

Interpretation in tourism destination for Eco tourism, Historical tourism and Cultural tourism

A guideline for developing interpretive planning in tourism destination

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Interpretation in tourism destination for Eco tourism, Historical tourism and Cultural tourism

(A guideline for developing interpretive planning in tourism destination)

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Introduction

Why is interpretation in tourist destinations so important? This handbook can support your ideas, and it is divided into 3 parts. First, the overview of interpretation in tourist destinations; the role and the importance; the principles of interpretation; the attributes that ensure effective interpretation; the principles of topic selection and theme development which is so important because it makes tourists realize and understand the value of the destination so that they love, value and preserve the destination. The second part consists of techniques to write and develop an interpretive plan, with descriptions of each topic in detail. The third part is nine examples of interpretive planning in tourism destination development across three aspects; ecotourism, historical tourism and cultural tourism. These plans are developed and provide a valuable management tool for site managers and the villagers who are seeking to achieve responsible destination management and development.

This handbook has been developed by the cooperative teamwork between tourism specialists from Department of Tourism and the consultancy team of Mahidol University International College as a guide to developing interpretive planning based on the local community's opinions. We sincerely thank all those who participated in the development of this handbook and for the contribution it will make to tourism destinations in Thailand.

Department of Tourism
September, 2015

Instruction for Use

This handbook was created to provide a valuable tool for site managers who want to present the unique natural and cultural heritage of their destination through interpretive elements. Identifying the unique, unusual, significant and spectacular values of a destination can extend the length of stay of tourists, provide a clear point of difference for your destination (through the provision of interesting stories, impressive interpretive presentation, the involvement of visitors in activities). This engagement with tourists will develop their participation, improve their visitor experience, and build their perception of the destination – and hopefully result in very favourable word of mouth recommendations to their friends.

This handbook is designed to be an aid to destination managers. It provides ideas on: how to use destination interpretation to build and satisfy tourist interests; how to develop and write interpretive plans; how to request government funds for your interpretive initiatives; and how to use interpretation as a tool in the development of a sustainable tourism development plan.

To obtain the best advantage from this handbook please read the primary instructions. Readers should take time to understand the key elements of the document related to interpretive planning for tourist destination development. Within the ten chapters, information is arranged in a logical order that relates to the development of a practical and useful interpretive plan as follows:

1. Definition and awareness of the values of a distinctive destination.
2. Destination assessment using SWOT analysis to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that could occur and affect the destination. It includes the outstanding marketing position which is communicated to the tourism market.

3. Specify the objectives for your destination and create clear methods to achieve them through the SMART model.
4. Outline and prioritize the topics and themes that you have identified for your destination so that your target market identifies your destination with a consistent group of values - and your destination builds a reputation around these attributes.
5. Identify the target groups who will be attracted to the values of your destination – matching destination values and target groups results in a better quality of tourist experience and a better reputation for your destination.
6. Develop a range of tourism activities that meets the needs of your target groups and matched the values of your destination – impressing visitors and generating greater participation, while building the reputation of your destination.
7. Improve the presentation of the destination by choosing the right interpretative techniques to support the activities selected for the destination.
8. Develop a marketing plan using 7Ps technique that integrates the interpretative themes for the tourism destinations with in the marketing plan.
9. Create a financial plan to manage the implementation of the interpretation plan - including the transparent management of funds.
10. Self-evaluation on an annual basis to measure the effectiveness, efficiency and achievements of the plan and its contribution to the tourist destination development.

By following each of the ten steps above you will have a comprehensive and integrated approach to developing a destination development and marketing plan that focuses on your destination's unique values. By integrating interpretation into the marketing plan you build on the strengths of your region. Each chapter provides valuable insights in ways to write interpretive plans that will bring out the best in your tourism destination.

Considering the 10 points above, is there any point that is new to you? Please read it completely and spread the knowledge within your networks. Do not keep it to yourself because the more you use knowledge, the more useful it becomes to you and others. If you have any problems in writing the plan, please look at the examples of the nine pilot tourist destinations which were selected to assist in the development of interpretive development plans.

Everyone wants the best possible result for their destination however this handbook can give only brief information and an introduction to the concepts. If you follow the steps outlined you will be much better placed to propose projects to funding and support agencies. I wish you good luck and hope that you achieve you're the ambitions you establish for you destination and community.

If you want to take a lead in developing your destination you should read this guide. You will be taking a key role in making positive change for Thailand tourism. You can do it! We will always support you!

Yours sincerely

Department of Tourism
and Mahidol University International College, Thailand

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Overview of interpretation

What is interpretation? Interpretation in the tourism context is the art of communication and presentation that stimulates the interest of tourists to make them understand the value and the importance of natural, historical and cultural assets. It plays an important role in value-adding to the tourism experience. It adds to visitor's enjoyment, amusement and pleasure. Importantly, through the presented story and information it helps them to gain an understanding and appreciation of the destination and hopefully builds good attitudes towards conservation and development of sustainable tourism.



Interpretation in tourism destination

Roles of Interpretation

1. To educate Interpretation helps tourists know and perceive the value and the importance of natural resources, history and culture of the destination. This can include concrete (tangible built structures), abstract local culture (stories, legends, religion) and elements such as music, cuisine, traditional garments which have been passed down the generations, and very importantly the friendliness and interactions with the local people. These authentic natural and cultural heritage elements, if well presented, can greatly impress visitors of the value of the destination. The aim is that they will leave very appreciative of the culture and amazed at the beauty of nature.



Local lifestyle

2. To create enjoyment Interpretation plays a big role in directly creating positive impressions and experiences for tourists. It increases the opportunity of visitors making return visits and recommending the destination to their friends through word of mouth, and importantly in this age of social media through ‘word of mouth’ – on Facebook, TripAdvisor reviews, Instagram etc. The interpretive activities should be fun and entertaining rather than only informative. Visitors are usually in a destination for a leisure experience so information should be presented in an engaging way. Interpretation should not only present facts related to events or persons in history but stimulate the tourists’ interest. For example it may make them feel like they were in the real event. Or it may provide comparisons with other places that they can relate too. It needs to assist tourists appreciate and enjoy the events presented in a supportive and interesting learning environment.

3. To conserve and promote sustainable development Interpretation is an important part of creating tourists’ awareness of the value of natural resources, history and culture of local communities. It also supports learning and creates a positive impression and attitude towards participation in conservation and sustainable tourism development. This attribute can be divided into 4 roles as follows:



Support learning the local culture

3.1 Visitor Management

Interpretation is the important tool for minimizing negative impacts from tourists' activities. Through the capacity of interpretive different themed activities and trails to disperse visitors, it can help to reduce the impacts of overcrowding and exceeding the carrying capacity of a particular part of the destination. Interpretive signs can also reinforce the messages of directional signage within locations, for example improper behavior which is harmful to wildlife; for instance, decreasing disturbing sound, limiting vehicle speed to prevent accidents, forbidding smoking, camp fires and feeding wildlife. Moreover, it can provide visitors with guidance on how to minimize impacts on local communities and things that they should do to achieve this. Interpretation provides opportunities to tourists to explore more new destinations.

3.2 Economic Development

Interpretative activities can add to the range of activities available to visitors thus encouraging them to extend their stay. The longer the average length of stay, the greater the benefits to the community through employment, products and services. Destination managers can hold special events and activities and encourage tourists to participate with and alongside local communities. Regular events and festivals encourage more visitors and can be used as a management tool to spread the occupancy of accommodation houses more evenly across the year. They also encourage visitors to extend their length of stay, spending money in the community leading to support and continuous development for the local economy.



3.3 Environmental Development and Cultural Heritage Conservation

Interpretation plays an important role in conserving the ecology of a destination. It helps decrease the negative effects from tourists' activities which are harmful to the environment such as soil compaction, shortcutting on trails, feeding wildlife etc. issues that can negatively influence natural conservation in long term. Interpretation also plays an important role in making tourists aware of the values of the environment in the area and the undivided bond between environment and community's culture. It helps increase knowledge, understanding and impression in the tourist sites they visit. Furthermore, communication can change the behavior of communities, tourists and other people involved so that they are more respectful of the sites. They may change their attitudes toward conservation and become active advocates for environmental conservation and cultural heritage protection, both in this area and in their own home regions.



The environmental and cultural heritage development



3.4 Community Development

Communication and interpretation help strengthen the community and the way it perceives its own cultural heritage assets. Local residents may be more protective and proud of their way of life and traditional culture. Interpretation also contributes to the understanding of the culture and further develops local cultural respect. This also leads to good attitudes and good relationships between local communities and tourists. If communities can see good coming from tourism then the community will be less pessimistic and their attitude to tourism will improve, leading to cooperation in conserving and developing sustainable tourism.

