

TREASURE HUNT IN YOUR NEIGHBOUR'S BACKYARD (TREASUREHUNT)

PR4: TRAINING PACKAGE ON AGROTOURISM



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INTRODUCTION

Agrotourism is an activity that provides rural producers and communities the opportunity to link agricultural to link agricultural development with the development of a recreational activity. Through the services such as gastronomy, lodging, guided tours, displays of daily rural activities and the sale of handicrafts activities and the sale of handicraft products, provides producers with an income that has a positive impact on their economy. It is considered a territorial development strategy for the reactivation of rural areas, giving value and hierarchy to the local identity and to the productive processes, through a commercial and tourism.

The benefits of Agrotourism transcend the tourism activity as a mere offer for a specific market segment. It is important to understand it as a tool for economic and social development, which collaborates with community organization and values traditional local practices and knowledge. For this reason, it is important to train people interested in agrotourism in entrepreneurial skills.

With this objective in mind, the Treasure Hunt project was conceived. The aim of Treasure Hunt is to:

- **Train agriculture entrepreneurs on developing skills and competences to innovate their business by connecting agriculture and tourism.**
- **Enhance the possibility for young immigrants and female entrepreneurs to get involved in agrotourism**
- **Promote innovation capacity in the agriculture sector as a whole thanks to the link with another relevant sector for EU economy, Tourism.**
- **Make agro tourism an attractive business for young entrepreneurs in combination with other land based businesses.**
- **Increase the interest for language learning among potential rural entrepreneurs by using interdisciplinary teaching methods, thus learning English and vocational skills in the same time -to build a strong network for the exchange of good practices in agro tourism.**

This Handbook for Agrotourism is aimed at entrepreneurs who are thinking of starting a small or medium-sized business. The content includes, entrepreneurial skills and competencies, main elements of a business plan, types of tourism experiences are there in a rural environment, general marketing concepts and practical and technical advice for running your agrotourism business. The Handbook is divided into a first section with the theoretical content, and a second section with extra material, exercises and best practices.

MODULE 1: PERSONAL SKILLS NEEDED IN AGROTOURISM.

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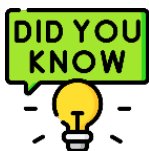
LESSON 1.1 – THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL SKILLS IN AGROTOURISM



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this lesson, learners will:

- Acquire relevant information of what personal or ‘soft’ skills are.
- Have a clear understanding of the importance of personal skills for hospitality and agrotourism entrepreneurs.
- Have a summarised information of the personal skills considered as most important for a successful career in agrotourism.



Did You Know?

- While certain ‘hard’ skills are necessary for any position, employers increasingly look for job applicants with a strong set of certain ‘soft’ skills.
- Employers are increasingly looking for candidates with hybrid skills, which are a combination of ‘soft’ and technical skills.
- While managerial ‘hard’ skills like accounting, financial analysis and marketing are essential skill sets for hospitality & agrotourism managers, soft skills are of paramount importance for succeeding in what is first and foremost a ‘people business’.

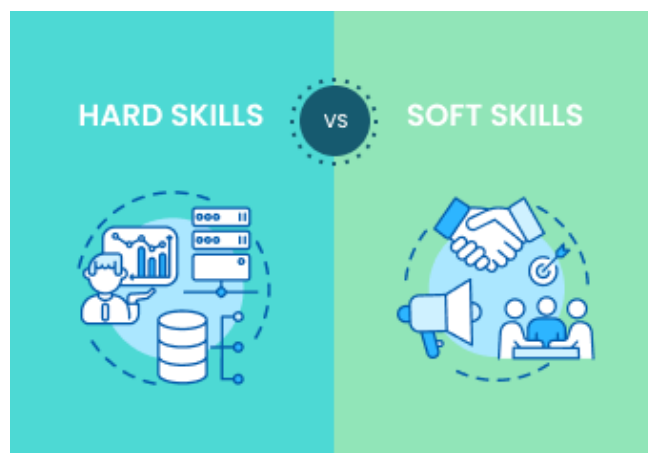
- According to the [Institute of Hospitality](#), the world's leading professional body for hospitality professionals, the key to a successful career in the hospitality industry, including Agrotourism, is to be able to effectively utilise the 'hard' skills learned and apply the organic 'soft' hospitality skills into your management style.
- According to [Forbes](#), 'soft' skills including traits like empathy, emotional intelligence, kindness, integrity, optimism, self-motivation, and resilience, are all crucial for success. They also indicate that occupations that require these 'soft' skills will account for two-thirds of all jobs by 2030.
- A [recent study](#) found that 75% of long-term job success depends on the level of soft skills employees had. Another [LinkedIn study](#) found that 57% of employers value soft skills more than hard skills
- While investing in your 'soft' skills is not as easy as learning something technical, the rewards stay with you for life. A job might come and go, but when you have leadership skills, creativity, or good time management skills, you know you will perform well wherever life takes you.



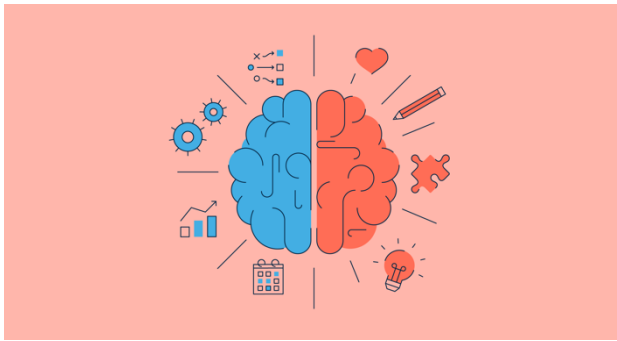
Let's get to the point!

Hard skills vs. Soft skills

[Hard skills](#), also known as technical skills, are abilities people gain through education, training and experience that often relate directly to a specific job or industry. These skills may also be developed through more informal methods, such as pursuing hobbies or interests related to those skills. Hard skills differ from soft skills -which are also known as interpersonal skills -. These are more general traits that apply to a wide range of jobs, such as communication and problem-solving. Soft skills are personal abilities that help you work well with others. Also known as personal skills, soft skills can help you communicate effectively, demonstrate professionalism and develop sustainable relationships. Examples of soft skills



include perseverance and ability to stay focused and consistent; high determination and willpower; confidence and self-esteem; readiness for lifelong learning, continuous personal and professional development; thinking out-of-the-box, i.e. thinking differently from the competitors; building long-term relationships and networking with peers and customers; creativity; teamwork, dedication to hard work; risk-taking, persuasiveness, and adaptability.



Some professions, such as [customer service](#) representative, are closely linked to soft skills, but every professional uses soft skills in their job. Any time you interact with a coworker, client or customer, you can use soft skills to make your work easier or more efficient. Developing and improving your soft skills is important because they can help you perform your

job tasks successfully and enhance your professional development.

10 MAIN REASONS WHY SOFT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT FOR YOUR CAREER AS AN AGROTOURISM ENTREPRENEUR

Although hard skills demonstrate your experience and technical abilities, soft skills indicate your ability to work well with others and grow within a company. Soft skills help you build relationships with your colleagues and customers, and solve problems so you can make positive contributions to a team or company. Listing soft skills on your resume, demonstrating them in an interview and developing them in the workplace can help you find new opportunities and advance your career. Here are 10 reasons why soft skills are an important part of starting your own business or finding a job and helping you advance your career:

1. Soft skills indicate longevity

When hiring for a position, many employers look for signs that a candidate may stay with their company long-term. Your potential longevity is important to employers because they will likely spend fewer resources on hiring a replacement. Soft skills like conflict resolution, commitment and motivation can make you a long-term asset to employers. Work ethic and professionalism are other important indicators of longevity at a job, which can help you distinguish yourself from other candidates for a position.

2. Soft skills help measure teamwork

If you're applying for a position as part of a team, the hiring manager may evaluate your application



partly based on how well you can work within a group. Employers use soft skills to measure your teamwork and communication abilities. Demonstrating your [teamwork skills](#) shows employers you can be an asset to others in the workplace. To appeal to an employer's goal of finding a great team member, list soft skills like flexibility and active listening on your resume.

3. Soft skills help maintain relationships



Soft skills not only support your relationships at work but also determine your success in working with your customers and business partners. Employers in hospitality business, including agrotourism, seek employees they can trust to represent the company in a professional and friendly way. Soft skills help employers differentiate between candidates who are qualified for a job and candidates who can exceed expectations by putting effort into their professional relationships. Some skills,

such as good customer service, can be a competitive advantage.

4. Soft skills can grow your network

Soft skills are critical for creating and growing your network and making professional contacts in the workplace. Professionals with excellent soft skills have a curious attitude that allows them to pursue professional leads and develop industry knowledge quickly.

5. Soft skills facilitate growth

Most soft skills contribute to your ability to use your existing skills well and develop and grow those skills consistently over time. Accepting and implementing constructive feedback is a valuable soft skill that can help you improve your productivity and quality of work. Employers also want to hire people who consistently look for ways to take the initiative to improve their skill set. Use your soft skills to be self-sufficient and reflective in your work, and you can quickly become an outstanding employee.

6. Soft skills can help you stay organized

Attention to detail, time management and the ability to delegate are all soft skills that help you stay organized at work. Being organized can show employers you're a reliable employee who meets deadlines. When combined with other soft skills like communication, organizational skills help you build trust among your team members because they know they can rely on you to help them find the information they need. You can [highlight your organizational skills](#) when applying for jobs by communicating with employers promptly and submitting a well-formatted resume.

7. Soft skills prove you can take initiative

Employers often hire and promote people who regularly demonstrate motivation and initiative. Having a positive attitude and being creative can demonstrate you have the ambition to think

of new projects or solve problems independently. Soft skills also help you implement your ideas by using motivation to translate brainstorming sessions into actionable projects.

Emphasize your soft skills to show you have plans to grow and inspire others through your focus and drive. Here are some [useful tips for taking initiative at work](#).

8. Soft skills demonstrate your leadership skills

You can [show your leadership capabilities](#) by emphasizing soft skills. Focusing on your soft skills shows you're thinking about how your habits and attitude impact others in the workplace, an essential part of great leadership. Employers value soft skills because they're more nuanced than technical skills, and employees with soft skills can adapt quickly to different environments. People with strong soft skills can analyze leadership strategies to help their team succeed and implement unique strategies for each setting.

9. Soft skills help you gain confidence

Your social skills can help you navigate workplace issues with confidence. Your confidence can help you influence others and persuade them of your perspective in professional situations. During a job interview, your confidence may convince an employer to choose you over another applicant. Using soft skills to [build your confidence](#) can help you integrate into a new workplace environment and establish yourself as an essential team member.

10. Soft skills help establish your reputation

Soft skills are important to help you [build your professional reputation](#). These skills can also help you contribute to your company reputation. How you interact with clients and business partners can influence how people perceive your company, impacting their decision to work with you. Your soft skills can determine the success of your social interactions, the timeliness of your work and your ability to [mediate conflicts](#) to build a great reputation.

10 ESSENTIAL SOFT SKILLS THAT A FUTURE AGROTOURISM ENTREPRENEUR SHOULD MASTER

1. Customer service skills

It should never be forgotten that it's the customer who provides the funds to pay salaries and other expenses which allow your farmhouse, hotel or restaurant to remain profitable and reinvest in its infrastructure. Thus, it is essential that employees and managers succeed in [satisfying and even delighting customers](#). Excellent customer service skills is all about



understanding the customer's needs and being able to deliver a [positive customer service experience](#).

2. Networking skills

One of the key skills needed in the hospitality industry is to be able to network effectively. Unlike many other sectors of business, [networking in this field is not about job-hopping, but is rather a way to stimulate repeat business](#) from customers. Building a loyal clientele who are interested in returning to the hotel/restaurant/tour will, in the long run, also enhance one's career. Of course, it's also important to be able to demonstrate to employers that customers are returning thanks to the relationship cultivated with them. Learning to use language that employers like to hear, such as 'client relationship management' and 'guest relations' during job interviews, can enhance one's chances of being hired.

3. Communication skills

Exceptional communication skills are highly valued in most industries and the higher up one gets in the hierarchy, the more important they become. In the hospitality and tourism business, each day can involve contacts with people of a variety of backgrounds, ages, nationalities and temperaments. Thus, it is important to be able to communicate in a way that represents the business while at the same time speaking to customers in a way that they can understand and relate to.

4. Flexibility skills

Compared to other professions, tourism jobs often demand that employees work odd hours like nights and weekends. This is especially true for people running or employed in an agrotourism companies. It is also necessary to be able switch rapidly from one task to another as the situation may arise. Thus, [flexibility](#) is an essential attribute to succeed in the agrotourism sector.

5. Organizational skills

Organizational skills are at a premium in the agrotourism trade. Given the need to multi-task and respond to spur-of -the-moment requests, it is necessary to maintain an organizational structure so as to be able to accomplish daily tasks in an efficient manner. One piece of advice: plan each day ahead keeping a checklist of things that need to be done. This will also help you [develop strong management skills](#).



6. Language skills



Language skills are a particular plus in the agrotourism field as they increase one's value as an employee. Speaking clients' language enables one to establish a more intimate relationship with them which promotes customer satisfaction and loyalty. Five of the most important language skills every agrotourism entrepreneur should master include reading and comprehension, [good listening skills](#), ability to speak in public, writing, and the [ability to communicate in more than one language](#). Once you've mastered these language skills, you will be in a good position to grow in your career as an agrotourism professional. Not only will these skills help you perform the job, but it will allow you to connect with your guests, vendors and staff members in a positive way. More relevant information about the importance of language skills is presented in Module 6. Language skills.

7. Commitment

It may sound trite to mention this one, but it can be noted that many young people start out in the agrotourism field with an enthusiastic outlook, but don't realize how demanding the work is and consequently get bored quickly. If they fail to understand that their job is to keep clients happy no matter the cost, such individuals will never progress beyond entry-level jobs.

8. 'Can-do' attitude

It is essential that agrotourism professionals be prepared to accept challenges in the workplace no matter how difficult the task may appear. A can-do attitude is a [positive mindset](#) that believes anything is possible if you put your mind to it. It is an empowering belief that gives you the motivation to overcome any obstacle through hard work, effort, and creativity. With a can-do attitude, you approach every challenge as an opportunity to learn and grow. Resolving a difficult situation boosts one's chances of getting a pay rise and /or a promotion. Exuding enthusiasm for one's job, instead of being sour, will enhance one's esteem both from customers and employers.

9. Multitasking skills

Being able to fulfill multiple roles, especially in an agrotourism enterprise is a way for employees to render themselves indispensable to their employers. It's important to be able to [deal with different tasks simultaneously](#), while completing each task assigned. Thus the ability to multitask may be one of the most important skills in this



industry. One way for students to get a head start in developing their [ability to multitask](#) is to work on the side while continuing their studies.

10. Cultural awareness

Agrotourism entrepreneurs are more likely than most to deal with customers of a wide variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds. The ability to be culturally aware and get past one's own cultural norms is crucial to building a successful career in this sector. Typically, customers will not always share the same values, belief systems and perceptions, so it's important to break free from cultural barriers. [Cultural awareness](#) is an



essential social skill that will help customers feel comfortable and at home with their surroundings. The goal is to satisfy their needs and wants, so as to turn them into repeat customers.

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Decide whether this sentences are true or false.

- Hard skills and soft skills are equally important for your career as an agrotourism entrepreneur (T)
- Soft skills are job-related competencies and abilities that are necessary to complete work, while hard skills are personal qualities and traits that impact how you work (F)
- Being able to adapt to changing environments and work processes makes you a competitive job applicant and a strong overall professional. (T)
- Financial analysis and bookkeeping are essential entrepreneurial soft skills. (F)

- Being able to interact with others in healthy and positive ways can help you avoid miscommunication and conflict during operational shifts (**T**)

2. Choose the correct answer.

- Which of the following is NOT considered an important soft skill needed by agrotourism entrepreneurs?
 - a) Teamwork
 - b) Networking
 - c) **Cash flow management**
 - d) Adaptability
- Which of the following does NOT represent a key reason to start networking?
 - a) Career opportunities
 - b) Professional growth
 - c) Support and information
 - d) **Being overloaded with work**
- Problem-solving is the process of understanding a challenge and working toward finding an effective solution to it. Which of the following basic steps involved in problem solving should come first?
 - a) Evaluate solutions
 - b) Monitor progress and make adjustments
 - c) **Define the problem**
 - d) Identify alternative solutions
 - e) Implement the selected solution
 - f) Select a solution
- A key element of soft skills is emotional intelligence (EI), i.e. the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, while also being able to recognize, understand, and influence the emotions of others. Which of the following is not considered a major component of EI?
 - a) Self-awareness
 - b) Social awareness
 - c) **Marketing skills**
 - d) Self-management
 - e) Managing relationships



Case studies, interviews, real life examples...



Check the following video to learn more about soft skills: <https://youtu.be/-YTpeWp1GDk>

Case Study 1 - Lost in translation

The day I served “lamb shank” to someone who asked for “Lapsang” (a type of tea)...

“Yes, it was 3pm and I thought it was a bit unusual to have lamb at that time but the restaurant served food throughout the day so I figured the customer was hungry. Plus, let’s just be honest, I had no idea Lapsang was a kind of tea! Culinary vocabulary can be rather tricky sometimes. I learnt that it is necessary to make sure you understand the customer’s request correctly before its accomplishment.”

In a world full of different cultures, it is impossible to know all the culinary vocabulary from the different countries and it is normal to feel somewhat lost when you hear a word you are not familiar with. However, you have to realize that you will never know all the words and terms your customers will use. This does not mean that you won’t be able to do your job in the best way: you will learn day after day how to deal with this type of language barrier. If language barriers can be a daunting challenge, working with people from all around the world is a truly fulfilling experience as you get to learn about different cultures and ways to interact with people with different backgrounds. Don’t let language barriers stand in the way of embracing everything a diverse workplace has to offer.

