have added greatly to what we offer in way of education at the field Station through the museum and an active education program and by offering more aspects of the data analysis that the participants can take part in.

The advantage often goes to the company that can deliver improved or innovative products before its competitors.

Respond to Political Opportunities

Smoothwater is also developing relationships with Inuit owned tourism businesses in Nunavut that can give our clients an Arctic experience that southern operators simply cannot offer. A part of the mandate of the new government in Nunavut is to facilitate local economic development. We are positioning ourselves to participate in that endeavour.

Good Business Tip: Exploit the opportunities created by change

Reposition Product in Response to Market Trends and Interests

Smoothwater was originally strictly an adventure travel outfitter in 1984. When we purchased the business in 1994, we began to operate *Smoothwater* according to the principles of ecotourism, and worked to change the facility into an ecolodge. We instituted a 4 year plan to revitalize our trail system and we developed diverse educational programming to compliment our adventure travel offerings. We have invested heavily in the business, renewing or enhancing virtually every aspect. We have also become strong advocates for wild spaces conservation, wildlife habitat and the health of our regional ecosystem. We do not oppose resource extraction, rather we work with this sector and government agencies to modify resource extraction activities to become truly sustainable and respectful of non-extractive values. Recently, we have worked to include ecological areas not found in Manitoba. We are offering trips on a Canadian Heritage river that flows within Nunavut and are working to include other Northern areas. This expansion allow us to offer clients a wider range of wilderness experiences.

Good Business Practice: Make flexibility a company feature

10.4 Become Informed

The ability to tap into appropriate information sources to develop new product offerings is a key attribute. For example, *Earth Rhythms* says they have “an open-ness to product ideas” and to going in new “directions and tangents we did not expect”.

Research, Research, Research

Earth Rhythms obtains information and ideas from the Internet and from brochures about what competitors are doing, as well as using a specially prepared inventory of opportunities and suppliers. They are always asking people questions about what the company might do, or about a product idea. In addition, they have a files collection of personal ideas, clippings, product ideas, etc., and are always on the look out for market research.

Good Information May be on Your Doorstep

Borealis Outdoor Adventure monitor future community events and conferences, and contacts organisers to see if a cycling adventure is feasible for their groups. Then they work with the organizers to develop a program that is within the capability of their participants.

10.5 Incorporate Market Preferences

A continual customer focus is critical for new product success. *Au Diable Vert* says they design a product making sure that it is accessible to their target market and that it integrates well with the distribution and promotion of pre-existing products. “We target the baby boomers and they respond well. When we create a new product or soft adventure, we make sure that it is accessible to this clientele.”

Market Information Can Come from Indirect Sources

Société Duvetnor has staff who for 8 years have been officers of varied regional and provincial tourism organisations. This enables them to have a constant flow of information about market trends and interests, which is consciously used to modify product offerings. In addition, these organisations can spread information about the Society’s products, thus there is a two-fold benefit.

Earth Rhythms feels client interests, needs and wants are very important and they do a considerable amount of market research, including structured interviews and focus groups. *Earth Rhythms* sums up this customer-focused perspective: “Talk to the client. Talk to the client. Talk to the client. We just keep asking, asking, asking; LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN.”

Conduct Focused Research

“For a women’s 3-day retreat, I asked a management consultant to bring a group of 15 women together for about an hour. We then took them on a guided visualisation: leaving Winnipeg on a Friday night, what they felt like, leaving their busy world, and arriving at Riding Mountain...what would they want to experience for the next 3 days. This provided great feedback with discussions of a range of ideas, the price point, etc. Based on this feedback, we are developing the marketing strategy for the weekend workshop.”

Your markets may include representatives of the travel trade. *Inside Out* has information packages that are specifically designed for the inbound tour operators and travel agents and for the corporate markets.

Quoddy Link Marine’s information leads them to believe their markets currently prefer: adventure without sacrificing comfort or safety; high quality; educational interpretation; environmentally responsibility; professionalism; uniqueness. “We attempt to incorporate all of these preferences in our product. We do this by using clean modern vessels which provide passengers the comfort of enclosed heated areas or the thrill of open air upper decks.”

Regarding market research, *Earth Rhythms* says, “we have developed a series of interview questions. We have developed a photo album of a number of our programs, and some storyboards, which we take with us on a sales call. These are very important tools for gauging “body language” responses to the visual representations...the clients’ reaction is the basis for understanding and responding to market preferences. We have made presentations in English as a Second Language classes, and asked the students what they would like to do. These help us to fine tune the activities and get at some of the fears that the students might have. We just keep asking, asking, asking.”

Nahanni River Adventures has attempted to soften their expeditions in keeping with changing demographics. “We do not conform to the ‘weekend warrior’ or ‘beer commercial’ image. We bring chairs and benches and serve wine with most dinners, while preserving a sense of exploration and challenge as appropriate for each individual”.

10.6 Test the Concept and the Product to Minimise Risk

Smaller companies can compete against larger organisations by building on their strengths: the ability to specialise; be innovative; react quickly to market opportunities; and use shorter decision chains. However, all new projects have financial risk, and there may be more financial risks for smaller companies. Thus it is important to be very satisfied with new product before launching it. *Blue Heron Nature Tours* tackled this by taking market ready workshops sponsored by tourism organizations, to evaluate their product.

Good Business Tip: Evaluate customer responses at the design stage and test responses of potential customers during development, to determine market readiness.

Research and Pilot New Product

Wildland Tours, studies, researches and then pilots their product with willing former guests before their product launch.

Good Business Practice: Consider the people in your company whose input and decisions are critical to design and product development. They need a balanced view of risk taking, and commitment to innovation.

Use Standards to Evaluate and Minimise Risk

Tours Innu evaluates their product against an evaluation by Société touristique Innu, which is based on standards of quality and safety.

Good Business Practice: Involve your partners early in the development of a new product.

Summary of a Good Product Launch Strategy

Wanipitei's approach summarises a good product launch strategy: They use client suggestions, examine the competition, research and investigate tourism information. They plan the product in advance, then staff test the program. The initial launch is with known clients

11. Conclusions

Canada has a tremendous range of natural resources, which have given rise to an equally varied and vibrant tourism sector in the area of ecotourism and adventure travel. The findings in this catalogue of exemplary practices demonstrate that there are also a vast number of approaches used by operators across the country, to tackle any one aspect of their business; however, many of the principles of success are similar. This catalogue demonstrates the strengths of these exemplary operators, who have not only exhibited a spirit of willingness to share with their professional colleagues, but have taken the time to share their practices.

It may have been evident to the reader that for some chapters (or Core Competency areas), the practices of specific exemplary operators were more likely to be highlighted, whereas in other chapters, other operators' practices were more likely to be selected. This is, in part, because it is a challenge for any small business to have equal capability or knowledge across all the aspects of their business, however much they require attention. It is hoped that this catalogue makes it easier for all such businesses to examine their own Competencies which might benefit from improvement.

In the area of **Business Management**, key messages from exemplary operators were that having a vision and a business plan were critical. Other aspects of the business flowed from these, whether operational plans and activities, financial procedures, organisation and risk management, or information and human resources management.

With respect to **Product and its Delivery**, the assurance of quality was critical, which flowed from a range of practices: guiding principles for operations in the field, high service standards both inside and outside the firm, and behaviour standards and codes for staff and for guests. In addition, in the area of ecotourism and adventure travel, the product quality was strongly influenced by the nature of guiding and interpretative experience, which was in turn influenced by guide training and client-to-guide ratios, and by making topic experts available on certain trips. Further aspects which influenced the quality of the product was good knowledge of the guests' needs and preferences. In addition to the above, most of the exemplary operators were aware that their operations (like their clients) were dynamic and able to improve, and examined operations with a critical eye and accepted or even welcomed the opportunity to improve.

Customer Service and Relations is an area important to most respondents. The key lesson was preparing guests well for their experience, both before their visit and immediately before the actual trip, as well as briefing during the trip. Additionally, keeping appropriate contact with clients after the trip, and listening to customer feedback was seen to be important. Exemplary operators were intent on exceeding client expectations, which they did both by *not* promising that which they could not deliver, and providing little extras in the way of tokens, experiences, or more significant surprises. They were all aware that taking a personal interest in clients, and customising to meet particular individual or group needs, contributed strongly to the quality of the guest experience.

Exemplary operators viewed their **Human Resources** as one of their strongest assets, and invested in training in a variety of ways. They recognised that all staff require training, not just the guides, and they extended this professional attitude to team building with staff, membership in professional organisations,

in-house and external training and accreditation. In addition, they provided feedback to staff on their performance, and provided incentives or rewards for staff, to commend a job well done.

Exemplary companies understand that their business is fundamentally based on natural resources, and so **Protection and Sustainability of Resources** was an important area of activity for operators, many of whom went far beyond their own company interests in this area. They illustrated a vast number of ways in which they were sensitive to the natural environment, conserved resources and developed relevant purchase and supply policies. In addition, they were particularly sensitive to having minimum impacts on wildlife, which is a key attraction for ecotourism and adventure tourism operations, as well as having broad minimum impact policies, which guided the behaviour of staff and guests. But beyond these more obvious activities, exemplary operators supported regional and local conservation efforts in tangible ways, whether by dollar or in-kind contributions, or by encouraging guest contributions, and many operators were members of and active in conservation groups.

It has taken longer for the tourism industry to see that the **Sustainability of Local Communities and Cultures** is also relevant to a sustainable industry. However, exemplary operators seem to be well aware of this fact. They “take ownership” of the region in which they operate, employ locally, purchase local goods and services, and involve local people in their plans. They try to spread the benefits of their operation in local communities, through volunteer work, donations, or assisting local groups or authorities. In addition, they exhibit local social or cultural sensitivity by encouraging (or discouraging where relevant) guests to visit and spend in local communities, and exemplary operators include local events or programming in their own activities, and may well partner with local operations or aboriginal communities. Their sensitivity to changing local conditions is reflected in responsive changes to their own operations over time.

Exemplary operators were particularly involved in a range of **Packaging** activities which revealed that they saw mutual benefits in packaging, rather than trying to “keep the customer for themselves”. They packaged with those who provided *different* services than their own, but significantly, also packaged with *similar* operators, who might often be located or operate in the same region. They understand that the competition is not “next door”. Exemplary operators also packaged with less traditional partners, with associations, and were strong in networking activities. They understood that cooperation in such aspects as marketing might lead to further cooperation and business. These operators also were attuned to the needs of the travel trade, which was an important partner. Some even created their own small packaging and marketing group when this met their needs better than conventional marketing organisations.

In the area of **Marketing and Promotion**, exemplary operators understood that marketing is not simply selling, but understanding markets, maintaining high customer service levels, differentiating products to meet customer needs, and capitalising on new market areas by modifying their product. They tended to have a written marketing plan, to know their marketplaces well and why they were targeting them, and to research their own customers on an ongoing basis. They also used a variety of means for marketing, and understood that what worked well for others may not be the means for them. Many of these operators were aware of the strength of electronic marketing, and could indicate the factors required for success, as well as tell the changes from one year to the next. They tended to be very innovative about marketing, and found the media to be extremely important to them in terms of free publicity, and quite a number tapped into or *created* events, to develop free publicity. One of the most important strengths of exemplary operators was that they were aware of how well the various media they used *yielded*: in other words, they tracked and measured their results, and modified their activities accordingly.

Exemplary operators understood that **Product Development** was a constant process, which required to be planned and designed well for success. They responded well to change, and had a process for developing new product, which incorporated flexibility. Part of their product development process involved becoming informed about markets, trends and preferences, and ensuring that these were incorporated into the product design. They also understood the element of risk involved in new product, and tested their concepts as well as new products with a range of individuals - staff, previous customers, partners and others.