Principles of Interpretive Theme Development

1. Research your destination, looking for its unique attributes. Study details about the special people who have lived or visited the area, special locations and things. The information should be derived from authoritative sources, the experts in various fields who understand the values of the destination across its many dimensions.
2. What are the remarkable stories of the destination you are presenting? What is unique to this area – something that no-one also has. What is very unusual or spectacular? Are there seasonal events that occur that are amazing, migratory animals, flowering times, fruiting time, cultural festivals? How and why is it interesting and different from other destinations?
3. Finding out the reliable and factually correct answer from your research.
4. Specify the content which could be presented in story with interesting universal concepts such as ‘thoughts’ ‘relationships’ ‘needs’ ‘processes’ ‘systems’ ‘values’ ‘challenges’ ‘struggling’ ‘families’ ‘survival’ and ‘discovery’.



5. Choose the most important concepts, topics and stories that you want to communicate with the tourists. Some of these concepts may occur at different times of the year, some are available all year round. Seek to find enough very special or unique concepts that will support year round tourism interpretive activities.
6. Write the core content which relates to the values and the importance of the destination.






A Rice Field, Nang Lae, Chiang Rai



Chapter 1

Positioning your destination



Understand

positioning and branding
within 30 seconds.

Interpretive planning for a destination has a valuable role to play in the marketing of the destination. The destination manager must develop a full understanding of the natural and cultural values contained within the destination and then use that knowledge and the principles of marketing to develop a marketing plan for the destination, in the same way that marketing plans are developed for any other product. You must undertake a focused analysis on the destination values and decide market positioning and the direction of your marketing efforts so that it represents what is unique and different from other destinations. It also includes special features and branding which convey a special meaning or relevance to visitors. In this chapter, we will study more about analyzing and positioning destinations, creating a recognizable brand and influencing the perceptions of the destination so that visitors leave feeling their expectations were met, that they received what they were anticipating and that the experience was memorable for the right reasons. The items below are presented in order of importance.





Positioning Your Destination

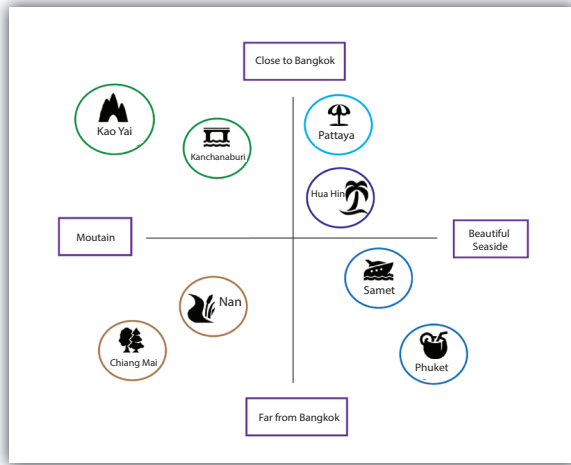
Positioning the destination is an idea supported by Phillip Kotler, the world class marketing expert who creates many theories we use today in marketing. It can be said that Market Positioning or Positioning means building the destination image based on distinctive attributes that tourists' recognize and perceive as valuable. How we build and present our destinations has a large bearing on how tourists think and talk about the destinations. We want to create perceptions of the destination that make it appealing to visitors, but that are accurate and can be delivered. To ensure the best response from tourists, perceptions of the destination and the reality of the destination should match. Therefore, positioning should be based on the analysis of the distinctive values of the destination; the perspectives and attitudes of tourists toward the destination; whether their attitudes are optimistic or pessimistic compared with other destinations with similar positioning.

Positioning is important to the marketing of a destination, you should consider:

1. Distinctive attributes of the destination
2. The perception of the destination by your target market(s)
3. Comparisons with the competitors which focus on similar interpretative activities (this is called competitor analysis)

When you have considered and decided on these three important things, you can develop a positioning map – a device to help examine the position of your destination compared to others and to identify its distinctive advantages. An example of a positioning map is presented below.





First, build x axis and y axis. Then, specify the features at the 4 ends of the axes. You can make as many positioning maps as you want by changing the applicable features. The more you compare, the more clearly you see the difference and the position of the destination. For example, from the figure above, Huahin is perceived by tourists to have beautiful beaches and to be near Bangkok. It is not perceived to be as beautiful as Samed which is further away from Bangkok. However, it is rated similarly to Pattaya which is a similar distance from Bangkok. Positioning maps help assess the destination and specify the direction of the interpretative planning. In some cases, the destination has a distinctive identity but these attributes are not clearly communicated and the target markets are not made aware of these attributes. Destination managers may have to consider using branding or Destination Brand Visibility techniques to communicate the brand values more effectively, and influence the common perception of the destination to the community and tourists.

Destination Branding

Destination Branding means creating name, sign and logo and specify color and special words to define the particular identity of the destination. The importance of branding is to communicate the destination's value and to create



recognition. If we think of a destination as a good, it is how we want the tourists to remember this good. For example, Coca-Cola’s branding clearly specifies for over a hundred years they use “black water, curved bottle, white and red logo” with attractive strapline or slogan of “open happiness”. This strapline has changed over the years but is mostly centred on concepts of fulfillment. We can see that branding not only creates a perception to the target group but also creates a notion of quality and identity for the brand. Coca-Cola generates its own personality; if compare to human, it is a kind and optimistic person who loves to share happiness and make people laugh. Branding makes people remember a product not just through visual perceptions but also through feelings and emotions, appealing to the target group about the identity of the goods.



Courtesy of: www.coca-cola.com

Destination branding has the same underlying principles as goods branding. Branding is concerned with three main elements which are; market position, target group and sign or brand by people in the area. For instance, Nanglae District in Chiang Rai Province is one of the tourism destinations selected to develop interpretative planning. The destination planning team participants have assessed the market position and they want to improve the ecotourism credentials of the area because of its beautiful mountains, rice terraces and Doi Dung (which is popular destination including well-known Nanglae pineapples which are different from other pineapples). Another prominent destination



feature of Nanglae District is Black House, which is the work of the distinctive national artist, Thawan Duchanee. He used warm colors to create his works.

While developing the interpretive plan with the participation of several local tourism stakeholders, they agreed to create a modern brand using applied art in warm colors like Thawan's. They chose the logo which consists of small fruit of Nanglae pineapples and mountains in green and brownish yellow which is the color of Nanglae pineapple. The example below is the illustration of the first concept drawing that they created together. The site managers of the destination will now hold meetings with the community to gauge their support for the logo and to receive feedback. The aim is to create a distinctive destination brand that is recognized and used consistently to communicate the destination values.



The example of “destination branding”

It can be inferred that interpretation in tourist destination planning involves self-assessment and situation analysis to determine the positioning of your destination and then branding the destination in a way that creates recognition for the area. Brand recognition is important, but so to is the need for brand perceptions to match with reality. The brand generates the destination's value, identifying its clear and distinctive characteristics. So in developing the positioning and direction of a brand it is important to analyze the destination and create realistic and deliverable positioning. It has to clearly communicate so that the communities and tourists alike perceive it in the same way. This leads to the clear direction of sustainable tourism development.






Bann-Huay-Nam-Kuen, Chiang Rai



Chapter 2

Know your competitors



Understand

destination benchmarking

within 30 seconds.

Benchmarking is a valuable tool to help us understand the ways to develop the potential of our destinations and to manage valuable destination resources effectively. Benchmarking is based on the selection of a ‘superior’ destination and then measuring the success of your own destination’s progress against the benchmark. The two destinations are can be compared across the areas such as reputation, standard or commercial performance (e.g. visitor numbers, occupancy, profitability). This approach helps us see the gap between our destination and the benchmark destination, highlighting what should be improved. Importantly, it will assist in identifying what must be done to improve performance and to achieve the goal. On the other hand, if we do not have an obvious benchmark with which to compare, and thorough analysis has not been undertaken, then our goal would be identified by using prediction techniques. This method could result in assessments that are anyway between completely correct or totally wrong. Therefore, benchmarking becomes the most tool to enhance competitiveness helping us to be more precise and clear in assessments and to achieve our goals.





Benchmarking Indicator

Destination benchmarking comes in a range of types; for example, we can learn from undertaking an analysis of a benchmarked destination as described above or from the destination with best practices and from well respected organizations who perform destination benchmarking internationally e.g. Green Globe 21 established by World Travel and Tourism Council. Green Globe 21 measures the destination performance, organizes training and seminars and provides certificates to destinations which succeed in meeting or exceeding benchmarks in sustainable tourism management and development. The components of the tourism management performance (www.greenglobe-int.org) are

1. waste minimization and recycling
2. management of conservation and energy efficiency
3. air quality control system
4. water management
5. polluted water management
6. greenhouse gas emissions
7. social and cultural management
8. economic development affecting society and culture
9. conservation ecology
10. land and resource management

Destination benchmarking can also be assessed from the perspective of the tourists' level of satisfaction, convenience of access to the destination, intentions to re-visit the destination, charms of the destination, quality of interpretation services at the tourist destination, tourism activities, safety, sanitation, tidiness, convenience and quality of overnight accommodation, quality and origin of souvenirs and hospitality and visitor experiences. These factors encourage local residents to be good hosts and to satisfy their guests.






