



**IT'S SIX SENSES  
MY EXPERIENCE  
MAKER** CULTIVATING  
YOUR EXPERIENCE





# BRINGING YOUR EXPERIENCE TO LIFE

## MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

Welcome to your very own Six Senses Experience Maker! You have received nourishing concepts and harvested ideas throughout the 6 Trails in your Six Senses Guide, and now it is time to ignite your vision by completing the **tangible steps to bring your experience to life.**

This tool allows you to use the valuable lessons gathered so far to realize your vision, while **ensuring that your experience is market ready**, so that you feel confident in welcoming visitors by the end of the program.

Your Experience Maker will guide you through **6 Elements that will help cultivate your idea** by prompting insightful questions, and providing action items, checklists, templates, and resources for creating, planning, and fulfilling your visitor experience.

Throughout the Experience Maker, you are encouraged to use the space provided to **note down your ideas, thoughts, action items**, and anything else that will help you to accomplish the development of your experience. Keep in mind that this tool is for you to use in a way that aids you in your unique journey, so use it as a guide while also relying on your Mentor for personalized support.

A big part of this journey is connecting with your Mentor and peers. **Your Mentor will be supporting you throughout**, helping to address any needs, brainstorming, answering questions, and providing guidance on the next steps.

*Let's get started with bringing your experience to life!*

### MY EXPERIENCE MAKER 6 ELEMENTS:

1. EXPERIENCE VISIONING
2. RESOURCES & OPERATIONS
3. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS
4. GUEST SERVICE
5. MARKETING & BRANDING
6. SUSTAINABILITY

## ELEMENT 1: EXPERIENCE VISIONING – THE ART OF CREATION

What does it mean to be an 'Experience Maker'? Much like how buildings need concept drawings before they are built, all great experiences need to go through a thorough visioning and structuring process to ensure a high-quality product that reflects values, culture, beliefs, and meets visitor needs.

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FOR INSPIRATION ON UNDERSTANDING WHAT MAKES A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE AND THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF EXPERIENCES, REFER BACK TO **TRAIL 1: VIEWPOINT 2** AND **TRAIL 2: VIEWPOINT 1** IN YOUR SIX SENSES GUIDE.

### MAKING IT HAPPEN...

By this time, you may have a preliminary idea of the experience that you are hoping to develop. On one of the notes to the right, in no more than 12 words, **write a concise description of what your experience is.** (e.g., Basket making workshop incorporating traditional teachings; interpretive tour of cultural sites; multi-day guided canoe trip along a culturally significant route). If you have more than one idea for an experience, jot them down, then one by one read each idea, close your eyes, and notice how you feel about each idea. The one that feels closest to your heart and values is the one that you will use for now. If you find yourself returning to your other ideas, reconsider which idea you will move forward with. Collaborate with your Mentor during this process.



## MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

—  
YOUR PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES SHOULD  
CREATE THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR EXPERIENCE  
DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY!

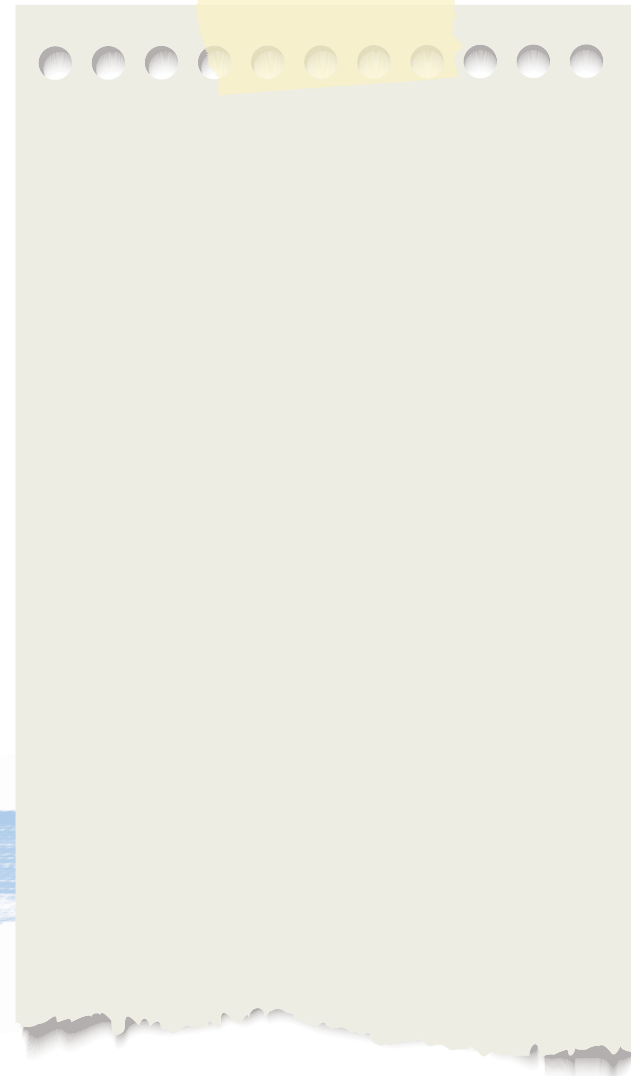
Now, take the time to explore the following series of reflective questions about your experience and consider each of the action items. This will set the foundation for consolidating your vision and understanding all the resources necessary to bring your experience to market. Remember, these questions are to get your creative juices flowing and are for you, so if there are any other why, what, where, when, or how questions that are important for you to consider, include them in your brainstorming. Jot down notes for each and discuss with your Mentor.

## WHY?

—  
YOUR 'WHY' CAN ACT AS THE COMPASS ON YOUR EXPERIENCE  
MAKING JOURNEY; IT PROVIDES YOU WITH THE REASON

- Why do I want to deliver this experience?
- Why would a visitor partake in this experience?
- Why is this a one-of-a-kind experience?

★ Bring your experience to market.



# MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

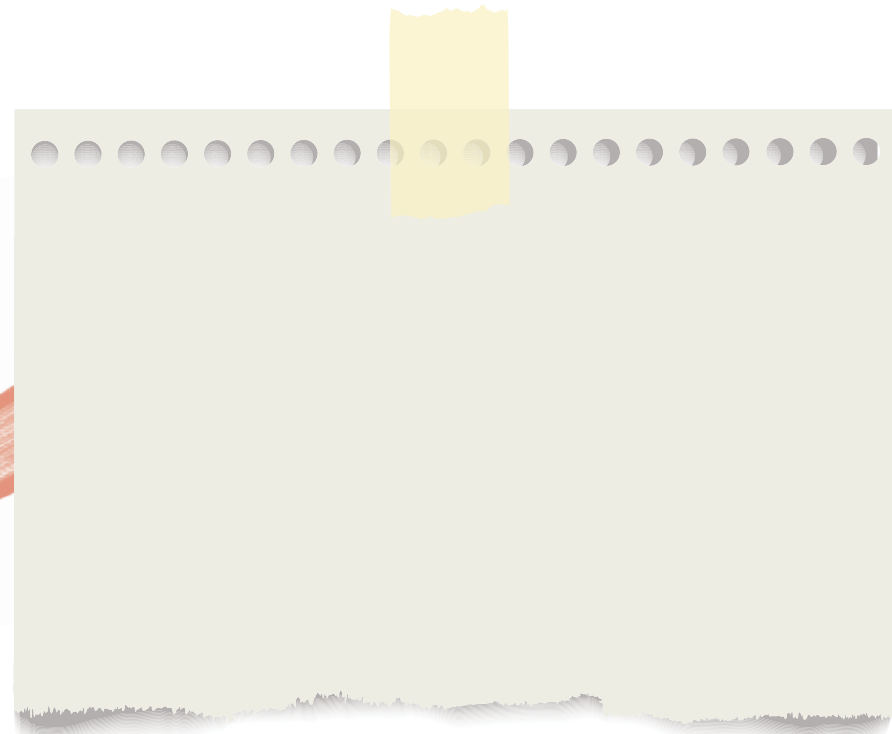
## WHAT?

- What story do I have to tell?
- What type of experience will I offer?
- What resources do I already have to deliver this experience and what do I need to obtain?
- What do I need to make this experience special?

## WHO?

TAKE SOME TIME TO REVIEW ALBERTA'S ULTIMATE TRAVELLERS TO GET A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR TARGET MARKET!

- Who is this experience for? Imagine your visitor, what are their demographics (to your knowledge), their motivations as a traveler, what is valuable to them?
- Who will be leading the experience?
- Who will I be partnering with, if at all?