Those who read this catalogue are challenged to review their own operations with a view to considering whether or not they are satisfied with their current practices, or whether they might benefit by improving certain aspects of their business. A further challenge is to determine how to select or modify any of the practices presented here, since a “cookie cutter” approach will not necessarily work.

It is helpful to keep in mind that none of the operators illustrated in this catalogue are equally exemplary across all Core Competencies; all have areas of great strength or relative weakness. What is important, however, is that they recognise this reality, that they have an attitude of constant learning, and they have a willingness to modify and improve their operations on an ongoing basis. Our thanks go to these operators who have chosen to share their strengths and insights.

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APPENDIX A

Contact Agencies and Resource Persons who Contributed Information and list of Exemplary Practice Operators

Contact Agencies and Resource Persons who Assisted

Peter Kingsmill
Chair, CTC Eco-Adventure Tourism Working Group

Nathalie Gagnon
Assoc. des Producteurs de Tourisme d'aventure du Québec (APTAQ)

Eva Cooper-Shannon
CTC Eco-Adventure Tourism Working Group

Jan Collins, Tourism Development Consultant
Manitoba Industry, Trade & Tourism

Bill Reynolds
Alberta Tourism Development Agency

Lori Waldbrook
Ontario Economic Development, Trade & Tourism

Louis Parent
Tourisme Québec

Martin Wanless
**CTC Eco-Adventure Tourism Working Group ;
TIANS (Tourism Industry Association of N.-S.)**

Stephanie Hunt
**Centre for Regional Tourism Research
Southern Cross University, Australia**

Guylaine Gill
Société touristique des Autochtones du Québec

Tom Elliot
Parks Canada, Yukon

Michele Deakin
Canadian Heritage, British Columbia

Randy Barenscott
CTC Eco-Adventure Tourism Working Group

Eric Yaxley, Managing Director
NWT Arctic Tourism

Alex Rhodes
BC Whale Watch Operators Association

Steve Bruno
Conservation Lands Product Club

André Villemare
Canadian Tourism Commission

Laura McLennan
**Blue Loon Adventures, Northern Ontario Tourism
Outfitters**

Bob Book, Tourism Development Officer
Nova Scotia Economic Development & Tourism

Trent Schumann
CTC Eco-Adventure Tourism Working Group

Liz Taylor
Travel Alberta

Joel Richardson
New Brunswick Economic Development & Tourism

Darryl McCallum, Manager of Product Development
Tourism Saskatchewan

Kathy Livingstone
**TIAPEI (Tourism Industry Association of Prince
Edward Island)**

Ross Dobson
Parks Canada, Ontario Service Centre

Louise Nadeau
Le Québec Maritime

Celes Devar
CTC Working Group

Lynn Flury
Saskatchewan River Basin Product Club

Tom Young
Bay of Fundy Product Club

Joseph Hnatiuk
The Ecotourism Society of Saskatchewan

Peter Williams
Simon Fraser University

Joe Keszi
Manitoba Industry, Trade & Tourism

Terry Hood
Pacific Rim Institute of Tourism

Gail Hall
Manitoba Tourism Education Council

Edouard Olivieria
Aboriginal Tourism Authority

Kathy Rosencranz
Tourism Saskatchewan
Ronald Smith, Development Director
Scottish Tourism Research Unit

Lyn Leader-Elliott
Leader-Elliott & Associates, Australia

Brad Mason, Park Manager
**Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park,
Saskatchewan**

Bryan Farrell, Environmental Studies
University of California

Executive & Advisory Committee members
The Ecotourism Society

Louise Twining-Ward, Researcher
University of Surrey, UK

Isabel Budke
Simon Fraser University

Simon McArthur
Missing Link Consultants, Australia

Xavier Font, TOURFOR Project Officer
**European Commission Environmental
Management System Award in Tourism**

Kerry Engel
Alberta Agriculture Food & Rural Development

Ross Clouthier
Cariboo College

Paul Rymes
CTC Eco-Adventure Tourism Working Group

Maurice Couture
CTC Eco-Adventure Tourism Working Group
Bill Sylvester, Head of Tourism
Highlands & Islands Enterprise

Al MacPherson, Ecotourism Management
Sir Sandford Fleming College

Brian White
**World Tourism & Travel Human Resources
Council**

Christina Deagle
Nova Scotia Adventure Tourism Association

Ted Phillips
Parks Canada, National Office

Dr. Tom Baum, Head of Department
University of Strathclyde, Scotland

Angie Gerst
Simon Fraser University

Corinne Martin
Great Canadian Travel Company

Jean-Pierre Issaverdis, Manager
**National Ecotourism Accreditation Program,
Ecotourism Associations of Australia**

APPENDIX B

Companies who Responded to the Survey

Operators Who Responded to the Survey

Active Journeys Inc.	M & W Guides
Ancient Voices Wilderness Camp	Manito Outfitters
Anishinabe Experience, The	Mariner Cruises
Anvil Cove Charters	Michie Creek Mushing
Au Diable Vert	Mingan Island Cetacean Study Inc.
Aurora Canada Tours Inc.	Mountain Quest Adventure Company Ltd.
Bathurst Inlet Lodge/Bathurst Arctic Services	Nahanni River Adventures
Big Sand Lake Lodge	Nahanni Wilderness Adventures
Blast Adventures Ltd.	Nature Tours of Yukon
Blue Heron Nature Tours Ltd.	Naturally Superior Adventures
Boreal Wilderness Guides	Niagara Nature Tours
Borealis Outdoor Adventure Inc.	Ocean Explorations Whale Cruises
Brewster's Mountain Lodges and Adventures	Ornitour
Brewster's Shadow Lake Lodge	Outdoor Adventure Company, The
Brier Island Whale and Seabird Cruises	Quoddy Link Marine Inc.
Butterfield & Robinson	Pikaluyak Outfitting Services
Call of the Wild	Pirate's Cove Whale Cruises Ltd.
Canadian Rockies Rafting Co.	Remote Passages Marine Excursions
Canadian Trails Adventure Tours Inc.	Rivers and Oceans Unlimited
Canoe Arctic Inc.	Sawyer Lake Adventures
Canoeski Discovery Company	Seacoast Expeditions Ltd.
Chocpaw Expeditions	Sea North Tours Ltd.
Churchill Nature Tours	Service Nautique Soleil de Mer
Clearwater Raft Tours Ltd.	Scott Walking Adventures
Crowsnest Vacation Creation	Shearwater Properties Ltd.
Earth Rhythms Inc.	Société Duvetnor Ltd.
Eco-Explorations	Smoothwater Outfitters
Ecomertours Nord-Sud Inc.	Stubbs Island Charters Ltd
Enodah Wilderness Travel	Territoire Sauvage Inc.
Esprit Rafting Adventures Inc.	Timberline Tours
Expedition Eau Vive Inc.	Tours Innu
Freewheeling Adventures Inc.	Tours of Exploration
Fresh Air Adventure	Traversée de Charlevoix Inc, La
Fresh Tracks Canada	Tuckamor Trips Inc.
Fundy Tide Runners	Tuckamore Wilderness Lodge
Gatherall's Puffin and Whale Watch	Tundra Buggy Tours
Good Earth Travel Adventures	Voyageur Ventures & Klondike Ventures
Great Canadian Travel Company	Voyageur Quest
Gros Morne Adventure Guides	Walden's Guiding and Outfitting
Horizon Nature Adventures	Wanapitei Canoe & Northern Outdoor Expeditions Inc.
Horizons Unlimited	Warner Guiding and Outfitting Ltd.
Horseback Adventures Ltd.	WeekEnder Tours Inc.
Horseshoe Canyon	Western Canadian River Adventure
Inside Out Experience Inc.	Wilderness Spirit Canoeing Adventures
Jasper Adventure Centre	Wilderness Tours
Kiska Adventures	Wildland Tours
Land of the Loon	Willard's Adventure Club
Lazy M Ranch	Windigo Wilderness School
Leaning Tree Ranch	Wyldewood Llama Treks

APPENDIX C

Operators with Exemplary Practices Discussed in the Catalogue

Ancient Voices Wilderness Camp

Box 679 Dawson City
YK Y0B 1G0

Tel: (867) 993-5605
Fax: (867) 993-6532
Email: avwcamp@yukon.net
Web site: <http://yukon.net/avwcamp>
Contact: Margaret Kormendy, owner

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Yukon

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Ancient Voices Wilderness Camp is an adventure, cultural, and ecotourism operator offering a wide variety of package tours. Ancient Voices Wilderness has on-site accommodation options for guests.

Target Markets

Canada, United States, Europe, Australia, Japan

Nature of Product

Summer
Winter

Product Offered

Ancient Voices Wilderness Camp offers both educational and interpretive components to their programs. By sharing First Nations culture with guests, Ancient Voices encourages the guests to participate in the activities "first hand". Summer activities include hide tanning, cutting and smoking salmon, cultural games, and crafts. Winter activities include dog mushing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and First Nation cuisine.

Accommodation consists of rustic cabins and comfortable wall tents. Other facilities on camp include log cookhouse, smokehouse, outside arbor, steam bath house, and gazebo.

Awards and Affiliations

Nominated – Golden Host Award
Nominated – Aboriginal Tourism Award
Yukon Department of Education/ Education Tribunal
Wildlife Refuge Planning Board

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Anishinabe Experience, The

Box 138, Golden Lake
ON K0J 1X0

Tel: (613) 625-2519
Toll Free 1-800-897-0235
Fax: (613) 625-2857
Email: anishexp@renc.igs.net
Web site: Coming in March
Contact: Linda Sarazin, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Ontario

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

The Anishinabe Experience caters to FIT travelers and offers group activities.

Target Markets

Domestic, Europe, Asia, United States

Nature of Product

Winter
Summer

Product Offered

The Anishinabe Experience provides the opportunity to share in Algonquin culture, traditions, and beliefs through various hands of activities. Included in the "Experience" are: hide tanning demonstrations, craft making, bannock making, drumming, dancing, storytelling, and a tour of the community. Guest participation is encouraged in all activities.

The Anishinabe Experience provides teepee accommodation during June through September. Arrangements can be made through local accommodation facilities.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Anvil Cove Charters

Box 454 Queen Charlotte
BC V0T 1S0
Tel: (250) 559-8207
Toll Free
Fax: (250) 559-8207
Email: anvilcov@qcislands.net
Web site: www.qcislands.net/anvilcove
Contact: Barb Rowsell

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

British Columbia

Season of Operation

May-September (scheduled)
Year-round (on request)

Description of Business

Anvil Cove Charters is an ecotourism and adventure travel operator.

Target Markets

Adventure Travelers

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

The Anvil cove is a 53 foot schooner certified by the Canadian Coast guard as a Passenger Vessel. The crew is fully trained in seamanship, safety and first aid and has over 20 years experience sailing the waters of Haida Gwaii. There is an emphasis on the cultural and natural history of the area. An extensive library onboard the vessel provides an opportunity to learn of the distinct flora, fauna, and geography. Kayaks, fishing gear, and other equipment are available for activities onboard and ashore.

The Anvil Cove has accommodations on board for 8 passengers.

Awards and Affiliations

The Sea Kayaks Guide Alliance of BC

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Au Diable Vert

169 Staines Road, Glen Sutton
QU J0E 2K0
Tel: (450) 583-5639
Toll Free
Fax: (450) 538-2059
Email:
Web site: www.virtuel.qc.ca/audiabilevert
Contact: Benoit G lineau and Isobelle Savoie

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Quebec

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Au Diable Vert is a tour operator with an onsite Inn for guest accommodation.