Benchmarking Methods

We can perform destination benchmarking by considering a competitor destination which has distinct characteristics in terms of geographic landscape, richness of ecological systems, unique ways of life, culture, related history, including community-based tourism destinations. Benchmarking should consider the following elements:

1. Understand your own destination. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your destination? Also study the background information on environment, history, society, culture, science, technology and evolution to understand the past so that this information can inform the interpretive plan that is being developed. The information from the analysis of external factors which has an influence on the development planning, policy specification and the direction of the destination development are applied. This information contains the political policy trend, physical environmental changes, demographic, social and cultural changes, levels of competition in the destination, and technological advances. Importantly, these factors are inter-related; any of them cannot stand out alone. However, these factors have an effect on the destination in different areas or regions in different levels.
2. Look outside your own region and find external destinations which are successful and well-known and which have similar destination values and scale to your destination. They make ideal “model” benchmarks.
3. Gather information, study and analyze the operation, the processes and the methods that the destination uses to achieve their goals. Study the challenges you have faced including the solutions. Then, compare it with your own destination to understand the differences and the operational methods.
4. Improve and compensate for your weaknesses by identifying critical barriers (e.g. replacing poor road signage, improving poor road access, re-aligning steep eroding walking trails) and develop your strengths





(e.g. installing viewing desks, opening new trails, marketing iconic species). Where possible adopt methods or working standards that continually seek to address your weaknesses and build on your strengths. Encourage the involvement of other stakeholders like local residents, community leaders, tourism entrepreneurs, local administrative organizations and governmental representatives of the province to share their opinions. Get them involved in destination planning and development and keep them updated with progress for the change in same direction. So often you can receive support from other agencies if you involve them and gain their interest and support for your destination. This holistic approach, ‘a whole of government’, ‘whole of industry’, ‘whole of community’ approach is being increasingly adopted across the globe as a means of fast tracking tourism development.

Examples of Benchmarking

Baan Hauy Nam Kaeun, located in Vieng Papao District, Chiang Rai Province, is a community that has unique lifestyles together with a rich ecology and water resources. The committed community has been served as a learning center on sufficiency economy.

The community, in collaboration with Hauy Pong Royal Project Development Center and Highland Research and Development Institute, established the first tourism group under the name Baan Hauy Nam Kaeun Homestay. Initially, Hauy Pong Royal Project Development Center and Highland Research and Development Institute were the consultants in the activities supporting tourism and leading to the standard. In 2014, Baan Hauy Nam Kaeun Homestay was certified under the standards established for homestays from Department of Tourism. Baan Hauy Nam Kaeun Homestay plans to further develop the local tourism offerings and to achieve other certification standards. They are also very active in building community networks to maintain and grow the local sustainable tourism industry.





Baan Hauy Nam Kauen Homestay performed destination benchmarking against using the highly regarded community-based tourism management approach of the Mae Kampong Homestay in Chiang Mai. Through this benchmarking process the following observations were made:



Mae-Kum-Pong Homestay, Chiang Mai

Baan Hauy Nam Kaeun Homestay compared strongly with Mae Kampong Homestay in the following areas:

- 👤 The community members are strong and harmonious. The community leader has the ability to manage the community, control and check outsiders who come in the village and to forbid advertisements and commercial signage from private organizations.
- 👤 The community is strong and resilient, with harmonious relations and its own lifestyles. Young community members are active in volunteering and have a sense of ethics and civic responsibility in relation to natural resources and the revitalization of their traditional culture.



- ⑩ The community is rich in natural resources and the weather is cool all year round.
- ⑩ The primary income of the community is from organic agricultural produce; tea and coffee plantations, flower orchards and flower parterre. The community is clean, tidy and safe. It won a clean community award from Royal Project Foundation in 2013.
- ⑩ The tourism management is efficient and income management is fair and transparent.

Weaknesses of Baan Hauy Kaeun Homestay compared with Mae Kampong Homestay were:

- ⑩ Access to the village is quite inconvenient especially in rainy season because of unsealed dirt roads and limited cement roads.
- ⑩ The telecommunication network covers only some areas.
- ⑩ The area has limited road connection to other destinations.
- ⑩ There is limited English spoken by villagers, causing a language barrier with foreign tourists.
- ⑩ There is inadequate directional signage, nature trails, and videos presenting the overall attractions at the Baan Hauy Kaeun Tourist Information Center. Local souvenirs are very limited and the toilets in the village are not up to the standards expected by international visitors.

As is demonstrated by the brief example above, benchmarking is an excellent management tool to develop and improve the presentation and performance of a destination. Benchmarking against a superior destination provides you with a practical and concrete example of what you want to achieve for your own destination, and then a clearer view of what must be done to achieve that outcome. Once you understand the actual problems



and limitations within your destination you can set about developing a plan to overcome these limitations. However care must be taken to correctly identify your benchmarking example. If the benchmark is too high it will discourage your stakeholders, as the task will seem impossible. Select a benchmark that presents an achievable goal. As your destination develops and oversteps your benchmark destination, choose another benchmark that is superior. This approach keeps your destination aspiring to better things and enables it to continually improve and prosper.

Moreover, it is important to understand the context of the two destinations thoroughly. You should not imitate or follow the processes and operations of the benchmark destination without first having a thorough knowledge and understanding of the specific context of this destination and its similarity to your own destination. It is of little value to benchmark against a destination which is materially very different to your destination. Look for destination that have similar characteristics such as access, maturity and sophistication of the destination, types of tourism experiences offered, target markets and community setting.





Kuu-Ka-Sing, Roi-Et



Chapter 3

Why objectives are important?




Understand

objectives setting in the plan within 30 seconds.

After positioning and establishing the ultimate goal and ‘big picture’ for your destination, the destination needs to specify its specific objectives as part of the interpretative planning process for tourism. If there are no specific objectives developed, the establishment of an overall aim and goal will be largely pointless. Goals set out where you want to be but they don’t get you to the destination. Objectives provide the road map to the destination. They set out what is required to be done in order for your destination to achieve the improved position you desire. A very useful tool in designing and setting objectives is the SMART model developed by Peter Drucker. The SMART model stands for; Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time related objectives. Moreover, the setting of objectives needs to be undertaken by the holistic involvement of the stakeholders discussed earlier and with your target groups in mind. The design of stepwise and achievable objectives will help immensely in the delivery of high quality experiences and the protection of the natural and cultural heritage values – the primary objective of good interpretative tourism planning.





Why objectives setting as part of destination interpretative planning is important?

Good objective specification consists of the following:

1. **Specific** - you should be able to answer the following six questions;
 - 1) Who is the performer?
 - 2) What is to be undertaken?
 - 3) Where: specify the place
 - 4) When: specify time
 - 5) Which: specify needs and limitations
 - 6) Why: give reasons or benefits why we need to achieve the objective.
2. **Measurable** - means the objectives need to have specific parameters that can be quantified; for instance, specify the number of participants to be attracted to an event or activity, the number of tourists, the increased income ratio, target perception ratio, tourist satisfaction ratio etc. So, we know how to achieve the objective.
3. **Achievable** - the objective should be within the reach of the stakeholders to achieve. If the objective is too difficult and cannot be achieved without the application of resources that are highly unlikely to be available then it has no positive value and is in fact damaging to the stakeholders as they may lose hope. For example, you want to communicate the history of the destination through stories by using multimedia technology but there is a limitation in budget which precludes the purchase of the equipment. It cannot be achieved. However it may be able to be achieved through live performances of storytellers in the community – thus a modified objective can still result in the cultural history stories being communicated – but it is done in a different way – and perhaps in a much more effective way – offering guests face to face contact with local people, and providing employment to the storytellers.





4. **Realistic** - means balancing the need to achieve the objective with the ability to deliver it. For example, the community may wish to stage an annual special event to support the range of interpretative activities in the destination. However without staff or people in the area participating to organize and staff the event it will not be achievable. To stage such an event may first require the development of a volunteer guides program.
5. **Time** or specifying time. It makes the team aware of the importance of deadlines, the amount of time they will have to devote and the specific activities required of them, and key time milestones along the way to achieve the objective. For example, to develop the personal interpretive techniques of volunteer guides in time for the next tourism high season in six months will require a one weekly training session for two hours and one field excursion per month.

The SMART model can be applied to create good objectives in the interpretative plan and for that matter all other plans. Interpretative planning in tourist destinations should apply the SMART model. The table below illustrates topics and examples of objectives relevant to interpretative planning in tourism. It is a useful tool for those responsible for destination planning and management.

