

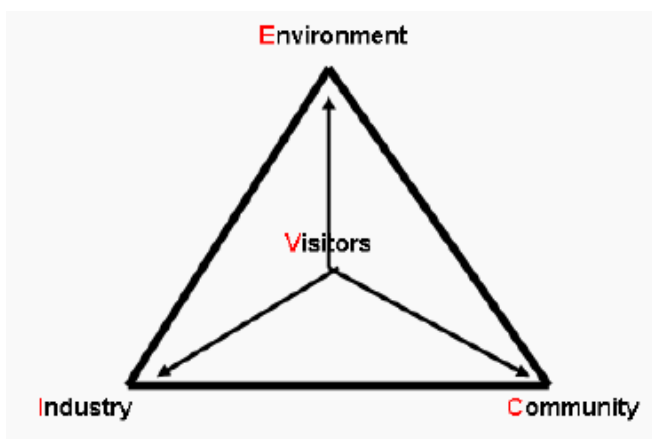
What Makes a Successful and Sustainable Small Tourism Destination?

It isn't just about the visitors or the attractions or the accommodation! International research and a comparison of Akaroa and Hanmer Springs have highlighted the requirements for successful small sustainable tourism destinations. [Read More](#)

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It isn't just about the visitors or the attractions or the accommodation! Research undertaken by Inspiring New Zealand (INZ) a group of tourism, interpretation and customer experience consultants, has shown that there are many other factors that need to be in place to ensure the long term sustainability of a community that is focused on the tourism industry for a major component of its economy.

Using international research as well as locally sourced information, INZ has undertaken an extensive assessment of two well known Canterbury tourism destinations – Akaroa and Hanmer Springs as examples of small tourism destinations. Using the VICE model INZ has researched all aspects of a vibrant and sustainable community to determine the current performance for the two communities, but more importantly how they are likely to perform in the future.



Welcome, involve and satisfy **VISITORS**
Achieve a profitable and prosperous **INDUSTRY**
Engage and benefit host **COMMUNITIES**
Protect and enhance the local **ENVIRONMENT**

Key findings:

- Successful small tourism destinations tend to be located around a major natural or built attraction that is the core drawcard for new and repeat visitors. If not a major attraction, destinations need a product focus (antique or book shops, arts and crafts, food and beverage etc) to encourage specific markets and repeat visits.
- Locations with high levels of seasonality (periods of high and low visitation) discourage tourism investment and local services for visitors and the resident community, while also discouraging new permanent residents. This combination leads to less profitable businesses and closure of tourism services during the low season.
- Tourism is a service industry that requires an available workforce to deliver the services. Communities that have a high average age because of their attractiveness to retirees will find it more difficult to attract people to service existing or new businesses. Communities that focus on tourism but are relatively isolated from larger populations are also less able to attract the quality of workforce required.

- Just like any other business, the tourism industry needs to adopt a continuous improvement policy to ensure that there are new things ‘to see and do’ if they are to attract new and repeat visitors. Failure to do this because a location is not seen as a viable development investment or there is lack of development land will reduce the growth and economic potential for a location.
- With tourism being a low wage employment opportunity for many, the affordability of a location for the tourism workforce is essential. High property values and rates combined with limited rental housing are negative factors for a tourism workforce.
- Locations that have the essential local services communities require are also likely to have the services that visitor’s need (shops, banks, petrol stations, transport etc).
- A sustainable community will have a range of social and sporting activities that can also be taken up by visitors (golf, bowling, tennis etc).
- Tourism businesses need to integrate with other businesses to have a single approach to attracting and growing visitors.
- Obtaining sufficient funding for tourism marketing and research is a key requirement in growing the tourism business. Targeted tourism rates for example enable businesses to invest in marketing and research that individual businesses could not afford.
- Developing and implementing a tourism strategy is a key requirement to ensure communities have a common objective.

How should a community determine whether it has or could have the essential factors that will ensure a long term sustainable tourism destination?

The research has indicated that every community is different and the solutions will also be different. The findings have enabled INZ to develop a framework based on the VICE model that will enable an assessment of a location’s current situation – identify gaps, future risks and impediments and prepare a Tourism Opportunity Plan to identify and evaluate the viability of specific projects that have the potential to deliver long term tourism sustainability for communities.

Contact Ray Sleeman to find out more about **What Makes a Successful and Sustainable Small Tourism Destination** and how we can help you determine the future for your community.

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