Target Markets

Babyboomers who love exploring the outdoors

Nature of Product

Fall/Winter
Spring/Summer

Product Offered

Au Diable Vert is situated in Glen Sutton in the Massif of the Appalachian Mountains. Au Diable is an Inn on 200 acres of land where 10 km of trail have been developed for hiking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. Other activities include canoeing in the summer and winter camping in the winter. Guided excursions include explanations of the landscape and habitat of the region.

Accommodation includes rustic camping and the Inn with room and dormitory lodging.

Awards and Affiliations

Society of Relationists of Quebec

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Bathurst Inlet Lodge/Bathurst Arctic Services

Box 920, Yellowknife
NT X0C 0G0

Tel: (867) 873-2595

Toll Free

Fax: (867) 920-4263

Email: bathurst@internorth.com

Web site: <http://virtualnorth.com/bathurst/>

Contact: Glenn or Boyd Warner, President,
General Manager

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Bathurst Inlet, NWT, Nunavut

Season of Operation

Summer

Description of Business

Bathurst Inlet Lodge is a receptive tour operator and packager offering ecotourism experiences. Bathurst Arctic Services offers adventure travel services, expediting, sport fishing, sport hunting and camp operation for mineral exploration and research.

Bathurst works cooperatively with Arctic Waterways (a partnership of Nahanni River Adventures and White Wolf) and Black Feather to offer raft and canoe trips.

Target Markets

Naturalists, High profile, Professional

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Bathurst Inlet Lodge provides interpretation in natural history, history, marine biology, Inuit culture, and northern issues. Activities include: birdwatching, hiking, photography, wildlife observation, rockhounding, sketching, boating, and history of the arctic and Inuit culture. Guests experience the North under the guidance of people who have lived in the North their entire lives, who love the land and the environment, and who appreciate the desire of Southerners to learn about Canada's arctic.

Bathurst Inlet Lodge offers a variety of accommodations including a historic lodge, cabins, and five camps.

Awards and Affiliations

Nunavut Tourism

NWT Arctic Tourism

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Big Sand Lake Lodge

1-1808 Wellington Avenue, Winnipeg

MB R3H 0G3

Tel: (204) 774-6666

Toll Free

Fax: (204) 774-5500

Email:

Web site: www.cyber-resort.com/bigsand/

Contact: Don McCrea, General Manager

Vera Bartlett, Promotions Coordinator

Type of Organisation

Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Manitoba

Season of Operation

June-August

Description of Business

Big Sand Lake Lodge is a receptive operator offering fully guided fishing packages to guests.

Target Markets

Domestic and Midwestern, Eastern, and Southern United States

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Big Sand Lake Lodge is a fly in fishing operation offering gully guided fishing packages at Big Sand Lake and limited guiding packages at four outpost lakes. Big Sand Lake Lodge also offers jet boat rides into secluded areas and hiking activities. The guides are Cree Indians from South Indian Lake, Manitoba.

Big Sand Lake Lodge accommodates 28 guests in deluxe log cabins. The main lodge service building consists of a hot tub, sitting area, sauna, exercise room, dining room, cocktail lounge, and office.

Affiliations and Awards

Manitoba Lodge and Outfitters Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Blast Adventures Ltd.

Suite 119-115 Elk Run Blvd., Canmore
AB T1W 1G8
Tel: (403) 609-2009
Toll Free
Fax: (403) 609-2009
Email: blastadv@telusplanet.net
Web site: www.blastadventures.com
Contact: Astrid and Bruce Klock

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Alberta

Season of Operation

June-September

Description of Business

Blast Adventures is a kayaking company that offers guided trips.

Target Markets

Alberta

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Blast Adventures Ltd. is an inflatable rafting company offering full day guided trips. The trips include transportation, lunch, equipment, and snacks. Guests are taught basic kayaking strokes and techniques and water safety. No previous river experience is necessary.

Awards and Affiliations

Networking Environment for Women
Professional River Guides Association

Commissionable to Travel Agent

Blue Heron Nature Tours Ltd.

Box 396 Neilburg
SK S0M 2C0
Tel: (306) 823-4992
Toll Free
Fax: (306) 823-4853
Email: joan.murray@sk.sympatico.ca
Web site: www.cantravel.ab.ca/bluheron.html
Contact: Murray Ball, Secretary

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Saskatchewan

Season of Operation

June-October

Description of Business

Blue Heron Nature Tours is a receptive tour operator offering educational and interpretive programs.

Target Markets

Alberta, Saskatchewan, United States

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Blue Heron Nature Tours is licensed to operate in the Manitou Sand Hills. The programs are interpretive hiking and camping expeditions through the area. The program themes include birding, interpretive trips focusing on coyote habitat, and native plant species.

Accommodation consists of no-trace camping, with tents and sleeping bags included. Blue Heron Nature Tours will secure other accommodations if needed.

Awards and Affiliations

Not Commissionable to Travel Agents

Boreal Wilderness Guides

Box 191 Seven Sisters Falls
MB R0E 1Y0
Tel: (204) 348-7739
Toll Free 1-800362-7185
Fax: (204) 348-2592
Email: guides@bwg.mb.ca
Web site: www.bwg.mb.ca
Contact: Dan Benoit, Naturalist, Vice President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Northeastern Manitoba, Northwestern Ontario, and Northwest Territories

Season of Operation

Year round

Description of Business

Boreal is an adventure guide and outfitter. Boreal packages tours with the Pinawa Resort and Conference Centre, Falcon Trails Resort, the Taiga Biological Station and First Nations communities.

Target Markets

National and International ecotourists with an emphasis on Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois and Texas in the United States and Germany, France and Italy in Europe.

Nature of Product

Winter /Summer

Product Offered

Boreal Wilderness Guides create dog sled and canoe adventure packages. They lead hiking, fishing, kayaking, snowshoeing, and snowmobile tours. Boreal offers workshops with botanists, biologists, nature artists, and photographers year round. Boreal provides accommodation in individual chalets to hotels. Primary accommodation is backcountry camping and log cabins in the summer and a combination of tents, quinzees, igloos, and log cabins in the winter.

Awards and Affiliations

Certificate of Merit – The Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism
Interpretation Canada
Manitoba Wildlife Society
Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association
Manitoba Aboriginal Tourism Association
Manitoba Metis Federation
Manitoba Best
Licensed Guides and Outfitters

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Borealis Outdoor Adventure Inc.

3120-8th St. East #106-305, Saskatoon
SK S7H 0W2

Tel: (306) 343-6399
Toll Free 1-800-463-6399
Fax: (306) 343-6199
Email: borealis@sk.sympatico.ca
Web site: www3.sk.sympatico.ca/borealis/
Contact: Darrell Noakes, President

Type of Organisation

Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Yukon

Season of Operation

May-September

Description of Business

Borealis Outdoor Adventure Inc. offers custom designed bicycle tours throughout western Canada.

Target Markets

Experienced cyclists

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Borealis Outdoor Adventure Inc. provides custom designed bicycle tours. All trips include an interpretive component with emphasis on local history or culture and natural history. Trips range from one - day events to multi-day adventures. Activities other than cycling include tours of historical sites, visits to areas of natural significance, and opportunities to interact with local populations. Borealis also offers CPR training and First Aid certification and cyclist and leader certification.

Accommodation includes bed and breakfasts, camping, and hotel and resort lodging.

Awards and Affiliations

Tourism Saskatchewan
Canadian Cycling Association
Saskatchewan Cycling Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Canadian Rockies Rafting Co.

8082 Canmore
AB T1W 2T8
Tel: (403) 678-6535
Toll Free 1-877-CANROCK
Fax: (403) 609-2335
Email: Canrock@telusplanet.net
Web site: canadianrockiesrafting.com
Contact: Todd Nunn, Owner

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Alberta

Season of Operation

May-September

Description of Business

Canadian Rockies Rafting Co. is a receptive operator offering rafting tours in Alberta.

Target Markets

Provincial, National, United States, Japan, Europe

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Canadian Rockies Rafting Co. offers half day rafting tours near Banff National Park, nature floats on the Bow River, and Family Whitewater experiences of the Kananaskis River. The trips consist of on-going natural and local history, nature walks, and field guides. The focus of the trips includes mountains, wildlife, scenery, fun, natural history, and an intimate mountain and river experience.

Awards and Affiliations

British Columbia Raft Trip Leader
Canadian Avalanche Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Canadian Trails Adventure Tours Inc.

Suite 153, 162-2025 Corydon Ave., Winnipeg
MB R3P 0N7
Tel:
Toll Free 1-800-668-BIKE (2453)
Fax: (888) 417-BIKE (2453)
Email: canadiantrails@msn.com
Web site: www.canadiantrails.com
Contact: John Sigurjonsson, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

All Canadian Provinces

Season of Operation

May-October

Description of Business

Canadian Trails Adventure Tours offers group bicycle tours in Canada.

Target Markets

Canada, Northern United States

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Canadian Trails Adventure Tours offers fully supported group bicycle tours. The duration of the trips range from 5 day mid-week tours to 4 month Trans Canada tours. Schedule tours can be combined to provide travel to any desired location. Both road and off-road tours are provided.

Accommodation is offered in up-scale country in or camping depending on the needs of the guest. For short-term trips, tents are provided by Canadian Trails Adventure Tours.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Canoe Arctic Inc.

Box 130, Fort Smith
NT X0E 0P0

Tel: (867) 872-2308

Toll Free

Fax:

Email:

Web site: <http://www.auroranet.nt.ca/canoe>

Contact: Alex Hall, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Northwest Territories, Nunavut

Season of Operation

June-September

Description of Business

Canoe Arctic offers wilderness canoe trips with an emphasis on wildlife interpretation.

Target Markets

Canada, Northern United States

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Canoe Arctic operates fly-in canoe trips in the Barren Lands (Arctic mainland) of the Northwest and Nunavut Territories of northern Canada. All of the trips place a special emphasis on wildlife viewing and photography. Activities that are part of every trip include wilderness camping, canoe travel, wildlife viewing, photography, sport fishing, botany, geology, archeology, and history. Canoeing and camping experience is a prerequisite; however, all levels of experience can be accommodated.

Accommodation on canoe trips is tent camping. Canoe Arctic provides the tents. Prior to departure and following the trip, arrangements are made for guest accommodation in hotels and bed and breakfasts.

Awards and Affiliations

NWT Arctic Tourism Association
Nunavut Tourism Association
NWT Wildlife Federation
Sierra Club
Ducks Unlimited
World Wildlife Fund

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Canoeski Discovery Company

1618 – 9 Ave. N, Saskatoon

SK S7K 3A1

Tel: (306) 653-5693

Toll Free

Fax: (306) 653-5693

Email: canoeski@link.ca

Web site: <http://www.link.ca/canoeski>

Contact: Cliff Speer, Owner/Manager

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Northern Saskatchewan

Season of Operation

May-October

December-March

Description of Business

The Canoeski Discovery Company offers canoeing and cross-country skiing instruction and wilderness touring programs.

Target Markets

High-end adventure travelers

Nature of Product

Summer

Winter

Product Offered

The Canoeski Discovery Company offers canoeing and cross-country skiing instruction and wilderness tours programs. Tours range from 2-12 days in length. Small groups offer a highly personalized ecotourism experience. The focus of Canoeski Tours is threefold: to provide a fun-filled, relaxing holiday with lasting value, to enable the guest to acquire the skills to canoe and ski safely and enjoyably, and to acquaint the guest with the natural and cultural heritage of the touring environment.

Accommodation on canoe trips is primarily in tents. Bed and breakfast and hotel accommodation can be arranged depending on the needs of the guests.