	Topics	Examples of objectives
1	Develop interpretive techniques	Develop techniques for effective personal interpretation for youth and older people in community - 1 year
2	Build new experiences / Create methods	Build new experiences for ecotourists by providing staff with special new learning activities - 6 months



	Topics	Examples of objectives
3	Build understanding	Build understanding and awareness of local culture for youth in the area - 1 year
4	Create perception / Stimulate trends	Create positive and accurate perceptions of the destination and stimulate community supportive of tourism - 1 year, then review and ongoing
5	Build participation / Coordinate the involvement of supporters	Encourage motivated supporters to be involved in tourism and improve the interpretation in the area – recruitment year 1, and ongoing
6	Conserve culture and environment	Involve youth in cultural awareness program by aiming at youths in high school - 3 years
7	Support employment opportunities / Give priority to local community	Support opportunities for the local community to become involved in interpretation development - 1 year
8	Gather information / Study possibility	Review success of the interpretation techniques within the development plan gather statistical and quantitative information of tourists’ satisfaction - every 6 months
9	Build harmony	Build harmony and gain the support of the local community for tourism and the opportunities it brings, thereby building an understanding of the need for destination interpretation - 3 years





Objectives and Target Group

In developing an interpretative plan as part of destination development you need to consider what is the objective for local people in the area in terms of their involvement and skill level including who is the target group you are seeking to attract through your interpretation program.

There are a broad range of skills and abilities in the community and you have to work within those constraints and opportunities. People have different knowledge, understanding and experience and the key to success is involving them to a level that they are comfortable with. For example cooking of traditional food is a valuable skill, and one which does not need English language skills. Cooking demonstrations can be done without the need for English as visitors can see the methods being adopted. Additionally it is easy to provide some basic English cards etc. to inform visitors of key methods and ingredients etc. as they watch the cooking demonstration.

Also the objectives of the local community who is involved in tourism and the objectives of the tourist are different – however the needs of both need to be considered in managing the destination. Therefore, objective specification needs to be concordant with the present situation and capability of the community and the resources. A way of expressing this in the objectives is to divide objectives into external and internal interest groups (or stakeholders).





The internal target group is the local community in the area; the persons responsible for the destination, tourism organizations, non-profit organizations, local wisdom or guru, youth in the community, schools and people in the area, including those who are not involved in tourism.



Local philosopher, Thai-Song-Dam, Phetburi



External target group means people and organizations outside of the destination. For example, tourists from other regions and abroad, the public sector outside the area, private organizations who support the destination interpretation development through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs to conserve environment and society. These CSR programs are an important consideration as they want to assist in building the destination so that it will attract jobs and prosperity that is based on sustainable activities such as tourism.



Leisure tourists





Tai-Lue farmer, Si-La-Phet, Nan



Chapter 4

Prioritize topics and themes



Understand

prioritize topics and themes for interpretation within 30 seconds.

Prioritizing of interpretation begins with searching for the important themes and stories that tourists would be interested and will remember fondly after their visit. Early in the interpretive planning process, you need to assess the interpretive values, that is the central themes and topics that will be developed for your destination. Theme refers to the concept which is the core to the destination, it represents what you want the tourists to know the destination for, and build their perceptions upon. Topics refers to a short description of the specific subject to be developed and then the points you want to present. The destination planners and managers should identify these key themes and topics and then stick with them year by year to build the ongoing perceptions of the destination. Many additional elements of the interpretive program can be added over time, but they should be consistent with and build upon the central themes that have already been determined. These themes and topics however should be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are still relevant and reflect the current state of the destination. It is also worth remembering that tourists are on holidays and they may only want to take on small bits of information and stories. They may not want to do everything on offer. However you can assist them to take home pleasant memories and reinforce the messages you provided to them through souvenirs, momentos such as music and crafts. This is the reason why interpretation of the values of a unique destination is important as tourists are more likely to remember unique customs and products and also take home with them a love and appreciation of the destination and its people.





Building the Topics and Themes

Topics and themes need to be specified to draw out the interesting aspects of the destination. The process of assessing which topics and themes to be developed is often assisted by brainstorming sessions involving a broad cross section of stakeholders who collectively have a detailed knowledge of the area. The theme has to be clear and overarching in nature because it represents the summation of the destination's most important stories. Audiences will follow the theme if it is appealing enough to make them want to seek out the experiences you offer.

The topics and theme and what you decide upon will also have a large influence on the media you use to build the experience for tourists. Remember tourists are on holidays and can't remember everything and every story. That is why it is important to just select out the key messages - this will keep the interpretation more effective.

The components of interpretation

Interpretation pieces are composed of the following key elements:

1. Topic - which is the core concept behind the presentation.
2. Theme that helps the reader understand what is being interpreted.
Scope of the contents.
3. Theme information, the key content of presentation (this may include illustrations or demonstrations).
4. Sub-themes and sub-topics.
5. The content of the story that describes the important details and provides some context.





Courtesy of: www.wildwalks.com

From the example above, the overall topic of this interpretive project is related to the importance of protecting river catchments. The key topic is on top in a bigger font which is “Lane Cove River Catchment”. “Native Fauna” is a sub-theme that is the animals of the catchment area. The statement on upper left side summarizes the overview of Lane Cove catchment area where variety of animals and plants live. This statement introduces the story about four animals with the examples chosen. Note that the sign does not try to describe all the animals of the area, rather it selects ones that represent a cross section of the species and ones that are likely to be seen by visitors.



9 techniques of how to write an interesting interpretative story

Story telling is the heart of interpretation. There are nine techniques to assist in the telling of interesting stories that will be appreciated and remembered by guests. The nine techniques are:

1. Personalize the communication by using words like “you” or “we”
2. Use natural and lively words like we (the community, the park) keep it light
3. Use familiar comparison words like: gibbon likes to hang in the trees – these trees are as tall as 4 level buildings. If you use unit of measurement, the reader may not see it clearly
4. Use Thai humor if possible, but use it carefully
5. Ask questions to allow the reader to think.
6. Make signs and other writing brief and easy to understand
7. Avoid using too many technical terms
8. Order messages and pictures
9. Always think about who are the readers and make it easy to understand. Do not try to communicate with only information and numbers. Think of the 9-12 year-old readers as the standard reading ability in interpretation



Interactive Story telling





From the table below, you can practise writing the contents of the interpretation. Consider your destination information and fill out the table to practise creating suitable contents by using the 9 techniques above.

Topic	Theme	Summary theme statement	Sub-theme	Story	Media
Lane Cove River Catchment	Native Fauna	Summary the overview of Lane Cove where variety of animals and plants live with rich ecology around you	Names of animals	Brief description of animals	Sign boards in the park
.....

Practice: Creating suitable theme and content for interpretation

The components of prioritizing contents in presentation are very important. It can be a difficult task to communicate a complex scientific concept in an easy-to-understand description, for example, information about long history, technical terms or ecological information. So, the interpretation has to do not only with prioritizing information but also using the correct techniques and media to appeal to the expected audience.





Tai-Yong lifestyle and Buffalo field, Chiang Rai



Chapter 5

Who is the target?



Understand

**determine target and behavior trend
within 30 seconds.**

After identifying the objectives of the plan, we should specify who exactly is the target audience. The target could be insiders or outsiders of the neighborhood and it could be a range of different age groups. We should specify the clear ratio because it has influence on content specification, media, techniques and activities which are presented the different target markets.



Target... Who is the target?

We should understand and analyze the target. Who are they? Where do they come from? Which region? Which countries? What language do they use? What is their cultural background? What age range do they belong to? How do they travel to the destination? How many of them are there? What do they want to do? What is their interest? What are their travel preferences? Such information has an influence on selecting contents, interpretive media and activities.



School Children

School children: Suitable activities for children include amusing recreations and role plays. Depending on the age of the school children involved, the message should not be too complicated. It should optimally contain demonstrations, experimentation, presentations and participation of local youth

from the area, in addition to including interesting multimedia.

College students: They want detailed information that will assist them to compose their reports or thesis. The suitable media are printed matter, website content and personal interview with destination managers.

Seminar group: They are interested in specific area of management. The suitable interpretive media are lecture, slides and multimedia.

Working age group: Like college students they are computer literate and information technology oriented. Tools like QR Codes can be very effective for distributing information to his audience which could be a suitable media for this group.



Seminar group





Family group: They like to travel by driving on holidays. They want their children to gain experiences from travelling and doing activities together. Family based activities can provide a fun learning and family experience.

Elderly group: They are generally healthy, have available income and as their children are most likely graduated they have time for travel - for leisure and relaxation. They are free to travel and interested in nature, culture, lifestyles and relaxing activities. They have the time to become more absorbed by information. They are generally open to learning new information and developing new skills.



Elderly group

How to specify the target?

In general, we can determine the market segment by relying on demographic information of the tourists. This information consists of parameters such population number, age, gender, education, nationality, income, occupation, hometown and religion. However, such information is not enough for understanding the behavior, interest and needs of the tourists. We need to understand values, interest, attitudes, expectations and behaviors of the targeted tourists. Such information can be applied in interpretive planning and assist in identifying communication strategies; for example, giving priority to details that meet the tourists' interest, use effective media and involving them in activities that will immerse them into the values of the destination.