Case Study 2 - Adapting to the environment you are exposed to

“I used to work in a small hotel in the Swiss Alps, where the climate was rather cold. Every morning, I got up to do my makeup before starting my shift (it definitely made me look less tired than I actually was!) and, except refreshing it after lunch during busy days, it lasted the whole day. After finishing my internship in this hotel, I wished to step into another culture and decided to undertake a new internship, this time in Dubai. I started my morning routine as usual: I woke up and put on my makeup to give me a more “awake look”. Little did I know that with the heat my makeup wouldn’t last through the first hour of the day. Today, I know it is important to understand the environment we live in and being able to adapt to it.”

Adapting to the environment you are in is a real expression of your acquired soft skills. In fact, how you present yourself is key in delivering a good customer service. First of all, it will put your customers in a better mood (seeing someone who is not presentable will definitely irritate them) and it will give you more confidence in yourself which in turn will result in a better performance on your side. **Adapting to your environment means much more than the way you present yourself: it also means understanding and respecting the cultural differences.** This is probably the most important part of the hospitality industry as you will constantly be interacting with

people from all around the world and respecting them will be the foundation of the relationship you will have with your customers (and your colleagues) and will affect the service you will provide them.

LESSON 1.2 – COMMUNICATION IS CRUCIAL



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this lesson, learners will:

- Understand the basic concepts of communication.
- Acquire relevant information of the different aspects of efficient communication.
- Have a clear understanding of the importance of good communication skills for agrotourism entrepreneurs.
- Know the differences between verbal and non-verbal communication.



Did You Know?

- Employers consistently included communication skills as one of the most commonly requested skills in 2020 job posting.
- Did you know that an average adult spends almost 70% of their time by engaging in any form of communication, out of which more than 45% of their time goes into listening, 30% in speaking, and 16% in reading and only about 9% in writing?
- Successful communication helps us better understand people and situations. It helps us overcome diversities, build trust and respect, and create conditions for sharing creative ideas and solving problems.
- With strong communication skills, you can clearly impact your agrotourism business. Great communicators are the ones who bring solutions, drive change, motivate and inspire their colleagues, and attract new customers.

- Poor communication may affect [teamwork](#), employee engagement, and your business growth overall.
- With the rise of globalization and technology, agrotourism businesses need employees who are able to effectively communicate with customers and clients from all over the world.
- [Digital communication skills](#) are increasingly important, alongside traditional language skills.



Let's get to the point!

Communication Skills in the Workplace

Knowing how to effectively communicate is a skill that will serve you well in every aspect of your life, particularly at work. Strong communication skills allow you to connect and collaborate with others, and aid your career progression by helping you succeed in your current role and land your next one.



A common [communication skills definition](#) is the ability to be understood and understand others. For instance, in the workplace there are few aspects of a job that don't require some form of communication. Whether you work onsite, remotely or in a hybrid arrangement, being able to understand others and communicate effectively yourself allows you to build trust, improve your interpersonal relationships and leads to better outcomes from all relevant stakeholders.

Strong communication skills in the workplace also help you collaborate, motivate, solve problems, provide and receive feedback, avoid conflicts and make better decisions.

If you manage staff, authentic, clear and regular communication is essential for engagement and productivity purposes. As a leader, maintaining regular communication and giving clear, honest and authentic direction gives people guidance, reassurance and fosters a sense of inclusion.

Communication skills involve listening, speaking, [observing](#) and [empathizing](#). It is also helpful to understand the differences in how to communicate through face-to-face interactions, phone conversations and [digital communications](#), like email and social media.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE AGROTOURISM INDUSTRY

Communication is a critical component of the agrotourism. Whether it's communicating with guests to ensure their satisfaction or coordinating with staff to provide top-notch service, effective communication is essential to the success of any agrotourism business.

Excellent communication skills are especially important in agrotourism because they can help to build rapport with guests, resolve conflicts, and create a positive overall guest experience. Agrotourism entrepreneurs should be able to effectively communicate with guests from all over the world, understand their needs, and provide them with the information and assistance they require.

Clear and concise communication helps to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunications that can disrupt the flow of operations. As visitors are most likely unfamiliar with the area they are visiting, it is also important for agrotourism professionals to be able to provide clear and concise directions.

What are the Benefits of Effective Communication Skills in Agrotourism?

Here are some of the most important benefits of being an effective communicator in the agrotourism industry:

- Capability of building strong relationships with guests and earning their repeat business.
- Better understanding of your staff's needs and abilities to more effectively manage them.
- Effective communication is crucial to remove the various cultural and/or language barriers.
- Improved abilities to deal with difficult situations and guest complaints.
- Abilities to create a positive working environment. Effective communication channels can bring greater understanding among the employees in your organization which will result in a positive attitude thereby improving customer service.
- Enhanced promotion of your agrotourism offers and attracting more visitors.

Types of communication

To be an effective communicator, you need to be proficient at all types of communication, which includes four main categories, i.e. verbal, nonverbal, written, and visual communication.

- Verbal communication: communicating by way of a spoken language.

- **Non-verbal communication:** communicating by way of body language, facial expressions and vocalics.
- **Written communication:** communicating by way of written language, symbols and numbers.
- **Visual communication:** communication by way of photography, art, drawings, sketches, charts and graphs.

Verbal communication is the use of language to transfer information through speaking or sign language. It is one of the most common types, often used during presentations, video conferences and phone calls, meetings and one-on-one conversations.



Verbal communication is important because it is efficient. It can be helpful to support verbal communication with both nonverbal and written communication.

The main steps to develop your verbal communication skills include the following:

- Use a confident speaking voice. Be confident when speaking so that your ideas are clear and easy for others to understand.
- Use active listening, without interrupting. The other side of using verbal communication is intently listening to and hearing others. [Active listening skills](#) are essential when conducting a meeting, presentation or even when participating in a one-on-one conversation. Doing so will help you grow as a communicator.
- Receive and integrate feedback without growing offensive.
- Have empathy. It means that you can not only understand, but also share in the emotions of others. This communication skill is important in both team and one-on-one settings. In both cases, you will need to understand other people's emotions and select an appropriate response.
- Avoid filler 'parasite' words. While it might feel natural after completing a sentence or pausing to collect your thoughts, it can also be distracting for your audience.

Non-verbal communication includes the use of body language and posture, facial expressions, clothing and hairstyle, voice, eye contact, and distance between yourself and others, used to

convey information. It can be used both intentionally and unintentionally. For example, you might smile unintentionally when you hear a pleasing or enjoyable idea or piece of information. Nonverbal communication is helpful when trying to understand others' thoughts and feelings. If they are displaying "closed" body language, such as crossed arms or hunched shoulders, they might be feeling anxious, angry or nervous. If they are displaying "open" body language with both feet on the floor and arms by their side or on the table, they are likely feeling positive and open to information.

Non-verbal communication skills vary by culture. While eye contact when talking is normative in European cultures, Asian and Latin cultures view extended eye contact as a challenge to authority. If you're in a management role, understanding these cultural differences will help you be an effective manager to all your employees.

Non-verbal skills affect the way that your verbal message comes off and the way that others hear your words. For example, if you are training a new trainee with your arms crossed at the chest or with a stern glare in your eyes, the new person may get the impression that you are frustrated



or angry with them. This can negatively impact your relationship with him/her. Lightening up the mood with open body language or a pleasant smile can smooth things over. Conversely, if the new hire has their arms crossed and appears on guard while receiving instructions on how to complete a task, they clearly are not listening well. They seem defensive about something. By picking up on their non-verbal communication and asking open-

ended questions to gain a better understanding of what's going on, you can defuse the situation and get on with training.

Visual communication refers to using photographs, art, drawings, sketches, charts and graphs to convey information. Visuals are often used as an aid during presentations to provide helpful context alongside written and/or verbal communication. Because people have different learning styles, visual communication might be more helpful for some to consume ideas and information.

Written communication skills allow you to convey specific information or your point of view concisely and clearly. Good written communication covers the subject in enough detail, while avoiding long and complicated sentences or excessive detail so the reader does not get lost in your message. There should be no room for interpretation.

Good written communication skills also include the correct use of spelling, grammar and sentence structure, a neat format, concise words and a tone that's suitable for the intended reader.

Common written communication skills examples include emails, proposals, reports, meeting minutes and instant messages.

How to Improve Communication Skills in Agrotourism?

As the agrotourism is connected with providing unique activities and experiences, focused on the guest and his/her needs, the host's ability to communicate is becoming increasingly important. The communicative activities must always be put into context and take into account that emotions are socially supported and individual, and that they can also differ culturally. The culture code of each individual guest has to be considered in the communication.

Agrotourism is a highly interactive and people-focused business and it is therefore important to agrotourism entrepreneurs and staff to master both verbal and non-verbal means of communication. For example, nowadays, non-verbal communication, still makes up approximately 65% of our communications.

In times of digitalization, emotions and unique experiences are increasingly sought-after by travelers, hotel and restaurant guests. Today's guests are not just looking for a roof over their heads or delicious home-made food, but a unique experience. Emotions crystallize as one of the most important factors for the individual well-being of guests. **Agrotourism must therefore create experience-oriented services that are associated with emotions.** In order to create conscious and positive emotions for your guests, the entire sensory spectrum must be activated, and both verbal and non-verbal types of communication should be taken into account.

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Decide whether the following sentences are true or false.

- Body language and expressions are types of verbal communication. **(F)**
- Good communication skills of agrotourism entrepreneurs are not connected with raising productivity levels of their employees. **(F)**

- Adjusting your speaking voice so you can be heard in a variety of settings is a skill and it's critical to communicating effectively. **(T)**
- Communication style used does not have to be adapted to the targeted audience. **(F)**
- Active listening, e.g. paying close attention to the person who is speaking, is considered a vital interpersonal communication skill. **(T)**

2. Choose the correct answer.

- Which of the following is NOT considered an important communication skill needed by agrotourism entrepreneurs?
 - Empathy
 - Prioritizing**
 - Sharing feedback
 - Active listening
- Which of the following does NOT represent a way of a good listener?
 - Be patient and let your partner speak
 - Ask questions and provide feedback
 - Don't look at the subtext**
 - Be curious and demonstrate interest
- Effective communication is an essential skill for achieving success in all areas of life, whether personal or professional. Which of the following basic steps related to achieving efficient communication should come first?
 - Use appropriate body language
 - Be clear and concise
 - Know your audience
 - Identify your objectives**
 - Listen actively
- Negotiation is a dialogue where two or more sides work together to reach an agreeable solution for all involved. It might result in a formal agreement, like a contract, or a less formal understanding, like a verbal agreement. Which of the following is NOT considered an important negotiation skill?
 - Patience
 - Persuasiveness
 - Customer service**
 - Problem-solving
 - Adaptability



Case studies, interviews, real life examples...



Check this video if you want to learn more about Communication Skills at work:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIHkuLgeBcA&t=120s>



Check this video that explains 5 ways to listen better:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSohjlyQI2A&t=328s>

Case Study 2 - Know when to keep your mouth shut (the day I congratulated a lady who was a bit overweight for her pregnancy...)

“Sure, I only wished to be nice and congratulate her for the upcoming baby. Unfortunately, the lady was far from being pregnant... To make things even more uncomfortable, I gave her a baby gift bag and asked her when her due date was. You can only imagine how embarrassing the moment was; both for her and myself. I literally said she looked fat and she obviously didn’t appreciate it. I had no idea how I could apologize to her. I thought about offering cookies along with her tea but immediately thought it was inappropriate.”

Of course guests appreciate nice gestures from their hosts, such as free coffee or dessert. However, you need to make sure that the context is appropriate. Either ask your colleagues or wait to see if the customer makes a clear reference to what gesture they would appreciate. This type of situation can be difficult to fix as the customer may be so offended as to leave at once.

As a rule of thumb, never get too friendly with customers. First of all, it can bother them as they probably want to enjoy some time with their friends (or alone) without a third party interfering in their conversation. Second, you may find yourself in this type of embarrassing situation if you do not pay attention to what you say.

Indeed, agrotourism hospitality is synonym with customer interaction and it is therefore important to strike the right balance between appearing too cold and too friendly. This will come with experience, you will learn to “feel” the customer, you will quickly learn to **decipher the non-verbal language of customers** to see whether or not they wish to interact with you and if they do, make sure you let them lead the conversation to avoid being intrusive.

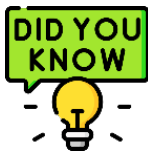
LESSON 1.3. - 5 ESSENTIAL CUSTOMER SERVICE SOFT SKILLS FOR AGRITOURISM ENTREPRENEURS



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this lesson, learners will:

- Acquire relevant information of some of the most important customer service soft skills for agritourism entrepreneurs.
- Have a clear understanding of the importance of good leadership and time management skills for agritourism entrepreneurs.
- Understand the benefits of creativity skills in customer service.



Did You Know?

- [Customer service skills](#) are of key importance for agritourism because it is a labour intensive industry that involves a high degree of customer contact.
- Customer service is important because it inspires customer loyalty and makes employees' jobs easier.
- According to a recent research, 60% of customers are frustrated when their requests are not resolved in a timely manner. In addition, 61% of customers would switch to a competitor following a single bad experience.
- Being an agritourism entrepreneur you should be prepared to adapt to a constantly changing environment, putting the [needs of the customer](#) at the forefront of every decision you take.
- The [Eisenhower Matrix](#), also referred to as Urgent-Important Matrix, is a viable tool helping you to decide on and prioritize tasks by urgency and importance.

- Leadership skills are not only important when starting an agrotourism business but maintaining and nurturing a workforce as well.
- More than 60% of customers report that they now have higher customer service standards after the pandemic and 73% of business leaders report a direct link between their customer service and business performance.
- Creativity is the single most important skill in the world according to a recent [LinkedIn survey](#).



Let's get to the point!

While agrotourism entrepreneurs obviously need to have traditional service competencies and hospitality hard skills, it is also essential to enhance their soft skills to provide a positive, memorable guest experience. Of these, customer service soft skills, i.e. the abilities and expertise agrotourism entrepreneurs need to ensure customer satisfaction and build long-term customer relationships, such as leadership skills, time management, creativity (thinking 'out-of-the box'), flexibility, and accountancy are of paramount importance to successfully address escalated customer concerns.

KEY LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR AGROTOURISM ENTREPRENEURS

What makes a good leader? A good leader will **demonstrate by example** what is expected of their team members. A great leader will take responsibility for the issues presented to them directly as well as every issue their team members encounter.



Strong leadership skills require a focus on resolving both customer and team member concerns with [empathy](#) and efficiency.

Decisiveness is a valuable leadership skill that can help to move projects along faster and improve efficiency. Strong [decision-making skills](#) aid in your ability to choose solutions to challenges. Effective decisiveness requires research, evaluation, problem-solving and goal-setting, often with a quick turnaround. Key skills related to being a strong, decisive leader include:

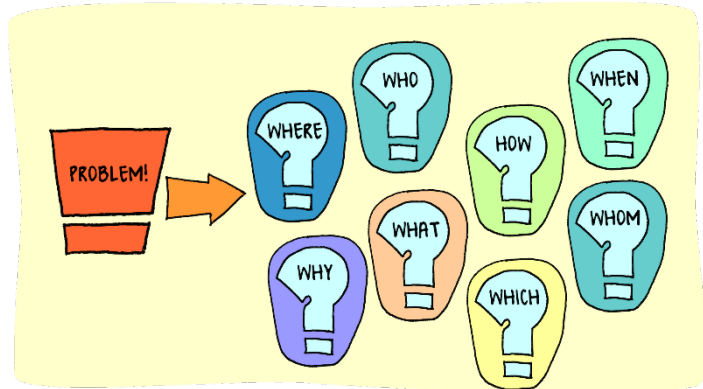
- [Problem-solving](#), i.e. the ability to handle difficult or unexpected situations in the workplace as well as complex business challenges.
- Initiative - taking initiative demonstrates valuable skills by showing that you can manage different tasks on your own and work with a variety of different people with different backgrounds.
- Research, i.e. the abilities to find an answer to a question or a solution to a problem.
- [Project evaluation](#)
- Expectation setting - establishing workplace expectations can help align your professional goals with your abilities and create more trusting professional relationships with coworkers or customers.

Integrity is often seen as simply truthfulness or honesty. However, it also means having—and standing by—a set of strong values. It's behaving honourably, even when no one is watching. Integrity in the workplace often means making ethical choices and helping the company maintain a positive image. A leader with integrity also shows the following skills: diplomacy, [ethics](#), reliability, professionalism, responsibility, confidentiality, honesty.

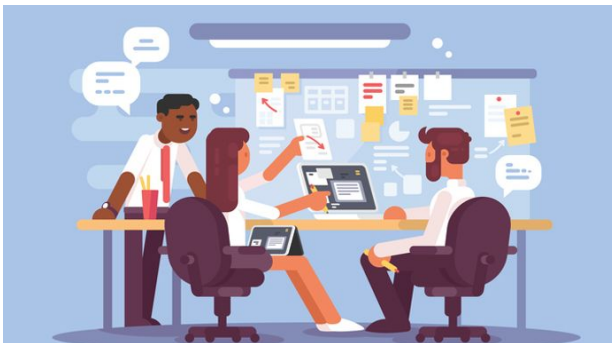
Positive attitude - an effective leader knows that a positive attitude can go a long way in the workplace. You work to create a positive work environment—even during stressful periods. Employees are more likely to be productive and motivated to do their best when they're happy and feel they're valued. Skills that help promote a good work environment include [conflict management](#), rapport, empathy, and positive reinforcement.

Relationship-building - leadership requires building and maintaining a strong, collaborative team of individuals working toward the same goal. Relationship-building, also known as [team building](#), requires other leadership strengths, like conflict resolution and effective communication skills. Once you better understand each other, you can benefit by assessing team-member strengths, delegating tasks and completing your goals more seamlessly. A successful leader who's adept at relationship building will also have the following skills: collaboration, management, social skills, and [teamwork](#).