Awards and Affiliations

Tourism Saskatchewan
Tourism Saskatoon
Canadian Recreational Canoeing
Ecotourism Society of Saskatchewan

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Chocpaw Expeditions

1 Industrial Park Rd, South River

ON P0A 1X0

Tel: (705) 386-0344

Toll Free (705) 386-7753
1-800-336-9903
Fax: (705) 386-0344
Email: chocpaw@onlink.net
Web site: www.venturenorth.com/chocpaw/
Contact: Paul J. Reid, Owner

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Ontario, Labrador, Manitoba

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Chocpaw Expeditions is a wilderness expedition company and a receptive operator.

Chocpaw packages accommodations, food services, transportation, and other receptive operators.

Target Markets

All markets

Nature of Product

Summer
Winter

Product Offered

Chocpaw Expeditions offers year round wilderness expeditions by dog sled and canoe. The entire experience is educational and rooted in the history and heritage of the exploration and settlement of Canada. Guides are knowledgeable about the history of the activity, the area, the cultures, and the flora and fauna.

Chocpaw contracts with local Motels for initial accommodation and meals. During the trip, tent camps and cabin accommodation is provided.

Awards and Affiliations

Ontario Federation of Sled Dog Sport
ORCA

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Churchill Nature Tours

Box 429 Erickson
MB R0J 0P0
Tel: (204) 636-2968
Toll Free
Fax: (204) 636-2557
Email: rmnt@mail.techplus.com
Web site: www.churchillnaturetours.com
Contact: Daniel Weedon, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Manitoba, Rocky Mountains, Baffin Island

Season of Operation

May-November

Description of Business

Churchill Nature Tours is a receptive and tour operator offering natural and cultural history expeditions.

Target Markets

Naturalists, Bird watchers, Wildlife photographers, International tour operators

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Churchill Nature Tours specializes in wildlife observation tours and natural and cultural history expeditions. The feature products are ornithology tours, whale watching, and Polar Bear safaris. Tours are led by experienced naturalists with substantial resource training and tour leading experience. Tours range from 4-16 days in length. Churchill offers day trips and receptive services to special groups and cruise ships. All tours are designed to offer intimate encounters with the natural resources of Manitoba.

Accommodation is provided at hotels and lodges in the area.

Awards and Affiliations

1989 Winner of Manitoba Export Award
1995 Manitoba's Candidate for Conde Nast Traveler "Ecotourism Award"
National Tour Association
Tourism Industry of Canada
The Ecotourism Society

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Clearwater Raft Tours Ltd.

1602 Clarence Ave., Saskatoon
SK S7H 2E8

Tel: (306) 665-7238

Toll Free 1-800-661-7275

Fax: (306) 343-0894

Email: clearh2o@sk.sympatico.ca

Web site: www.clearwaterrafting.com

Contact: Sue Holowach, Owner/Manager

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Saskatchewan

Season of Operation

June-August

Description of Business

Clearwater Raft Tours offer raft trips within the boundaries of the Clearwater River Wilderness Park.

Target Markets

Saskatchewan, United States, Western Europe

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Clearwater Raft Tours offers raft trips 4-7 days in length. Clearwater Raft Tours is the only firm that is approved and licensed to provide whitewater rafting trips within the boundaries of the Clearwater River Wilderness Park. The guides are professional and take pride in providing the most exciting and safe wilderness raft tours. Activities on the trip include: nature hikes, photography, wildlife viewing, fishing, storytelling, and swimming. Clients are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the trip.

Accommodation is tent camping while on the trip. A Bed and Breakfast in Saskatoon provides lodging for guest before and after the trip.

Awards and Affiliations

Tourism Saskatchewan

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Crowsnest Vacation Creation

Box 628 Coleman

AB T0K 0M0

Tel: (403) 562-2997

Toll Free 1-800-613-6481

Fax: (403) 562-2997

Email:

Web site: Travel.to/crowsnest

Contact: Doug Wilson, Owner

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Alberta

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Crowsnest Vacation Creation is a tour operator that offers customized itinerary planning and a variety of guided and assisted mountain adventures.

Target Markets

Alberta, Canada

Nature of Product

Winter

Summer

Product Offered

Crowsnest Vacation Creation offers a variety of guided and assisted mountain adventures. Activities include historical tours, mountain biking, peak climbs, caving, winter camping, back packing, fishing, lake canoeing, tubing, rock climbing, cross country skiing, luge, camping and back packing. Tours of the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre and Crowsnest Museum are also provided.

Accommodation is provided in motels, cabins, the local conference centre, and tent camping. A mobile kitchen facility and large tents are used for more remote experiences.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Earth Rhythms Inc.

Box 243, Onanole
MB RoJ 1N0
Tel: (204) 848-4680
Toll Free
Fax: (204) 848-7483
Email: earthrhythms@techplus.com
Web site:
Contact: Celes Davar, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Manitoba, Saskatchewan

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Earth Rhythms Inc. offers ecotourism, adventure travel, and corporate and group learning experiences.

Target Markets

Manitoba, United States, Japan
Corporate, FIT

Nature of Product

Winter
Summer

Product Offered

Earth Rhythms is a small outdoor adventure company based in Onanole, a town at the southern edge of Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba. Earth Rhythms draws from a wide range of resources including the natural environment, heritage, aboriginal cultures, science, music, art, and local talents and expertise. Earth Rhythms is based on ecotourism principles and specializes in designing and delivering customized outdoor experiences. Activities include: wildlife photography, wildlife viewing, horse packing, day treks, and over night excursions. Experiential learning outings include elements of both soft adventure and ecotourism and draw from the fields of management, human resources, and natural sciences.

Accommodation options include teepee camping, camping, guest ranch lodging, cabins, hotels, and bed and breakfasts.

Awards and Affiliations

Interpretation Canada

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Eco-Explorations

Box 5559 Huntsville

ON P1H 2L5

Tel: (705) 788-2013

Toll Free

Fax: (705) 788-2013

Email: explore@eco-explorations.com

Web site: www.eco-explorations.com

Contact: Brad Polischuk, Owner/Operator

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Ontario

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Eco-Explorations offers ecotourism and adventure travel experiences.

Target Markets

Ontario, International

Nature of Product

Winter
Summer

Product Offered

Eco-Explorations offers small group ecotourism opportunities that vary from 3 to 7 day trips. All trips are suitable for beginners and experienced nature travelers. Summer activities include canoeing, sea kayaking, hiking, and mountain biking. Winter programs include cross country skiing, snowshoeing, winter camping, and winter skills. Eco-Exploration offers custom trip packages for groups, families, clubs, and schools. All Eco-Exploration programs and outdoor adventure experiences are conducted to minimize the impact on the environment.

Accommodation is tent camping. Bed and breakfast accommodation is arranged before and after the trip.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Ecomertours Nord-Sud Inc.

606, des Ardennes, Rimouski
QC G5L 3M3
Tel: (418) 724-6227
Toll Free
Fax: (418) 724 2527
Email: ljones@globetrotter.net
Web site:
Contact: Linda Jones

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Quebec

Season of Operation

June-October

Description of Business

Ecomertours Nord-Sud offers eco-cruises in the gulf of the St. Lawrence.

Target Markets

Quebec, Ontario, Maritimes, United States, France, Belgium, Germany

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Ecomertours Nord-Sud offers eco-cruises for 5-8 days on the Gulf of St. Lawrence. A nature guide provides natural and cultural interpretation on board the ship. The ecotours comprise of daily stops, on board entertainment, accommodations, and meals. Activities include wildlife viewing and bird watching. Stops en route include Mingan Island, Anticosti, Forillon National Park, and Bonaventure Island.

Accommodation is provided on board the ship.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Esprit Rafting Adventures Inc.

Box 463 Pembroke
ON K8A 6X7
Tel: (819) 683-3241
Toll Free 1-800-590-RAFT (7238)
Fax: (819) 683-3641
Email: esprit@iosphere.net
Web site: WWW.espritrafting.com
Contact: Jim and Erin Coffey, Directors

Type of Organisation

Adventure Travel and Ecotourism

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland, Mexico

Season of Operation

April to October – Canada

October to April - Mexico

Description of Business

Esprit Rafting Inc. is an eco-adventure travel company with an emphasis on river trips and an outdoor centre.

Esprit cooperates with other businesses that provide horse packing and rock climbing.

Target Markets

Domestic, National, International, Adventure Travelers, and Ecotourists

Nature of Product

Winter
Summer

Product Offered

Esprit Rafting Inc. is an outdoor centre and rafting adventure travel and ecotourism operator. Esprit provides instruction and certification in canoeing, kayaking, raft guiding, advanced wilderness first aid and river rescue from their outdoor centre.

Their Ottawa River base camp is Quebec's western most international youth hostel. The hostel provides a base to experience adventures in the region including: rafting, kayaking, river boarding, and mountain biking.

Esprit provides camping and well as dormitory style accommodation. There is a bed and Breakfast across the bay for alternative accommodations.

Affiliations and Awards

Friends of the Pontiac River
Adventure Leadership and Outdoor Training Program

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Expedition Eau Vive Inc.

C.P. 285 Chelsea

QC J0X 1N0

Tel: (819) 827-4467

Toll Free

Fax: (819) 827-4422

Email: e.eauvive@orbit.qc.ca

Web site: www.orbit.qc.ca/canoe

Contact: Pierre Desjardins, Director

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Quebec

Season of Operation

April-September

Description of Business

Expedition Eau Vive offers River or Rabaska canoe excursions and operates a training school.

Expedition Eau Vive packages with the Canadian Museum of Civilization to link history and canoeing.

Target Markets

Quebec, Europe, United States

FIT, Groups, Tour Operators

Nature of Product

Spring/Summer

Product Offered

Expeditions Eau Vive offers canoe trips in the Quebec region. The tours include educational, enriching activities, allowing participants the opportunity to gain more knowledge about the natural environment. Educational elements include: respect for the environment, interpretation of flora and fauna, and the apprenticeship of wilderness camping. Other activities include meditation, tai chi, astronomy, and experiencing the life of "coureurs des bois". The great outdoors, adventure, and history are the main points of interest.

Accommodation consists of tent camping.

Expeditions Eau Vive also sub-contracts with hostels.

Awards and Affiliations

Nominated in the category of sustainable and sustainable tourism for the Great Prizes of Quebec

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Freewheeling Adventures Inc.

RR #1, Hubbards

NS B0J 1J0

Tel: (902) 857-3600

Toll Free

Fax: (902) 857-3612

Email: bicycle@freewheeling.ca

Web site: www.freewheeling.ca

Contact: Philip Guest, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Freewheeling Adventures offers cycling, walking, sea kayaking trips in Canada, Europe, Israel, and Mexico.

Target Markets

North America

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Striving to offer the very best tour experience possible at every location, Freewheeling adventures looks for tranquil, scenic, and rewarding trip experiences. Activities include cycling, sea kayaking, and walking. Freewheeling Adventures offers inns with charm and distinction en route, food to delight the palate, and guides with warm, charismatic, and caring personalities. Freewheeling Adventures are celebrations of good, active lifestyle, good food, good company, and special places. Some of the trip destinations are: Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, France, Prince Edward Island, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Scotland, and Holland.

Accommodation consists of the highest standard in lodging.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Fresh Air Adventure

PO Box 146, Alma
NB E0A 1B0

Tel: (506) 887-2249
Toll Free 1-800-545-0020
Fax: Summer: 506-887-2286
Winter: 902-895-2533

Email: FreshAir@fox.nstn.ca
Web site: fox.nstn.ca/~freshair/
Contact: Alan Moore, President
Joseph Miller

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

New Brunswick

Season of Operation

May - October

Description of Business

FreshAir Adventure is an adventure sea kayaking operation.