Tourist behavior is a sensitive and complicated matter. The individual travel patterns is influenced by a wide range of factors, which affects their travel decisions. It can change with time and situation. Tourists may have various preference, behaviors, values, interests and attitudes which can change from one group to another group, from one destination to another destination. The decision in selecting a holiday destination is also changeable. Popular trends also influences travel choices. So, we should always study, follow up and analyze the behavioral changes of tourists.





Behavior trend and Interest of tourists

Amadeus, a world leading technology organization who provides travelling and tourism information, has surveyed the behavior of international tourists according with globalization by using demographic and economic factors, consumer information and technology development. They divide the travelers into 6 groups.

Type of Tourists	Behaviors and Interests
Simplicity Seekers	Depend on organizers or outsourcers to manage trips and other services for them.
Cultural Purists	Hold interests in multicultural community and traditional lifestyle. Looking forward to challenging adventure, unique experiences, along with exchanging their own values with the local.
Social Capital Seekers	Interested in taking pictures. Always capture new location or outstanding events to add into their collections. Information sharing is to be expected.
Reward Hunters	This group aims to relax after long working days. Careful consideration about physical and mental health. Organic foods are preferred. Have taste in time-consuming, sight-seeing trips. Inspirational and exceptional experiences are what they need.
Obligation Meeters	They travel for working purposes: meeting, symposium, business, a family obligation visit, participation in sports. Also, it could be health purposes.
Ethical Traveler	They are aware of the responsibility for the ecology, community, society, and culture. Never hesitate to contribute knowledge and be helpful to community.

Reference: Amadeus.com/tribe 2030



Travelers’s Behavior and Interests:

1. Travel alone, prefer individualism, freedom. Take part in designing a trip and selecting tourist attractions and travel activities.
2. Search for authentic experiences: interaction with the locals, exchanging knowledge and experiences with local communities.
3. Social media takes significant part in tripping. Wifi connection is appreciated. Taking photos and sharing them as they go.
4. Experienced travelers. They are prone to travel more often but the duration of trips decreases. High expectation of products and services.
5. Always search for new places and unique experiences. Accommodation has become part of visitor experiences, rather than simply a resting place.
6. Heightened awareness of ecology, society, and culture.



Tourist’s activity

Destinations should develop a travelers’ database recording their behavior and their interests in traveling. Not only that, frequently asked questions, their travel preferences and duration for each stop should be included. This data will help destination planners to assess behaviors and visitor flow and to use this information to modify product offerings and enhance visitor experiences. It is also important to evaluate their use of interpretive elements, their understanding of the story or theme presented and their interest in topics. This information can then be built into future planning and product development efforts.






Thai-Song-Dam, Phetburi



Chapter 6

Tourists' Experiences are needed



Understand

**the technique of how to create
co-creation tourism experiences
within 30 seconds.**

To reinforce the traveling experience, we can create ongoing interest and impression by continuously improving the quality of presentations and keeping the activities up-to-date. Adopting various media to present contents in new and different ways is another technique to make it more interesting. The content should have a riveting plot; for example, adding astonishing facts or controversial issues or generating questions that elicit traveler's participation. Should they want to take part in a presentation, they should be able to touch the objects shown in exhibition, tryout the retro attire and take pictures to capture the moment, or report news while recording for a television program. It is vital to connect each of the experiences and offer them fundamental information systematically in order to optimize shared-experience. Smartphones and Apps offer extraordinary opportunities to engage with visitors and to spread the word about to destination to their networks.



Enhance co-creation experiences with enjoyment

Effective interpretation must be entertaining, not repetitious or boring. The language should be easily understood, if not conversational. Interpreters are advised to communicate in a friendly and cheerful way and to have a sense of humor while on duty. Both speakers and listeners must be active in a two-way communication. What's more, travelers should be encouraged to participate in interpretive programs. This is the concept of involvement that has been a fundamental part of interpretation since it was first conceived.

We may attract travelers' interest with **the selective use of attractive images, light, sound, text font**. Usually people are attracted to dominant or new artifacts or a variety of interpretive activities. Mono dimensional presentation of objects only holds people's interest for a short duration, lowering the chance of success in interpretation.



Tourist picking a tea leaf at Bann-Huay-Nam-Kuen, Chiang Rai

Another way to draw visitors' attention is to **keep them involved in activities and shared experiences**. Generally speaking, people remember things with which they come in contact and active participation is much more memorable than just reading, listening, or looking. Adding a sense of humor is





advisable for memory works better in happy state. Additionally, the audience should take part in **finding the answers with a variety of interpretative media**. One more thing to be noted is that animation, moving pictures, is more memorable than still pictures. To engage in our culture, it is vital that they join in our activities: traditional Thai dance, handicraft demonstration, cultural exhibition. They should be stimulated to **seek answers and compare the results with vivid pictures in different sizes or different camera angles** – different perspectives. Alternatively, we could invent new tactics, such as, **imitation of places or objects**. In order to make them feel related to the experience, visitors should be able to touch and literally participate in the exhibition. Other examples of the tactics are wearing the retro attire or to report news in the actual studio. These examples shows how visitors could feel engaged with the experience.

Boost Experience with Personal Relationship

We should prepare information that relates to visitors' own experiences. Studies have shown that human relate with things that are similar to their background better than the unrelated ones; for example, **experiences, lifestyles, cultures, and languages**. The more travelers feel personally related towards anything, the more they will value it.



Exceptional Experiences for tourists

It is also possible to add some values, merits, proverbs to stories to introduce them our culture. As is: telling stories of “Toong Ka King” during a visit to the elder community at Wat Phra Keurt, Nan, explaining the name of the embroidery and its use.



Relating travelers' background to the actual event could come in handy.

This will trigger even more attention. You could start with questions, “When was the last time ...?”, “Have you noticed that ...?”, “How often have you ...?”. Topics that are usually related are career, family, success, welfare, merits, and beliefs. Avoid technical terms at all cost to reduce confusion.



Preserve the nature with local defender of Nang Lae, Chaing Rai

Boost Experience with Well-Organized Narration.

Stories could compliment the experiences for travelers. However, it needs to be clear, simple, comprehensible, and not setting listeners on edge.



Enhance the experience with a story

Theoretically, good stories include **title, prologue, background, details, continuity of content and appropriate language.** A story should consist of no more than four main ideas. In order to make a story memorable, an interpreter should always connect each part of



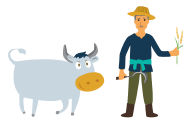


the story together to understand the whole picture. Like watching a film, it would be difficult to follow should the story come in fragments. In the context of television, if audience loses their interest, they are not hesitant to change the channel.





Farmer school, Si-La-Phet, Nan



Chapter 7

Which technique suits you best?



Understand

**characteristics of interpretative media
within 30 seconds.**

To effectively communicate with visitors on topics such as the importance of a destination, the type of interpretative media you use must be considered. The site manager must begin learning the distinct characteristics of each form of media and then choose wisely. You need the media to suit your objectives along with raising visitors' satisfaction and experience. Planning to use the selected media systematically is not to be neglected.



Type of interpretative media

There are two types of interpretation that are widely used:

1. **Personal interpretation** - the interpreter communicates directly with visitors. Those can be guides or lecturers giving information and answers to visitors' in line with a pre-prepared strategy and theme. The presentation needs to be well-rounded and skillfully communicated. The interpreter should seek to elicit a positive response or participation from visitors, creating a friendly vibe among them. The person in charge needs to not only give information but to guide, demonstrate and bring the story to life – perhaps through role play or other theatrical techniques.

Personal interpreter has many **benefits**. It is a resource that directly interacts with visitors. With such an encounter, visitors can see and hear for themselves. Also, it is a two-way communication as visitors can respond and interact. Personal interpreter has a strong influence and is very persuasive if carried out well. It can create excitement, engagement and develop a very positive overall mood within the visiting group. Moreover, personal interpreter provides the ability to instantly adapt to the actual situation making this kind of interpretation superior to non-personal interpretation.



Youth guide in Nan



It also comes with **downsides**. Sometimes personal interpreter cannot access all the audience efficiently. In addition, the performance chiefly relies on interpreter's knowledge and skill. Referencing all the information will be a difficult task. Personal interpretation relies on a larger pool of interpreters and the abilities of those interpreters will vary. Importantly it is vital to mix the interpreters around between venues as it is very easy for a guide to become stale and bored with presenting the same information day after day. This boredom will show through very quickly to visitors.

2. **Non-personal interpretation** consists of

1) **Publications:** flyer, postcard, manual, booklet, map – both online and in hard copy format.

2) **Directional signs:** informative media describing aspects such as topography, history, culture etc. The size, color, durability of the material must be well thought out. For example is the sign designed for someone walking by or driving by? it is going to be subjected to vandalism? It is vital to use universal pictograms to depict common things such as toilets, camping areas, directional arrows etc. to prevent misunderstanding.



The example of sign board that shows time instead of distance in New Zealand





3) **Exhibitions:** it is an effective media that can offer many travelers information at one time. Though, please note that the information and duration must be brisk or else the attention from travelers will be lost. The decoration of the exhibition could compliment to whole performance.