Problem-solving - good leaders are skilled at problem-solving issues that arise on the job. [Effective problem-solving](#) often requires staying calm and identifying a step-by-step solution. Problem-solving skills can help leaders make quick decisions, resolve obstacles with their team and external teams alike, and ensure projects are finished on time and according to the specifications.



Ability to delegate - a strong leader should take 70% of their work tasks completely off their plate, and pass them on to the next in command (this continues down the entire chain). Delegation is a skill that entrepreneurs must continually develop. Successful delegation ensures that we avoid decision fatigue and burnout and that we are constantly learning new skills and moving the company forward.



Dependability - being a dependable leader means that people can trust and rely on you. A dependable person follows through on their plans and keeps promises. The strong relationships built by a responsible leader create a resilient team that can work through any difficulties that may arise. Being dependable means meeting deadlines, being straightforward and coming through on your obligations or when you can't meet a promise or a goal, communicating this early on and having a backup plan. Dependable leaders also have the following skills: realistic goal setting, timeliness, loyalty, detail-oriented, and initiative.

Ability to teach and mentor - one skill that differentiates leadership from many other competencies is the [ability to teach and mentor](#). Effectively teaching colleagues or direct reports to grow in their careers helps organizations scale. Often, this skill requires that leaders think less about themselves and more about how to make their team successful. To be successful as a leader that can teach and mentor a team, you might hone the following related skills: ability to recognize and reward, motivation, clarity, and helpfulness.

Time management

Your customer's time is valuable and so is your company's time. Customers do not want to feel rushed, but they also don't want to have to wait around to have their needs met. Along the same lines, your team members need enough time to complete all their duties without feeling rushed but will get bored if they don't have enough to do.

[Effective time management](#) involves striking a delicate balance to find that sweet spot in the middle for customers, team members, and the company. Time management skills help you manage your time well. Some of the most important time management skills include:



Organization - staying organized can help you maintain a clear picture of what you need to complete and when. Being well-organized might mean maintaining an up-to-date calendar, being able to locate certain documents easily, having a tidy environment and taking detailed, diligent notes.

Prioritization - assessing each of your responsibilities for priority is key in being a good time manager. There are many ways to prioritize what you need to accomplish. You might decide to complete fast, simple items followed by longer, more involved ones. Alternatively, you might prioritize your tasks starting with the most time-sensitive, or a combination of both.

Goal-setting - setting goals is the first step to becoming a good time manager. Goal setting allows you to clearly understand your end goal and what exactly you need to prioritize to accomplish it. Setting both short and long-term goals can lead to success in your career.

Planning – a fundamental part of time management is planning. Being efficient in planning out your day, meetings and how you will accomplish things will help you stick to your schedule.

Stress management - when practicing good time management, you should also be attentive to your mental health. Handling stress in a positive way can help you stay motivated and perform well when going through your schedule. You might do this by including small breaks throughout your day, or by rewarding yourself in small ways as you accomplish tasks.

Note-taking - taking notes and keeping documents up to date are important when managing time and tasks.

Creativity



Even the most common concerns don't always have a "one size fits all" solution. It takes creativity to determine the most efficient and effective way to meet your customer's needs. Finding creative solutions requires you to go beyond standard operating procedure and consider the nuance of the problem before you. For customers with complex

problems, when you find a creative solution to their problems, you build loyalty and show your company's ability to meet dynamic needs.

Creativity is the ability to think about a task or a problem in a new or different way, or the ability to use the imagination to generate new ideas. Creativity enables you to solve complex problems or find interesting ways to approach tasks. If you are creative, you look at things from a unique perspective. You can find patterns and make connections to find opportunities. There is some risk involved with being creative, but you can show you are self-motivated to try things that have not been done before.

There are several kinds of creative skills that you can practice becoming more creative in the workplace. Used in combination, they can be effective in helping you think differently about a problem or a task. They include:

- Making connections - when you are creative, you find connections between different ideas and use those connections to solve problems. Often these connections happen when you aren't actively thinking about the problem or task. Something you read or something someone says connects with the problem and you see it in a new way. Being in a different environment or experiencing something for the first time can also create connections that help you view tasks differently.
- Making observations - you can discover new ways of doing things by observing the world around you. Watching how people work can inspire you to think of ways to help them be more efficient. The way someone approaches a task might give you ideas of how to help someone else who performs a similar task. Paying close attention to how people use products or services can help you see how well they function, and then you can devise ways to improve them.

- Asking questions - being creative sometimes allows you to challenge accepted or conventional wisdom. You may wonder why you do a task a certain way, or why you have to follow specific procedures. There may be times when the reason is no longer relevant, but everyone is used to doing it that way. This allows you to look for better ways to do that task or revise the procedures to make them more relevant.
- [Networking](#) - when you are creative, you can usually enjoy a diverse company and network with people. Being around people from different backgrounds can expose you to new ideas and inspire creative thinking. Talking and working with people who view the world differently can help you gain new perspectives when approaching your work. **The best time to network is now:** before you need it. Why? Strong networks leading to good results don't happen overnight. It takes time to create relationships and to have you connected with the right people.
- Experimenting - bringing out your creativity may help you experiment. No matter how unusual an idea might be, a creative person is willing to test it and see if it works. They see failure as an opportunity to learn and improve. To develop this skill, keep working on a problem, adjusting and rethinking your ideas until you find a solution.

There are many activities and exercises you can try that can help improve your creativity. These include: use a sketchpad, read regularly, write, exercise, listen to music, choose diversity, change your environment, etc.

Flexibility

Every customer is unique and it is important to treat them individually. Personalization improves customer satisfaction, no matter the reason for their visit. All it takes to personalize your customer's experience is a little flexibility in your approach. Even small things, such as changing your communication style or adjusting your body language can go a long way towards making your customer feel comfortable and satisfied.

Flexibility and [adaptability](#) are two very similar concepts and are often used interchangeably, or together in job descriptions. In an employment context, it could include how responsive you are to new information, changing conditions or circumstances, commitment to making ongoing



improvements in systems/processes or ways of working and how well you handle or make use of uncertain situations. The [ability to cope with change](#), or respond well to change, is extremely important in the workplace. Situations, circumstances or workplaces can change extremely quickly, and if individuals, and therefore organisations, cannot adapt to changes quickly, they are likely to be left behind.

Flexibility includes adapting successfully to changing situations & environments, keeping calm in the face of difficulties, planning ahead but having alternative options in case things go wrong, thinking quickly to respond to sudden changes in circumstances, ability to adapt to change positively in response to changing circumstances, persisting in the face of unexpected difficulties, anticipating & responding positively to changing environments, etc.

To truly demonstrate your adaptability in the workplace, you need to learn to flex when your preferred option is unavailable. Given the pace of the rapidly changing workplace and business environment, be willing to quickly switch and adjust plans. To do this, draw on your soft skills.

In fact, when demonstrating adaptability in the workplace, you often utilise several key soft skills to respond positively to change in your environment or company.

This ability to draw on your soft skills to demonstrate your adaptable approach starts with [problem solving](#). This is a skill that allows you to approach challenges resulting from change with a positive mindset and come up with an ideal outcome. You can also draw on your [critical thinking skills](#) to observe and analyse information relevant to change and turn it into viable solutions and actions.

[Teamwork](#) is another essential skill to help you demonstrate your adaptability in the workplace. Being able to work successfully in a team, especially when it's made up of people with different personalities, skills and experiences, will ensure you remain open to new and different ideas, support others and never let anyone down when priorities shift. When facing change, you'll continue to collaborate and adapt ideas and approaches when the context changes.

Finally, your [communication](#) and [interpersonal skills](#) enable you to engage with colleagues, share your ideas, actively listen to others, ask questions and build and maintain relationships when adapting to change at work.

Accountability

A great team leader is accountable for their own actions as well as for the actions of their team. Your customer's satisfaction and your team's performance are your responsibility. When a team leader accepts [accountability](#) for the team, it builds trust and loyalty within the work environment. Team members feel empowered to take responsibility for their customer's satisfaction when they know they are supported by their team leader.

A good leader will never have a great team. It takes a great leader to guide others into achieving success. Fostering these five skills within yourself and your team members will improve your leadership skills and make you a more effective customer service professional.

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Decide whether the following sentences are true or false.

- Building a simple solution means trivialising or rushing through the problem that you are looking to solve. **(F)**
- Maintaining a positive, 'can-do' attitude is beneficial for your agrotourism business. **(T)**
- Time management includes actively prioritising tasks and responsibilities, then scheduling the week to ensure time is spent on the most urgent tasks. **(T)**
- The importance of teamwork and working well with fellow team members is overestimated. **(F)**
- Knowing how to adapt to change at work is important for your career long-term. **(T)**
- To be an active listener at work, it is not important to devote your full attention to the person you are speaking with. **(F)**

2. Choose the correct answer

- Which of the following is NOT considered a way to improve one's problem-solving skills?
 - a) Identify and understand the problem
 - b) Brainstorm creative solutions
 - c) Use verbal and non-verbal communication**
 - d) Visualise the problem
- Which of the following is NOT an essential element of critical thinking?

- a) Keeping an open mind
 - b) Procrastinating**
 - c) Considering the problem
 - d) Interpreting the available information
- Which of the following actions demonstrates your critical thinking abilities?
 - a) Being a team player
 - b) Analysing data to form your decisions**
 - c) Avoiding unnecessary meetings
 - d) Having good presentation skills
 - Effectively managing your time can help to lower stress and improve your focus, making you more effective and potentially leading to even greater career success. Which of the following is NOT considered an important way to improve your time management skills?
 - a) Create a daily plan
 - b) Choose diversity**
 - c) Delegate responsibilities
 - d) Monitor how you spend your time
 - e) Block out distractions



Case studies, interviews, real life examples...



Video: A powerful way to unleash your natural creativity:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjYrxcGSWX4>



Video: What is Creative Problem Solving:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbxYiUG5RRlv>

MODULE 2. PRACTICAL STEPS: HOW TO START AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS PLAN AND HOW TO ADAPT IT TO THE TOURIST NEED

BEGOÑA GONZÁLEZ RICART, FYG CONSULTORES



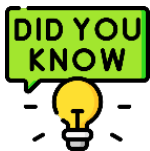
LESSON 2.1 STARTING A BUSINESS: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this Lesson, learners will:

- Identify personality traits that make a good host at any tourist attraction or kind of service industry.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your business idea.
- Consider personal, economic, environmental, and community values.
- Have a clear understanding of your farm operation's history and current situation.
- Assess their entrepreneurial goals and potential
- Assess their resources: farming activities, land resources, labor, capital requirements, and off-farm factors.



Did You Know?

- Agrotourism businesses are not for everyone. You have to consider your personality, the state of your business, and the resources available.
- Creating a warm and safe atmosphere is very important to ensure that your customers will come back.

- It can be interesting to have an advisor with whom you can talk about your goals and potential risks.
- Sorting out and recognizing the available resources is crucial to start an agrotourism business. Resources go beyond economics.



Let's get to the point!

Agrotourism activities are becoming an important component of many farm operations. These activities have the potential to increase farm revenues and maintain the sustainability of the industry. However, agrotourism activities won't suit every farm or farmer. Before starting an agrotourism operation, it is recommended that farmers spend some time assessing the potential that these activities have for their operation, and carefully planning the business and marketing elements of their operation

Hence, the first question you should ask yourself is: **Is Agrotourism for you?** When answering this question, you should consider the following points:

DETERMINE YOUR AGROTOURISM INTERESTS

There are many different types of agrotourism ventures that are appropriate for a farm, ranch or other agricultural enterprise. Customers who visit your farm may want to participate in various activities, such as harvesting crops, hiking, hayrides, feeding animals, and many others. These customers often do not come from a farming background and will ask many questions about daily farm activities that may seem trivial to you. A successful agrotourism farmer must be willing to share information about the farm and spend time to make customers feel welcome. The ideal agrotourism host requires many of the same personality traits that make a good host at any tourist attraction or kind of service industry. It is important that farmers critically evaluate their personality type before developing an agrotourism operation.

Assess Your Personality

Agrotourism entrepreneurs must be a "jack of all trades." They must be able to assess their enterprise with a business mind, share knowledge that is fun and educational and have good interpersonal skills.

Some important questions that you should ask yourself:

- Do you enjoy entertaining guests or having farm visitors?
- Do you like crowds?
- Can you create a warm, safe, and inviting atmosphere for people visiting your farm?
- Can you manage the additional business responsibilities associated with an agrotourism operation (including marketing, employee management, and customer relations)?

If the answer to most of these questions is yes, then you are a good candidate for agrotourism. If you did not score well, then agrotourism may still be in your future, but you will need help from others to have a successful agrotourism business.

BREAK INTO A NEW MINDSET: THINK TOURISM

It is important to “think tourism” when evaluating whether agrotourism is right for you. Dealing with tourism is unlike dealing with any other product. A product is simply something you deliver and sell to a customer. Products can range from things that are touched, called goods, to things that are experienced, called services. For example, a hammer is a good. The way a person who sells the hammer treats a customer is a service.

To start thinking from an agrotourism perspective, you need to tap into a side of your business that may not be familiar: the tourism side. Agrotourism involves goods and services. Tourism tends to be more of an experience than a good. This distinction may present a different perspective for you. Often you will have to think more about the “feelings people get” when they are participating in agrotourism and less about the actual “things they walk away with” when they leave your farm. Production and consumption of the product are additional traits that make tourism businesses unique. Tourism products are produced and consumed in the same place. As the agrotourism operator, you produce the agrotourism product at your farm, and agritourists visit your farm to experience that product by becoming a part of it. This range of tangibility and intangibility can be visualized using the goods to services continuum, which is summarized below using agrotourism examples:

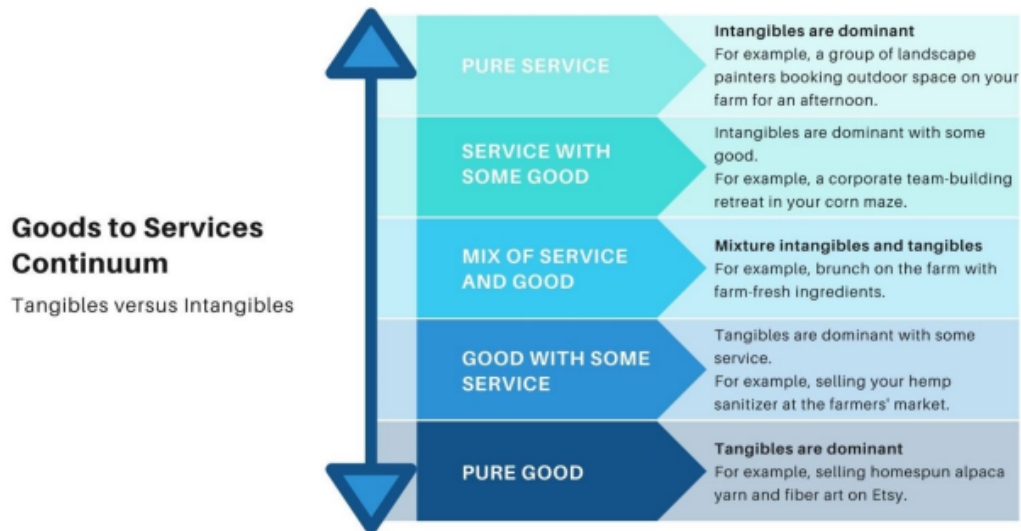


Figure 1: Goods to Services Continuum. Source: <https://www.rural.pa.gov/getfile.cfm?file=Resources/PDFs/research-report/AgrotourismHandbook2021Dec.pdf&view=true>

Did you answer the question? Is Agrotourism right for you? Now that you have had some time to consider agrotourism basics, did you decide on the answer? Whether it was yes or no, it is still important to point out that agrotourism is not for everyone. You may not have the time, you may have other off-farm employment commitments, you may lack interest, or you may not think you are ready for agrotourism. If you have decided agrotourism is right after reading this section, continue reading! Alright, you have the personality and determination to start an agrotourism business. However, desire is not everything, to ensure the success of your business, when starting from scratch, it is necessary to review the assets you have at your disposal:

1) Assess Your Goals

It is critical to set realistic goals for your operation. Depending on your situation, these goals can vary greatly. Some examples: earning additional farm revenue, starting a new career, expanding opportunities for family members to work on the farm, educating the community...

Regardless of the motivation for starting an agrotourism operation, it is important to develop both **long-term goals and short-term objectives**. Setting realistic goals will assist you in making important decisions regarding your operation. You should bear in mind that the two are related and a long-term goal should help to establish short-term objectives or plan small steps that may help to reach this goal. Setting attainable objectives will help to establish a **strategic direction**

for your operation. So where do I start? We often set unrealistic goals or do not know what we need to take into account in order to have an affordable business plan. Here are **10 steps that**



will guide the growth of your agrotourism business. Consider moving from 1 to 10 over a period of 1 to years.

2) Assess Your Resources

You will also need to assess both your **current resources** and those you will need for your proposed enterprise, including the nature of existing farming activities, land resources, labor, capital requirements, and off-farm factors.

In some cases, those who want to start an agrotourism business already have the material resources, as they already own a farm, and only need to transform it into a tourism-focused business. In this case, the entrepreneur will have to analyse **current farming activities**. Many entrepreneurs have successfully expanded their farm operations to include agrotourism enterprises by building on what they are already doing. This allows a producer to share knowledge and enthusiasm with visitors, which can make for a more enjoyable and authentic agrotourism experience. Focusing on current production practices will also ensure that the expertise and equipment exists to conduct the operation with minimal additional costs.