## WHERE?

- Where will this experience take place?  
Will it be mobile, so that it can be delivered in different settings?
- Where will I be promoting this experience?
- Where will visitors come from to participate in this experience?

## WHEN?

When will the experience take place? (Season, time of day, consider what works best for your target market)

- When will I be ready to deliver this experience?



*Your vision starts here!*

## MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

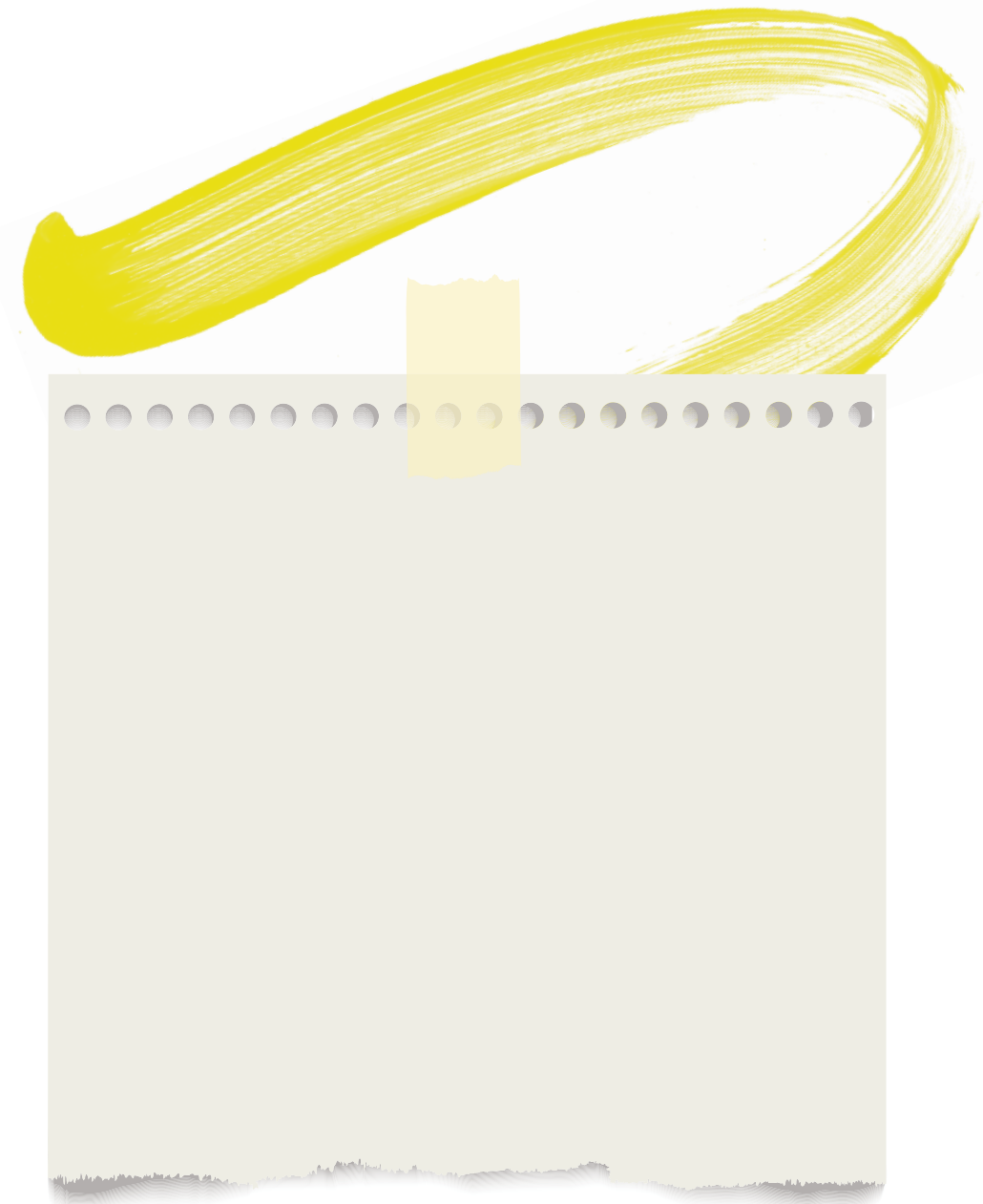
### HOW?

- How will I deliver the experience?
- How does this experience maintain cultural authenticity and protocol?
- How can I involve my community in this experience?
- How does this experience align with my (business) values and goals?
- How can I engage visitors' senses while they are participating in my experience?
- How will I evaluate the quality and visitor satisfaction of my experience?
- How much of an investment of time, and resources will this experience cost me?

### MAKING IT YOURS...

Now, use the template below to create a rough draft itinerary or outline of your experience. Remember your 'who, what, where, when, why and how' as you develop it. While you are developing it, pull your Mentor in for support and guidance, or once you have a draft complete go over it with your Mentor.

Review this sample experience itinerary for inspiration.



## ELEMENT 2: RESOURCES & OPERATIONS – UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEEDS

Although the visioning of your experience can evolve throughout the development process, the next step will be assessing your current resources and determining what is needed to run this experience from an operational standpoint. This will broadly include permits, insurance, infrastructure, equipment, and human resources.

When we speak of engaging the senses, the infrastructure and equipment that visitors interact with can contribute to the overall feeling and memory of an experience - from artistic, thoughtfully designed plates when serving food or even a beaded pen for signing a waiver form – the little details do count and can be the finishing touches that make your experience memorable. In the following pages, you will also create a *wish list* of items that would bring your experience to the next level.

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FOR INSPIRATION ON UNDERSTANDING WHAT IT MEANS TO INCLUDE YOUR COMMUNITY IN YOUR TOURISM OPERATIONS AND CREATE A SENSE OF PLACE FOR YOUR VISITOR, REFER BACK TO TRAIL 1: VIEWPOINT 1 AND TRAIL 2: VIEWPOINT 2 IN YOUR SIX SENSES GUIDE.

### MAKING IT HAPPEN...

The following series of reflective questions will allow you to ponder the resources and actions required for you to bring your experience to market. Have your **EXPERIENCE OUTLINE** from Element 1 on hand as you work through the following points and consult with your Mentor if you need assistance on any of the items.

## 1. LICENSES & PERMITS

Since you have come to this program as an existing market-ready business, you likely already possess a valid business license to operate legally. However, when launching new experiences, you will need to investigate if you need to obtain special permits or licenses to deliver them.

- a) Are there any additional necessary permits or licenses required for you to deliver your experience? (This could include land use permissions, access permits, resource harvesting permits, etc.)

- b) What municipal, provincial, and/or federal regulations must your experience adhere to for operating your experience? (e.g., food safety guidelines)

- c) If you already possess the necessary license and permits, when are they due for renewal?



## 2. PRODUCT & SERVICE INSURANCE

Each type of experience within cultural tourism poses its own unique risks. As some activities are deemed riskier than others, making sure that you are familiar with the type of insurance required to deliver your experience is essential before it hits the market to ensure all assets and liabilities are covered, staff feel supported, and your guests feel safe.

a) Will this new experience require special insurance coverage, such as the case when offering programming to school groups, and/or high-risk adventure activities such as rock climbing?

YES OR  NO

b) Will I require a waiver form for guests to fill prior to participating?

YES OR  NO

c) Will myself or other staff need to obtain additional certifications or training to safely deliver this experience? (e.g., Wilderness First Aid & CPR, Swiftwater Rescue, etc.)

FOR ASSISTANCE IN NAVIGATING THESE AREAS, REACH OUT TO YOUR MENTOR FOR THE RELEVANT LEGISLATION THAT APPLIES TO YOUR EXPERIENCE.

*Ensure all assets  
and liabilities are covered!*

### 3. INFRASTRUCTURE

To ensure holistic and sustainable development of your experience, we will look at two categories of infrastructure, hard and soft. Hard infrastructure can refer to the physical built environment, facilities, and structures that you, your staff, and your visitors will be interacting with while conducting your experience. Soft infrastructure can refer to the systems, processes, and procedures that will be carried out by you or your staff to deliver a quality experience.

- a) Create a detailed list of all the infrastructure that is required, involved in, or has an impact on the delivery of your visitor experience. This will include both hard and soft infrastructure and be sure to list everything that is needed, whether you currently possess it or not.

#### HARD INFRASTRUCTURE

(e.g., roads, signage, pathways, cooking shelter)

#### SOFT INFRASTRUCTURE

(e.g., emergency and risk management plan, standard operating procedures, contingency plan, cancellation policy)

YOUR MENTOR CAN HELP GUIDE YOU IN DEVELOPING OR ACQUIRING ANY MISSING INFRASTRUCTURE THAT YOU REQUIRE.