Exhibition in tourist information center, Khao Yai National Park

4) **Audio-visual equipment:** it can create virtual experiences, along with rousing attention. It can be view by a large audience at the same time. Also, it has potential to pass on considerable amount of information with ease. Listeners have freedom to skip or rewind the content as they wish, according to their interest.

5) **Multimedia:** it mixes many types of media together to optimize its effectiveness in communication. In present, computers are employed to supervise and deliver presentations, whether in forms of text, images, animation, sound, or clip video.





6) **QR Code:** it is two dimensional barcode compiling a massive amount of data in a short amount of time. It requires only electronic device and QR Code. Travelers automatically access information where QR Code is found: announcement board, tourist attraction. This type of media prevails globally, however it does rely on having reliable access to the internet.



Courtesy of: www.audiotrails.co.uk/evolution-qr-code



Informative sign of tourist attractions

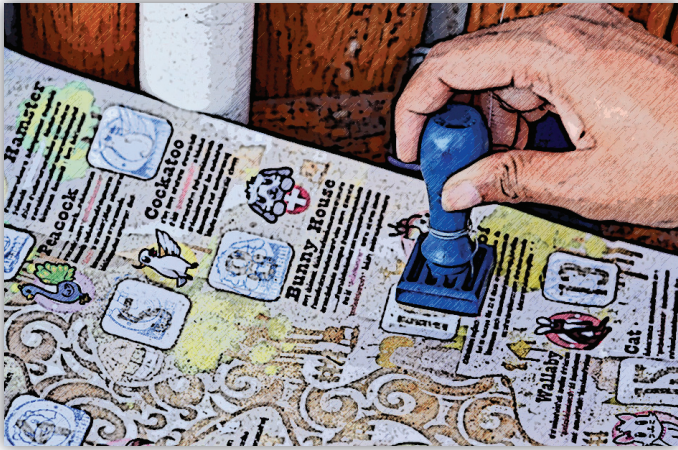
7) **Social media:** the online community has gained a huge following in a short time. It is known for its instant accessibility and up-to-date information. It involves a low cost in publication and yet can reach a very large audience, across a large area. What's more, social media attracts almost all kind of travelers with the ease of access to various kinds of media. Social media also comes with the advantage of eliminating printed material.



A Natural-blended photo spot in New Zealand



8) **Self-guiding trail:** this technique can be stationed in remote destinations, such as, woodland, nature education center, national park. The upside is the limitless number of travelers that can read the sign and move on. Also, it helps teachers and guides who are taking groups on activities. Travelers have the freedom to venture alone and immerse themselves in nature's grace.



Self-learning route

9) **Tourist information center:** this technique provides information about the destination. It is often situated at the entry to the place or at a very popular destination within the place. Various types of media are available: including, displays, models, audio-visual, interactive games and multi-media installations. Tourist information center can also provide opportunities for the sale of crafts, books and food and beverage.



10) **Special events and activities:** this technique are generally held to recognise special occasions. It could be an exhibition, a fair, competition, or anniversary. There are great opportunities to engage with visitors at such events.



Welcoming performance, Kuu-Ka-Sing, Roi-Et

How to choose type of interpretation to communicate?

There is no fixed instruction of how to choose type of interpretation. However, many crucial factors need to be considered:

1. Tourists' cultural background and their motivation for travelling
2. Number of tourists in a group
3. The terrain of the destination and its size
4. Theme and objective of the interpretative programs
5. Strengths and weaknesses of the selected media to communicate
6. Budget
7. Workforce and their expertise in producing interpretative media and time availability






The one and only “Queen Crab”, Kanchanaburi



Chapter 8

7Ps Interpretative tourism marketing
in sustainability



Understand

the sustainable interpretative tourism marketing within 30 seconds.

After evaluating the dominant trait of a destination and marketing position, 7Ps are to be employed in strategic planning and action plans to improve visitor satisfaction in interpretation. 7Ps are:

1. Product (destination and merchandise in the area)
2. Price (price setting to meet the customer's need)
3. Place (accessibility and distribution channel of destination)
4. Promotion (marketing communication/interpretation for destination's values)
5. People (tourism stakeholder)
6. Participation (involvement from all stakeholders)
7. Process (implementation process)



View it through experts of marketing and interpretation

The key to sustainable interpretative marketing is to think and act like a marketing expert. We must understand the situation, factors, and risks. Additionally, we must understand tourists' interest and relate them to the actual experiences. A total understanding of strategy is needed. Without an eco-friendly mind, travelers may not care to preserve the place they visit. Thus, it is our duty to raise tourists' awareness of responsibility.

Self-evaluation and sustainable interpretative marketing strategy (7Ps)

With the knowledge mentioned previously, we can now try to answer the following checklists to evaluate our understanding.

Table of self-evaluation for 7Ps strategy

7Ps and explanation	Questions	Answer	
		Yes	No
1. Product (Development of the tourism product, work layout, facilities, extra services, warranty)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do we have the interpretative planning for tourism ?2. Are we superior to other destination?3. Are we pleased at tourists' satisfaction level?4. Where and how do tourists receive information?5. Are we aware of what tourists should know after they leave?6. Can we assist them in process of learning?		





7Ps and explanation	Questions	Answer	
		Yes	No
<p>2. Price (Compare the price with its worth and quality, budget for interpretation, fluctuation of demand and supply)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do we have budget to screen tourists? 2. Is our product good value for money? 3. Is there a personnel improvement budget? 4. Are we aware of fluctuations of demand and supply that affect our pricing? 5. Do we have backup plan if we attract too many tourists, perhaps using price to control demand? 		
<p>3. Place (Accessibility, purchasing approaches)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is our destination accessible? 2. Are there methods to purchase our product via website, tourist assistance center, or travel firms? 3. Do we pay attention to our sales? 4. Do we contemplate which method could best offer information to tourists before making a purchase? 		
<p>4. Promotion (Enhancing interpretation performance)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fixed target of clients? 2. Specific objective in interpretation? Either constructive, informative, or creating shared experience. 3. Is the communicative media appropriate in the local context? 4. Plan for presentation in terms of topics, main ideas, and type of media? 5. Assessment by objectives to communicate? 		



7Ps and explanation	Questions	Answer	
		Yes	No
<p>5. People (Tourism stakeholder: tourists, responsible staff in the area, locals, government officers, NGOs, guide community)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can we identify responsible person for a specific task in improving tourism? 2. Do we understand the need of our customers? Can we analyze the pros and cons of our target? 3. Do we understand the advantages of each communicating media and its outcome? 4. Could we identify the objectives for interpretation in accordance to target group? 5. Do we have self-reliance policy or cooperation between departments? 6. Do staff have the support of volunteers? 		
<p>6. Participation (Involvement from all tourism stakeholders)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do other officers take part in improving tourism? 2. Work contributions? 3. Do we vote for changes? 4. Do we have policy of enhancing staffs' potential? 5. Is everyone on the same page in the process of tourism improvement? 		
<p>7. Process (Action plan)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does interpretation process go as planned? 2. Does action plan concern with the balance of economic, society, environment to be sustainable? 3. Is each step of process coherent? Specified objectives? Good timing? Assessment for further improvement? 		





This checklist should prepare you for the effective tactic of becoming a sustainable interpretation tourism destination. If your answer was “yes” to most of the preceding answers then you are on your way to success. If not, this will be a good start to prepare your organization for improvement using 7Ps strategy.





Manorom, Chainat



Chapter 9

Responsible financial team



Understand

finance and planner
within 30 seconds.

“Transparency” should be at the core of financial management in the business or enterprise. It is the responsibility of professional staff to achieve this goal, that’s for sure. By being transparent about the organization’s financial situation to all employees and other stakeholder, it will increase their sense of involvement and satisfaction. What’s more, employees and involved people may become a greater asset in helping to improve the organization by coming up with innovative new approaches for the organization. In this chapter we will explain how appointing responsible officers, undertaking good financial planning, and maintaining a transparency policy will enhance effectiveness of the enterprise.



Money. Huge decision. Think twice.

After some talks with nine pilot destinations in developing interpretative planning projects, only three projects have clear directions in relation to financial planning. Achieving good financial management can be achieved if the process is broken down into the steps:

1. Categorize staff by their expertise: Homestay division, Restaurant division, Building division, Tour division
2. Form a committee responsible for each division
3. Assign monthly treasurer
4. Hold a meeting and enumerate income-outcome
5. Divide budget into 3 sections: HR improvement, Destination improvement, Savings
6. Invest profits into the cooperative for sustainability
7. Search for sponsors to support creative activities around destination

It is important to always survey the local satisfaction for the methods you have adopted so as to improve its efficiency. Transparency is the key. Should any organization have a single person responsible for the financial section, others tend to feel distrustful and disheartened, and may lose momentum to work in the destination.