On the one hand, it is important to carefully assess your **land and infrastructure** to determine if your agrotourism enterprise is feasible. **Some important questions to ask:**

- Do you rent or own the property?
- Are your soils and climate adequate to produce the crops you intend to produce as a part of your agrotourism operation?
- Does your property have unique features or scenery?
- Are there any potential hazards for visitors? Many farm items may pose safety and health risks, including agricultural machinery, chemical sheds, irrigation ditches, etc.
- Do you have the necessary facilities, including bathrooms, parking, and shelter in case of bad weather? Are there any complementary attractions or landmarks nearby?



On the other hand, you should bear in mind that running a business requires **labor**. For many farms, agrotourism will represent a new business model that will require hiring, training, and managing additional personnel, or supporting the existing employees in acquiring new skill sets. For example, success in agrotourism will require all farm employees to be friendly, courteous, and knowledgeable about the farm, its products, and its production practices.

Employees at a retail market will need to possess basic customer-service skills and be able to make proper change at the cash register. All employees will play an important role in ensuring a safe, enjoyable, and memorable visit to your farm. When hiring people, make sure you understand the legal implications of hiring employees.



Finally, as with any business, it is important to determine your **financial resources**, that is, how much money you are able and willing to risk on a new agrotourism enterprise. Determining the appropriate financial resources requires careful assessment

of the potential costs and benefits of the proposed venture.

Although every operation will be different, some financial needs to consider include:

- Additional labor costs
- Infrastructure costs
- Additional liability insurance coverage
- Amenities (e.g., additional bathroom facilities, handicap access, parking, etc.)
- Marketing costs It will also be important to consider new regulations as you grow your agrotourism business, including:
 - Zoning regulations
 - Safety and health regulations
 - Building codes
 - Insurance requirements
 - Labor laws
 - Environmental regulations
- Resources to assist you as you learn about regulations may include your municipal zoning officer, local fire department, municipal building inspector, farm insurance agent, state department of agriculture, state department of labor, and state department of environmental protection.



Check this video about basic steps to starting an agrotourism business
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GZvD8iwaLY>

We must also consider not only the financial resources available, but also the **financial goals** we want to achieve with our business. It is important to understand the connection between a good idea and a financially feasible idea. Start your new venture without debt; use what you have and determine if you are suited for agrotourism before borrowing money. Develop a business plan to start an agrotourism venture with little capital investment from yourself, friends, family or banking institutions.

Test the venture and then adjust your business plan accordingly. **Find your financial comfort zone by answering these questions:**

- Do I have cash on hand to start a business?
- Will I need to get a loan?
- Do I feel comfortable borrowing money?

Assessing your financial resources can be difficult. In most cases, it's a good idea to involve other family members and outside professionals to assist you in making that decision.

- So, when do you want to start your business? 1-2 years, 1-3 years, 3-5 or more.
- What changes to your property will be necessary to accommodate your new venture?
- Will it be affordable to create the venture using existing resources?
- Is it possible to open your business for a trial run without making any major changes or investments?

In short, to start an agrotourism business, it is not enough to have an idea. The above are some preliminary considerations that we must consider in order to start our small business!

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. **What are your personal skills? Take a look at yourself. What can you do? Fill out the following worksheet to assess your own skills. Answer No, Somewhat, Yes, for the following questions.**

	YES	NO	SOMEWHAT
Do I like meeting and working with all types of people?			
Do I like to entertain and serve strangers?			
Am I patient, persistent, and sensitive to the needs of travelers?			
Can I manage my enterprise while conserving the land?			

Do I have experience with presenting my ideas to many people?			
Am I willing to take responsibility?			

2. Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F)

- The agrotourism business has more to do with agriculture than with tourism. F
- Short-term objectives in my business should be linked to long-term objectives. T
- The first task in starting an agrotourism business is to develop a business plan. F
- A financial need to consider when starting an agrotourism business are environmental regulations. T
- When starting an agrotourism business it is advisable to research the market, your competitors and your collaborators. T
- In an agricultural and tourism business, market trends are more important than the interests of the owner. F

3. Think about your values and list them in the space below. Consider what it means for you to be “successful” in farming, or try distinguishing between personal, economic, environmental, and community values. If you are having trouble putting values onto paper, try drafting a brief essay. Begin by recalling a critical turning point in your life when you were faced with a serious tradeoff: What values guided you?

Personal Values: _____

Economic Values:

Environmental Values:

4. Assess Your Current Situation. The SWOT analysis is a planning tool used by businesses and organizations of all sizes and types. Strengths and weaknesses refer to factors that

are internal to your business. Opportunities and threats refer to your business' external environment. Ultimately, your plans for the future should help you build on your strengths and overcome your weaknesses. Your plan should help you take advantage of opportunities or ward off threats offered by your environment.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

5. Classify the following activities according to the scheme provided at page ---- on tangible and intangible assets (drag and drop)

- jam made on your farm - stargazing on the farm - Workshop on how to make your own jam on the farm. – Brunch on the farm with farm-fresh ingredients - Sale of vegetables at the farm market -

PURE SERVICE

stargazing on the farm

GOOD WITH SOME SERVICE

Sale of vegetables at the farm market

SERVICE WITH SOME GOOD

- Workshop on how to make your own jam on the farm.

PURE GOOD

jam made on your farm sold at Etsy

MIX OF SERVICE AND GOOD

Brunch on the farm with farm-fresh ingredients



Case studies, interviews, real life examples...

Case study 1 - Agrotourism in the Valencian Community, Spain.

The agrotourism offer in the Comunitat Valenciana cannot be understood on its own without the integration of products linked to the world of oil production, olive oil tourism and fish tourism. Other tourism activities related to beekeeping or truffle farming, are also considered a type of agrotourism activities.

Olive oil tourism, the essence of liquid gold

The Valencia Region has a long tradition of olive growing, with autochthonous varieties for the production of 'liquid gold'. Thanks to olive oil tourism you can get to know this reality and its mark in many towns and villages of the region, as well as tasting different olive oils at first hand so that you can learn how to distinguish them and appreciate them in the best possible way.

A good example is La Cooperativa Viver, located in the Valencian region of Viver and Alto Palancia. This cooperative was founded in 1990 and, in the first instance, was dedicated to growing crops for sale. Recently, however, they saw the opportunity to expand the business to include agrotourism activities.



Some of the services and activities offered are: a lunch among the vineyards, with their own products, while the history of the farm is explained to you on a walk, a simple visit to get to know the world of olive oil and how it is produced, an experience with the almond trees in blossom, a tasting in the countryside and a lunch at the Cooperativa de Viver with their wines and local products.

In addition, they offer the products they produce from their crops at their market. Do you think about the transformation of this Cooperative? What strengths do you see in its services? How would you improve the business?



Source: <https://www.cooperativaviver.es/en/>



For further information, visit their website: <https://www.cooperativaviver.es/>

References

https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Vermont-Agrotourism-Collaborative/2019_BestPracticesAgrotourism-FINALDRAFT-lores.pdf

<https://rvs.umn.edu/Uploads/EducationalMaterials/902cc28b-7174-43a4-951b-93ecbd756971.pdf>

LESSON 2.2 AGRICULTURAL BUSSINESS PLAN

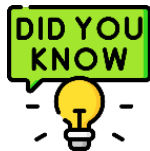


Learning Outcomes:

After completing this Lesson, you will learn:

- The essential steps of starting or expanding an agrotourism business.
- Who is your management team.

- What is your legal structure.
- What regulatory agencies you will work with and how you should meet how you will meet their requirements.
- How to approach business planning in the start-up phase of a small farm.



Did You Know?

- The business plan is essential to minimise the chances of failure of your business.
- The business plan does not only consist of income and expenditure tables, but also takes into account the marketing of your farm or the staff needed to run it.
- Defining the type of entity of your agrotourism business is very important and should be in line with your values. Defining yourself as a cooperative is not the same as defining yourself as an SME.



Let's get to the point!

Now that you have thought through the process you are ready to formally write the business plan. Many people say, I'm not borrowing money and I know what I want to do, so why do I have to write a business plan? Business plans offer an opportunity to think through your operation and plan for the perfect as well as the not so perfect days when you experience hardships due to equipment failure or employee problems. After you create the plan, consult with a banker

even if you don't need the additional funds, it's wise to know whether or not you have a marketable venture.

WHAT IS A BUSINESS PLAN?

A business plan clarifies the values, goals, challenges, and strategies of your agrotourism enterprise, allowing you to work through business decisions before committing resources. It is vital to your success because it provides a clear understanding of your agrotourism enterprise to help guide and focus your financial and management decisions. A business plan also may be helpful in securing financing by providing lenders a look at your financial situation and

expectations. The business plan should be a dynamic document: it should be kept up-to-date and reevaluated periodically to reflect changes in your values, goals, challenges, and strategies.

- A business plan is not a final report. It is a dynamic, ongoing process.
- Writing a business plan seems intimidating. It will definitely take time. But you know most of the information you need to complete one.
- Your business plan is a good way to review your farm's development, state your goals and look ahead to future success. It's a great off-season project, and it is essential to the success of your agrotourism venture.
- A business plan will help you clarify your thinking and, if done thoroughly, will give you a valuable document to present to farm credit agencies and banks to obtain the financing you might need to implement your agrotourism activities.



What are the parts of a Business Plan?

1. Executive summary

The executive summary is placed at the beginning of the business plan but should be the last part to be written. It describes the proposed business, or changes to the existing business, and the sector it is (or will be) part of. The research findings and recommendations should be summarised concisely to provide the reader with the information needed to make any decisions.

2. Mission statement

If possible, the mission statement should be limited to three sentences and include only the key ideas about the *raison d'être* of the enterprise. An example of a mission statement for an agricultural production farm could be: the mission of farm X is to provide fresh and healthy produce to our customers and to provide a safe and pleasant working environment for our employees. If you have more than three sentences, you should try to express them as concisely as possible.

3. Information on the company context

Describe how the different parts of the business integrate: production, sales, business cycles, and a breakdown of management.

4. Organizational aspects

Who will run the business, who are the directors in the business? What are the skills of the management team and how do their different responsibilities make maximum use of their abilities. What is the chain of command in terms of decision making? Also use this section to identify how the management team, and taking on employees will help maximise strengths, while addressing identified weaknesses to help improve the business. Finally, which of the business structures will you choose to operate through?

Types of Business Entities

Type of Entity	Does This Limit Liability?	How Are Profits Taxed?	What Is Transferred Most Easily?	Does It Support Raising Capital?
Sole Proprietorship	No	Taxed as an individual	Individual assets	Less appropriate
General Partnership	No, but may elect to become a limited liability partnership	Partnership taxation	Capital interest	Appropriate when structured as a limited partnership
Limited Liability Company (LLC)	Yes	May choose to be taxed as a partnership or as a corporation. Single-member LLC is a "disregarded entity"	Units	Yes
Corporation	Yes	May choose to be taxed as a Partnership (S Corp) or as a Corporation (C Corp)	Shares	Yes
Nonprofit	Limited liability for members and uncompensated board members	Tax exempt	Transfer of assets to other than nonprofit is prohibited	Yes
Cooperatives	Limited liability for members	Taxed as a cooperative	Transfer restricted to other eligible cooperative members (farmers)	Yes

SOURCE: A Legal Guide to the Business of Farming in Vermont, University of Vermont, 2006

5. Market research and strategies

Spell out your market analysis, including sales forecasts, deadlines and milestones, advertising, public relations and how you stack up against your competition. If you can't produce a lot of data analysis, you can provide testimonials from existing customers. We encourage you to start considering an assessment of the markets you serve and your strategies for serving them. These are the key questions you need to answer:

- Product: What is our product?
- Customers: Which markets do you serve?
- Unique Features: What are the unique features that distinguish your product?
- Distribution: How do we distribute our product?
- Price: How do we price our products?
- Market and Industry: How does our market change?

After answering these questions and carrying out market research for the product and service you want to offer you will:

- Identify and land business opportunities.
- Know the profile and commercial behaviour of your target customer. You will know their interest in the solution or product you propose to solve their problems, the price they are willing to pay or their usual points of purchase.
- Identify the different segments or niches into which the market is divided, as you may be addressing several customer profiles.
- Determine the current and future size of the market and the level of competition. It is important to determine whether your market is growing or shrinking and whether it is attracting a high volume of new competitors.
- Know your competition well: who they are, what they sell, at what prices, how they differentiate themselves and what their competitive advantages are.
- Anticipate the reactions of competitors and suppliers to your product launch and advertising campaigns.
- Identify possible risk elements that could radically transform the sector, such as the emergence of a new technology or legislation.



Find out more tips on Market Research for your Agricultural Product/Service:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wb7dKHanyu4>

6. Marketing strategy

Marketing is a process of ensuring that customers' needs are identified and met in order to generate value for the business. Strong marketing can set you apart and ensure that your outstanding products and experiences are enjoyed by those they are intended for. The "Five P's of Marketing" give structure to a marketing plan and encourage you to be inclusive as you consider your product, price, placement, promotion, and people.



PRODUCT What do you offer to your target market? Goods: Vegetables, meat, value-added products, maple, baked goods, handcrafted items... v Experiences: Tours, classes, farm stays, dinners, tastings, playdates, festivals, weddings, retreats...

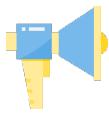


PRICE What do you charge for your products? The prices you charge for your products are influenced by the costs of production (your products and those of your competitors) and by the willingness to pay of your customers. When there are many producers selling the same product, without a significant difference in quality, the price is immediately set at the same level. Originally, this would be at a level that meets all costs

and there is a profit, at least for the most efficient producers. Competition sets the market price ceiling that any product can reach. The more intense the competition, the more difficult it will be to charge a price above par.



PLACE: With an agrotourism business, one goal is to sell farm experiences which can only be offered on the farm. Another goal may be to stay connected with farmers through sales of other products after they have left your farm. Therefore, your farm itself is a distribution channel, and your website with an online shop, or online event registration system may be others.



PROMOTION: The strategies you use to raise awareness of the product or experiences offered to your target markets. There are an overwhelming number of places where you can display your farm brand and many methods for promoting your farm's offerings. Prioritize your promotion strategies around your customers, based on what you learn from your customer profile. Where and how are they accessing information?

Spread the word about your agrotourism offerings! Get attention through...

- Social media
- Press releases
- Your website



POSITIONING: The process of creating a unique impression for the operation in the minds of your customers. Start by asking yourself, "How do I want my customers to describe my farm?" What adjectives would you want them to use? "Friendly"? "Casual"? "Sustainable"? This process is commonly referred to as brand development. Once you've determined what kind of "brand" you have, make sure all your marketing materials reflect that brand.



To learn more about how to market your business on social media, please visit:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rmwl_QgcPQc

7. Financial strategy

The financial section should include accurate expectations of cost for every step toward establishing the new business.

- Startup costs (one-time expenses).
- Monthly expenses (repetitive costs).
- Sources and uses of funding.
- Balance sheets (initial and projected up to three years).

- Projected cash flow (monthly for the first year and quarterly for years two and three).
- Profit and cost forecasts (annually for three years).
- Break-even analysis (when do you expect to profit?).
- Three prior years of statements for your current business (if applicable).
- Personal financial statement of the owner or owners.

8. Exit strategy

An essential part of a good financial plan is knowing when to quit and having an exit strategy that specifies situations in which the business or parts of the business would close. The economic viability or desirability of certain farm activities will change over time, and parts of the business may become less profitable; sometimes even a good idea simply runs its course. A successful agrotourism business will adapt and be responsive to evolving market opportunities. You have confidently chosen a final whole farm strategy based on your thorough research and evaluation. Now, one of your last steps in the planning process is to develop a contingency plan—an action plan for how to respond should conditions within and outside the business change.

Contingency planning is important to assure that your business plan will be implemented smoothly. Throughout the planning process you've used your research to inform and make a number of realistic assumptions about the industry, prices, productivity and labor. A contingency plan can help you prepare for those situations when things don't go as planned—when market or economic conditions that are out of your control change. A contingency plan can also help you know when it's time to exit the business if it is not successful.

Contingency plans need not be long or complicated. If you intend to share your written business plan with lenders or other external business partners, contingency plans simply need to convince readers that you've done a thorough job of planning and that the business is prepared to respond successfully should internal and external conditions change.



To learn more about how to make a Business Plan visit this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6pvyoCGW6U&embeds_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wellersaccountants.co.uk%2Fblog%2F8-key-elements-of-a-business-plan-you-need-to-know&source_ve_path=Mjg2NjQ&feature=emb_logo



To learn more about Risk Management and Contingency Plans visit this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYz-n6cNbiQ>

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F)

- Market research and strategies are important to understand the context of your business, the competition and their strategies. T
- A business plan is a final report. It should be long and full of technical information. F
- The “Five P’s of Marketing” are Price, Product, Promotion, Place, and Premium. F
- The financial section of a Business Plan should include accurate expectations of cost for every step toward establishing the new business. T

2. Welcome to “Helsinki Farm” company. Heidi and Mark created this family business from a disused farm. They started growing produce and now offer experiences, accommodation and a market to buy their products. Below you have an image with the 5Ps of the Marketing Mix: product, price, place, promotion and positioning. You also have several notes with policies that “Helsinki Farm” could do and that can be associated to each of the four above. You will have to move to each of the boxes to relate them. Don't cheat!