- b) Is the infrastructure that is required for my experience safe and up to standards for visitors to use?

YES OR  NO

- c) Does the existing infrastructure meet the needs of the experience I am developing?

YES OR  NO

- d) Do I need to arrange any maintenance, upgrades, or revision to existing infrastructure?

YES OR  NO

- e) Is the infrastructure easily accessible to potential visitors? If not, can there be modifications or an alternate location to make the experience accessible?

YES OR  NO

Below, note down any thoughts, ideas, and 'to-dos' needed to fulfill infrastructure requirements for your experience. Discuss with your Mentor.

## 4. EQUIPMENT & INVENTORY

Regardless of the type of experiences you offer, you will have to manage an inventory of all the required equipment and supplies necessary for your experience delivery. As you gain confidence in delivery of the experience, the supplies may change as you discover what works the best for efficiency, effectiveness and to provide the 'wow' factor.

This inventory may include items such as standard office equipment, food and beverages, or a fleet of kayaks. Creating systems for managing your inventory and equipment will allow you to be organized and on top of your business assets.

- a) Start a list of all equipment, products, and supplies that are required for you to deliver your new experience and include quantities if you wish.

•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

- b) Do I need to purchase new equipment or supplies to deliver this experience?

YES OR  NO

- c) What items could make the experience special?

- d) Have I created an inventory list? If not, use the first tab on the Equipment & Supplies Inventory Template to start one.

YES OR  NO

- e) Will I need to obtain additional storage or facilities for any new equipment required to deliver this experience?

YES OR  NO

- f) If I need to purchase new supplies, where will I be purchasing from? Is there a local business or artist I can support?

## 5. HUMAN RESOURCES

Human resources, put simply, are the people, the faces, and the spirit behind your business. They are the storytellers, the people responsible for taking care of the experience from start to end. Your human resources needs will be highly dependent on the type of experience offering, size of your business, and scope of your current operations. As your business grows, you may find yourself needing to hire additional staff, even seasonally, to meet the demands of your new experience. Training is also an important consideration for developing and offering a new product. Again, have your **EXPERIENCE OUTLINE** from Element 1 on hand to refer to as you ponder the following questions.

- a) Define the roles and number of people required in the entire delivery of this experience. (e.g., one person preparing food, another person interpreting, another collecting payment, etc.)

- b) Do you anticipate needing to hire any additional staff for your new experience?

YES

OR

NO

IF YOU ANSWERED YES, YOU CAN ASK FOR GUIDANCE FROM YOUR MENTOR IN DEFINING WHAT THE POSITION(S) WILL LOOK LIKE USING THE FOLLOWING TEMPLATE.

- c) If you answered yes, what position(s) do you need to hire?

- d) Will you or anybody else need additional training to deliver this experience? Write down any training or capacity building needs that might be required to develop and deliver your new experience. This could include an outline of a training plan, professional certifications, required qualities for delivery of the experience, and more.



## MAKING IT YOURS...

Use this template to create a framework of the required resources and operational considerations for your experience(s). Build upon the work you completed above to determine what needs to happen and how you can implement it. While you are developing it, pull your Mentor in for support and guidance, or once you have a draft complete go over it with your Mentor.



## ELEMENT 3: FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – THE VALUE OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

As an operator, you understand that an important part of building an experience is to consider all of the direct and indirect costs related to curating it – from planning to delivering – to ensure you have an attainable goal, return on investment, and that you are prepared for the associated expenses. This Element in your Experience Maker will set you in the right direction to evaluate costs, and help you make decisions on, for example, how much you need to invest to make your experience genuine, special, and authentic, while bringing in revenue.

Remember, you are creating a purchasable moment that people will be willing to pay for because they see the value for their money.

Your experience will have the power to:

- Enhance and grow your business
- Increase demand for your services
- Support Indigenous tourism in Alberta
- Bring more visitors to your business, community, and region
- Contribute to the overall destination development of your community and region

FOR INSPIRATION ON UNDERSTANDING WAYS TO BRING MORE VALUE TO YOUR EXPERIENCE, REFER TO **TRAIL 4: VIEWPOINT 2** IN YOUR SIX SENSES GUIDE.

### MAKING IT HAPPEN...

The following series of reflective questions and action items will guide you through understanding the value of your experience, considering potential costs related to it, and building on your knowledge of pricing experiences. Work with your Mentor if you need assistance on any of the items.



## 1. IDENTIFYING COSTS – BUDGETING YOUR EXPERIENCE

In the previous Element of your Experience Maker, you reflected on the resources needed to bring your idea to life. In this Element we will begin by calculating the cost of those resources. Your costs don't have to be precise, use an estimate based on your knowledge and some brief research.

- a. Open your Equipment & Supplies Inventory Template saved from Element 2 and navigate to the 2<sup>nd</sup> tab entitled Projected Costs. Start entering your required equipment and supplies and the costs.
- b. Is there anything else you should consider besides what you have identified in the resources needed? Example: marketing, permits, employee recruitment, training, etc.

- c. Are there any costs you could cut back on and still host an unforgettable experience?

- d. Value-added enhancements: Is there anything you could add to your experience at little or no cost and that would give it a special touch?

- e. How much, approximately, will it cost you to develop, launch, and deliver your experience?



## 2. PRICING YOUR EXPERIENCE

Once you have pinpointed the nature of your experience, the resources needed, and related costs, now you can start considering how you will price your experience. A few things to consider besides costs, can be seasonality, target audience, competition, and value perception for example.

Understanding market rates for similar experiences is also a way to set the parameters. Some brief research to find out how much competitors are charging for a similar or comparable experience can be your starting point.

a) Do you know your competition? Research similar experiences and their price points.

<b>EXPERIENCE NAME</b>	<b>PROVIDER</b>	<b>EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>PRICES</b>



## MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

- b) Could you price your experience differently based on the season? If so, reflect on how it would be priced in the different seasons, for example higher by 10% in the summer.
- c) Could you offer discounts for different audiences and different occasions? For example, school groups, families, and larger groups. If so, reflect on the options and how this discount could be applied.



ARE YOU GOING TO BE SELLING YOUR EXPERIENCE THROUGH TRAVEL AGENTS, THIRD-PARTY WEBSITES SUCH AS AIRBNB, OR TRAVEL TRADE DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS? CONSIDER ADDING AT LEAST AN ADDITIONAL 10% TO YOUR PRICE SET ASIDE FOR THIRD PARTY COMMISSIONS.

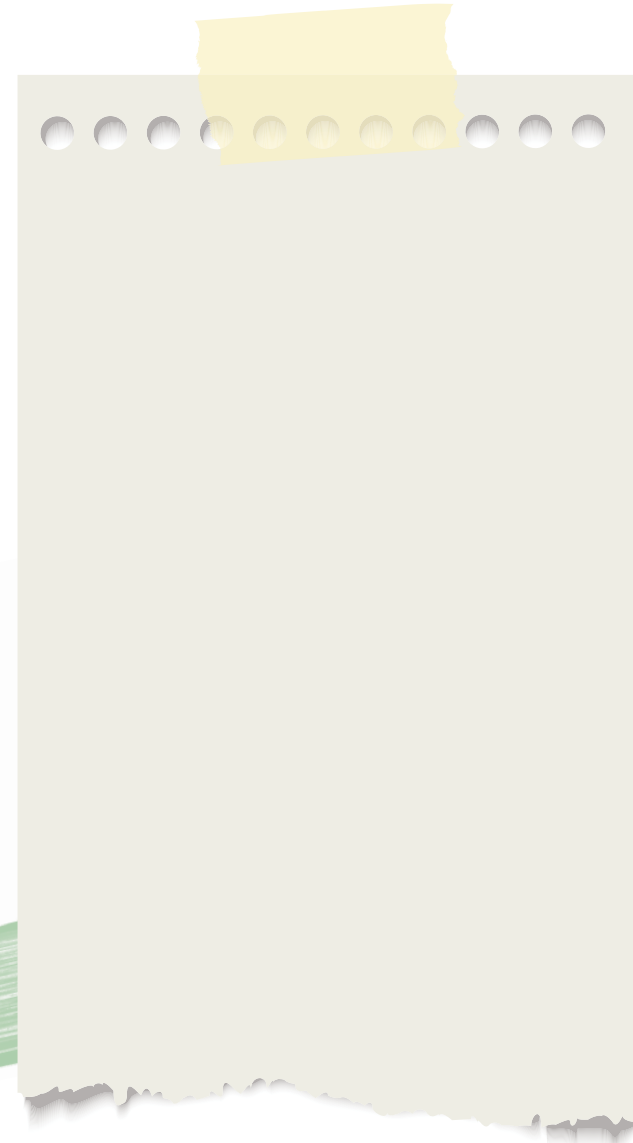


Demand will directly affect how you price your experience. If your demand is high and increasing, you can naturally increase the price to follow it.