Target Markets

Central Canada, Atlantic Canada, and Eastern United States

Nature of Product

Summer product (seasonal)

Product Offered

Utilizing the splendor and the uniqueness of the Bay of Fundy coastline, FreshAir Adventure offers guided sea kayaking experiences focusing on challenge, education, and enjoyment. Programs include everything from a two-hour Bay tour to a five-day hiking and kayaking excursion.

FreshAir Adventure does not provide accommodations but is able to suggest a wide range of quality Bed and Breakfasts and Inns in the area.

Awards and Affiliations

1998 & 1999 Savvy Traveler Award

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Fresh Tracks Canada

1823 West 4th Ave., Vancouver
BC V6J 1M4

Tel: (604) 718-5098
Toll Free 1-800-667-4744
Fax: (604) 718-5110
Email: adventure@freshtracks.com
Web site: www.freshtracks.ca
Contact: Carol Raaymakers

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

British Columbia

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Fresh Tracks (Canada) is a receptive operator.

Target Markets

Adventure Travelers

Nature of Product

Summer
Winter

Product Offered

Fresh Tracks (Canada) is an associate company of Fresh Tracks Adventure Travel Centers Inc., an international adventure travel company offering hundreds of journeys throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Fresh Tracks Canada is an inbound soft adventure operator specializing in 55 adventures in British Columbia, the Yukon, and Alaska. They are able to give potential clients assistance in their choices and provide a wide variety of adventures that require no previous experience. Most trips incorporate some form of learning and have nature specialists and guides certified in their area of instruction.

Fresh Tracks offers trips that involve either luxury camping, country inns, or backcountry lodges.

Awards and Affiliations

CTC
ACTA
CITC

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Fundy Tide Runners

16 King St., St. Andrew's by-the-Sea
NB E0G 2X0
Tel: (506) 529-4481
Toll Free
Fax: (506) 529-4481
Email: welchdb@nbnet.nb.ca
Web site: www.townsearch.com/ftr.htm
Contact: David or Sandra Welch

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

New Brunswick

Season of Operation

May-October

Description of Business

Fundy Tide Runners is a whale watching and nature tour company.

Target Markets

Day Visitors

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Fundy Tide Runners is a whale watching and nature tours company. They offer a quality ecotourism experience. The two-hour trip is narrated by the Captain who is the interpretive and wildlife guide. The small group dynamic allows the Captain to speak one on one with the clients. Eagle, porpoise, seal, and marine bird sightings, as well as unique insights into the regions history and culture, will round out your adventure.

Fundy Tide Runners works closely with accommodation providers, as well as, packages with the major hotels in the area

Awards and Affiliations

Bay of Fundy Whale Watchers Code of Ethics

Great Canadian Travel Company

273 Donald Street, Winnipeg
MB R3C 1M9
Tel: (204) 949-0199
Toll Free 1-800-661-3830
Fax: (204) 949-0188
Email: sales@gctc-mst.com
Web site: www.great.canadiantravel.com
Contact: Corrine Martin, Director

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Manitoba, Northwest Territories

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

The Great Canadian Travel Company is a receptive operator. They have a full service travel agency and have agreements with all of the major suppliers in Manitoba and across Canada. The tours include packages with accommodations, food service, and transportation.

Target Markets

Manitoba, Northwest Territories

Nature of Product

Summer

Winter

Product Offered

The Great Canadian Travel Company offers tours that range from cultural to soft to extreme adventure, all with an element of ecotourism. The Great Canadian Travel Company uses the most knowledgeable guides and instructors so that all tours are a learning experience. Highlight packages are the Beluga Whale Tours. This summer tour to the north will introduce you to some of the flora, fauna and history of the province. The tours offer a history of the Hudson Bay Company and their role in the development of Canada's fur trade.

Accommodation consists of the highest standard in lodging.

Awards and Affiliations

ACTA

IATA

Churchill Chamber of Commerce

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Gros Morne Adventure Guides

9 Clarke's Lane, Norris Point
NF AOK 3V0
Tel: (709) 458-2722
Toll Free 1-800-685-4624
Fax: (709) 458-2722
Email: gmag@newcomm.net
Web site: www.newcomm.net/gmag
Contact: Corrine Martin, Director

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Newfoundland, Labrador

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Gros Morne Adventure Guides specialize in walking, hiking, backpacking, sea kayaking, backcountry skiing, and snowshoeing.

Target Markets

Ontario, Maritimes, New England

Nature of Product

Summer

Winter

Product Offered

Gros Morne Adventure Guides specializes in walking, hiking, backpacking, sea kayaking, backcountry skiing, and snowshoeing adventures for the small group and individual travel markets. The adventures are tailored to meet the client's varying levels of ability and choice of accommodations. They are able to meet the needs of the high adventure to the learning traveler. The guides are experienced naturalists with an excellent ability to accommodate the variety of client needs.

Accommodation includes bed and breakfasts, country inns, wilderness lodges, and backcountry huts.

Awards and Affiliations

1998 Canadian Heritage and Hospitality
Newfoundland and Labrador Sustainable Tourism
Award
Interpretation Canada

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Horizon Nature Adventures

4165-A, Saint-Denis, Montreal
QC H2W 2M7
Tel: (514) 286-6010
Toll Free 1-888-318-6010
Fax: (514) 286-0179
Email: nature@hna.qc.ca
Web site: www.hna.qc.ca
Contact: Stephane Boulay, Director

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Quebec

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Horizon Nature Adventures is receptive and whole sale ecotourism and adventure travel operator that focuses on the observation of flora and fauna.

Horizon Nature Adventures package accommodation, food service, and transportation.

Target Markets

Quebec, Canada, Europe, United States,

Nature of Product

Summer

Winter

Product Offered

Horizon Nature Adventures well-structured, properly supervised expeditions will enable small groups to participate in unique forays into the heart of Quebec's unspoiled wilderness. It has designed a number of expeditions affording unique experiences, and selected the best of them to include as part of their package deals. Participants can choose from a variety of expeditions providing many opportunities to experience nature. Activities include cross-country skiing, sea kayaking, cycling, dogsledding, and canoeing.

Accommodation consists of inns, cottages, lodges, and camping.

Awards and Affiliations

ACTA
APTAQ
Montreal Tourism
The Young Chamber of Commerce of Montreal

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Horizons Unlimited

Box 1110 La Ronge

SK S0J 1L0

Tel: (306) 635-4420
Toll Free
Fax: (306) 635-4420
Email: ric.crco@sk.sympatico.ca
Web site: www.lights.com/waterw
Contact: Ric Driediger, Owner/Operator

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Saskatchewan, Manitoba

Season of Operation

Summer

Description of Business

Horizons Unlimited is a receptive operator offering canoe trips and interpretive programs.

Target Markets

Saskatchewan, North America, Europe

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Horizons Unlimited offers canoe trips, canoe clinics, canoe courses, whitewater canoe training, canoe trip guiding, and canoe rentals. Trips focus on the history of the area. Interpreters with knowledge of specific areas are utilized to add to the travel experience. Expert naturalists share information about herbs, edible plants, and plants with medicinal value. Horizons Unlimited provides guided tour that range from 6 days to 2 weeks. They also have a lodge and cabins for rent.

Accommodations include good quality tent, the Horizon lodge and cabins. Hotels are used according to client need.

Awards and Affiliations

Tourism Saskatchewan
Northern Shores Tourism Region
Saskatchewan Canoe Association
Canadian Recreation Canoe Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Horseshoe Canyon

Box 61349 Brentwood Postal Outlet, Calgary
AB T2L 2K6

Tel: (403) 823-2200
Tel: (403) 282-4812
Fax: (306) 284-1912
Email: nodwells@cadvision.com
Web site: www.cadvision.com/nodwells
Contact: Leila Nodwell, Managing Director

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Alberta

Season of Operation

Summer

Description of Business

Horseshoe Canyon is a U-drive All Terrain vehicle interpretive tour.

Target Markets

General public, Tourists, Special groups

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Horseshoe Canyon is a U-drive All terrain vehicle interpretive tour in the badlands of Alberta. Each vehicle has an audio tape player system with speakers allowing visitors to hear a self-guided tape tour as they drive. The emphasis of the audio tape tour is education and interpretation. Subjects on the tape discuss the following; geology, topography, vegetation, wildlife, dinosaurs, and local history.

Horseshoe Canyon does not supply accommodation, but there are many lodging options in the area.

Awards and Affiliations

Inside Out Experience Inc.

Box 987 Bragg Creek
AB T0L 0K0
Tel: (403) 949-3305
Toll Free
Fax: (403) 905-3305
Email: insidout@telusplanet.net
Web site: www.telusplanet.net/public/insidout
Contact: Ric Driediger, Owner/Operator

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Alberta

Season of Operation

May-October

Description of Business

Inside Out Experience is a receptive ecotourism adventure traveler that offers rafting, hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing, alpine skiing, and corporate team learning programs.

Inside Out Experience packages accommodations, food service, and transportation.

Target Markets

Canada, United States

Tours, Incentive groups, FIT, Recreation and leisure marketplaces, Corporations

Nature of Product

Summer

Winter

Product Offered

Inside Out Experience is an ecotourism and adventure travel company that offers rafting, hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing, alpine skiing, and corporate team programs. All tours include historical, geographical, and wildlife interpretation.

Accommodation consists of bed and breakfasts and hotels. Inside Out Experience partners with the International Youth Hostel Association.

Awards and Affiliations

Alberta Wilderness Society
Professional River Outfitters Association of Alberta

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Jasper Adventure Centre

Box 1064, Jasper
AB T0E 1E0
Tel: (780) 852-5595
Toll Free 1-800-565-7547
Fax: (780) 852-5595
Email: tours@telusplanet.net
Web site: www.explorejasper.com
Contact: Scott Eady, Manager

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Jasper and Hinton, Alberta

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Jasper Adventure Centre is a soft adventure tour operator in Jasper National Park.

The Jasper Adventure Centre supplies activities for large international tour operators, school groups, and FIT's.

Target Markets

Alberta, Western Canada, and International

Nature of Product

Summer

Winter

Product Offered

The Jasper Adventure Centre is an adventure travel and ecotourism operator that offers the following experiences: raft trips, float trips, horse trips, sleigh rides, canoe trips, meadow tours, watchable wildlife tours, bird and beaver watching tours, glacier ice walks, hot springs tours, back country trips, dog sledding tours, snowmobile tours, snow shoe tours, cross country ski tours, and ice walks. All guides provide information on the Park's natural and human history.

The Jasper Adventure Centre is able to arrange accommodation in Bed and Breakfasts and bungalows.

Awards and Affiliations

Jasper National Park Professional River Outfitter's Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Land of the Loon Resort

Box 4, Christopher Lake
SK S0J 0N0
Tel: (306) 982-4478
Toll Free
Fax: (306) 982-4489
Email: loon.land@eagle.wbm.ca
Web site: ecocanada.com/anglin
Contact: Debbie Greening, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Saskatchewan

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Land of the Loon Resort is an eco-resort and receptive ecotourism operator.

Target Markets

Saskatchewan, Canada

Nature of Product

Summer
Winter

Product Offered

Land of the Loon Resort is a four-season nature based eco-resort featuring handcrafted deluxe log chalets, a log lodge, and conference centre with dining room. The focus of the resort is to bring guests and nature together utilizing low impact equipment such as canoes, mountain bikes, wind riders, small motor boats, and cross country skis. Self-guided experiences are offered as well as planned excursions. Clients come to have a spiritual retreat in nature, to learn something about nature and their environment, or to carry out business meetings in quiet natural surroundings.

Accommodation is provided in the log chalets of the resort.