- 1) television advertising campaign
- 2) Christmas discount campaign
- 3) changes in the presentation of the jams sold at the market
- 4) sale of products from the web
- 5) investment in the farm's infrastructure
- 6) creation of a logo and a slogan for the business

<p>PRODUCT</p> <p>changes in the presentation of the jams sold at the market</p> <p>sale of products from the web</p>	<p>PROMOTION</p> <p>television advertising campaign</p> <p>Christmas discount campaign</p>	<p>POSITIONING</p> <p>creation of a logo and a slogan for the business</p>
<p>PRICE</p> <p>Christmas discount campaign</p>	<p>PLACE</p> <p>investment in the farm's infrastructure</p>	

3. Choose the correct answer:

1. How can a business plan be used to minimize the risks of a business?
 - a. It tells an entrepreneur exactly how much profit they will make.
 - b. It shows an entrepreneur how many products they will definitely sell.
 - c. **It allows an entrepreneur to make informed decisions about their business.**

2. ____ the strong and weak points of any firms in competition with yours and look for marketplace opportunities:
 - a. Evaluate
 - b. **Investigate**
 - c. Eliminate

3. Which section of the business plan should be completed last?
 - a. Finance detail

- b. Marketing budget
 - c. About your business
 - d. **Executive summary**
4. Why create a Business Plan?
- a. To get finance
 - b. To impress your mum
 - c. **To set out clear goals for your start-up**
 - d. To make sure you know what you are doing.



Case studies, interviews, real life examples...

Case Study 2 - Agrotourism in Ebbio, Tuscan, Italy.



Ebbio is a restored 13th century farm beautifully transformed in a tranquil spot for retreats and holidays. Nestled inside an evergreen forest, it sits on an extinct volcano that was sacred to the Etruscans and overlooks the medieval walled town of Monteriggioni.

Ebbio's family includes Sibilla, Francesca, Nyshi, Bardhyl, Jane, Elkabira, as well as geese, chickens, horses, donkeys, dogs, cats and plenty of butterflies. The country ways of old Italy are preserved here, where we dedicate ourselves to the organic cultivation of our olive trees, vineyards, fruit, vegetables and herbs, which we then use in preparing our home-made vegetarian meals. Among the activities that can be carried out on the farm, we find the following:

Cooking workshop

An introduction into the culture of seasonal, balanced and healthy cooking. We mix our organic ingredients, creating unique tasteful combinations inspired by traditional gastronomy.



Historic hiking route

The Via Francigena is the ancient path that has connected Canterbury and Rome since the Middle Ages. Nowadays it remains a pilgrimage path, as part of the Way of Saint James (Camino de Santiago) but also presents a different way to discover Tuscany. Take a journey through time in close contact with the ancient surroundings and local shops. Ebbio is just 800 metres away from the starting point of the route from Monteriggioni to Siena; the route from Monteriggioni to San Gimignano starts just over 1 km away.



Cooking workshop

An introduction into the culture of seasonal, balanced and healthy cooking. We mix our organic ingredients, creating unique tasteful combinations inspired by traditional gastronomy.



If you want to know more about Ebbio click on this link: <https://www.ebbio.it/about-us-2/>



Check how agrotourism is in Crete, Greece, in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJRjLXed5M>

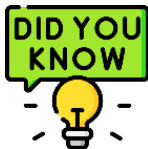
LESSON 2.3 ADAPTING YOUR BUSINESS TO TOURISTS' NEEDS



Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this lesson, you will have learned:

- The different activities that can be carried out in an agrotourism business.
- How to adapt your facilities to visitors.
- How to train workers to provide a good service to customers.



Did You Know?

- The most successful agrotourism farms are based on quality, authentic experiences, not simply sales of products.
- A good greeting by a well-organized and easily identifiable staff (wearing farm t-shirts and/or hats) is important in making your customers feel welcome.
- If your farm is well organized and well run and customers feel welcome and appreciated, you will get repeat business.



Let's get to the point!

OFFERING HIGH-QUALITY ON-FARM EXPERIENCES

Lessons one and two addressed the preconditions for developing agrotourism business and how to organise your resources to ensure its success through a business plan. In this lesson, we will see, once the business is set up, how to adapt it to the needs and tastes of the client.

What do visitors want when they come to your farm? The most successful agrotourism farms are based on quality, authentic experiences, not simply sales of products.

A quality on-farm experience can be as simple as feeding grain to some goats or picking berries or as elaborate as an English tea, summertime bonfire, or all-day festival. **If your visitors have an enjoyable experience, they are more likely to spend money at your farm and come back for more!** Keep it real. Families that are compressing their vacation time into weekends and who are traveling by car are looking for authentic people and experiences. They want to meet the farmer. They see farmers as honest hardworking people. They might be envious of your farm and land and be completely ignorant of how hard you and your family work to keep it. Make sure your interactions are friendly and accommodating.

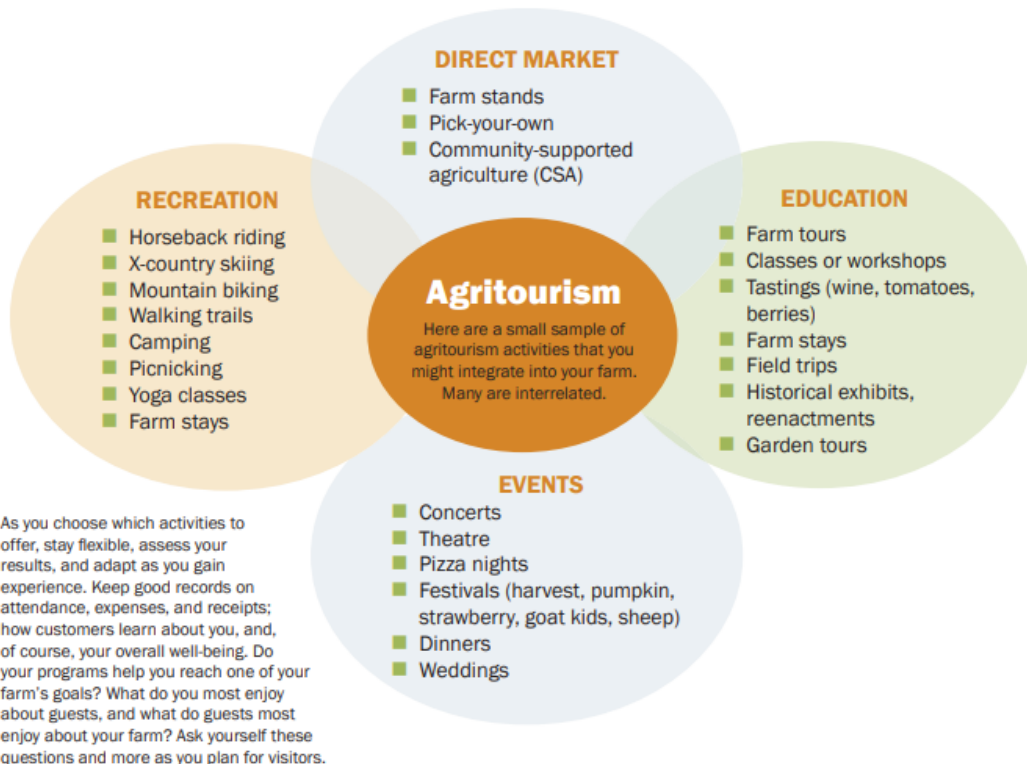
Be yourself. It can be another agrotourism farm near you, another popular tourist attraction that is not farm related—it can even be the TV and the Internet! Rather than throw up your hands in frustration, think about what competitors offer and what they can't. Before you spend money marketing your farm, think about the ways you might be able to collaborate with a nearby competitor. Compare your enterprise with theirs and figure out what you can do to gain an advantage.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What activities can people do in our region?
- Do they compete with me or complement me?
- Would my potential customers want to do these activities?
- What makes me different from others?
- Are there ways to collaborate with nearby 'competitors' to increase our business?
- What's so special about me?

Authenticity in agrotourism activities could include a slide near a corn field, a farm gift shop where you can decorate animal-shaped cookies, and a blow-up pumpkin bouncy house near a pumpkin field. However, as the industry has grown many farmers have remained committed to offering activities that authentically represent farming. Visitor experiences don't have to be complicated. Guests will relish the opportunity to see a cow up close, meet a chicken, watch a pig take a nap, or taste a freshly picked carrot. All these activities will influence how they understand farms and food, and how they value farms and farmers.

The activities you can offer on your farm should be in accordance with the resources available and the demand of the visitors. Moreover, they can be divided into several areas and targeted at different sectors. Here you can find some examples:



They're here! What do we do now?

A good greeting by a well-organized and easily identifiable staff (wearing farm t-shirts and/or hats) is important in making your customers feel welcome. Some of your first-time visitors may have gotten lost on the way and may feel frustrated. A friendly greeting tells the customer they are in the right place and puts them at ease.



Sometimes customers ask questions that have obvious answers, or that seem stupid to you. They are not really asking for an answer, they are giving you permission to talk to them. Rather than sounding frustrated or annoyed at the fiftieth time you are asked, "Is this fresh picked?" use the question as an opportunity to tell the customer what makes your farm special. "At our

farm we get up before dawn to pick our produce. The cool morning temperatures mean the produce is going to be at its freshest and last much longer than something trucked in from far away.” Make sure that employees know the history of your farm and can explain your ideology and practices including safety measures. If you or an employee doesn’t know the answer, say you will get it for them and be sure to follow through later that day with a phone call or email.

Customer service is exhibited both in the way you present your farm and in how you treat visitors. If you have paid staff members, they are likely your biggest expense, but also your greatest asset.

Create a sales-oriented environment

Visitors that are comfortable stay longer and spend more. Think of what makes you comfortable when you visit a farm or business. At a minimum provide:

- Clean toilets
- Fresh drinking water
- Shady spots for parents and children to sit
- A safe play area for children with farm-themed toys
- Clear and easy to navigate parking
- Post road signs that lead to your farm and clearly state your hours.
- Hire enough staff to answer questions, speed checkouts and carry customer purchases to cars.
- Place baskets and bags in a convenient place so customers can easily get them.

If your farm is well organized and well run and customers feel welcome and appreciated, you will get repeat business. But consider other techniques to get customers to come back. Incentive programs have potential. Some farms offer “frequent picker” cards. You get the pounds you picked marked down each time you come and after you have picked the correct amount, you get a good discount on further picking. Offering different activities over the season (picking, festivals, workshops, demos) can keep people interested in your farm and what you do.

Safe Environments and Facilities

You should ensure that your property and facilities are well maintained and in compliance with zoning, health, and environmental regulations. It is useful as well to create a risk-management plan for your farm. Be sure that your farm has adequate staff to provide necessary information to visitors, as well as the infrastructure for basic services such as parking, transportation, signage, and restrooms. Tell your insurance agent about all the activities that you are offering, and make sure you have adequate coverage.

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Think about your business, what activities could you develop? Write them down and classify them according to the categories in figure X on X page.

2. Read the following description of an agrotourism business and think of some improvements they could implement to make their services more customer-oriented:

Paco Johns Farm is a small business located in Southern Europe. Paco, the owner, comes from a family with a long tradition of growing pumpkins, olives and tomatoes for self-consumption. These products are typical in his area, and the surrounding fields are also grown and distributed in local markets. Paco has a large house next to the crops, which nobody lives in as it is very old and dilapidated. At the moment, he only offers fresh produce at the local market and by-products (tomato jam, pumpkin pie, oil) on site at his place.

3. Drag these activities into the corresponding category:

DIRECT MARKET Sale of home-made tomato jam	
RECREATION Wine-tasting of wines produced in our vineyards Horse riding.	Celebrate your daughter's birthday at "AgriGreen Brothers" facilities. Horse riding.
EDUCATION Discover the farm animals' workshop for children from 3 to 6 years old. Grow your own potatoes' experience at Rushmore Farm.	Sale of homemade tomato jam Winetasting of wines produced in our vineyards Discover the farm animals' workshop for children from 3 to 6 years old.
EVENTS Celebrate your daughter's birthday at "AgriGreen Brothers" facilities.	Grow your own potatoes' experience at Rushmore Farm.

4. You discover a business very similar to yours two streets away. What strategies could you choose to differentiate yourself?

- a) Be more price competitive
- b) Offer experiences that are different from theirs
- c) Spreading fake rumours in town about the business**
- d) Invest in a marketing campaign
- e) Report the competitor business to animal inspection and control.**
- f) Ally myself with other businesses to compete unfairly and bring this one down.**
- g) Renovate my facilities



Case studies, interviews, real life examples...

Case study 3- Apivilloros, bee tourism. Villoros, Castellón, Spain.



This agrotourism business offers the unforgettable experience of becoming a beekeeper for a day.

At Apivilloros they introduce you to the world of bees, which you'll enjoy with all five senses, surrounded by thousands of them.

Source: <https://www.viuelports.com/es/apivilloros>

In the following pictures you can find some educational resources used on north American farms to involve children in the experience. Keeping children entertained while they learn is beneficial for both them and their parents, who can enjoy free time and relax on the business site.

Self-Guided Educational Experiences: Some Ideas for Your Farm



Color wheel (above) and Scavenger Hunt (at right), both from *Cultivating Joy & Wonder: Educating for Sustainability in Early Childhood Through Nature, Food, and Community*. Shelburne Farms, 2013.



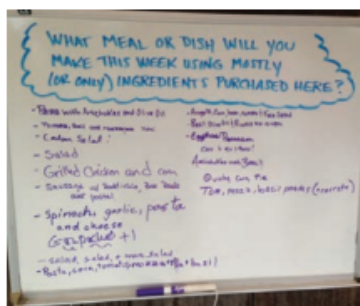
Chalkboard question and answer, Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary, Lincoln, MA.



An interpretive walk at Spring Brook Farm, Reading, VT.

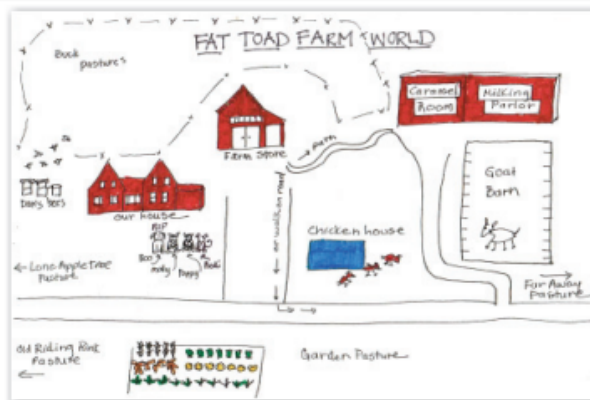
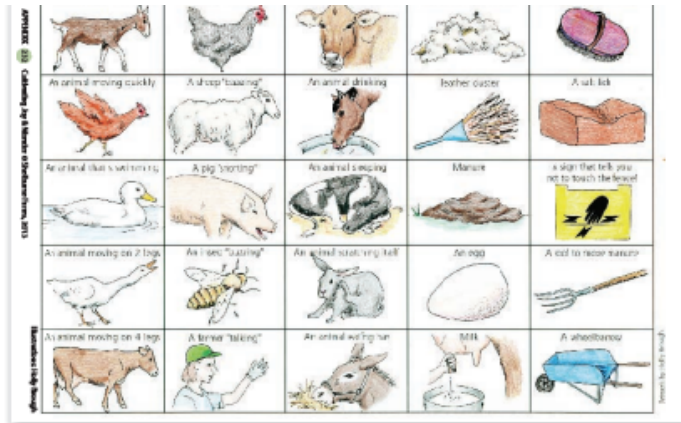


Someday Farm in East Dorset, VT, tucks activities into mailboxes around the property.



Killdeer Farm Stand in Norwich, VT, writes a question on a dry erase board each day. Customers answer it.

(Right) When Fat Toad Farm in Brookfield, VT, offered tours of its goat milking operation, staff would pass out this map so that guests could navigate the farmstead.



Looking for educational resources?

The Farm-Based Education Network is a free member network established to strengthen and support the work of educators, farmers, and community leaders who are providing access and experiences of all kinds on productive, working farms. The FBEN can connect you with farm-based education resources.

There are also many helpful websites, publications, and workshops.

- <https://www.farmbasededucation.org/>
- <https://lifelab.org/>
- <https://edibleschoolyard.org/network>
- <https://www.farmtoschool.org/>

MODULE 3. PRACTICAL STEPS: HOW TO RECOGNIZE ACTIVITIES OF THE RURAL LIFE THAT COULD BECOME TOURIST EXPERIENCES AND HOW TO DEVELOP A TOURIST OFFER BASED ON RURAL LIFE EXPERIENCES.

HENRIK ERLINGSON AND HÅKAN HULEBO, STORA SEGERSTAD
NATURBRUKSCENTRUM

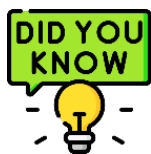
LESSON 3.1 RURAL LIFESTYLE



Learning Outcomes

After completing this Lesson, learners will:

- Know how to describe rural and rural lifestyle
- Know how to define Agrotourism
- Reflect and discuss what is 'urban' and 'rural' and the differences and demarcations between these concepts



Did You Know?

- In addition to the official Swedish language, Sweden also has official minority languages, such as Sami and Finnish.
- Tap water is drinkable everywhere in Sweden.
- Littering is a legal offence in Sweden



Let's get to the point!

To find a suitable starting point, we may start to define some of the key concepts of this section. What is significant for "the rural life"? What words do we use to describe "a tourist experience" and "Agrotourism" as a phenomenon?

A tourist experience, what is that? The word suggests that it is not only an event. An experience is something more, that leaves traces in the individual, in memories and future expectancies (Larsen, 2007).

Others points to what people remember is the unexpected, personal experiences that is unique and different from others' experiences (Park, Santos 2016).

From PR1 final report we find two short definitions of agrotourism:

"Agrotourism is a specific type of rural tourism in which the hosting house must be integrated into an agricultural estate, inhabited by the proprietor, allowing visitors to take part in agricultural or complementary activities on the property" (Marques, 2006)

"Agrotourism is any practice developed on a working farm with the purpose of attracting visitors" (Barbieri & Mshenga, 2008). So, basically, a farm that welcomes visitors.