The premium price is a selling price that reflects the value received and the experience enjoyed by your visitors. To charge a premium price, you need to have a competitive advantage in three areas: your visitors' perception of your brand, the experience and service benefits you offer, and the emotional and personal connections you create (between your visitors and the land and people and culture). As an Indigenous tourism operator offering an authentic cultural experience, you have great advantage to stand out and be competitive.

One of the benefits of piloting your experience is testing prices; you can always adjust to better match fluctuating market realities. An incentive such as a new experience promotion can be interesting to motivate buyers.

- d) Let's confirm a pilot price for your experience. Based on how much you will need to invest to launch and deliver your experience, market rates, competition, and demand, determine a preliminary price. How do you estimate you are going to price your experience approximately (per person/unit, etc.)?



### 3. RETAIL RATES VERSUS NET RATES

If you plan to sell your experience through travel trade distribution channels, you will need to be familiar with the concepts of retail pricing versus net pricing. But first, what is the travel trade? Travel trade is people and companies that sell travel products to visitors which they have bought from someone else (i.e., you!). Basically, travel trade is a distribution network for travel products, often in our case, selling Canadian products to international markets.

Your retail rate is the price that you sell your experience for directly to your consumers. When you are selling your experiences through your travel trade partners (e.g., regional tourism organizations, tour operators, and travel agents), you will offer net rate pricing, which provides a more favourable rate as per the formula below:

- **Regional Tourism Organization (RTO): 25% - 30% discount**
- **Tour Operators: 15% - 20% discount**
- **Travel Agents: 10% - 15% discount**

For example, if the retail rate for your experience is \$50, your net pricing would be as follows:

- **For RTOs: \$35 - \$37**
- **For Tour Operators: \$40 - \$42.50**
- **For Travel Agents: \$42.50 - \$45**

Use the spaces below to calculate your draft net rates:

MY DRAFT EXPERIENCE PRICE

**Net rates:**

RTOS

---

TOUR OPERATORS

---

TRAVEL AGENTS

---

## 4. PROFIT & RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

Calculating the return on investment (ROI) is essential to ensure that your new offering is sustainable and profitable for your business. Calculating your projected profit and ROI initially helps you to understand how many sales you need to break even and for the new experience to have a positive financial impact. Your experience's ROI can be used to identify an approximate measure of the profitability and can be calculated from the following values:

- **The initial COST OF INVESTMENT to build your experience**
- **The REOCCURRING COSTS to deliver your experience each time**
- **The final PRICE OF YOUR EXPERIENCE**
- **The GAIN OR PROFIT generated from the sales of your experience**

We have looked at some of the costs associated with delivering your experience and developed a preliminary price for the experience. Work with your mentor to determine your break-even point and some initial financial projections for your experience.

*Connect with your Mentor for guidance.*

## MAKING IT YOURS...

To summarize your understanding of the overall value of your experience, complete the table below.

### THE VALUE OF MY EXPERIENCE

**How much will I spend the first time**

**I deliver my experience?** My overall initial projected costs to implement this experience.

**How much will I spend every time**

**I deliver my experience?** My overall projected costs to deliver this experience based on a measure that makes most sense (e.g., minimum/maximum participants, per group, unit, etc.).

**How much will I charge?** The estimated price per person for this experience.

**How will I adapt the price of my**

**experience?** Some variable prices that can apply to this experience (e.g., seasonal, groups, discounts, etc.).

Use this template to plan and keep track of your new experience's financial expenses, revenue, ROI, and more. While you are working on this, pull your mentor in for support and guidance, or once you have a draft complete, go over it with your Mentor.

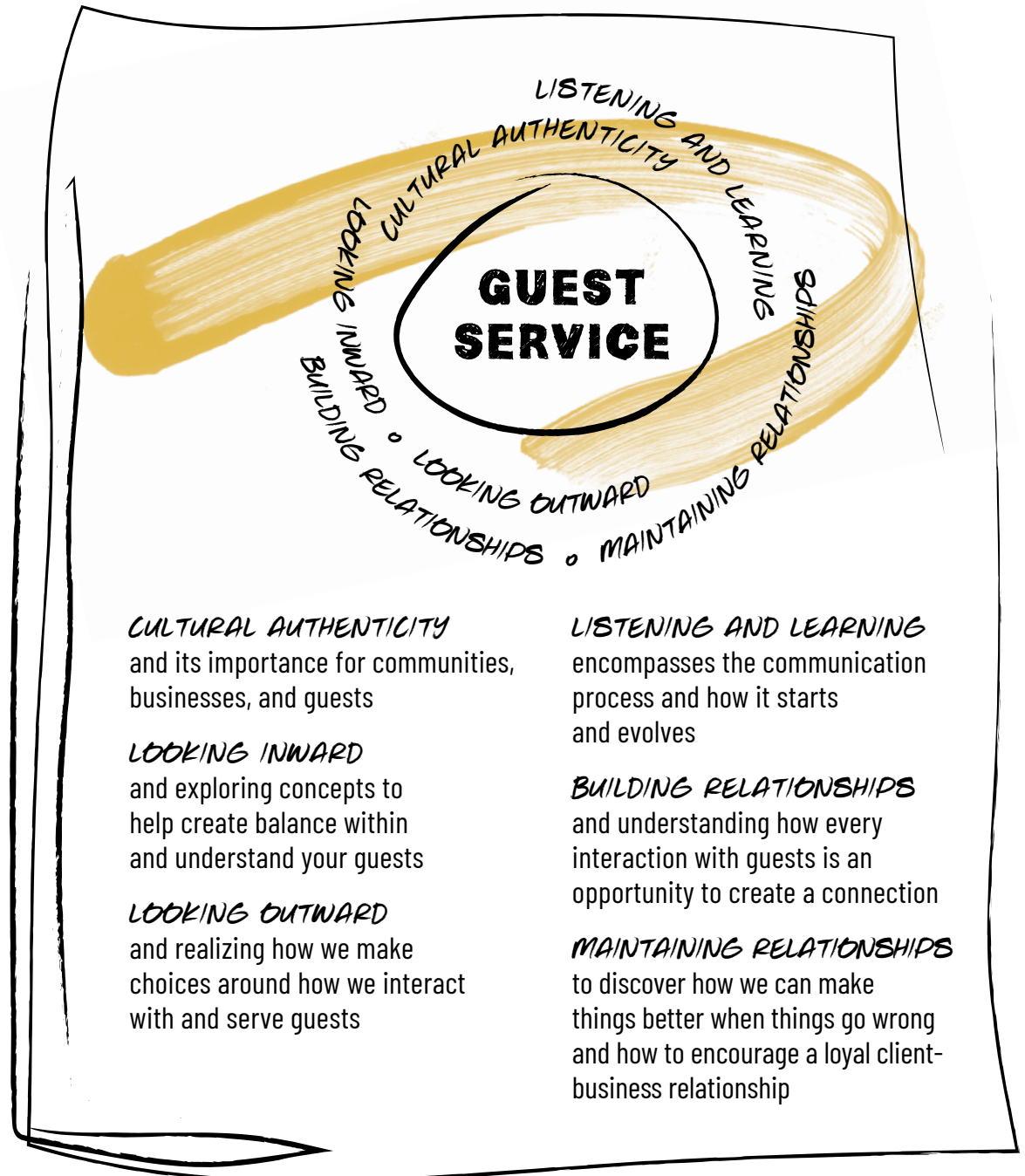
## ELEMENT 4: GUEST SERVICE – SHARING & GENEROSITY

In this Element we will be exploring important aspects of serving your guests, and what that means from a cultural tourism point of view. Like the Cree teaching of sharing and generosity, *nikwatisiwin êkwa mâtinamâkêwin*, delivering good guest service is about going above and beyond to take care of your guests while sharing your knowledge, skills, and culture.

An essential factor in maintaining a good business reputation, to keep people coming back, and increase visitor demand through word-of-mouth and reviews, is to meet current guests' expectations and look at ways to exceed them.

You can better meet guests' expectations when you begin by simply identifying what they look for when they come to your business and participate in your experiences. For example, try to visualize meeting guests' expectations as a journey where specific milestones are completed to achieve the final target.

The following diagram represents key elements that lead to exceptional guest service.



**CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY**  
and its importance for communities, businesses, and guests

**LOOKING INWARD**  
and exploring concepts to help create balance within and understand your guests

**LOOKING OUTWARD**  
and realizing how we make choices around how we interact with and serve guests

**LISTENING AND LEARNING**  
encompasses the communication process and how it starts and evolves

**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**  
and understanding how every interaction with guests is an opportunity to create a connection

**MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS**  
to discover how we can make things better when things go wrong and how to encourage a loyal client-business relationship

FOR INSPIRATION ON HOW SHARING STORIES OVER A MEAL IS A POWERFUL MEDIUM FOR CONNECTING WITH YOUR GUESTS AND ALSO INSIGHTS ABOUT CREATING A SENSE OF ARRIVAL FOR YOUR GUESTS, REFER BACK TO **TRAIL 4: VIEWPOINT 1** AND **TRAIL 2: VIEWPOINT 2** IN YOUR SIX SENSES GUIDE.

**ESSENTIAL  
GUEST SKILLS FOR  
SERVICE EXCELLENCE**

PROFESSIONALISM  
POSITIVE ATTITUDE  
RESPONSIBILITY  
PUNCTUALITY  
CONFIDENCE  
COURTESY & ATTENTIVENESS  
FRIENDLINESS & ENTHUSIASM  
FLEXIBILITY  
EMPATHY  
CLEAR COMMUNICATION



**MAKING IT HAPPEN...**

The following series of reflective questions and action items will allow you to work through some of the considerations required for facilitating an unforgettable guest experience.

*Work with your Mentor  
if you need assistance  
on any of the items.*

## 1. SEEING FROM THE GUEST'S VIEWPOINT

Your guest's experience begins even before they arrive at your business. Their impression of your business and experience begins **at the time they find you**, meaning that the impression they get online, from social media and/or your website, in person, through word-of-mouth is the beginning of the overall experience.

Refer to the example of a guest experiencing a cultural walking tour from beginning to end, and then let's reflect on **the guest's journey through the perspective of your experience.**

a) How/where will guests find out about my experience?

b) How will guests be able to book/purchase it?

c) Once they've booked/purchased the experience, what kind of communication will they receive from the purchase point to the date of the experience? (e.g., email confirmation, phone call, details on experience, pre-trip guidelines, options for cancellations, etc.)

If you are creating an experience that requires pre-trip Guidelines, use the template provided and seek guidance from your Mentor on how to personalize it to your experience.

d) On the day-of, how will guests be welcomed?

## MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

e) What will the guest's experience be as they go through our time together?



f) As the experience approaches an end, what am I going to say to/do for the guest?



g) How am I going to collect the guest's feedback and maximize the opportunity for a continuous relationship and their return to my business or a good review/referral?



It is best to offer multiple options to collect your guest's feedback, to respect people's preferences. Keeping it short and sweet is also ideal to ensure the guest is not overwhelmed by the number of questions. A physical and digital comment card can suffice to provide you with the feedback you need.

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT IN DEVELOPING A GUEST FEEDBACK FORM, REFER TO THE GUEST FEEDBACK FORM EXAMPLES PROVIDED OR CONNECT WITH YOUR MENTOR.





## 2. ENHANCING THE GUEST EXPERIENCE

As an Indigenous entrepreneur, you may have considered the ways in which you can integrate your personal values and ways of knowing, being, and doing into your business offering and guest experience. The idea of sharing, generosity, and creating community are powerful ideals that can make all the difference in creating a meaningful memory for your guests.

a) In what ways can I go above and beyond as the guest journeys through my experience?

b) Is there a special feature or a special touch that I can include?

c) Is there a way I can improve my guest's experience? If so, how?

## MAKING IT YOURS...

As you build your memorable and perhaps life-changing experience, making it yours is elemental, and this is done by using your own personable special touches to elevate that moment for guests.

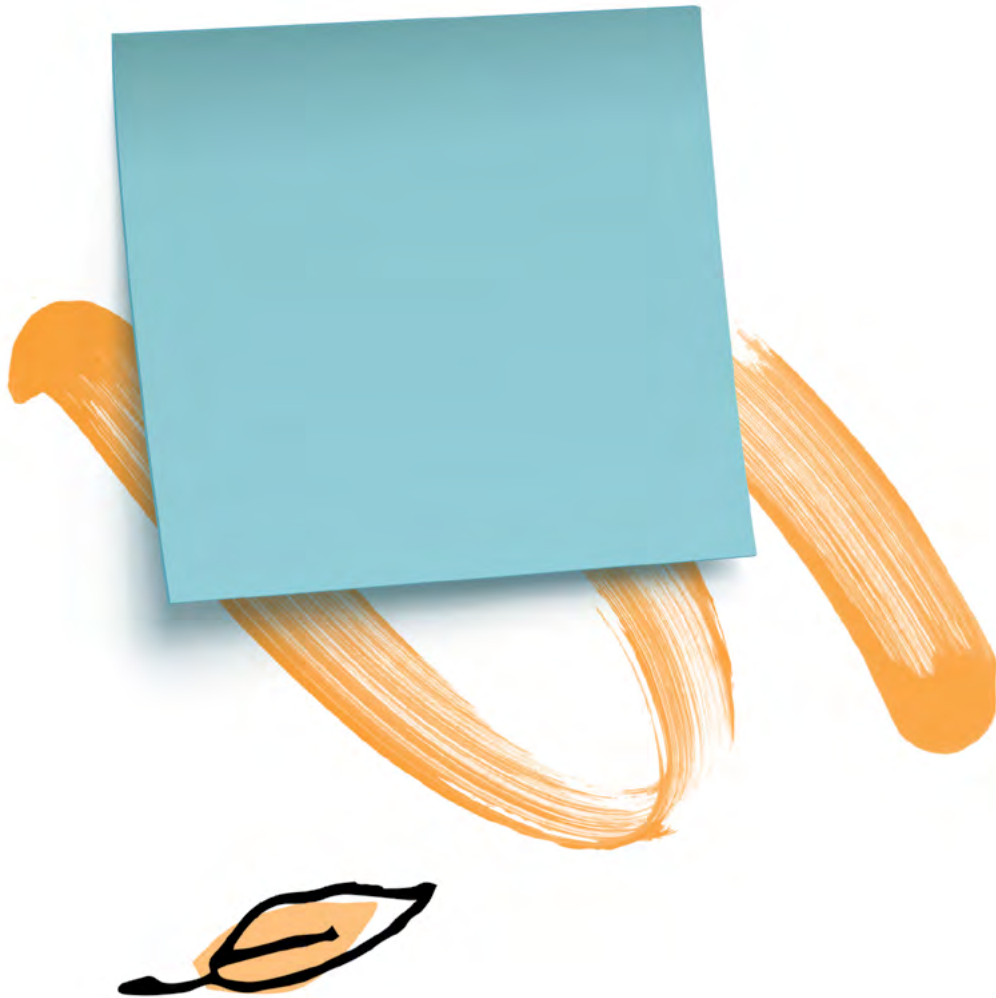
Reflect more **on the 'YOU' factor** for this experience:

a) How do my own personal skills, personality, story, and style play a role in this experience?



*Reflect on the you factor...*

- b) How am I incorporating my gifts, passion, and features that make this experience something only I have to offer?



At this point in your journey, it is useful to ask yourself the question **what do I want every guest to experience?** Although each experience is unique and every visitor will have their own individual takeaways, when designing your tourism experience you should explore some key concepts that you will identify as the desired outcomes for a visitor of your experience.

Use this template to think about and continue developing the key concepts or visitor takeaways of your experience. Build upon the work you completed above with respect to your visitor's journey through your experience. While you are working on this, pull your mentor in for support and guidance, or once you have a draft complete go over it with your Mentor.



## ELEMENT 5: MARKETING & BRANDING – SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE WORLD

Marketing and branding are more than a tagline or a logo or an advertisement. It's a perception, a feeling rooted in the guest's experience and the sum of all interactions they have with your business. Everything they see, hear, do, smell, feel, and taste contributes to their perception of your experience, business, and your region as a destination.

When it comes to showcasing your new experience, considering your existing guests and current target market, as well as potential new ones, will be essential to ensure the success of this new venture. In this Element, we will reflect on these target markets and how you will communicate your experience and share this experience with the world, as it directly relates to your business' brand and your guests.



FOR INSPIRATION ON HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN GIVE VISITORS A TASTE OF YOUR EXPERIENCE BEFORE THEY VISIT AND BECOME A PART OF YOUR MARKETING AND BRANDING STRATEGY, REFER BACK TO TRAIL 3: VIEWPOINT 2 IN YOUR SIX SENSES GUIDE.