Process of participation in financial management



Tips for financial stability (adapted from Bank of Thailand)

An appropriate tourism management requires annual financial management plan. It is often easier if the government runs an organization rather than entrepreneurs in terms of survivability, particularly as tourism becomes the main source of income for an area. The result from the pilot project's fieldwork reveals that tourism profit is only the extra income. Many areas have strong stand point that the main source of income should come from agricultural profit. There are pros and cons to that idea. Though, this might affect the strategy of interpretative planning.



Extra income from tourism activity

Many do not see the importance of the strategy of interpretative planning to tourism development. But if this tactic, less tourists may arrive and those that do arrive may leave disappointed. That is a negative outcome no matter which way you look at it and it provides no long-term income based on tourism – the largest industry in the world. Bank of Thailand has recommendations for financial stability which can apply to tourism development as follows:



1. Responsible person (Government agency, NGO, or community itself) are to be vigilant of profit fluctuation. You need an amount of savings in case of emergency that could at least cover 6-month expenses. Other ways are investing some of the savings or holding money for a new marketing campaign for example. If you consider investing or loaning money, you must study their business history, the nature of their business and the risks involved based on conservative assumptions, not the most optimistic ones. The sum of principal and debt interest must not exceed $\frac{1}{3}$ of monthly income.
2. A financial account is required. It shows the flow of money and lets a marketing expert plan for their future strategy. It also keeps track of tourist's information per capita; even come up with a plan for low season tourism marketing strategy for continuous income.
3. Set fixed goal and when to achieve it by. Carefully prioritize the importance of each step. At an early stage, you may begin with low-cost media or even cooperation with the locals. Requesting help from locals to reduce expenses.



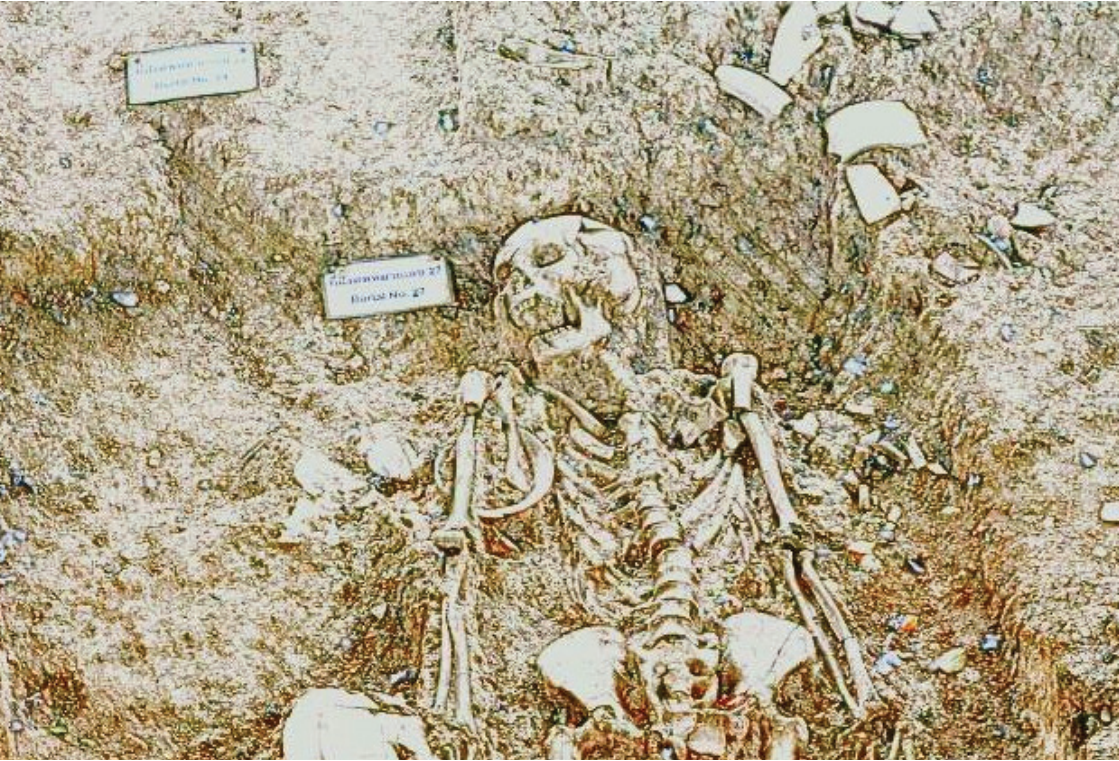
Objective planning





4. Strictly follow the plan with discipline and dedication.
5. Inspect and adapt to changing situations. At least every 6 months, attempt to re-assess the financial condition. With this approach a more stable tourism improvement is likely.
6. Assigning a treasurer to constantly report status of money flow. He or she must form a security policy to ensure the transparency of their duty.






Ban Pong Manao Archaeological Site, Lopburi



Chapter 10

Evaluate your own achievement;
ready for the next steps?



Understand

indicators for the evaluation of
interpretation
within 30 seconds.

Evaluation and follow-up must be done regularly. Though time-consuming, it will yield promising results. This step is to measure tourists' satisfaction with interpretive activities, evaluate, and improve the effectiveness of interpretive programs. Furthermore, we can assess employee performance in order to determine future policies on capacity building.





Evaluation an Interpretative Plan for Tourism

5 categories with description and indices are as followed.

1. **Destination's Potential** (weight 15 points)

Topic	Index
1. Value, identity of destination	Geographic terrain, Natural abundance, Ways of life, and Local tradition
2. Accessibility to destination	Connection to public transportation, Diffusion on travel information
3. Tourist facilities	Visitor Information Center, Facility, Accommodation, Parking, Toilet, Restaurant, Souvenir shop
4. Activities	Variation and Distinction of activities provided
5. Opportunities and threats analysis	Site manager's awareness of opportunities and threats on tourism planning and development



2. **Management Potential** (weight 15 points)

Topic	Index
1. Responsible organization	Clear responsibility, Management experiences, Determination, and Dedication
2. Employees	Number of employees per unit and their cooperation
3. Revenue and expenditure management	Self-reliance. A system monitoring revenue and expenditure. Reassuring financial plan
4. Network and community relationship	Number of network. Cooperative activities with community and other organizations
5. Action plan and evaluation	Feasibility and suitability of time. Implementation and evaluation afterwards

3. **Content Latency** (weight 30 points)

Topic	Index
1. The entire presentation	Attractive content. Congruence. Continuity Accordance with objectives and target audience
2. Theme	Identified theme
3. Organized message	Content is easy to follow, comprehensive, insightful. Cut to the chase



4. **Target** (weight 20 points)

Topic	Index
1. Tourist demographics	Type of tourists, Language, Country of origin, Age range, Educational level
2. Travel characteristics	Trip details; Starting point. Group tour or independent travelers, Family travelers
3. Tourist behavior and interest	Analysis of travel motivation. Preferred activities in destination
4. Visit duration	Time spent on destination

5. **Art of Presentation** (weight 20 points)

Topic	Index
1. Media choice	Appropriateness of media choice, determined by site location, target, content, budget, quality and maintenance of interpretative media
2. Interpretative technique	Creativity and Initiation. Rhetorical question to stimulate attention. Arts of speaking. Clothing. Displaying artifacts. Miniature models. Tourist's participation in interpretative activities



Score Table and Summary of Evaluation for Interpretation

Evaluation	Result
Destination's Potential (15 points)	
1. Value, Identity of Destination (3 points)	
2. Accessibility to Destination (3 points)	
3. Tourist facilities (3 points)	
4. Activities (3 points)	
5. Opportunities and Threats Analysis (3 points)	
Management Potential (15 points)	
1. Responsible Organization (3 points)	
2. Employees (3 points)	
3. Revenue and Expenditure Management (3 points)	
4. Network and Community Relationship (3 points)	
5. Action Plan and Evaluation (3 points)	
Content Latency (30 points)	
1. The Entire Presentation (10 points)	
2. Theme (10 points)	
3. Organized-message (10 points)	



Evaluation	Result
Target (20 points)	
1. Tourist Demographics (5 points)	
2. Travel Characteristics (5 points)	
3. Tourist Behavior and Interest (5 points)	
4. Visit Duration (5 points)	
Art of Presentation (20 points)	
1. Media Choice (10 points)	
2. Interpretative Technique (10 points)	
Summary

Scoring criteria

Score	Summary of Interpretative Plan
90-100 points	Interpretative Plan is Outstanding
70-89 points	Interpretative Plan is Very Good
50-69 points	Interpretative Plan is Good
30-49 points	Interpretative Plan is Poor
20-29 points	Interpretative Plan Needs Improvement





This table shows how interpretation potential depends on three main categories: Content, Target, and Art of Presentation, adding up to 70 points. There are many factors that could affect the result of interpretation, so feel free to change the indices and their weight where appropriate due to objectives of interpretative plan.