Agrotourism belongs to the category whose main motive is the encounter with nature and rural life (travelling, observing, exercising), together with ecotourism, ski tourism, mountain tourism and sports and rural tourism

A farm or a real estate in a rural area are often the base of rural tourism and agrotourism. What is "rural" then, and a "rural lifestyle"? That may be difficult to agree upon, since there is no consensus in this matter. Even though, rural development is one of the main goals of the EU development policy, still there does not exist unified approach how to define and measure it (Clark, et al, 1997)

One approach to define is to identify urban areas first, rural is then defined as the territory that is not included in the urban. Good decision-making in choosing an appropriate rural definition requires an understanding of what urban is and how urban in turn determines what rural is. What do you think about that approach?

There exists many similar terms associated with the development as rural, regional, remote, local, peripheral etc. which make definition difficult.

There are also many differences among EU countries in economic, social, cultural and environmental factors, causing there is no consensus on how to define rural areas and at what level: local (usually municipalities) or regional.

To put some numbers to it, a densely populated area has 10,000 inhabitants or more, but can vary. (A limit of 3000 inhabitants is often used in Sweden for example), (Landsbygdsdefinitioner i Sverige och andra länder Glesbygdsverket, 2008. Definitions of rural areas in Sweden and other countries). Then, rural is everything below these numbers. Although there exist many definitions of rural areas, the most commonly used definition is the definition of the European Commission, based on Eurostat and the OECD. This regional approach defines rural areas based on 1 km² grid cells where predominantly rural regions are areas with share of population living in rural grid cells is 50% and more. These areas have to also fulfil two conditions: maximum population density threshold of 300 inhabitants per km² and maximum population of 5,000 inhabitants in contiguous cells below the density threshold (Eurostat, 2015). So, the topic can be very complicated, if you want to. We can also settle with a less complicated definition:

Rural: all areas that are not considered a city or densely populated area.

Rural lifestyle

Rural residents are often portrayed as self-sufficient and independent. The connection to agriculture is strong since the agricultural lifestyle has shaped most urban areas for a very long time. The result is that rural inhabitants often have a reputation of being self-reliant and independent. This is beyond the quantifiable characteristics often used, such as inhabitants per km², to determine what is rural. (Warren, Smalley, ed, 2014)

So, in conclusion, rural lifestyle may contain: *Connection to agriculture or agriculture heritage, connection to skills that can make one self-reliant* and this in an area that is *less densely populated. A connection to nature.* There you have some of the characteristics of a rural lifestyle.

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Comprehension questions

We know from the text above that researchers define "rural", "rural lifestyle" and even "agrotourism" in many different ways. There is not only one right way to do it. And now, let us try to do things even worse ;), by adding your own views on the matter! Describe what a rural countryside is to you!

How do you know when you are in a rural area?

What can you find there? What can you find that you don't find in a city?

What is the best thing about the countryside in your point of view?

Put yourself in an agrotourism customer's position! For example a middle class family from a suburb. What do you think **they** consider the best thing about the countryside? Do they define "countryside" or "rural" the same way you do?

Can you think of at least 5 reasons why a person from a city should plan a rural vacation?

2. Decide whether the following sentences are true or false.

- Rural is a complex area! (T)
- A house in the suburbs is often the base of an agrotourism business (F)
- A tourist experience leaves traces in the tourist's memory and future expectancies (T)



Case studies, interviews, real life examples

Case Study 1 - Tiraholm fishfarm

(see PR 1 final report "A frame work of a training for young Europeans in agrotourism" page 9)

The Tiraholm estate is a farm with an old lineage and exciting history, and is located on a peninsula stretching out into Lake Bolmen. Today the Ekwall family runs fishing in the lake. The fish is caught, processed, sold and served here at Tiraholm.

The oldest current record of Tiraholm is the name Tidhra, which dates back to 1414 when the squire Peter Gudmundsson was head of the farm. Eneroth, Porat and Löfgren are other family names of those that have owned the property before it was sold 1896 to a German sawmill. In 1907 Tiraholm was bought by Strömsnäs Bruks AB.

The tale of Ebbe Skammelson tells of the mystique surrounding Tirahol, which stretches back to 11th century.

In the early 1920's, Maja, a woman from Stockholm, contracted tuberculosis and needed fresh air to improve her health. Doctors were consulted and she was given advice to spend time by Lake Bolmen, where the air was clean and healthy. So, her husband Per Ekwall bought the farm Tiraholm in 1928. The couple had four children and following this, their son Gustaf along with his wife Theresia became owners of the farm twenty years later.

The fishing

Gustaf and Theresia had a conventional farm predominantly dealing with milk production at Tiraholm, in addition to this; they were doing a little fishing as a side interest. At the end of the 1950's Gustaf started to drive to the market in Ljungby with freshly caught fish to sell, especially the famous Bolmen whitefish, but also pike, eel and perch. This extra income was a blessing for him and his wife since by now their family had grown and were parents to six children.

The youngest child was Nisse and together with his wife Vicky he took over the farm in 1981 with fishing as the main occupation. His cousin Hugo, who is a fisherman in lake Mälaren, helped Nisse and Vicky to get started fishing with trap nets. Trap nets are a sustainable fishing method whereby the trap can be left in the water for the whole season. The nets are emptied regularly and protected species, or undersize fish are returned to the waters unharmed.

Along with the takeover of the farm, Nisse and Vicky also started to farm Rainbow trout in the lake. Gradually the farm has expanded over the years with a processing facility, smokers and newer boats.

Farm shop and restaurant

As Vicky and Nisse settled into their busy role as fish farmers, they extended their family with the addition of three children, Jens, Malin and Jonas. Amidst all of this hard work and the

pressures of a new family, they were able to open one of Sweden's first farm shops in 1988. The shop specialised in smoked, pickled, filleted and fresh fish from Bolmen long before the phrase "locally produced food" became popular.

The shop developed a good reputation and in order to broaden the range on offer, the couple began experimenting with pies and burgers. From here, the next step of starting a small restaurant was visible on the horizon, but there was still some way to go. In 1998 Tiraholm's fish restaurant opened, becoming what is probably the only purely inland fish restaurant in Sweden, and with a completely local touch. Pike, pike, eel and rainbow are cooked according to your order.

In 2006, the need for a small function room at Bolmen had presented itself. After storm Gudrun had devastated large parts of the farm's forest, storm-felled timber was cleared and milled. During that winter a pub and ice cream cafe was built using the timber, as an extension to the existing restaurant.

As the popularity of the restaurant grew, the number of visitors to Tiraholm continued to increase, and in 2010 the restaurant room was expanded following a decision made by the children Jens, Malin and Jonas about a greater involvement in their parent's venture, which facilitated this further expansion.

The restaurant's capacity was increased from its previous 40 indoor seats to today's level at just over a 100.

In 2012, the first "Christmas Table" was served for guests at Tiraholm. The event was very much appreciated and enjoyed by all – with the skill of the chefs and a lot of creative ingenuity, we now offer about 40 dishes consisting of freshwater fish and a tasty selection of game meat from the forests in the immediate area.

Hotel, conference centre and research station

In early summer 2018, the hotel in Tiraholm was ready for use. The thoughtful and delicate work by the local craftsmen resulted in our red hotel building, complete with water-inspired rooms and conference suite. Having overnight accommodation in our back yard of course means a more complete experience here on Bolmen's shores. Tiraholm also takes great pride in the fact that the region's companies and organisations hold their important meetings and host their clients and partners within the "Småland backdrop".

The facility also forms the base for the educational project "Think H2O" that the research institute "Sydvatten" has been conducting at Bolmen for high school students for some time.

Youth from southern Sweden come to Bolmen to learn the multidisciplinary aspects of our most important resource; water. The close cooperation with the research station, which has existed on the farm for some time, and is run by Sweden Water Research, makes Tiraholm and Bolmen a hub for water and lake fish related issues in southern Sweden.

Over the years, Tiraholm has been grateful to be nominated for, and receive various awards for their company, environmental thinking and commitment to the countryside. Tiraholms Fisk is owned and operated by the Ekwall family. They have great help from some year-round employees as well as a wonderful crowd of more than 35 seasonal workers from the area.

What do you think about this transformation into a fish farm? What strengths do you see in its services? How would you improve the business?

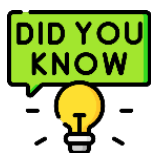
LESSON 3.2 WHO IS THE TOURIST AND WHAT DOES HE WANT TO DO?



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this Lesson, learners will be able to

- Categorise different types of agritourists based on their request of activities
- Find the activities in your neighbourhood that are suitable for your customers and your place
- Increase the value of your place by cooking, storytelling and a place to sleep



Did You Know?

- " By choosing locally produced food on your rural vacation, you support the local economy and contribute to local food culture and sustainability (Sims, 2009).

- " In 2020, rural destinations and neighbourhood tourism raised their visit frequency and played a big role in tourism recovery after the Covid-19 lockdowns. (NY Times, 2020) (Reitano et al, 2021)



Let's get to the point!

When we talk about agrotourism we should always remember that the biggest resource we have is the customer. In this chapter we will try to figure out who the customer is and what needs and wishes he or she can have.

Try to identify the customers you are going to address. Is it the backpacker type of budget travellers, or even migrant guest workers? They might like to earn some money or at least work for food and bedding. They tend to look for bigger farms with a lot of seasonal work such as berry picking and grape harvest. They have no need for other activities.

The second group of travellers could be the families consisting of parents and younger kids (pre-teenagers). This group might need some activities not necessarily connected to agriculture work. But it's typical with activities like feeding the calves, chasing hens and picking eggs. The third group of customers is coming from the same social environment. For example, a workplace. They come primarily for the social activities like competitions, hot bathtub and good food. The 4th group can be couples coming primarily for enjoying the tranquillity of the countryside. The fifth group are people who come for learning anything from visiting a tractor museum to baking a traditional cheesecake.

There are, of course, many other ways to group customers in agrotourism. This is just the first attempt to help to better understand who the customer is

Now when you have defined the customer you have to go to the second part of the treasure hunt, defining the activities that you will offer. First of all, visit other agrotourism actors. In the neighbourhood in your country and if possible, in other parts of the world. During our work with the treasure hunt project we have found at least 10 "commandments" that should be applied when planning or organising for agrotourism activity. 7 of these commandments are dealt with in this lesson. The three last ones concern not only the activity itself, but also how you get there, the means of transport. They are dealt with in the next lesson.

These are the pillars or commandments to take into account when you go for “treasure hunting in your neighbours’ backyard”

1) *Visit neighbours – find the treasures.* Is he hiding something in the backyard? What do you or your place have that is exotic to visitors?

2) *Go beyond the great sights –find your own diamonds* It is not the sunset in Santorini that is so special, it is watching all the people that gather for the sunset that is worth seeing , it might also be the little dog you meet on a trip that stays in your memory

3) *Show your own disadvantages - they might be gold to others.* Open up your backyard to the visitors –if your place is full of mosquitoes- build a mosquito museum - If your place is cold – build an ice hotel

4) *Fight the placelessness – make your destination a “place”.* Make sure there is something unique with you destination than cannot be copied and set up elsewhere

5) *Produce local - Cook global.* Serve your guest with traditional or international dishes, but make sure you use local products as much as possible [Farm-to-Fork at Michelin-Star Restaurant Grön in Helsinki - YouTube](#)

6) *Tell a story – increase the value of your or your guests findings (provenance)* [How to tell great stories on tour? Story telling advice for guides! - YouTube](#)

7) *Provide a resting place– listen to the silence.* Try to make the guest stay overnight – they will spend more and enjoy a good night’s sleep and the tranquillity of the country side

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1.Comprehension questions.

- How many groups of travellers are defined in the text passage?
- Can you think of any other groups of travellers that would be interested in agrotourism?
- Which group of tourists would you yourself be interested to work with?

2. Decide whether the following sentences are true or false

- Backpackers are willing to pay a lot for food and bedding.(F)
- Berry picking can be a typical job for Migrant workers.(T)
- Teenagers travelling with their parents often, like to pick eggs and chase hens.(F)
- Work mates like to compete with each other(T)



Case studies, interviews, real life examples

Case Study 2 - Skullaryd moosefarm

(see PR 1 final report “A frame work of a training for young Europeans in agrotourism”)

The Moose Park is run by Erik Öster.

Erik is 24 years old and he has since he was a child been close to nature and animals. Going to farm school (Stora Segerstad) was the obvious choice. During study the idea was born to expand the current deer farm which his grandfather started in 1970, with moose. Work started in 2012 and finally in summer 2014 the park is open to the public.

The family farm dates back to the Viking era and there are cairns and a rune stone close by the park. Most buildings on the farm are from the mid 1800s but the oldest buildings are from the beginning of the 1700s. The Moose park is surrounded by beautiful Swedish nature.

The vision...

One of the aims of the Moose Park is to give people an opportunity to visit the countryside to experience wild native animals.

A further aim is to use the area for the study of ecology and the relationship between Swedish cloven-hoofed game in cooperation with schools. It is important to remember and respect that these are wild animals.

Therefore, the animals are kept in large enclosures that are as natural to them as possible. All animals are reared in captivity, but they are still wild species.

The moose is the king of the forest, and we strongly believe that it is only natural that they have access to woodland, just as it is for our red deer to have access to marshland.

This means that your experience at Skullaryd Moose Park will be special. Here the animals can be viewed in their natural environment.

What do you think about this transformation into a moose farm? What strengths do you see in its services? How would you improve the business

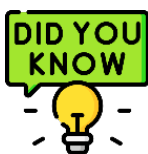
LESSON 3.3 HOW TO MAKE TRAVEL A PART OF THE EXPERIENCE



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this Lesson, learners will be able to

- Make the traveller slow down the pace while getting to the final destination
- Suggest alternative, more environment friendly means of transport to and from your destination



Did you know?

- Travelling by train domestically in Sweden is a very good choice, since the power for most trains comes from renewable resources
- Sweden has the concept "Bo på Lantgård" (Stay at Farm) This organisation is fairly small with approximately 100 farms connected
- "Naturturismföretagen" (Nature Based tourism companies) has 350 businesses as members and is Sweden's way of organising companies with Nature-based tourism



Let's get to the point!

Agrotourism is often connected to sustainable and environmentally friendly activities. However, the transport to the rural experience is often not considered when calculating the environmental impact of the activity. Becoming an eco-friendly traveller doesn't mean you have to cycle everywhere. Sustainable and green travel is about understanding the environmental impact of our behaviour. With that understanding, we can change the way we travel for the benefit of the planet.

Green travel and ecotourism will open you up to amazing travel experiences you've never imagined. Travelling this way means you'll know you're doing your bit for our beautiful world (staff Accuweather). The longer time you spend on the journey, the longer time you tend to spend on the final destination. Here are the remaining commandments of agrotourism, dealing with travel.

8) Go slow - skip the highways (and the fly ways) – walk or go by bike, horseback, boat, train, bus or full car. If you have to fly, choose to make as few starts and stops as possible, direct flights may require longer ground transports to the bigger airports. But that is in most cases preferable (according to some calculations a ferry is more harmful to the environment than other vehicles- a sailing ship would be less harmful) Slow tourism aims to reduce travellers' carbon footprint by slowing down the entire experience. This could mean a tourist uses train services to make their way to the destination, rather than relying on the speed of planes. It also means spending more time enjoying each activity, which can reduce carbon emissions associated with local travel.

9) Enjoy the journey – make it your goal. If you go slow, you are likely to meet new people and places you wouldn't have seen elsewhere. "Slow tourism is characterised by reducing mobility and by taking time to explore local history and culture, while supporting the environment. The traveller's main goals are relaxation, self-reflection, escape, novelty seeking, engagement and discovery." (- Journal of Travel Research) In addition, slow travel can help avoid situations where

a location becomes overrun with cars, entertainment venues, and other offerings. This helps to avoid rapid cultural shifts, especially in smaller towns and cities.

10) Travel less- stay longer– experience more. By travelling shorter distances you can spend more time at your destination. For travellers, slow travel provides many benefits, including increased engagement with the locations being visited, more opportunities for self-reflection, and more time to enjoy travel experiences and take things in properly. In many ways, slow travel can be viewed as a potential antidote to some of the negative traits of mass tourism.

Check this video to learn more about slow tourism:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2BsZFUEPXs>

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Comprehension questions

- Why is it good to have guests staying longer?
- Which means of transport would you prefer for a longer trip?
- How would you make your guests appreciate and choose slow tourism?

2. Decide whether the following sentences are true or false.

- If you go to an agrotourism activity you shouldn't think of the environmental impact such a journey could have. (F)
- If you have to fly, choose to make as many starts and stops as possible (F)

- Slow tourism is characterised by reducing mobility and by taking time to explore local history and culture while supporting the environment. (T)

3. Fill in the gaps

1. _____ tourism aims to reduce travellers' carbon footprint by slowing down the entire experience.

a) mass **b) slow** c) religious

2. Slow travel can help to avoid situations where a _____ becomes overrun with cars, entertainment venues, and other offerings.

a) **location** b) neighbour c) dog

3. By travelling shorter distances you can spend more time at your _____ .

a) home b) bed **c) destination**



Case studies, interviews, real life examples

Case study 3. Introduction to Agrotourism in Sweden (PR2 Report Sweden)

Read the case about Sweden and choose any other European country (not Bulgaria, Greece, Italy or Spain) and make a similar guide to that X country. If you find it more useful translate one of the guides above from English to you mother tongue, go ahead

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MODULE 4. PROMOTIONAL SKILLS NEEDED IN AGRITOURISM (HOW TO PROMOTE AGRITOURISM, TRADITIONAL MARKETING, DIGITAL SKILLS, USE OF IT AND PLATFORM).

KLAUDIA ALLAJBEJ, INNOVED

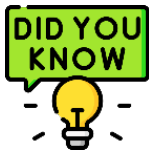
LESSON 4.1: WHAT IS MARKETING AND THE BASIC MARKETING CONCEPTS



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this Lesson, learners will:

- Know what is Marketing
- Know which are the five principal Marketing Concepts and their features
- Know what a Marketing Plan is and its characteristics
- Be able to create their own Marketing Plan and what to include in it



Did You Know?