### MAKING IT HAPPEN...

The following series of reflective questions and action items will help guide you through an understanding of the target market for your experience and the planning process of how you will share it with the world.

*Remember to consider your existing guests and current target market.*

## 1. RECOGNIZING YOUR TARGET MARKET – CURRENT AND NEW GUESTS

a) Generally, who are my existing guests and my business' target market?

**DEMOGRAPHICS:** Age, income, family status, occupation.

**HOBBIES/LIFESTYLE:** What do they like doing?  
Where do they spend their discretionary income?

**WHERE THEY'RE FROM:** Country, region, urban/rural setting.

**REASONS FOR VISITING:** Push and pull factors for travelling.

**WHAT THEY VALUE:** What creates meaning in their life?

b) Is my new experience catered to my current guests/target market?

# MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

c) How does my new experience fit with my business' brand identity?

d) Will I need to adjust anything in my experience to ensure it aligns with my brand identity?

YES OR  NO

ARE YOU REFLECTING ON ADAPTING/CHANGING YOUR CURRENT BUSINESS BRAND AND IDENTITY INSTEAD OF THE EXPERIENCE? CONNECT WITH YOUR MENTOR FOR GUIDANCE.

e) If so, what will need to be adjusted in my experience?

f) Am I looking to attract new or different markets for my experience from my current target market?

YES OR  NO

g) Who is my experience catered for? What are the different target markets I want to attract to book my experience?

## 2. BRANDING – SCULPTING THE IDENTITY OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

Referring back to the core aspects of your experience and what you hope every guest will encounter, you can start sculpting your experience brand and identity, which will reflect directly on how you will sell it later on.

When you brand your experience, think about how it reflects your business, and your target market. Your experience will attract like-minded people who identify with what is offered, the way it is offered, and the business and person who offers it.

- a) If my experience were a person, what characteristics or traits would define it?

### MULTIPLE CHOICE CHECKBOXES:

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoorsy   | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bold        | <input type="checkbox"/> Artistic      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inspiring   | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic  | <input type="checkbox"/> Rebellious    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful    | <input type="checkbox"/> Introspective |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventurous |  |



- b) Are there any other 'personality traits' that I want to foster within my experience; especially traits that may be reflective of myself, my business, and its consumers?



TO EXPLORE MORE INSIGHTS ON YOUR EXPERIENCE CHARACTERISTICS, REFER TO YOUR OVERALL BRAND IDENTITY AND ASK YOUR MENTOR FOR GUIDANCE.

- c) If I were speaking about my experience, what characteristics would define the voice and/or language of my experience?

### MULTIPLE CHOICE CHECKBOXES:

- |   |                                    |                                     |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual | <input type="checkbox"/> Elegant    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conversational | <input type="checkbox"/> Luxurious | <input type="checkbox"/> Courageous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tranquil       | <input type="checkbox"/> Feminine  | <input type="checkbox"/> Happy      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligent    | <input type="checkbox"/> Masculine | Other:                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh          | <input type="checkbox"/> Playful   | <input type="text"/>                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly       | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong    |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Original       | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean     |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic      | <input type="checkbox"/> Dramatic  |                                     |

## MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

d) As your experience encompasses the six senses, considering them in your marketing and branding will be important. Reflect on how your experience incorporates:

Sight. What will guests <b>see</b> ?	
Smell. What will guests <b>smell</b> ?	
Touch. What will guests <b>feel</b> ?	
Taste. What will guests <b>taste</b> ?	
Sound. What will guests <b>hear</b> ?	
Spiritual/Cultural Connection. Will there be an opportunity for the visitor to have a <b>deeper connection</b> with your culture and land?	



### 3. MARKETING – SPREADING THE WORD

Before you release your experience out in the world for purchase, it is important to consider aspects such as how it will appear online, using your website, social media, and incorporating third party apps, for example. Other important aspects to consider can be the different opportunities to deliver your experience, for example on your own or perhaps offering it as part of a package, including different local industry partners.

a) How am I going to market my experience online?

**MULTIPLE CHOICE CHECKBOXES:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My website               | <input type="checkbox"/> TripAdvisor                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My social media channels | <input type="checkbox"/> Expedia   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social media ads         | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry partners' websites<br>(e.g., ITA/ITAC) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airbnb                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel trade partners                           |

Notes/ideas and other online marketing channels:



FOR MORE IDEAS ON MAKING THE BEST USE OF YOUR RESOURCES FOR MARKETING YOUR EXPERIENCE, LOOK AT THE COST-EFFECTIVE MARKETING TIPS RESOURCE.



# MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

b) How am I going to market my experience using traditional marketing tactics?

### MULTIPLE CHOICE CHECKBOXES:

- Print media - brochures, pamphlets, etc.
- Tourism trade shows/events
- Through local businesses/partners
- Visitor centres or other attractions

Other:

c) Is this experience stand-alone, or am I offering it as part of a package?  
Is this something I can consider for the future?



d) Who are some potential partners that I could reach out to combine my experience with their products/services, offering a packaged product?

**PARTNER NAME/  
BUSINESS**

**IDEA FOR  
PARTNERSHIP**

<b>PARTNER NAME/ BUSINESS</b>	<b>IDEA FOR PARTNERSHIP</b>



## 4. TRAVEL TRADE MARKETING – YOUR EXPERIENCE FLAT SHEET

If you decide to go down the path of marketing your experience through the travel trade industry, an important tool that you will need to be familiar with is your flat sheet. This resource is used by yourself, destination marketing organizations (DMO) and the Indigenous Tourism Alberta team to send to receptive tour operators, in-market tour operators, and travel agents to support the sale and promotion of your experience.

Here is a checklist of items and features to guide you when developing your flat sheet:

- Double sided 8 ½ x 11 page that explains who you are and what you are offering to prospective partners
- Describe you or your company and what you are offering as a travel experience
- Your name, email, website, phone number, social platforms, and handles
- Minimum and/or maximum amount of guests to operate the experience
- Seasonality and/or dates that your experience is available
- Map of the location of your experience relative to international airports of Calgary and Edmonton
- Describe how travelers can find your business or experience location

- List any items travelers must or should bring to the experience
- List what is included and what is not included in the experience (e.g., meals)
- Describe any booking policies, such as requiring a deposit or cancellation policy
- Three modifications of your flat sheet per experience (one with direct retail rates, one with travel trade net rates, and one with both retail and net rates)
- Strong imagery!

The images on your flat sheet are very important. They should be engaging and pull people in. Viewers should be able to get a feel or understanding of the experience you are selling through the images. Make sure there are always people enjoying your experience in the photos. If your experience is multi-day, make sure to have imagery that displays each day's activities.

Your flat sheet should contain all the information, yet be written as succinctly as possible and in a way that is easy to understand. It is important that your customers and travel trade partners see themselves or their client being interested in your experience.

## MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

### MAKING IT YOURS...

After reflecting on some important aspects of marketing and branding your experience, you can begin to develop assets that will help you promote your experience and get it out there.

Soon you will be directed to your **My Experience Stand-Out Statement Template** where you will start developing copy for your marketing pieces and assets. But first, these three examples can be used as inspiration when thinking about what you could say to market your experience.

*Descriptions containing enough information for visitors to understand all they need to know about the experience.*

*Considering the core aspects of an experience, its target market, its brand and feel, a simple write-up to sell and invite visitors to be part of the experience.*

*Adapting the original write-up for different platforms such as Instagram or Facebook, including post captions and visuals.*

You may already know about the importance of quality visual content such as photos and videos when developing your marketing assets. Professional photography and other digital content is a key commodity in tourism marketing, and Indigenous tourism in particular.

—  
IF YOU NEED SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE ON ACQUIRING HIGH QUALITY VISUAL MARKETING CONTENT, CONNECT WITH YOUR MENTOR.

Now is the time to start developing your own marketing content. Use this template to create the foundation of your marketing copy that can be utilized across your marketing channels.



## ELEMENT 6: SUSTAINABILITY – GROWING & ADAPTING

When we think of the essence of **sustainability**, caring for our environment and protecting Mother Earth is usually what comes to mind. While bringing your visitor experience to life, let yourself be guided by this. Part of creating a sustainable experience is also considering how it will be nourishing you and your business as the years pass, and thinking about strategies to make it an adaptable experience that can be easily modified, revised, and adjusted to keep promoting the overall benefit for you and your business.