Awards and Affiliations

Heritage Canada Award

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Lazy M Ranch

Box 427, Caroline
AB T0M 0M0
Tel: (403) 722-3053
Toll Free
Fax: (403) 722-3246
Email: thelazym@telusplanet.net
Web site:
Contact: Lane and Margie Moore,
Owner/Operator

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Alberta

Season of Operation

May-October
Winter – groups and retreats only

Description of Business

The Lazy M is a working cattle ranch that offers a real ranch experience to guests.

The Lazy M packages with the Alberta Country Vacations Association and other outfitters.

Target Markets

Alberta, Europe

Nature of Product

Summer
Winter

Product Offered

The Lazy M Ranch is a working cattle ranch that offers guest and real ranch experience. Each guest is given riding lessons and taught riding techniques. They are also given information about the agricultural history of the area. There is a strong educational and interpretive component with the ranch experience. Activities include horse whispering techniques and demonstrations, western riding lessons, cattle moving, and branding. Lazy M Ranch also has a Mountain Tent Camp in the Clearwater River Valley.

Accommodation is provided in a log home and ranch lodge.

Awards and Affiliations

Bighorn Wildlands Coalition

Commissionable to Travel Agents

M&W Guides

Box 8020 Canmore
AB T1W 2T8
Tel: (403) 678-2642
Toll Free
Fax: (403) 678-2642
Email: wendy@mwguides.com
Web site: www.mwguides.com
Contact: Wendy Rockafellow, Director

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon

Season of Operation

Spring/Fall/Summer

Description of Business

M&W Guides are an ecotourism and adventure travel operator.

Target Markets

Canada, United States, Europe, Australia, New Zealand

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

M&W Guides are an ecotourism and adventure travel operator focusing on climbing. Activities include rock climbing, summer mountaineering, alpine climbing, and ski mountaineering. The guides and instructors give interpretive information about the Rocky Mountain ecosystem, geological processes, wildlife, glaciology, weather, National Park cultural history, flora, and fauna. M&W Guides enable clients to work on personal goals such as fitness, technical skills, mental training, goal setting, and having fun.

Awards and Affiliations

Association of Mountain Guides
Canadian Avalanche Association
Canadian Association of Mountain Professionals

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Mariner Cruises

Westport, Brier Island

NS B0V 1H0

Tel: (902) 839-2346

Toll Free 1-800-239-2189

Fax: (902) 839-2070

Email: mariner@klis.com

Web site: www.marinercruises.ns.ca

Contact: Penny Graham, Owner/Operator

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Nova Scotia

Season of Operation

June-October

Description of Business

Mariner Cruises offers whale and sea bird watching cruises. Mariner Cruises packages with Brier Island Eco Tour (Walk on the Wild Side) for afternoon whale watches.

Target Markets

Canada, United States, Europe

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Mariner Cruises offers whale and seabird watching cruises daily from June to October. The trips run from 3-5 hours in length. Each cruise offers the opportunity to view porpoises, dolphins, whales, and seabirds. Passengers also get to experience the famous Bay of Fundy tides, view ancient basalt rock formations, the Peter's Island Bird Sanctuary and gain insight into the local history and geology. Mariner Cruises also offers Brier Island Eco Tours, which are guided walking tours to experience the natural wonders of Brier Island. An abundance of birds and rare botanical treasures are viewed.

Mariner Cruises will assist clients in arranging accommodations at local bed and breakfasts and motels.

Awards and Affiliations

Tourism Association of Nova Scotia
Evangeline Trail Tourism Association
The Nova Scotia Bird Society
The Society for Marine Mammology
North Atlantic Marine Mammal Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Michie Creek Mushing

RR #1, Site 20, C104, Whitehorse

YK Y1A 4Z6

Tel: (867) 667-6854
Toll Free
Fax: (867) 668-2633
Email: info@michiemushing.com
Web site: www.michiemushing.com
Contact: Suzette Delmage or Chris Hutchins,
Owners/Operators

Type of Organisation

Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Southern Yukon

Season of Operation

Winter

Description of Business

Michie Creek Mushing is a receptive operator offering dog sledding tours in the Yukon.

Target Markets

Europe, North America

Nature of Product

Winter

Product Offered

Michie Creek Mushing is located just 40 miles south of Whitehorse in the beautiful Wheaton River Valley. They offer a unique aspect of Yukon lifestyle – the exhilaration of driving a team of huskies to explore the wild valleys and rugged mountain trails of the region. Activities include: guided wilderness dog sledding adventures from their home cabin base in the Wheaton River Valley, as well as expedition style trips along the Yukon Quest Trail. Tours are customized from 1-6 days for one to four people.

Accommodation consists of cabins and heated wall tents on trail.

Awards and Affiliations

Wilderness Tourism Association
Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon
Dog Drivers Association of the Yukon
Mush with Pride

Mingan Island Cetacean Study Inc.

285, Green, St-Lambert
QC J4P 1T3

Tel: (450) 465-9176
Toll Free
Fax: (450) 465-9176
Email: rsblues@polysoft.com
Web site: rorqual.com
Contact: Richard Sears, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Quebec

Season of Operation

June-October

Description of Business

Mingan Island Cetacean Study Inc. is a research organization and receptive tour operator focusing on whale watching.

Target Markets

Canada, United States

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Mingan Island Cetacean Study is a research organization first and foremost, however, all sessions are designed to have public participation in the research. On the water we teach them field techniques and at the field station where they are involved in analysis and organizing data. In addition Mingan Island offers interpretation to the public and sessions in their museum. Mingan Island offers 7-day session throughout the season to participants who are motivated to take part in research and not just observe nature, which in the case of Mingan Island is the study of Blue Whales.

Accommodation can be arranged by Mingan Island Cetacean Study Inc.

Awards and Affiliations

Society of Marine Mammology
Quebec Adventure Travel Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Mountain Quest Adventure Company Ltd

210-223-10th St NW, Calgary
AB T2N 1V5
Tel: (403) 270-0000
Toll Free 1-800-269-8735
Fax: (403) 283-6555
Email: info@mountainquest.ca
Web site: www.mountainquest.ca
Contact: Trent Schumann, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Mountain Quest Adventure Company is a receptive operator, tour operator, guiding service, private itinerary planning service, and corporate enrichment company focusing on eco and adventure travel experiences.

Target Markets

High-end traveler, Corporate sector

Nature of Product

Summer
Winter

Product Offered

Mountain Quest Adventure Company is committed to providing top quality, ecologically responsible experiences, highly proficient and unobtrusive leadership, and an increased sense of union with the world. Mountain Quest employs leaders, planners and facilitators who are at the top of their field. Activities include dogsledding, heli-skiing, canoe float/barbecue, mountain biking, grizzly tracking, mountain retreats, birdwatching, hiking, and many more. Mountain Quest will arrange vacations according to client need. Accommodation consists of everything from camping to five star hotels. Mountain Quest will arrange accommodation at the client's request.

Awards and Affiliations

Alberta Ecotourist Award
Friends of Kananaskis
Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society
Central Rockies Wolf Project
Banff Interpretive Guides Association
Calgary Convention & Visitors Bureau

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Nahanni River Adventures

PO Box 4869
Whitehorse YT Y1A 4N6

Tel: (867) 668 3180
Fax: (867) 668-3056
Email: nahanni@yknet.yk.ca
Web site: www.nahanni.com
Contact: Neil Hartling, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Alaska, Yukon, NWT, Nunavut, BC

Season of Operation

June-September

Description of Business

Nahanni River Adventures offers 1-3 week river expeditions in Alaska, Yukon, NWT, Nunavut, and British Columbia. Options include canoe trips, raft trips and large Voyageur Canoe trips.

Target Markets

Southern Ontario, Canada

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Nahanni River Adventures uses the river corridor to explore the land. Hiking and wildlife observation is a key element. The guides are required to have "interpretive modules" to present at key points on each expedition. In addition, they assist guests in exploration and discovery using tools such as spotting scope, binoculars and a reference library. We choose to keep our groups small for an intimate atmosphere and minimal impact.

Pre and post trip accommodation is in comfortable hotels. On the expedition, accommodation is in dome tents.

Awards and Affiliations

Nahanni River Outfitters Association
Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon
Tourism Industry of Yukon
NWT Travel Arctic

Nahanni Wilderness Adventures

Box 4, Site 6, RR1, Didsbury
AB T0M 0W0
Tel: (403) 637-3843
Toll Free 1-888-897-5223

Fax: (403) 637-3843
Email: adventures@nahanniwild.com
Web site: www.nahanniwild.com
Contact: David Hibbard

Type of Organisation

Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Northwest Territories

Season of Operation

June - September

Description of Business

Nahanni Wilderness Adventures has been in business for the past 15 years offering fully guided and outfitted trips on the Nahanni River.

Target Markets

Adventure Travelers

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Nahanni Wilderness Adventures offers 8-21 day trips along the Nahanni River. All details and logistics are accounted for in the package, including the upriver charter flight.

Awards and Affiliations

BC Raft Guides

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Nature Tours of Yukon

P.O. Box 4543, Whitehorse,
YK Y1A 2R8

Tel: (867) 667-2028
Fax: (867) 667-2028
Email: naturetours@yukon.net
Web site: www.naturetoursyukon.com
Contact: Eduard N. Festal

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Soft Adventure

Provinces and Territories of Operation

Yukon, British Columbia, North West Territories and Alaska

Season of Operation

June to September

Description of Business

Nature Tours of Yukon is a soft adventure tour company offering various trips within the Yukon. Emphasize small groups tours with very personal service and large educational and interpretive components .

Target Markets

German speaking Europe and increasingly the USA

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Nature Tours of Yukon offer an opportunity to travel the Yukon. Modes of transportation include backpacking, canoeing and sightseeing. Every trip has an educational component teaching skills such as angling or building log cabins, as well as interpretive accounts of the area's natural and cultural history.

Nature Tours of Yukon also operate the Frances Lake Wilderness Lodge. This small wilderness lodge offers an intimate environment and opportunities for hiking, wildlife viewing, photography and canoeing.

Awards and Affiliations

Tourism industry of the Yukon
Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Naturally Superior Adventures

RR#1, Lake Superior, Wawa

ON P0S 1K0
Tel: (705) 856-2939
Toll free: 1-800-203-9092
Fax: (705) 856-7168
Email: dwells@onlink.net
Web site: www.naturallysuperior.com
Contact: David Wells

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces and Territories of Operation

Ontario

Season of Operation

May - September

Description of Business

Naturally Superior Adventures offer high quality outfitting, guiding and instruction. The focus is on great service and sharing the heritage, ecology, environment and culture of the area.

Target Markets

Northern United States

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Naturally Superior Adventures offer sea kayak, canoe, Voyageur Canoe and hiking trips/tours mostly on Lake Superior and adjacent lakes and rivers. The voyageur canoe trips have a focus on voyageur history and fur trade of the area. Other trips provide training on the heritage, ecology and environmental features.

Naturally Superior Adventures also do custom trips for Europeans. These supply more custom information on certain aspects.

Awards and Affiliations

AESCKO
TASK
ORCA
Algona Kinniwabie Travel Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Niagara Nature Tours

R.R. #1, Vineland Station
ON L0R 2E0
Tel: (905) 562-3746
Toll Free 1-888-889-8296

Fax: (95) 562-3746
Email: nnt@vaxxine.com
Web site:
Contact: Carla Carlson, Owner/Founder

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Southern Ontario, Niagara Peninsula

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Niagara Nature Tours offers interpretive and educational programs in the Niagara Peninsula.

