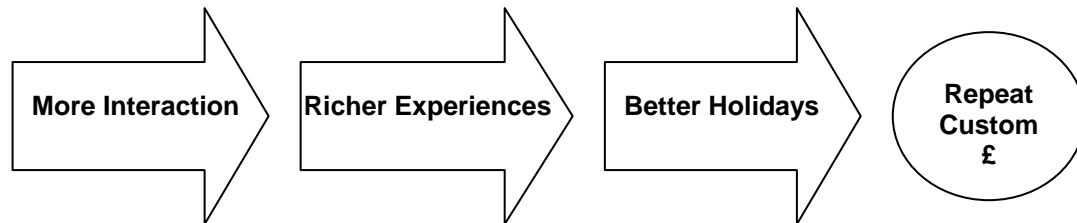


## Richer Experiences for your Customers

Here are a few simple steps that you can consider to increase the interaction between your customers and local communities which will provide a better holiday experience. Better holidays with special experiences can lead to increased customer loyalty. By encouraging interaction with the locals and their culture, benefits will be gained all round.



### Offer your customer a better holiday

Your customers know they are getting a better holiday when quality information is provided. They want more information and a richer experience (*see footnote*) and together with your knowledgeable staff you can provide this.

- Encourage cultural awareness in all the information you provide throughout the customer journey
- Provide a consistent message in pre-departure information, welcome meetings and reception/room information
- Get your customers to 'talk the talk' by provision of local language cards

### Your staff – your assets – your face

Your reps are your best assets and are your face in resort. They need your support and the more knowledge they have, the more your customers experience will be enriched. Help them to develop relationships with the locals – if the locals enjoy you being there – they will enjoy your customers being there and will provide a better holiday experience for them.

- Encourage your staff to explore the wonders of the country and pass this knowledge to your customers.
- Let your staff employ local guides – they have inside knowledge and can bring the culture to life
- Ensure reps take the opportunity to learn the local language – this can bridge the divide between the tourists and locals and will be much appreciated

### Provide richer experiences

Develop your excursion itinerary to introduce products that can enrich the entire holiday experience. Establish creative tours, encourage interaction and use the local crafts people to give your customer those better stories to tell when they get home.

- Involve the locals to show what is unique in the destination, specialist skills (e.g. cooking lessons) can be taught and will give your customer memorable experiences
- Ask your reps to become more familiar with the local culture such as local festivals; encourage your customers to become involved and participate
- Invite local crafts people to come into your resorts, some guests will feel more comfortable
- Alternatively offer excursions to villages/towns where local crafts are produced but remember to reduce group sizes upon arrival to encourage one to one interaction

The local community plays a pivotal role in determining the success of your customers' holiday. By building a better rapport and encouraging interaction, you can ensure your customers have a great time and return to you next year for another special holiday experience

Note: Tearfund - Research Report 2000 "Tourism – An Ethical Issue"

*International Centre for Responsible Tourism, MSc Responsible Tourism Management Course, 2005-06*