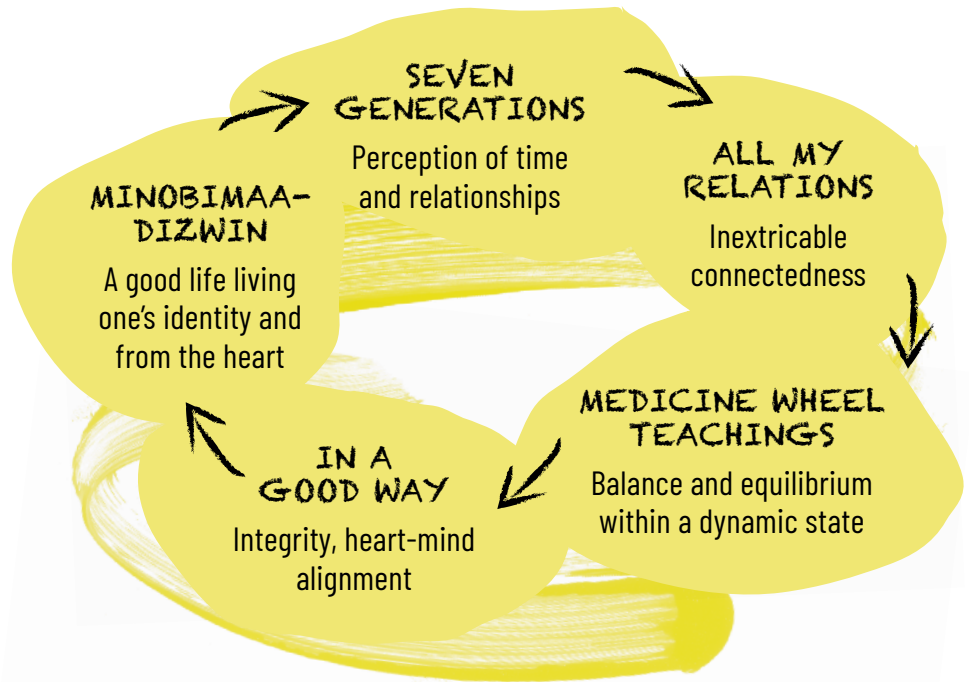
### INDIGENOUS BELIEFS AROUND SUSTAINABILITY

Indigenous traditions, beliefs and values are rooted in the belief that as Indigenous people on this Earth, it is our job to be stewards of the land. We must ensure that we take care of the relationships with which we've been entrusted—with the land, with the air and water, with our friends, family, neighbours, and ancestors.

*Source: Sustainability & Reconciliation: Indigenous Perspective, Jacqueline Ottmann, PHD. University of Saskatchewan*

*Source: What is Mino-Pi-Matisi-Win? Turtle Lodge International Centre for Indigenous Education and Wellness*

—  
TAKE SOME TIME TO REFLECT ON SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH AN INDIGENOUS LENS USING THE SUSTAINABILITY REFLECTION RESOURCE PROVIDED.



—  
FOR INSPIRATION ON FOSTERING THAT DEEPER CONNECTION AND REFLECTING ON YOUR INNER SELF, REFER BACK TO TRAIL 5 IN YOUR SIX SENSES GUIDE.

### MAKING IT HAPPEN...

By this time, you have looked at all the foundational elements to build your visitor experience. In this last Element, we will reflect on ways to ensure your experience is helping you and your business grow, while bringing benefits to the world and people around you.

## 1. BEING GUIDED BY YOUR VALUES

Ensuring you stick to your values and beliefs while building and delivering this experience is the first step to ensure it will be a meaningful, memorable experience for guests, and a long-lasting revenue generator for your business.

a) What are the strongest values, beliefs, and principles at the heart of my experience? How are they integrated?

b) How does this experience help me stay true to who I am and my business philosophy?

The workspace is a large, light beige rectangular area with a torn bottom edge. On the left side, there are seven circular punch holes. A yellow sticky note is attached to the top edge, and a vertical black line is drawn in the center of the workspace.

## 2. EMBRACING CHANGE & INNOVATION

As a business owner, there are probably many changes you have endured – new technology, social and economic shifts, industry trends, and global circumstances such as pandemics or natural disasters. Planning for innovative ways of offering your experience that address these challenges will keep you ahead of the curve.

Think about the different aspects of your experience, its resources, its delivery, its length, its essential features, its environment, and answer the following questions.

a) Can my experience be offered in different environments?

YES OR  NO

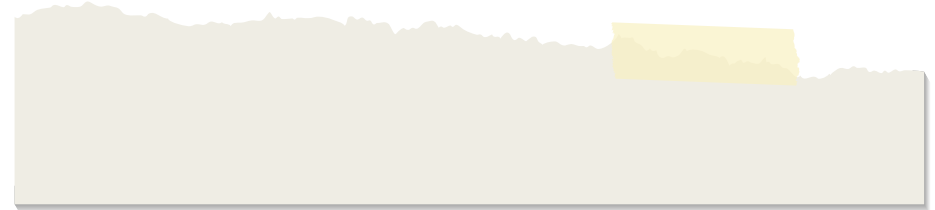
b) Can my experience be delivered in person and online?

YES OR  NO

c) Can the length of my experience be changed/customized? If so, how?

YES OR  NO

d) What are different ways that I could deliver this experience?




## MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

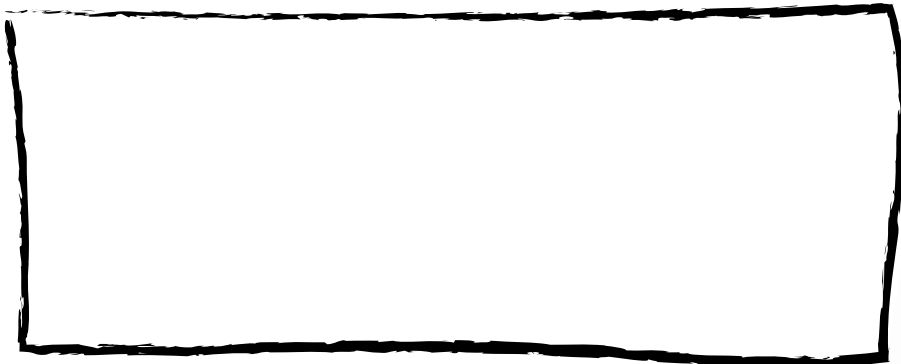
e) Can I replace resources needed to deliver my experience in case they are scarce, inexistent, or seasonal, and still deliver without compromising it? If so, how?



g) If I could adapt this experience to attract a different clientele, what clientele would it be and how would it be adapted?



f) How can my experience be adapted without losing its essential features?



*Deliver without compromising.  
Adapted without losing  
what counts.*

### 3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIPS

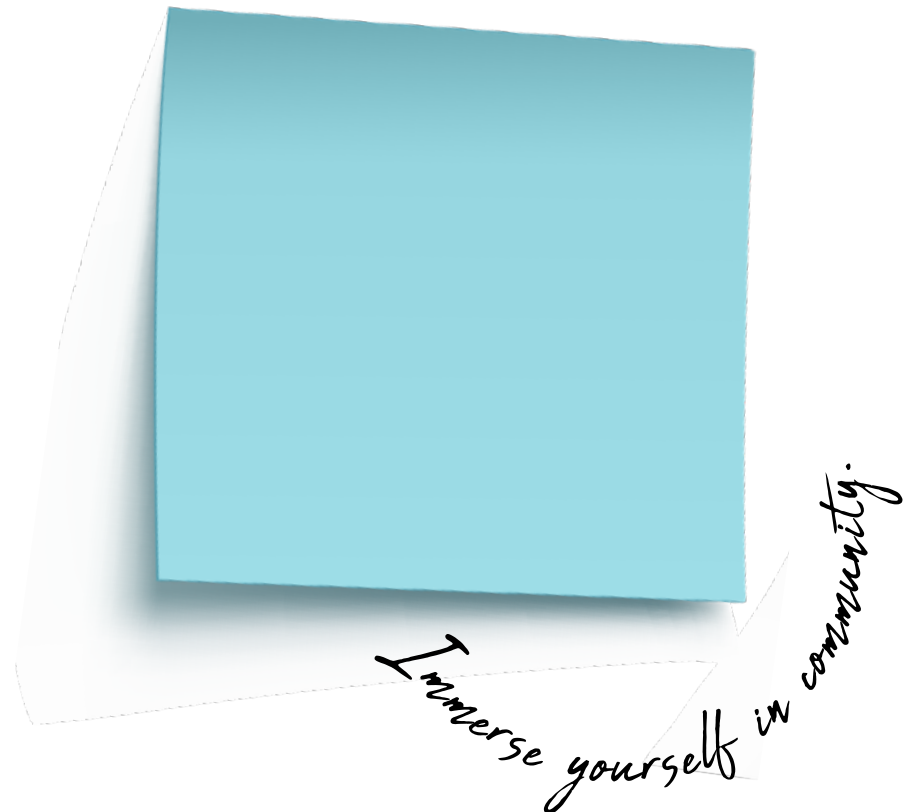
Partnerships help broaden your audience and reach, allow you to share resources with other entrepreneurs or businesses, and expand the kind of experiences you can offer. Make sure to immerse yourself in your community of fellow cultural entrepreneurs, there is room for everyone to succeed. Indigenous tourism is about working together.

a) When it comes to packages and pooling resources, think about the areas where you might be able to partner to enhance your experience and who these potential partners might be.

