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Video Transcript
SU 2.4.3
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Module:	Module 2: Design an innovative visitor experience
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Sub-Unit:	2.4.3: Audience development tools to engage and enhance the visitors' experiences
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Welcome to the subunit of Module 2, entitled Audience Development Tools to engage and enhance the Visitors' Experiences.

An understanding of the Engagement Mix is important as a tool to engage and enhance the visitor's experience.

- In this sub-unit, you will be introduced to the four realms of the Experience Model and the Thematic Approach which can be applied to the experience design.
- Case studies are provided for you to enhance your knowledge as to the application of such processes and how these can be applied by various cultural heritage managers to engage and enhance the visitor experience.

I am Dr Marie Avellino and I am the Director of the Institute for Tourism, Travel and Culture at the University of Malta.

I have always been interested in how 'culture' is appropriated by industries such as tourism and turned into a product that, in the case of tourism, is marketed and sold to tourists or private entities such as museums to attract local as well as foreign audiences.

Although 'appropriation' or 'commercialisation of culture' it may sound as something negative, the fact that a culture is appropriated and turned into a commodity, there are also benefits to it, such as when rituals and traditions are forgotten or no longer useful for the communities that used to practice them. However in being turned into a product for visitor consumption, allows the cultural image, tradition, etc., to live on and be remembered and appreciated not just by the local communities but by other persons and visitors outside it. It can also be used to attract visitors to a destination, a site, a space and also provide employment and revenue for the cultural agents.

This study unit is not about the process of commoditization or the negative and positive aspects of it, but is more about the tools that can be used to attract audiences and visitors to the cultural and touristic product one is offering on the market. In marketing we traditionally segmented what was sold into a 'good', meaning a tangible product, a service which ultimately is intangible, or a combination of both. But this was not enough, especially when one wanted to be competitive and so the tangible and intangible offers were enhanced. When Pine and Gilmore produced their seminal work on the 'experience economy' way back in 1998, they predicted that as goods and services become more commoditized, the thing which will matter most, will be the experience that is created by companies. They maintain that experiences are a distinct economic offering from services, as different from services as goods are.

- They suggest the characteristics of the experience economy and present the kinds of changes this 'new' economy will force companies to make.
- First there was agriculture, then manufactured goods and eventually services.
- Each step represented a step-up in economic value- a way for producers to distinguish their products from increasingly undifferentiated competitive

offerings. Now these services are in their turn becoming commoditised, as companies are looking for the next higher value in an economic offering.

Prior to this Zukin had already hinted at this when she described Walt Disney's genius as laying in his ability to an old form of collective entertainment – the amusement park – into a landscape of power. He did this through the means of production and diffused consumption. Today we would include the distribution as we transform the goods and services into an interlinked network through the utilization of new technologies, a transformative demand process takes place which also results in the audience or consumer being part of the experience. I refer to this in the slide where I refer to prosumers. You can read up about it in the Case Study I have added for you about the Festa in Malta.

- Experiences are at the heart of the tourism economy and can take place at events, visitor attractions and during hospitality.
- Seeking to attract high quality visitors entails offering a high quality experience where all stakeholders contribute to formulating an innovative, yet sustainable visitor offering.
- The experience commences before the event and continues even afterwards. It can be perceived as a journey.
- The Cultural manager needs to highlight and create memorable experiences along the journey by using the tools we are providing you in this unit.
- The tourism experience takes place at the moment when tourism consumption and tourism production meet (Andersson, 2007) and therefore cultural heritage managers should be aware not just of the role of the consumer, but also of the stakeholders (such as governments, service providers) in the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 2011, 2016).
- The Role of the Cultural manager must be that of the Cultural Broker, the mediator between the Supply (cultural heritage product), the Demand (visitors) and the other How stakeholders act, independently or collaboratively to develop and maintain an innovative, yet **sustainable visitor offering mix** so as to maximize **social, economic and environmental** benefits within a strategic framework Stakeholders (Avellino, 2016).

Pine and Gilmore (1998) suggest that there are four types of experiences:

- o **entertainment** (passive/absorption);
- o **educational** (active/absorption);
- o **escapist** (active/immersion); and
- o **esthetic** (passive/immersion).

Schmitt (1999) suggests that customer experience can be defined in terms of five dimensions:

1. **Sensory experiences** (sense);

2. **Affective experiences** (feel);
3. **Creative cognitive experiences** (think);
4. **Physical experiences, behaviours and lifestyles** (act); and
5. **Social-identity experiences** (relate).

In their conceptualisation, Gentile et al., (2007) add a further component,

- **Pragmatic** (practical act of doing something).

These dimensions and types of experiences can serve managers to provide a bespoke experience for their visitors.

To this successfully they need to identify their market audience and then build a programme based on various elements which are called the Engagement Mix. This mix is built on what is known in Marketing as the Marketing Mix or the 7Ps, but the engagement with the audience, and therefore the end user is given priority. These are presented in more detail in the PowerPoint presentation but will be elaborated upon in more detail in Module 3.

As an *aide memoire* we suggest what is called the THEME Framework based on 5 design principles which are:

- **T**heme the experience (see Slide 26)
- **H**armonize impressions with positive cues
- **E**liminate negative cues (See Slide 23)
- **M**ix in memorabilia (See Slide 21 & 22)
- **E**ngage all five senses (see Slide 16)

To have better understanding of how this framework can be applied I recommend what Sharon Zukin had presented 30 years ago and which still holds today – Walt Disney corporation. Whether you study the Theme Parks, the Cruises, the Disney Channel and the other plethora of Disney experiences you will find that the formula is still used (of course with upgrading and application of new technologies and practices) because it works. Let that be your benchmark for Audience Development.

After studying the case studies which accompany this subunit, you are invited to test your knowledge by attempting the multiple choice and quiz questions.

Thank you for your attention.

END OF SCRIPT



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