Evaluation in interpretation

Interpretative programs must be evaluated regularly, or at least once a year. It could be done by staff, tourists, or personnel from other organizations either in form of questionnaires, survey, focus group, individual interview. A suggestion box is another good way to obtain feedback. We must pay close attention to tourist behavior so to determine their interests as well as their feedback on our own performances. Activities that yield unsatisfactory results should be improved. The quality and accessibility of media must be persistent. After evaluation and amendments, we must do the follow-up to further improve our tourism.



Example of 9 Pilot Destinations for Developing Interpretative Planning in Tourism Destination



Kuu-Ka-Sing, Roi-Et



MOO-YA : Ancient pipe
Thai Yong Culture,
Chiang Rai



Thaiphusa sirikit
(Queen Crab)
Kanchanaburi



Personal Interpreter
Manorom, Chainat



Baan Lang Tao,
Thai-Song-Dam, Petchaburi



A unique skeleton with
bronze bowl
Ban Pong Manao, Lopburi



Farmer's lifestyle
Farmer school,
Si-La-Phet, Nan



Mieng tea leaf with hill tribe's
lifestyle Baan-Huay-Nam-Kuen,
Chiang Rai



Local forest protector
Nang Lae, Chiang Rai

The unique symbol for interpretation in tourism destination





Cultural Aspect: Thai Culture, Yong Culture, Chiang Rai Province

The Interpretative Planning “Thai Culture, Yong Cultural tourism development”

Background and Significance

San Thang Luang village, Chan Chawa Tai sub-district, Mae Chan district, Chiang Rai province is an interesting historical village showing the strong and harmonious identity of Yong ethnic people; unique language, costume and natural tourist attractions. Therefore, the interpretation is very important for tourism. We aim to develop both inside and outside the village to support the tourism economy (also known as the visitor economy) and to encourage the local to protect and conserve their hometown which the important origin of Yong ethnic people.

Plan title	Tai Yong cultural tourism, San Thang Luang village, Chan Chawa Tai sub-district, Mae Chan district, Chiang Rai province
Objective	To be a model of interpretation in Thailand’s tourism destination
Positioning for interpretation	<p>Logo “Yong People Association”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yong People (men, women) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men dress in Yong outfits with a dull white headdress, white shirt, round neck and long sleeves blue coat, and blue fisherman pants. Women dress in Yong outfits with a dull white headdress, traditional blue shirt and sarong (dull white on top, stripe at the middle, green at the lower) 2. Buffalo cattle 3. Rice fields and Yong lifestyles as the background




Destination Analysis	Strength	Weakness
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yong Association for the future 2. Strong and obvious lifestyle focusing on agriculture 3. Obey the leader and be harmonious 4. Their own language 5. Good at managing the rice fields 6. Humans and buffalos lifestyles 7. Yong people's beliefs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-learning is not strong 2. Young generations don't give much importance 3. They see things differently 4. Believe too readily without consideration 5. Some cultures are lost like handicraft fabric and Tai Yong house 6. Buffalos and ways of farming 7. Written language and letters are lost
Prioritizing topics and themes	Present the Yong language, Khantok dinner, agricultural lifestyle, humans and buffalos lifestyle respectively	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To publicize the tourism product 2. To acknowledge and conserve the identity of new generation of Yong people 3. To look for and publicize Yong's success by using media 4. To communicate the pride to Yong people 5. To support main income 	
Target	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic group/Thai 2. Local people in the area 3. Yong people in other area 	
Duration	Each plan has different duration depend on budget and workforce, estimate 1 year plan.	





<p>Budget and financial management plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledge, train and subsidize the association in order that they can take care of themselves. - Specify the responsible man for tourism to distribute works from the leading lady and school. - There is restriction in human resource. They may distribute the responsibility. <p>There is Yong people in Chan Chawa Association with committee in every department according to the management structure under the control of Yong People in Chan Chawa Association as followings.</p> <p>Operation committee</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marketing department plan, control and specify the tour packages along with the promotion. 2. Reservation department reserves the accommodation/ hotels, restaurant and tourist attractions for the customers. 3. Accounting and financial department controls accounting system/ income-expense/ working capital management system. 4. Reception department welcomes the customers and provide them tour information.
<p>Projects and Activities</p>	<p>Personal Interpretation technique</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young guides (village’s guides) sponsored by Chan Chawa Municipal <p>Non-personal interpretation technique</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provincial highway guide posts to guide the way from Chiang Rai to Mae Chan district and the entrance of San Thang Luang village. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rectangle guide signs with angle chamfer and edge lines 2. White background, edge line, logo (Thai culture, Yong culture), black numbers and letters (Thai culture, Yong culture: Yong people in Chan Chawa)





**Projects and
Activities**

3. The sign size depends on the content according to the standard of Department of Highways; second type, 240 (at least) x 70 cm. letters size, 20 cm. high for Thai letters, 10 cm. for English letters, 20 cm. high for E group number and arrows pointing 5 spots (posts)

Destination guide signs

1. To guide the tourists to the destinations
2. Installed at crossroads in the destinations
3. Rectangle signs with 12x 12 cm. arrow and 4 cm. thick. The logo picture has 18x18 cm. size with Thai content; 7 cm. high. For English, use capital letter as the leading letter with 4 cm. high.

Destination's Name signs

1. To show the location of the destination.
2. Installed in the destination area.
3. Rectangle sign with the 18x18 cm. logo of the destination. The Thai name of destination is in 7 cm. high letters. The English name uses capital letter as a leading letter with 4 cm. high.
4. Blue background with white letters and logo.
5. Wooden sign carved in low relief.
6. 2x4 inches hard wood pillars in black installed in the hole with 20x30 cm. size and 50 cm. depth. Casting concrete 10 cm. high from the bottom of the hole. 255 cm. high from the ground to the top edge of the sign.

Destination information signs

1. To show the information and details of the destination.
2. Installed in the destination.



Projects and Activities

3. Rectangle sign with Thai name of the destination in 5 cm. high letters. For English, use capital letter as leading letter in 3 cm. high. For detail contents, use Thai and English letters in 2.5 cm. high. The sign has 80 cm. width and 150 cm. length.
4. Blue background and white letters and logo.
5. Wooden sign and oil paint letters.
6. 2x4 inches hard wood signs installed in the 20x30 cm. hole with 50 cm. depth. Casting concrete 10 cm. high from the bottom of the hole. 175 cm. high from the ground to the top of the post.

Service function signs (Village map and tourist information map)

1. To provide convenience to tourists.
2. Installed in the destination.
3. Rectangle sign with 10x10 cm. arrows to guide the directions. 15x15 cm. logo with contents describing the services; Thai letters in 5 cm high, English letters in 3 cm. high. The post has 25 cm. width and 105 cm. length.
4. Deep gray sign background, white arrows, white logo background, gray logo, white letters.
5. Wooden sign with oil paint letters.
6. 2x4 inches hard wood pole in black installed in 20x30 cm. hole with 50 cm. depth. Casting concrete 10 cm. from the bottom of the hole. 200 cm. high from the ground to the top of the sign.
 - Making “Thai culture, Yong culture” documentary.
 - Operating website to publicize Thai culture, Yong culture documentary.
 - Advertise in local radio.



Success Indicator

Making people aware of the importance of Yong people lifestyle and buffalo and Wiang Nong Lom wetlands.

- The association gives importance to the destinations, having clear principles of destination development and management.
- Local organizations develop and look after the destinations together.
- Having specific tourism committee.
- Specify methods and direction of development and goods.

Note: Each budget should specify the amount of money of the projects/activities.



Thai Yong costume



MOO-YA : Ancient pipe





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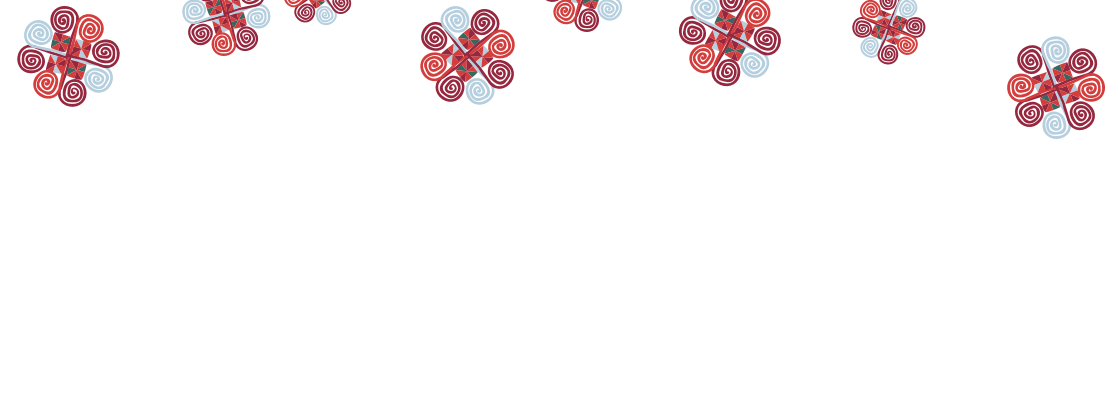
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