Target Markets

Local, Regional

Nature of Product

Summer

Winter

Product Offered

Niagara Nature Tours offers unique programming that is suited to anyone interested in the arts, sciences, and nature. Niagara Nature Tours works with storytellers, musicians, and local artists and crafts people, to provide a wide range of educational and enjoyable activities. Some of the areas of focus are: botany, ornithology, mycology, entomology, geology, natural history, and photography. Tours range from hiking and walking excursions to motor coach and van tours.

Niagara Nature Tours does not provide accommodations but is able to suggest a wide range of options in the area.

Awards and Affiliations

NPCA Achievement Award
Niagara Peninsula Field Naturalist's Environmental Award
Region of Niagara Environmental Award
Festival and Events Niagara
Niagara Economic and Tourism Corporation
Canadian Women in Science

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Quoddy Link Marine Inc.

General Delivery, St. Andrew,
NB E0G 2X0
Tel: (506) 529-2600
Fax: (506) 529-2600
Email: quoddylink@townsearch.com
Web site: www.townsearch.com/quoddylink
Contact: John Eldridge

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Soft Adventure

Provinces and Territories of Operation

New Brunswick

Season of Operation

May - October

Description of Business

Quoddy Link Marine Inc. provides regular scheduled "Whale Search and Nature Cruises" and exclusive group charters. Charters may consist of Whale Search and Nature Cruises, combination Nature Cruise/Passenger Ferry Service linking St. Andrew and Campobello Island, Sunset Cruises, other specialty cruises or a combination thereof.

Target Markets

Individual and family travelers; group travel market and corporate clientele.

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Quoddy Link Marine Inc. offer cruises sailing the coastal waters and islands of the Bay of Fundy. While whales are often the highlight of the tours, the area is home to large populations of seals and porpoises. All cruises are narrated throughout. Topics include: whales and other wildlife, local history, tides and weather, lighthouses, herring weirs and aqua-culture, seaweed's and the tidal zone, etc.

The "Quoddy Link" is a certified passenger vessel designed specifically for optimum wildlife viewing and safety.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Remote Passages Marine Excursions

P.O. Box 624 / 71 Wharf Street, Tofino,
BC V0R 2Z0
Tel: (250) 725-3163
Fax: (250) 725-3380
Email: remote@island.net
Web site: www.remotepassages.com
Contact: Don Travers

Type of Organisation

Environmentally minded Adventure

Provinces and Territories of Operation

British Columbia

Season of Operation

March - November

Description of Business

Remote Passages Marine Excursions operate 1 day whale watching, hot springs explorer and sea kayaking tours. Each program is different and designed to explore Clayoquot Sound from the ocean to the forest.

Target Markets

Educational sector, inbound, local and special interest groups

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

The aim of Remote Passages is to help develop a better understanding of the world we live in through educational programs for all ages. These programs are built around interpretive stops in Clayoquot Sound. These will regularly include observation and discussion of the whales, the rainforest, an interesting aspect of the marine environment (depending on the opportunities available at the time) and some cultural history.

Remote Passages Marine Excursions operate 4 motorized zodiac-style vessels and has a kayak fleet of 18-20 cockpits.

Awards and Affiliations

Sea Kayaking Guide Alliance of British Columbia
Industry organizations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Rivers and Oceans Unlimited

802 Baker Street, Nelson

BC V1L 4J7

Tel: (250) 354-2056
Toll free: 1-800-360-RAFT
Fax: (250) 354-2058
Email: brian@riversandoceans.com
Web site: www.riversandoceans.com
Contact: Brian McCutcheon

Type of Organisation

Adventure packages with an emphasis on ecotourism

Provinces and Territories of Operation

Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon and Alaska

Season of Operation

Summer

Description of Business

Rivers and Oceans Unlimited operate wilderness rafting and ocean kayaking experiences from 5-12 days.

Target Markets

United States

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Rivers and Oceans Unlimited specialize in western Canada and operate trips on behalf of many larger adventure wholesalers. Trips range from experiencing the caribou migration in Ivvavik National Park to paddling with the Orcas in the Johnstone Strait. Trips educate guests about the regions traveled and promote an understanding of the wildlife, human and natural history, along with bio-diversity.

Trips have become more focused on soft adventure experiences, but Rivers and Oceans has maintained a variety of unique and meaningful itineraries to remote locales.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Seacoast Expeditions Ltd.

1655 Ash Road, Victoria,
BC V8N 2T2
Tel: (250) 383-2254
Toll free: 1-800-386-1525
Fax: (250) 383-4383
Email: seacoast@islandnet.com
Web site: www.seacoastexpeditions.com
Contact: Barbra Mohan

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces and Territories of Operation

British Columbia

Season of Operation

March - October

Description of Business

As a founder of the whale watching industry in Victoria, Seacoast Expeditions has been in business since 1987. Seacoast offers a highly developed whale spotting network and offers excellent sighting success.

Target Markets

Local Victoria market, Canadians and Americans

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Seacoast Expeditions offer a 3 hour coastal excursion: an exhilarating round trip of 30-50 miles in search of killer whales, porpoises, harbour seals and other marine wildlife. The boat slows or stops to allow passengers to observe wildlife, to take photographs and to ask questions. The presence of a trained naturalist on every trip ensures an enjoyable and educational experience.

Seacoast Expeditions also offers an arrangement whereby whale sightings are guaranteed.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Sea North Tours Ltd.

Box 222, 39 Franklin Street, Churchill,

MB ROB 0E0

Tel: (204) 675-2195
Toll free: 1-888-348-7591
Fax: (204) 675-2198
Email: seanorth@cancom.net
Web site: www.cancom.net/~seanorth
Contact: Mike or Doreen Macri

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces and Territories of Operation

Manitoba

Season of Operation

June - September

Description of Business

Sea North Tours Ltd. specializes in water tours. They offer a choice of boats to meet needs in terms of passenger space and types of activities.

Target Markets

Those interested in nature

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Sea North Tours offer a variety of water tours. The spring tour focuses on the beautiful ice formations and birds. Summer tours offer whale watching and a tour of the Prince of Wales Fort. Dive charters in the emerald green water of Hudson Bay are available. And for other interests, custom charters are possible.

Boats are hydrophone equipped to listen to one of the most vocal whales in the world: belugas.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Scott Walking Adventures

1707 Pryor Street, Halifax
NS B3H 4G7
Tel: (902) 423-5000
Toll free: 1-800-262-8644
Fax: (902) 423-5019
Email: rscott@fox.nstn.ca
Web site: http://fox.nstn.ca/~rscott
Contact: Wendy Scott

Type of Organisation

Adventure travel and ecotourism

Provinces and Territories of Operation

Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick

Season of Operation

Summer

Description of Business

Since 1992, Scott Walking Tours have offered an adventure travel experience which includes the many goals of ecotourism.

Target Markets

United States as well as central and western Canada

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Scott Walking Adventures operates 6 and 7 day all-inclusive Walking/Hiking Adventures in Nova Scotia (3 adventures), PEI, New Brunswick and Newfoundland (2). The adventures are van-supported inn to inn and the walks are guided.

Adventures include whale watching, bird cruises, rafting up a tidal river, wildlife viewing, and strolling through restored settlements from as long ago as 1000 AD. We walk and picnic amidst stunning coastal vistas, secret cliff-bound coves, and wildlife rich shores. We explore fishing villages and enjoy friendly country inns with candle lit dinners.

Awards and Affiliations

Sierra Club
Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy
NS Adventure Tourism Association
NS Ecotourism Development Foundation

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Smoothwater Outfitters

Box 40, Temagami

ON P0H 2H0

Tel: (705) 569 3539

Toll Free

Fax: (705) 569 2710

Email: temagami@onlink.net

Web site: www.smoothwater.com

Contact: Francis Boyes,
Caryn Boyes, owners

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Ontario, Temagami region

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Smoothwater is an adventure and ecotourism operator with an on-site ecolodge that consists of dining, meeting space, private rooms, and dormitory style bunkhouses. Tent camping space is also available.

Smoothwater works cooperatively with an independent dog sledding operation.

Target Markets

Canada, United States, and Europe

Nature of Product

Winter

Summer

Product Offered

Smoothwater is an ecolodge and outdoor recreation outfitter offering a diverse range of guided tours, workshops, and instructional courses focusing on Temagami's natural and cultural heritage. Summer activities include canoe tripping, hiking, and mountain biking. Winter activities consist of cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and dog sledding.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Societe Duvetnor Ltd.

200 rue Hayward, C.P. 305, Riviere du Loup,
QU G5R 3Y9

Tel: (418) 867-1660

Toll Free

Fax: (418) 867-3639

Email: duvetnor@duvetnor.com

Web site: www.duvetnor.com

Contact: Elyse Lauzon, General Director
Jean Bedard, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Quebec

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

The Societe Duvetnor is a non-profit corporation and charity organization devoted to the conservation of natural environments and to public education through ecotourism and interpretive programs.

The Societe packages with major hotels in the area, ornithologist organizations, and sea kayak operators.

Target Markets

Quebec, United States

FIT, small groups

Nature of Product

Winter

Summer

Product Offered

Ecotourism activities include discovery excursions to observe birds and marine mammals. Daylong excursions focusing on hiking and wildlife viewing, 2-6 day trips in fully furnished cottages and rugged camping trips in isolated and remote areas.

The Societe offers a diverse range of lodging and accommodation including lodge, hostel, and camping sites.

Awards and Affiliations

National Heritage Award

Canadian Parks Service Award

Medal of Merit for the Advancement of Monuments and Sites in Quebec

Small Tourist Enterprise Award

The Great Prizes of Quebec Tourism

Minister of Tourism Gold Laureate Award

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Timberline Tours

Box 14 Lake Louise
AB T0L 1E0
Tel: (403) 522-3743
Toll Free
Fax: (403) 522-3743
Email:
Web site:
Contact: Susan, Paul Peyto

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Alberta

Season of Operation

Summer

Description of Business

Timberline Tours is an ecotourism and adventure operator offering horseback tours.

Target Markets

Horseback riders
Banff, Alberta

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Timberline Tours offers one hour to ten-day horseback tours. Tours include day or overnight trips. All meals are included in the tours. The trips include an interpretive component focusing on wildlife, wild flowers, mountains, and lakes.

Accommodation on pack trips consists of tent camping.

Awards and Affiliations

Alberta Outfitters Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Tours Innu

50, boul. Bastien, bureau 120, Wendake,
QU GOA 4VO

Tel: (418) 843-5030
Fax: (418) 843-7164
Email: stinnu@oricom.ca
Contact: Guylaine Gill - General Director

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces and Territories of Operation

Quebec

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Tours Innu is a native receptive your operator.

Target Markets

France, Italy, Britain, Germany

Nature of Product

Summer/Winter

Product Offered

Tours Innu is a native receptive tour operator appointed to market products identified and approved by the Société Touristique Innu, an organization responsible for the development of tourism. The trips, or products proposed last from 1 to 8 days, and take place throughout different regions of Québec. Different stops are scheduled in certain communities, villages, and non-native attractions, as well as stops in museums, or attractions with native interest. The products ready for export originate in 6 different nations from 8 Québec tourist regions. 1) The Mohawk from the vicinity of Montréal, 2) the Atikamekw from the Upper St.-Maurice region, 3) the Inuit from Nunavik, 4), the Hurons from the vicinity of Québec, 5), the Montagnais from Lac St-Jean, the North Shore, the Lower North Shore, and the Schefferville area, and 6), the Micmacs from the Gaspé area.

Depending on the trip or the product, the client can stay in a hotel, cottage, teepee, igloo, hostel, or another passing shelter. Tours Innu does not own any lodgings.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Tours of Exploration

P.O. Box 48225, Vancouver

BC V8X 1A1

Tel: (604) 886-7300
Toll free: 1-800-690-7887
Fax: (604) 886-7304
Email: info@toursexplore.com
Web site: www.toursexplore.com
Contact: Catherine Evans

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces and Territories of Operation

Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon and North West Territories

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Tours of Exploration has been in business since 1990 offering tours specializing in nature and culture.