- That Marketing is more than the advertising and selling of a product?
- The differences between the five Marketing Concepts?
- How to create a Marketing Plan and what to include in that?



Let's get to the point!

WHAT IS MARKETING?

Marketing is the process of “creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for costumers, clients, partners, and society at large (*American Marketing Association*). In more simple words, it is the action of promoting a service or product and thus, constitutes a broad term that includes every activity involving the advertising and selling of an item to customers. Marketing starts with attracting customers, building a relationship with them, and finally keeping it by satisfying their needs. The marketing process is done in several different ways and usually, professionals use one or more of the five marketing concepts to earn their consumers’ trust and create profitable, long-term relations with them.

What is the marketing concept and the five basic marketing concepts?

The marketing concept is whenever a company plans and implements to maximise profit by boosting sales, meeting customers’ needs, and surpassing competitors. The aim is to reach a win-win situation that serves both the customer and the company. The marketing concepts were first derived from the book of Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*. However, marketing remained unexplored to the world till the 21st century.

The principal five marketing concepts include product, production, selling, marketing, and societal concepts.

In order to fully appreciate the marketing concept is important to understand the meaning of the terms needs, wants, and demands:

Needs – it is something inevitable for the existence of life. Needs cover several things, such as food, shelter, security, respect, etc.

Wants – are our desires and wishes in life, our social setup and culture form our wants.

Demands – when our desires, needs, and wants are backed by our ability to pay, they become demands.

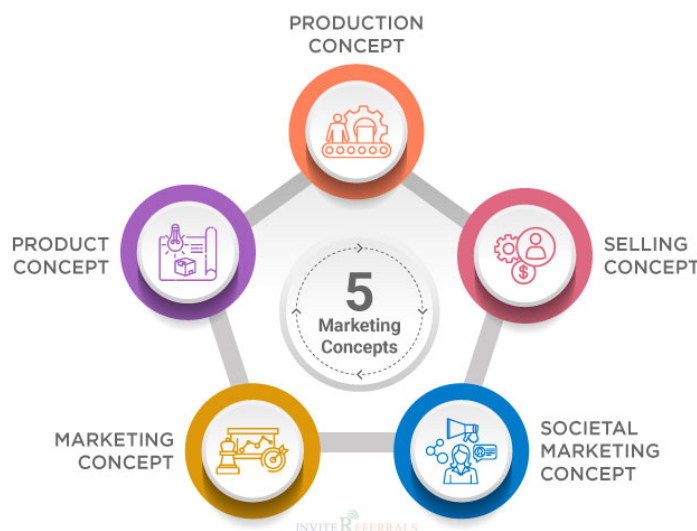


Figure1:https://www.google.com/search?q=5+basic+marketing+concepts&client=safari&channel=iphone_bm&sxsrf=AJOqlzUC7NeWRajR0vgyBD43gHeWnnh4Q:1675970476020&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjY4HHlln9AhVSnIsKHQukDglQ_AUoAXoECAEQAw&biw=767&bih=704&dpr=1.25#imgr

For example, Apple Inc. is a prime example of this concept in action. Its target audience always eagerly anticipates the new releases of the company. Although, there are other off-brand products that perform many of the same functions for a lower price many people will not compromise just to save money.

Working merely in this concept, a marketer could fail to attract customers who are motivated by availability and price.

- **Production Concept**

This is one of the earliest marketing concepts; here the organisation focuses on the ability of its production processes. This concept is a belief that the customer would always acquire products that are cheaper and more readily available. Furthermore, it advocates that the more the products/production, the more would be the sales; it refers to manufacturing the products cheaper to make them ready for the mass population. The centre of production is on the quantity, not the quality.

The Production Concept came about as a result of the rise of early capitalism in the 1950s, and it accompanies Say's Law. It reports that supply generates demand in the market.

For instance, India and China are great examples of the production concept. The latter made sure that increases in its overall production through cheap manual labour were made available by mass-producing and distributing products all over the world. What China did in manufacturing, India did with information technology services by a mass-producing talent for IT. Today India is the biggest exporter of IT services.

- **Selling Concept**

According to the name, the idea of selling is to sell the company's product through large-scale marketing and promotional activities. It does not matter whether they satisfy customers' needs. The concept usually excludes customer satisfaction and does not usually lead to repeat purchases.

The selling concept is centred on the belief that you must convince a customer to buy a product through aggressive marketing of the benefits of the product or service because the product itself is not a necessity.

For example, think about soda pop. Did you ever wonder why ads for Coca-Cola continue to exist despite the prevalence of the brand? Everyone knows what Coke has to offer, but it is widely

known that soda lacks nutrients and is bad for your health. So, the Coca-Cola Company is aware of this, and that's why they spend huge amounts of money promoting their product.

- **Marketing Concept**

The marketing concept is customer oriented. It places customers in the middle of the marketing process, discovering their demands and wants, and then meeting these needs better than competitors do.

A typical example of this marketing concept is [Glossier](#). The company understands that many women are unhappy with the way that makeup affects the health of their skin. They also noticed that women are fed up with being told what makeup products to use. Keeping all these in mind, Glossier introduced a line of skincare and makeup products that nourish the skin and are also easy to use and promote individualism and personal expression with makeup.

- **The societal concept**

This marketing concept is an emerging one that emphasises the welfare of society. It is based on the idea that marketers have a moral responsibility to market conscientiously to promote what is good for people over what people may want, regardless of a company's sales goals. Employees of a company live in the societies they market to, and they should advertise with the best interests of their local community in mind.

The fast-food industry is a good example of what the societal concept aims to address. There is a great societal demand for fast food, but this kind of food is high in fat and sugar and also contributes to excess waste. Even though the industry is answering the desires of the consumer, it is hurting our health and detracting from our society's goal of environmental sustainability.

WHAT IS A MARKETING PLAN?

The marketing plan is a document that explains the marketing efforts of a business in an upcoming period, which is usually a year. The plan summarises the marketing strategy, promotional, and advertising activities planned for the period.

Elements of a Marketing Plan

Marketing objectives of the business: The goals should be attainable and measurable, which are two of the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) associated goals.

Current business marketing positioning: This is an analysis of the organisation's current state concerning its marketing positioning.

Market research: Extensive research about current market trends, customer needs, industry sales volumes, and expected direction.

Outline of the business target market: Demographics of the business target market.

Marketing activities: A list of any actions concerning marketing goals that are scheduled for the period and the indicated timelines.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) to be tracked.

Marketing mix: A combination of factors that may influence customers to purchase products.

Competition: Identify the competitors of the organisation and their strategies, together with ways to counter competition and gain market share.

Marketing strategies: Refers to the development of marketing strategies to be employed in the approaching period. These strategies will include promotional strategies, advertising, and various marketing tools at the organisation's disposal.

Marketing budget: An intricate outline of the organisation's allocation of financial resources to marketing activities. The activities have to be carried out regarding the budget limitations.

Monitoring and performance mechanism: A plan should be in place to identify if the marketing tools are bearing fruit or need to be revised based on the past, current, and expected future conditions of the organisation, industry, and the overall business environment.

Marketing is the process of getting people interested in your company's product or service.

The 5 Marketing Concepts



The fundamental elements of a Marketing Plan



EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Choose the correct answer

- The only thing marketing does is advertise a product or service.
 - True
 - False**
- How many are the Marketing Concepts?
 - 4
 - 5**
 - 3
 - 7

- In the production concept customers generally prefer quality, innovation, and performance.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
- The Marketing Plan is a document that shows the marketing efforts that a business did in the past 2 years.
 - a. True
 - b. False**



Case studies, interviews, real life examples...

Case Study 1 – The Apple Hill Growers Association



The Apple Hill Growers Association (www.applehill.com/) grew out of a small group of orchard ranches that were founding difficulty surviving. Today, it includes more than 50 members (Christmas tree growers, winemakers, and grape growers among them). Its season starts in June with a Father's Day cherry festival and continues into December with Christmas tree sales. Apple sales kick off on Labour Day weekend. The economic impact of this organisation on the county neared \$84 million in 2003, according to the El Dorado County Agriculture Department. This is just one example of farmers and the

media using marketing in order to promote agriculture in their area.

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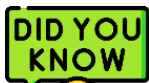
LESSON 4.2: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this Lesson, learners will:

- Know what Digital Transformation is.
- Learn which are the key components and benefits of digital transformation.
- Learn the key elements of a digital transformation framework.



Did You Know?

- How does digital transformation benefit businesses (agrotourism included) today?
- That a digital transformation framework is necessary in order for your business to be benefitted from digital transformation?
- Which are the most important elements of a digital framework, in order to achieve Digital Transformation?



Let's get to the point!

THE NEED OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN AGROTOURISM

In order for tourism to advance and experience sustainable growth in the coming years, digital transformation is both a solution and an unavoidable trend. Rural tourism is regarded as a new trend that will provide a reliable source of income for tourist-related enterprises. Hence, one of the pressing objectives is to expand rural tourism in conjunction with digital change. Through outlets like websites, social networks, or Internet search engines, the most distinctive and historic values of rural places are transferred to urban areas in an effort to draw tourists there.

Digital Marketing constitutes one of the tools of Digital Transformation and is very useful for farmers because that way they can reach out to more buyers and get higher prices for their products. It also empowers agricultural start-ups. Due to the development of agribusiness infrastructures and the increasing literacy in rural areas, young farmers are prepared to adopt Digital Marketing skills. Digital Marketing constitutes one of the innovative developments to sell products digitally without the intervention of mediators and reach their products globally.

Digitalization of the sector

Digital transformation is the reshaping of a business in the digital era or the integration of computer-based technologies into a company's products, processes, and strategies that changes the way someone works and adds value to their customers in essence.

E-business is any process that a company conducts over a computer-mediated network and refers to the conduct of all types of business activities over the Internet. Moreover, E-business is a broad term that encompasses other terms such as e-commerce and [e-tailing](#).

Digital Marketing is any type of marketing that uses electronic devices, digital media, and digital channels to promote products and services and reach specific customers. Social media marketing is a form of digital marketing. Especially in recent years, social media platforms have become very familiar and important, and most companies, businesses, and organisations create content there to build the company's brand, promote their work, products, and services, reach customers, increase sales, and drive their customers to the website of the company.

Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is the reshaping of a business in the digital era. In other words, Digital Transformation is the integration of computer-based technologies into a company's products, processes and strategies that change the way someone works and adds value to their customers in essence. More precisely, companies are undertaking a digital transformation to better engage and serve their employees and customers in order to improve their competitiveness. It is also a cultural shift that requires companies to constantly challenge the current situation in the business, experiment, and embrace the uncomfortable and failure. The process of digital transformation can encompass everything from automating manual processes to creating entirely new customer experiences.

The key components and the benefits of digital transformation

There are five components required to make a company's digital transformation happen:

1. People

This is a useful reminder: whenever we talk about data, we end up with people.

2. Data

Widely accessible and retrievable records of interactions with consumers, employees, and customers can provide knowledge about customers and employees.

3. Insights

With the right know-how and tools, data can be turned into insights.

4. Action

Most interesting, compelling, and curious insights would be useless if there was no plan to turn them into actions. These actions require the appropriate skills, processes, and change management.

5. Results

The final phase of digital transformation is the evaluation of results or impact. The results themselves become part of the new, richer data set that is enhanced and improved by the insights of the process.

Digital transformation is essential for companies in our digital age. So, it is time to look at the benefits that digital transformation brings to the business:

1. Increases customer satisfaction

You can use digital tools and strategies that directly lead to higher customer satisfaction.

2. Enables a high-quality user experience

High-quality companies provide experiences that can build on automation, AI, and self-service tools.

3. Limits human error

Digital processes prevent time-consuming manual data entry and human inefficiency.

4. Fosters an environment for employee excellence

Widespread adoption across the organisation is important for business growth. Do not underestimate investing in employee growth by hosting internal webinars, attending conferences, etc.

5. Encourages collaboration and improves communication

When you digitalise your company's internal communication, you create an ideal environment for employees to collaborate, etc.

6. Increases operational efficiency

Digital business processes save time, reduce frustration, and close revenue leakages.

7. Increases agility

With the capabilities of a digital business environment, your organisation can anticipate challenges and develop solutions to remain viable in the years to come.

8. Promote data-driven insights

Centralised data storage and tool development are key elements for analysing and transforming data into information that enables informed decision-making.

9. Enable the monetisation of software

In our digital age, a shift to a software-centric approach is essential. However, many companies remain on the launch pad because they do not know how to develop and leverage software monetisation.

10. Enable future digital growth

Digital transformation is the first step that sets the course for all future business growth. If you do not invest in the digital transformation of your business, your business will quickly become obsolete.

The key elements of a digital transformation framework

In order to benefit from digital transformation, the creation, and development of a strategic digital framework is essential. This framework should include practical steps that are customised to the industry and the specific needs of the company. If this is achieved, companies can critically examine their ideas and better anticipate future obstacles. The best part is that both the company and the employees benefit from digital transformation.

There are some key elements that a digital framework should contain in order to be effective. These are:

- **Define clear goals**

Ask yourself this question: what does digital transformation mean for your company and your employees? If the goals of digital transformation are unclear or not properly communicated, this will lead to misalignment and failure in the eyes of stakeholders. If the company lacks a culture of comprehensive transformation or employees resist change, it will be difficult to gain acceptance for new processes. So the only way to solve this problem is to create an integrated, holistic framework for digital transformation.

- **Create an integrated strategy**

The importance of this step should not be underestimated. Leaders can improve business transformation outcomes by developing integrated strategies that start with the focused process and change management for organisational design. Success then depends on the practical application of this integrated strategy.

- **Inspire culture change through leadership**

Decision makers need to find new techniques to lead and support a workforce made up of permanent employees, AI tools, freelancers, and remote workers all working together. One of the most important lessons for leaders is to realise that digital transformation is not just about harnessing new technologies, but also about inspiring and motivating people.

- **Go for adaptability and agility**

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced changes in recent years that have impacted everyone and workplaces in multiple ways, and it does not look like the trend toward changing work patterns and new technologies will slow down anytime soon. Therefore, digital transformation has evolved from a nice, lofty goal to an operational necessity. Adaptability and agility are valuable interpersonal skills for the immediate and long-term future. An agile mindset gives a competitive edge and helps to deal with rapidly changing conditions in a company and to make a career as an individual.

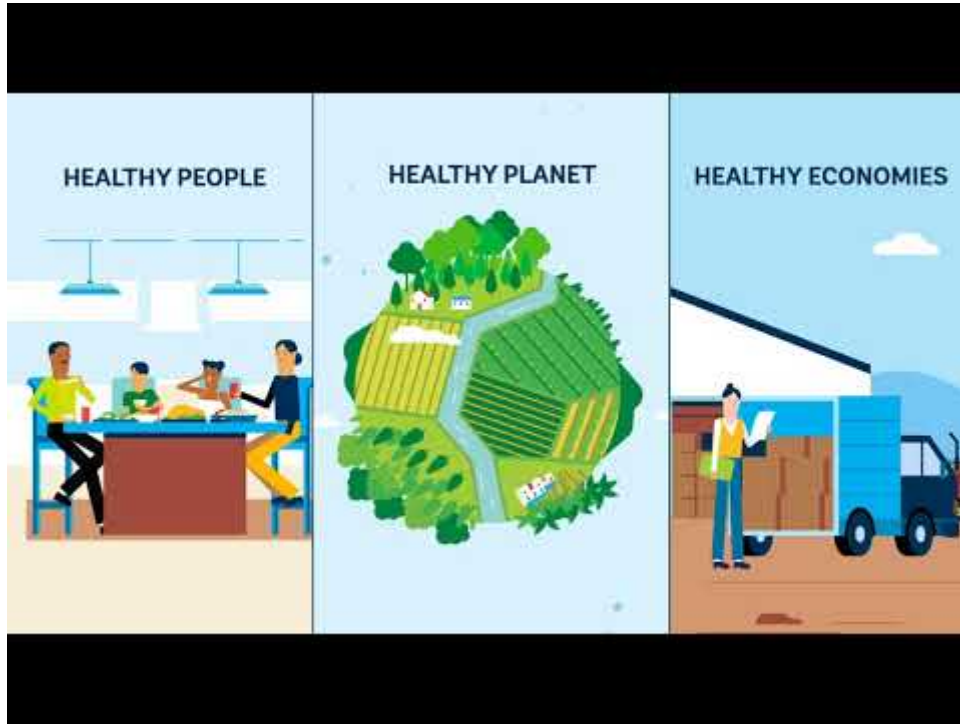
- **Invest in training**

The success of a digital transformation relies heavily on employees having the right skills. Change is happening so fast that existing skills are diminishing, and new skills are needed by all employees - not just IT specialists and managers. Growth and innovation rely on regular training in hard and soft skills.

These are the five key elements for developing a successful strategic digital framework. This framework should be tailored to the industry, the company's goals, and, most importantly, the individual needs of each employee.

Digital transformation is the process of using digital technologies to create new — or modify existing — business processes, culture, and customer experiences to meet changing business and market requirements. This reimagining of business in the digital age is digital transformation.





EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Choose the correct answer

- Digital transformation is to create from scratch a business that follows the digital age standards.
 - a. True
 - b. False

- In order for digital transformation to happen, “people” constitute one of the fundamental components.
 - a. **True**
 - b. False

- Which of the below belongs to the benefits digital transformation offers?
 - a. Increases customer satisfaction
 - b. Increases operational efficiency
 - c. Enable future digital growth
 - d. **All the above**

- If you want digital transformation for your business, then a strategic digital framework is necessary.
 - a. **True**
 - b. False



Case studies, interviews, real life examples...