EXPERIENCE/ PACKAGE ELEMENTS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Experience/Package Elements Potential Partners	
Transportation	
Accommodation	
Meals	
Mementos/Souvenirs	
Basic Services	
Creative Elements/ Extra Entertainment	
Other:	

In Element 5 – Marketing & Branding, you reflected on ideas for partnerships. Refer to your answers to reflect on your decisions, and how partnerships could contribute to the overall sustainability of your experience and your business.

b) Besides potential business partners, are there any local organizations, educational institutions, neighbouring communities with whom I could partner to offer my experience and if so, which one(s)?





## 4. MEASURING GROWTH & SUCCESS

Along this journey through the Experience Maker, you've reflected on multiple factors that will be directly related to the success of your experience. Evaluating how well your experience is going will be fundamental to ensure it continues to be sustainable for you and your business. By measuring the success of your experience, you can plan and adapt accordingly for areas that might need your attention.

To measure success, first you will need to define some measurements, methods, and establish some high-level goals (your Key Performance Indicators or KPIs) that you can strive towards. Then you can go back to evaluate, compare, and adapt as needed.

a) Some of the elements (KPIs) that might help you measure success are below. Choose some based on how you intend to apply them to your experience.

### MULTIPLE CHOICE CHECKBOXES:

- Number of inquiries by potential guests
- Number of experiences booked
- Number of bookings cancelled
- Number of guests who attend the experience
- Number of guests who provide feedback and are satisfied
- Revenue generated by this experience compared to my overall business revenue
- Number of referred guests

- Number of returning guests
- Number of items sold
- Staff turnover rate
- Number of partnerships established
- Sales generated via my website
- Sales generated via social media
- Sales generated via word-of-mouth
- Sales generated via my partnerships

b) Are there any other KPIs that could help you measure the success of your experience? If so, what are they?



## MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

c) Based on your answers, in the left-hand column fill in the applicable areas that you are going to measure during your first season, in other words your KPIs. Then in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column, set your target numbers for each KPI for the first pilot of your experience that is open to the public.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)	TARGET GOAL FOR PUBLIC PILOT	ACTUAL VALUE ACHIEVED	NOTES AND CONSIDERATIONS

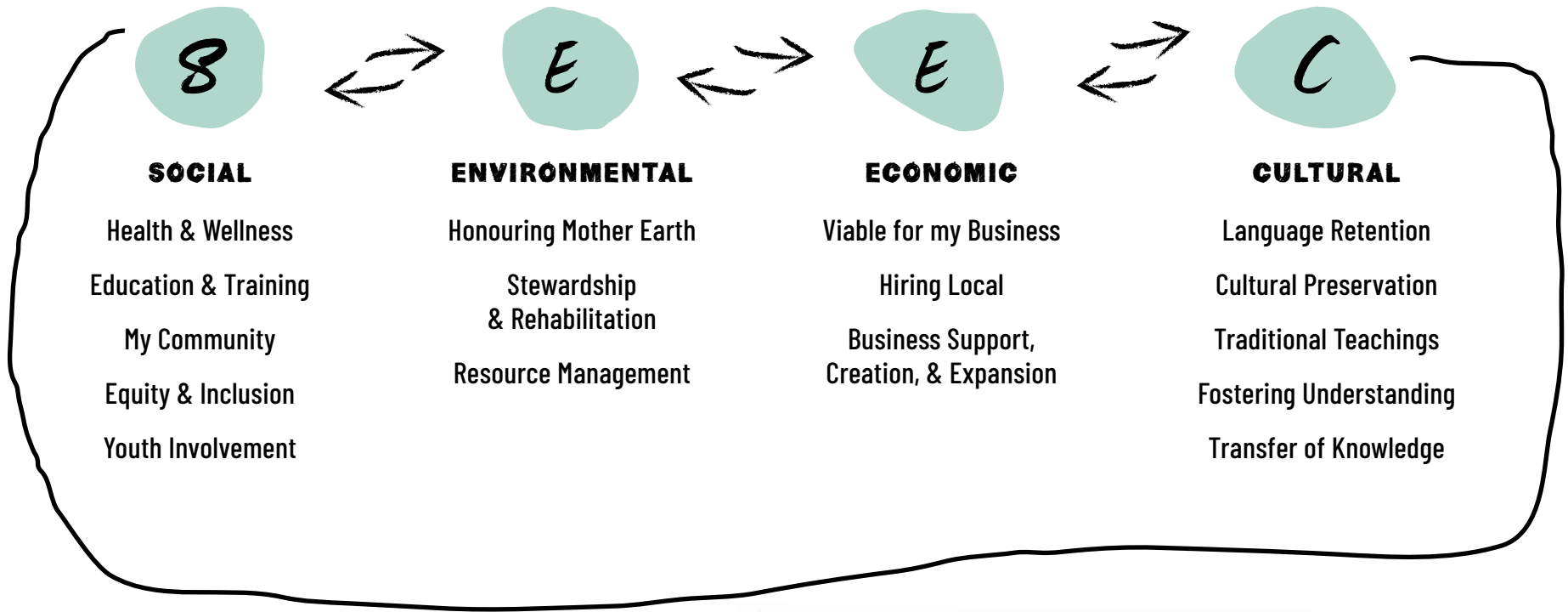
SEEK GUIDANCE FROM YOUR MENTOR IF YOU NEED SUPPORT TO FILL OUT YOUR KPIS TABLE.

USE THE FILLABLE TEMPLATE PROVIDED TO REVISIT YOUR KPIS ANNUALLY TO MEASURE SUCCESS AND ADAPT AS NEEDED.

## MAKING IT YOURS...

### Going the Extra Mile with Sustainability – The SEEC Model

The SEEC model is a framework in which to make sense of the world around us and make decisions responsibly. Everything in this life can be seen through a social, environmental, economic, and cultural lens. When we discuss monitoring and evaluation, it can be helpful to ask questions using the SEEC model.



## MY EXPERIENCE MAKER

Reflect on the questions below to identify how your experience is aligned with bringing social, environmental, economic, and cultural benefits to you, your business, and your region.

### SOCIAL

- When possible, does this experience partner with or use local suppliers, businesses, or non-profits?
- Does this experience, either directly or indirectly, help to address community challenges?
- Does this experience help to promote skill and capacity building and/or work opportunities for other Indigenous community members?
- Can this experience be modified to be accessible for visitors experiencing barriers (poverty, disability, etc.)?

### ENVIRONMENTAL

- Does this experience align with past and current community environmental protection initiatives?
- Have I identified ways to partner with local environmentally friendly organizations or other environmentally conscious entrepreneurs?
- Does this experience use reusable or compostable items, if possible?
- Does this experience incorporate knowledge from Elders and Knowledge Keepers on land stewardship?

### ECONOMIC

- Have you explored mutually beneficial partnerships that contribute to ongoing economic sustainability?
- Does this experience diversify the type of experiences your business offers?
- Have you sought the support from industry partners to assist with marketing and other business support services?
- Does this experience contribute positively to the local economy?
- Is this experience economically viable for my business right now?

### CULTURAL

- Does this experience help to preserve and celebrate the traditional skills and cultural knowledge of my community?
- Is this experience suitable for youth, to help facilitate cultural knowledge transfer to younger generations?
- Does this experience utilize technology to bridge cultural gaps?
- Does this experience honour our Indigenous worldviews, ensure authenticity, and instill cultural pride?

## YOU'VE MADE IT!

Congratulations on creating the foundation of your experience and wrapping up the Mentoring phase of the Six Senses Program!

The next chapter in your journey leads you to the Piloting Stage of the Program. By this time, you have collected many guidelines, ideas, suggestions, and reflections and are now equipped to plan your delivery of an experience that is authentic to your story and brings value to both your visitors and your community.

CONNECT WITH YOUR MENTOR TO SCHEDULE A ONE-ON-ONE MEETING TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO DELIVER YOUR FIRST PILOT EXPERIENCE!



*ITA Six Senses Program developed by:*



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