

THE OPPORTUNITY GUY'S 10 TIPS FOR GOING EXPERIENTIAL

By Joe Veneto, The Opportunity Guy

Your consumers are healthier, wealthier, better educated and better traveled than previous generations. When they travel, these experience junkies do not want a vanilla vacation but rather desire to find unique and unforgettable experiences. A great experience is one that turns your customers or travelers into your unpaid sales people. This is accomplished by word of mouth marketing, through consumer buzz and commercials that are created and replayed by your customers as a result of a UFE, UnForgettable experience. Word of mouth is your secret marketing weapon and one of the most powerful motivators for buyers, especially in travel. The following are ten tips for identifying UFEs, UnForgettable experiential products and services when you travel.

1. Look for experiences with sense appeal, taste, touch, sight, smell and sound. Sensory experiences, especially those involving multiple senses, such as taste and smell, or sight and sound are the most powerful. Food and music offer great UFE examples of experiences with sense appeal.
2. Ask yourself, can I learn something, gain a skill, a new understanding or insight and will it be fun?
3. Seek experiences that give you special access to go behind the scenes where only the chosen few can go!
4. Choose experiences that are unique to a venue or destination and help you tap into the local flavor. For the best opportunity to experience a place, aim to do what the locals do and go where they go. On site in a destination, ask the locals as well as the bellmen and front desk staff for their favorite tips.
5. See how you can meet an expert, an authority, an interesting person or celebrity that will make your visit special in some way. A great example is a living history tour that transports you to another place and time.
6. Look for an experience that provides you with an "insider's view" that will make it special.
7. Choose experiences that make you a VIP, treat you special in some way or lower the velvet ropes.
8. Select opportunities that totally immerse you in the experience and put you in the center of the action, such as cooking, wine making, mural painting, art lessons, conducting an orchestra, acting in a play, etc.
9. Pick experiences that give you bragging rights and allow you to earn your traveler or destination merit badge. Bragging rights are one of the most powerful hallmarks of UnForgettable experiences.
10. Consider the time of year you are visiting to uncover Experiential offerings. Some experiences are only available at certain times of the year and exist on a limited basis.

To access quality information, ask questions and do a bit of research before you go, to get below the surface and discover the experiential opportunities. In many cases it may cost more, but the experience will be well worth it and will most likely have some bragging rights attached.

About Joe Veneto

Joe Veneto, "The Opportunity Guy," is a management consultant, speaker and trainer. His company, Opportunities Unlimited, formed in 1996 is dedicated to collaborating with organizations in Tourism, Hospitality and Service-related industries to achieve results by creating new business opportunities. Veneto is a 25-year veteran of the tourism industry and an expert in the areas of planning, development, marketing and distribution of package tourism products. He also collaborates with Destination Marketing Organizations to expand opportunities and create competitive advantage through developing UFEs, UnForgettable Experiential tourism products for multiple market segments. He has completed experiential development projects for the multiple destinations; sample projects include *Philadelphia CVB*, *Gray Line Worldwide*, *Experience Columbus*, *the CVB for Columbus, Ohio*, *Visit Baltimore*, *Meet Minneapolis* and others.

In addition to his consulting, he is a well-respected professional speaker, presenting programs annually throughout North America for National Associations, Regional Tourism Groups, Governor's and Provincial Tourism Conferences as well as Convention and Visitors Bureaus.