Target Markets

Ontario, Alberta and selected United States cities

Nature of Product

Spring - fall

Product Offered

Tours of Exploration focus on tour programs that facilitate the experience of unique wildlife, cultures and/or wilderness. They are led by experts in their field and provide ongoing educational/interpretive discussions during the tour. Clients may be involved in hiking, walking, ongoing research, photography, touring in 2-20 passenger vehicles, sailing or small cruise vessels, jeeps, tundra buggies or horse in back country.

Trips range in length from 3-12 days during mainly spring, summer and fall with a few winter programs.

Awards and Affiliations

Local Chamber of Commerce

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Traversee de Charlevoix Inc, La

841, rue Saint-Edward CP 171, Saint-Urbain
PQ G0A 4K0
Tel: (418) 639-2284
Toll Free
Fax: (418) 639-2777
Email: traverse@charlevoix.net
Web site: www.charlevoix.net/traverse
Contact: Eudore Fortin, President

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Quebec

Season of Operation

June-November

December-March

Description of Business

La Traverse de Charlevoix is offers ecotourism and adventure programming to receptive agencies, wholesalers, and adventure tourism products. La Traverse de Charlevoix also has cabin and cottage accommodation on-site.

Target Markets

Quebec, Ontario, United States, Europe

Nature of Product

Summer

Winter

Product Offered

La Traverse de Charlevoix is the longest and most difficult hiking trail in Quebec. It travels through the Charlevoix backcountry, at the heart of the World Biosphere Reserve. Winter activities include cross-country skiing. Summer activities include hiking and mountain biking. Tours can be independent or guided. Guided tours provide interpretive information regarding flora, fauna and the geology of the region. Various other services are provided including transportation and food service. Accommodation is provided in log cabins and cottages.

Awards and Affiliations

Grands Prix du Tourisme de Charlevoix
"Tourist Personality of the Year"
"Development and Innovation"
"Tourist Development"

Thomas Fortin Prize
Builder of Charlevoix Prize
APTAQ

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Voyageur Quest

599 Millwood Rd, Toronto

ON M4S 1K7

Tel: (416) 486-3605
Toll Free 1-800 794-9660
Fax: (416) 486-3604
Email: voyquest@infoamp.net
Web site: [Http://www.inforamp.net/~voyquest/](http://www.inforamp.net/~voyquest/)
Contact: John Langford, Director

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Ontario

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Voyageur Quest customizes packages for tour operators and acts as a receptive tour operator, focusing on wilderness tour operation.

Voyageur Quest packages with transportation and food services and well as outfitters offering canoe rentals, dog sleds, and ski rental.

Target Markets

Provincial, National, International

Nature of Product

Summer
Winter

Product Offered

Voyageur Quest is a wilderness tour operator with a focus on "soft adventure". Activities include: an edible wild interpretive hike, a discussion and dinner with a first nation elder in a wig wam, Canadian craft making, canoe trips, dog sledding, ecology, and history. Outside technical expertise includes First Nation speakers, drummers, trappers, wilderness travelers, Canadian Folk musicians, and naturalists.

Voyageur owns and operates the Algonquin Log cabin Lodge. Camping and wilderness lodge accommodation is available.

Awards and Affiliations

Algonquin Forgotten Trails Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Walden's Guiding and Outfitting

Box 4845, Whitehorse
YK Y1A 4N6
Tel: (867) 667-7040
Toll free: 1-877-WALDENS
Fax: (867) 668-3073
Email: Bwalden@hypertech.yk.ca
Web site: <http://www.waldensguiding.com>
Contact: Blaine Walden

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces and Territories of Operation

Yukon

Season of Operation

January - April
June - September

Description of Business

Walden's Guiding and Outfitting is a year-round adventure travel company operating in the Yukon. Dog sledding adventures are offered in the winter and canoeing in the summer.

Target Markets

Mainly North America, but also Japan, United Kingdom and Germany

Nature of Product

Summer
Winter

Product Offered

Walden's Guiding and Outfitting offers week long dog-sledding trips in the winter and a variety of canoeing trips which vary in length from 5-12 days in the summer. The canoe trips include several different Yukon Rivers (Wind, Snake, Big Salmon, Yukon) as well as a shorter fly-in/canoe-out trips into the same wilderness lodge used for the dog sled trips.

All of the trips include education and interpretation. This is comprised of practical skills such as paddling and camping, as well as interpretation of the natural environment and all things northern.

Awards and Affiliations

Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon
Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Wanapitei Canoe & Northern Outdoor Expeditions Inc.

17-393 Water Street, Peterborough

ON K9H 3L7

Tel: (705) 745-3721
Toll Free 1-888-637-5557
Fax: (705) 745-4971
Email: trips@wanapitei.net
Web site: www.wanapitet.net
Contact: Shawn Hodgins

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces & Territories of Operation

Ontario, Quebec, Northwest Territories, Nunavut

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Wanapitei Canoe and Northern Outdoor Expeditions is an outdoor eco and adventure operator with a focus on canoeing and kayaking.

Target Markets

Ontario, United States, Europe

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Wanapitei Canoe and Northern Outdoor Expeditions is primarily an outdoor adventure travel company with an emphasis on northern canoe trips during the summer months. They offer canoe trips in northern Ontario, northern Quebec, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. Some of the programs are combined canoe and hiking trips. In addition, Wanapitei offers kayak trips in the winter to southern destinations such as Florida, Georgia, and Baja Mexico. Wanapitei also operates lodge-based programs out of their wilderness lodge in Temagami Ontario. These involve day trips by canoe, foot, and motor boat, with meal and accommodation in the lodge.

Accommodation on trips consists of tent camping. For area programs, accommodation is in Wanapitei's wilderness lodge.

Awards and Affiliations

Ontario Camping association
Ontario Recreational Canoe association
Canadian Recreational Canoe Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Warner Guiding and Outfitting Ltd.

Box 2280, Banff
AB T0L 0C0
Tel: (403) 762-4551
Toll free: 1-800-661-8352

Fax: (403) 762-8130
Email: warner@horseback.com
Web site: www.horseback.com
Contact: Ron Warner

Type of Organisation

Adventure Travel

Provinces and Territories of Operation

Alberta

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Warner Guiding and Outfitting Ltd. has been offering tours in Banff National Park since 1962. The company operates horseback adventures in the summer and cross-country ski trips in the winter.

Target Markets

North America

Nature of Product

Summer
Winter

Product Offered

Warner Guiding and Outfitting Ltd. offer products involved with backcountry trips on horseback during the summer, and cross-country skiing during the winter. Special interpretive trips that offer specific information to people who may want extra knowledge about a subject are also arranged. For example, wildlife monitoring trips, park history rides, naturalist and interpretive rides are available.

Accommodation includes both company owned tents and back-country lodges.

Awards and Affiliations

Alberta Outfitters' Association

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Western Canadian River Adventure

13008 - 65 Avenue, Edmonton
AB T6H 1W8
Tel: (780) 436-2896
Toll free: 1-888-436-6636
Fax: 1-888-436-6636
Email: wcra@compusmart.ab.ca
Contact: Ray or Linda Bock

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces and Territories of Operation

British Columbia, Alberta, North West Territories

Season of Operation

June - August

Description of Business

Western Canadian River Adventure (WCRA) offers canoe trips whose goal is the education and the celebration of wilderness.

Target Markets

Participants who are 40+, Income >50,000 with higher education or training

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Western Canadian River Adventure offers canoe trips with an overlying focus on education and awareness issues with guest experts accompanying all of the trips. The Voyageur canoes used adds an historical or cultural context to the trips. The mode of travel is new to most participants and adds an element of adventure when we negotiate difficult class 3 rapids.

Currently, WCRA offers 4 trips on the Kootenay River (BC) and 1 each on the Milk and North Saskatchewan (AB) Rivers. Group size is a maximum of 12.

Awards and Affiliations

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Wilderness Spirit Canoeing Adventures

206 Chestnut Street, Winnipeg
MB R3G 1R7

Tel: (204) 774-2140

Fax: (204) 984-2403

Email: wspirit@escape.ca

Web site: <http://www.escape.ca/~wspirit>

Contact: Bruno Rosenberg

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces and Territories of Operation

Manitoba and Nunavut

Season of Operation

June - September

Description of Business

Wilderness Spirit Canoeing Adventures has been in operation for 4 years. The company offers canoe trips on rivers that flow through Manitoba's Canadian Shield into the Hudson's Bay lowlands, as well as flat-water trips on Shield Lakes.

Target Markets

Shorter trips and instruction - locally

Longer trips - locally, United States and Europe

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Wilderness Spirit Canoeing Adventures offer canoe trips up to 2 weeks in length. Each trip offers both educational and interpretive components based on a client's skill level/interests and trip demands. Trips with varying skill level requirements are offered. The company ensures that no trace camping rules are understood as a basic practice.

Wilderness Spirit Canoeing Adventures also offer river rescue and paddling instruction to interested clients. A new product development is a corporate team building program that will be offered to medium sized businesses in Manitoba.

Awards and Affiliations

Rescue 3 International

CRCA Moving Water Instructor

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Wildland Tours

124 Water Street, P.O. Box 383, St. John's
NFL A1C 5J9
Tel: (709) 722-3123
Fax: (709) 722-3335
Email: wildtour@nfld.com
Web site: www.wildlands.com
Contact: David Snow

Type of Organisation

Ecotourism and Adventure Travel

Provinces and Territories of Operation

Newfoundland and Labrador

Season of Operation

June - October

Description of Business

Wildland Tours was started in the late 1980s and is renowned as a premier operator of unique and exclusive wildlife adventure tours in Newfoundland.

Target Markets

European nature lovers

Nature of Product

Summer

Product Offered

Wildland Tours offer 5-8 day nature tours in Newfoundland and Labrador. The company's operations are based on an environmental preservation philosophy that brings clients a genuine adventure experience without compromising the natural beauty of the landscape. Every day includes detailed explanations of interesting sites, phenomena, and their significance.

All guides and staff at Wildland Tours are experienced and excel in customer service. Most transportation is provided in a 20 passenger bus or mini-van.

Awards and Affiliations

1990 Tourism Association of Canada Governor General's Award for Conservation

Commissionable to Travel Agents

Windigo Wilderness School

Box 94, Station A, Prince George
BC V2L 4R9
Tel: (250) 614-0909
Toll free: 1-888-422-1888
Fax: (250) 614-0947
Email: jpillon@windigo.bc.ca
Web site: www.windigo.bc.ca
Contact: Jeremy Pillon

Type of Organisation

Responsible Adventure Travel

Provinces and Territories of Operation

British Columbia and Alberta

Season of Operation

Year-round

Description of Business

Windigo Wilderness School is a four-season operation. In its five years of operation, Windigo has evolved from simply offering guide services to a focus on experiential education.

Target Markets

Eastern United States and Canada, Europe, primarily Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Italy. New markets include Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and the South Seas.

Nature of Product

Summer
Winter

Product Offered

Windigo Wilderness School offers hiking trips from overnight to 30 days and in the summer again, two different styles of canoe trips. The company has two-day trip itineraries and one overnight, and three extended (12-16 day) wilderness tandem canoe itineraries. Similar trips are available in 34' voyageur canoes as well.

Windigo Wilderness School strives to provide some type of educational component in all trips: environments traveled through, human history of area, and skills.

Awards and Affiliations

Council for the Development of Native Development Officers

Commissionable to Travel Agents