Case Study 2 – AeroFarms in Newark



AeroFarms in Newark, New Jersey, USA is an agricultural pioneer. AeroFarms is innovating with commercial-scale indoor farming that disrupts traditional growing seasons. The activities are all rooted in proprietary crop-production systems powered by Dell Technologies’ IoT solutions and expertise. The technology is able to automate and analyse everything from seeds to package loading at temperature,

humidity, airflow, nutrients, light, water and food safety, unearthing data to drive deeper insights and – ultimately – bigger yields of tastier crops.

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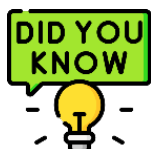
LESSON 4.3: MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR AGROTOURISM OPERATIONS



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this Lesson, learners will:

- Learn how to promote their business.
- Know what a Marketing Strategy is.
- Learn the main steps they have to do in order to create a Marketing Strategy.



Did You Know?

- What is a Marketing Strategy?
- What a Marketing Strategy should include?



Let's get to the point!

WHAT IS A MARKETING STRATEGY?

Creating a Marketing Strategy helps you explain how you would promote an agrotourism enterprise. It describes what you will offer customers so they choose your business, and what you will do so they come back. Furthermore, it helps you determine who your customers are and how to attract those whom most benefit your business. Your marketing Strategy is a function of your products, pricing, promotion, place of sale, customers, competitors, complementary businesses, as well as your production and marketing costs. The Marketing Strategy starts with your business idea and continues through the sale of your product or service, namely is a dynamic process that changes as you evaluate, learn, act and reflect. To develop and implement your Marketing Strategy start by reviewing your business plan (Where are you now? Where do you want to be and how you can get there?).

Understand the market

- **Develop your brand**

In the visual age where we are, images – on your website, or your various forms of promotional material - speak for your product.

- **Do some research**

Your Marketing Strategy begins with research. Take time to understand the market in which you will be working – the world of people searching for entertainment, relaxation, and education on farms and ranches, and what the agrotourism and nature tourism industry are ready to offer them.

Know your industry

Recognise the agrotourism and nature tourism trends that can impact your enterprise. Foresee how the market might change and identify what you can do to keep in track. Are urban “foodies” still excited about eating local food and drinking local wine with famous chefs in orchards, etc? The popularity of social media and the Internet means that social media and a website are “must-have” promotional tools for your farm.

- **Understand the customer**

Identify your target customers. Discover who is already visiting your area. Tourism boards and/or your chamber of commerce can provide useful information about the agrotourism market clientele.

- **Build strong community relations**

Fundamental to any service industry is good public relations. You should try to build and maintain a good positive image and a reliable reputation with your customers, local community, region, state, and industry. The community can provide valuable emotional, financial, and entrepreneurial support. As you embark on your new venture, become community involved.

- ✓ Set up a farm FAM tour

A familiarisation tour or FAM tour shows an invited group of participants what a group of agrotourism operators in a particular area has to offer. The tour is offered free of charge or at a reduced price.

You can use the FAM tour as a tool to promote your agrotourism enterprise directly to customers. In a FAM tour, you invite potential customers to your farm to view your facilities and learn about its remarkable activities. If you are thinking to host school groups, call your regions/ local schools and invite administrators or teachers out in order to show them how your activities can benefit or raise awareness of their students.

If your customers are tourists visiting the area, contact your local chamber of commerce or tourist bureau so they know the existence of your business; organise a FAM tour for them. FAM tour participants should be people with the potential to influence others to support or visit the operations on the tour.

- ✓ Build off-season offers

Have a look around to see what you might be able to give consumers when business is slow. Create a conference room in your barn or an outbuilding that can host gatherings in the winter and weddings in the summer, for instance.

What makes you special

The qualities you offer which make customers feel special are also very important for the success of your business. Your unique features distinguish your agrotourism operation from all others. This is also called branding. You have to identify these features.

- **Know your product**

The importance of knowing your product cannot be overemphasised. A product indicates something that is tangible, designed, manufactured, and packaged. When you consider your product, consider your product mix (what products will you have on your shelf and why have you chosen them?), service (when shopping do you prefer hunting the aisles on your own or being assisted by the staff?), and overall atmosphere (what emotions will your customers take away from their experience?).

- **Identify your features and benefits**

The features of your business are very important to its success and equally significant are the benefits that feature offers. See in the table below some good examples.

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- **Identify your features and benefits**

The features of your business are very important to its success and equally significant are the benefits that feature offers. See in the table below some good examples.

My Features and Benefits (EXAMPLE)

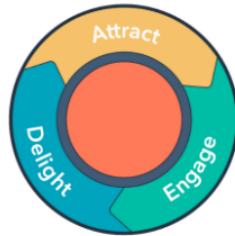
Features	Customer Benefits
Remote location	Rest and relaxation Free from city bustle Clean air Unspoiled natural beauty
Nearby location	Minutes from town Oasis in your own backyard Family day-trip U-pick farm
Farm stand	Our vegetables are the freshest Experience vine-ripe flavor Reminiscent of childhood
Small facility	Intimate setting Exclusive get-away Garden cottage fantasy
Moderate prices	Affordable Won't hurt the family budget

Develop your message

- **Organise promotional activities**
 - ✓ Put up posters.
 - ✓ Hand out leaflets.
 - ✓ Offer samples, where allowed.
 - ✓ Send monthly e-newsletters.
 - ✓ Work with local restaurants to offer your products on their menu.
 - ✓ Join the local chamber of commerce, or join the agrotourism association, if there is one.
 - ✓ Include recipe cards and bookmarks with products.
 - ✓ Provide press releases to local newspapers, radio, and television stations.
 - ✓ Tell customers about your product; where it is grown and how it is made.

Be sure the marketing techniques you choose are the most successful ones available for your intended audience. Don't limit your choices to those you prefer or are most easy. Be consistent with your marketing strategies as well. Avoid choosing your promotional strategies only to change them once they've already started to work. Too often, small business owners may acquire a new idea, change the original message or appearance, and confuse the customer in the process.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERNET



Attract tools	Delight tools	Engage tools
Ads	Lead flows	Smart content
Video	Email Marketing	Email marketing
Blogging	Lead Management	Conversations inbox
Social media	Conversational bots	Attribution reporting
Content strategy	Marketing automation	Marketing automation

An April 2007, in a survey conducted by Harris Interactive, Expedia asked travellers where they would go to find reliable information for planning their summer travels. Online travel sites were the top response (52%), followed by recommendations by family or friends (45%). Rounding out the responses were travel guidebooks (25%), travel community sites (19%), magazines and newspapers (19%), traditional travel agents (17%), and convention and visitor bureaus (16%). Every day, the general public uses the Internet as their primary source of information. If you don't already have an online presence, start a blog on a free platform like WordPress.com or Blogspot.com. You can publish a profile of your farm that includes a list of products, directions, and open hours. You may update your events, add images and YouTube videos, link to your social media accounts, and, probably most significantly, establish a website where anyone can find you and where you can lead people for other information.

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Choose the correct answer

- Marketing Strategy shows how you will promote your agrotourism business.
 - True

- b. False
- The only and most important thing you must do in order to promote your enterprise is to use social media and create a website.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
 - The procedure of inviting potential customers to your farm to view your facilities and learn about its remarkable activities, is called:
 - a. Pick-nick
 - b. Farm tour
 - c. Familiarization tour**
 - d. None of the above
 - The use of the internet is not that significant to promote your business.
 - a. True
 - b. False**



Case studies, interviews, real life examples...

Case study 3. Video.



[Trinity Valley Dairy](#) focuses on agriculture education and tourism. They bring people to their farm, so they can experience farm life, and learn about dairy farming, and this is a way to promote their little farm!

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MODULE 5: MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL SKILLS

GIOVANNI CARLUCCI, SOPHIE MARTEL, MATERAHUB

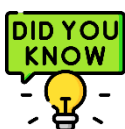
LESSON 5.1: MANAGERIAL ASPECTS OF AGROTOURISM



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this lesson, learners will:

- Expand their understanding of business management beyond just agricultural production and livestock management.
- Incorporate aspects of public targeting into their business strategy.
- Learn how to effectively manage people, in addition to managing the production of goods.
- Understand how to manage and improve the services offered to the public



Did You Know?

- There are now more and more universities all over Europe that offer programmes in Agrotourism Management.
- There are nine categories of agritourist products and services: agri-accommodation, agri-food and beverages, primary agrotourism, direct sales, agri-recreation, agri-sport, agritainment, agri-therapy and cultural tourism. ([source](#))



Let's get to the point!

ASPECTS OF MANAGING A AN AGROTOURISM

When we turn an agricultural activity into a tourism business, many new managerial aspects add on to the usual ones of food production and sales. Indeed, agrotourism means getting closer to people, and managing a “direct-to-consumer” activity entails creating new departments in the business. Depending on the services that the business offers, different managerial aspects need to be taken into consideration, but at the foundation of a successfully established agrotourism business, we can find the following aspects:

Management of public facilities

As your farm will now be open to the public and host visitors/guests, it is essential that there is sufficient capacity in terms of infrastructure, providing basic services such as restrooms and parking areas. Beyond the actual farm area, access to the farm with adequate roads and signage, or transportation system, need to be thought of. There are regulations that come with having a business infrastructure open to the public, and it's important to know what are the regulations regarding hazards and safety (emergency exit, fire extinguishers, smoke alarms), and the laws regarding what the facilities can provide.

Management of the services

- **Accommodation**

If you decide to provide lodging services, then there are many business aspects that need to be managed. The amount of work added to your daily farm work will depend on the number of rooms you choose to provide. Managing lodging services entails front desk service and housekeeping. Before the guests arrive, there is upstream work to take care of such as ordering the items needed for the rooms, decorating and preparing the rooms, establishing rates and listing the rooms online, and managing the bookings. Providing this service also means keeping a close supervision on stock and supply.

- **Catering**

Oftentimes lodging services come with catering as well. It can be from a simple breakfast to offering lunch and dinner. Catering services can be open to the guests staying over night but also to the daily public. Catering services require careful management and following strict food regulations, however they are a great opportunity for your farm to sell your products fresh and directly to the consumer, which is a real added value of agrotourism. Depending on how many tables you are offering and the operation hours, new employees might be hired, such as for waitressing and cooking.

- **Educational Experiences**

Depending on your farming activity and the extent of your property, you have great opportunities for offering agriculturally-oriented educational experiences. Those experiences can be adapted to all types of public and are a great way to bring people closer to nature and life in the countryside. Fruits and vegetable picking, horseback riding, visit of farm animals, walking trails, guided tours, cooking workshops, cultural talks about the history of the farm and the region,... the opportunities are endless when it comes to agrotourism experiences, however they require good organisation of bookings and service schedule, and a good preparation if tours or workshops need to be delivered. The more experiences your business provides, the more staff you will need to cover all services, therefore, a good management of all public experiences is a must.

- **Management of Customer Service**

As you open to the public, managing customer service should be at the heart of your business organisation. It can be challenging to become customer-oriented and it is important to choose the right persons to interact with the guests. Managing customer service means someone is in charge of the online communication with guests before they arrive, and of direct communication with guests when on-site. While people are visiting your farm, they will have all sorts of requests and needs, thus a person of contact must be clearly established. You want to ensure that your guests have a good experience and spread the word about your business, therefore having a good communication with your customers online by responding to reviews and feedback, is an extra help to building your image.

- **Management of Employees**

As your business activity expands, you will need to hire new employees. Hiring, training, organising schedules, managing payments, are all part of the role an agrotourism manager needs to take. It is important to have a clear communication with your employees and train them well on the values and kind of service you want them to transpire through their work. Having good relationships with your employees is also a way to create or reinforce good community relations and spread a positive image of your business in your area.

- **Risk and Safety Management**

A very important aspect of your agrotourism is to always be in compliance with safety norms, from public safety, food safety, facility norms, health norms, and environmental regulations. There are a lot of norms and regulations to take into account when operating an agrotourism business, that's why having a risk management plan laid out can be beneficial. All employees involved in the agrotourism activities should be trained on the regulations and get familiar with the risk management plan.

- **Marketing and Communication**

Digital marketing and advertising is at the source of your income as it is what makes your business known to the public. Therefore, this aspect takes a big part in the management of your agrotourism (see module 4 to know more about marketing skills).

- **Finances**

As new cash flow is created with your activities, a new branch is added to your financial management. It is important to clearly define the roles within your team (more on financial management in lesson 5.3 below).

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Test yourself! When thinking of turning your agricultural business into agrotourism, new aspects of business and life are being added to the management of the activity. As this is often a family affair, it is good to ask yourself and your family a few questions first, to know who in the family is more apt and comfortable with certain managerial aspects of the activity. Some questions to ask yourself are:

- As you will invite the public into your home, are you comfortable putting your family and yourself on display?
- What types of customers are your target and do you enjoy interacting with all types of customers?
- Who in the family is the most familiar with the products and/or services that you will provide?
- Communication is key for a successful business, and it starts with digital communication. Who in your team is the most familiar with online tools such as social media and enjoy using them?
- Since you will be dealing with people, the customer's feedback can be a great tool to evaluate your business. How open are you to receiving critics and feedback about your home?



Case studies, interviews, real life examples

Case study 1. From traditional sicilian farmers to managers of an agrotourism business



Farmers for a lifetime, for four generations the Ciulla family runs with strong enthusiasm and hard work this lovely house surrounded by the Sicilian countryside, originally conceived as a

farm. The agrotourism is specialized in the production of various products such as extra virgin olive oil, almonds, oregano, sage, herbs, liqueurs with prickly pears and limoncello.

Since just two years Calogero and Sandra decided to tackle a new challenge and plunge into the world of tourism, creating a brand-new and comfortable accommodation ready to welcome the tourists who wish to enjoy a holiday of peace and relax. Sandra is responsible for the management of the kitchen, while Calogero is dedicated to the cultivation fields and then to the farm, the real heart of the agrotourism. You can read more about the Ciulla family store here: <https://www.feudomuxarello.it/about-us>

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Zito, M. (2021, May 10). *Feudo Muxarello Agrotourism, one of the best in Sicily | Italian Traditions*. Italian Traditions. <https://italian-traditions.com/feudo-muxarello-agrotourism-best-sicily/>

LESSON 5.2: MANAGERIAL SKILLS & DIGITAL TOOLS

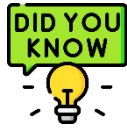


Learning Outcomes:

After completing this lesson, learners will:

- Understand the importance of incorporating business management strategies beyond agricultural production and livestock management when turning an agricultural activity into a public-facing operation.
- Be able to identify the unique managerial skills required for agrotourism, specifically related to service and hospitality sectors.
- Know how to apply entrepreneurial skills to effectively manage agrotourism operations.

- Be equipped with the knowledge to manage teams and finances in an agrotourism setting.



Did You Know?

- Only 11.9 % of EU farm managers were under the age of 40 years old in 2020. (source: [Eurostat](#))
- The concept of management skills was invented by Henri Fayol in 1949, with the four basic principles being planning, organising, leading, and controlling.



Let's get to the point!

No matter the type and size of enterprise, managing a business requires entrepreneurial and managerial skills. Businesses in the agrotourism sector fall under these conditions too. Below are the main skills that are particularly important for your team to have in order to manage your activity successfully. Along with the many formal and non-formal training about managerial skills that can be found, management tools have been developed.

ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

The very first skill required to run your activity is organisation skill. This means being able to lay out the goals of the business, plan out the actions to reach those goals, and foresee the needs to get there. A manager needs to be able to plan efficiently in order to prioritise tasks, scheduling, and developing systems to achieve goals. When running a multi-service business, by providing accommodation, catering, and educational experiences for example, organisational skills are essential to ensure all the operations run smoothly, and your customers are satisfied with your services.

There are many business management softwares available online. These softwares can help your business keep track of your accommodation bookings to avoid problems such as double booking for example, register the amount of guests expected to plan out catering proportions and stocks, and can provide online ticketing in order to reserve tours or any of the services you offer. These softwares are used by the majority of the tourism businesses, big or small as they are a non-neglectable help. You just have to pick the one that is right for you.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

The most important component of leadership is being able to make thoughtful decisions about your business' goals. As a leader, you need to guide initiatives, delegate with proper information and inspire. For this, it is important that you lead by example and that you train your team to do the adequate job. Therefore, having a strong line of communication with your team is essential. Communication within your business is key to ensure that everyone has the proper knowledge and tools to work towards a common goal. Good communication skills are a major component of leadership skills.

There are many ways to keep an open line of communication with your staff. Depending on the size of your team, digital communication tools are an effective way to be able to communicate in and out of the business site. Tools such as Sling offer more than chat options but also scheduling. Having a private social media group for your team can also be a good way to reinforce open communication and create trust within your team.

Being customer-oriented

Being customer-oriented is giving importance to your customers' needs and ensuring their satisfaction. That means having a strong line of communication with your customers as well. Listening to your customer and giving them a space where they are able to give feedback is a great way to gain insight on what they liked about your business and its shortcomings. Approaching your customers with a friendly and problem-solving attitude will make your customers feel valuable. Problem-solving is a key component of being customer-oriented, as ensuring your customers have a positive experience is the priority.

One way to make sure your present and future customers have a good experience is to collect their feedback. There are many ways you can collect feedback from your customers, by having a guest book at the front desk for guests to leave a comment about their stay, by having evaluation forms or short surveys available or sent to them by email after their stay, or by enabling reviews via third party websites.

Time management

Time management is the ability to use your time and the one of your employees efficiently and productively. This means being able to organise your time and prioritise between different activities. Planning is an important part of time management. In the hospitality sector, there are certain aspects of time management to take into account, such as seasonality, which may affect your customers' flow.

A great way to help with time management is the use of schedule and calendar softwares or apps. As the manager, you need to have an overview of both the customers bookings in a calendar, and of your employees' shifts. Many scheduling apps are now being used by businesses for their practicality and easy access on smartphones.

Marketing management

Marketing management is another side of communication skills. If internal communication involves the way you communicate to your employees, external communication is the way you communicate with your customers. On-site communication is needed when your customers are already here, but communication does not stop there. There is a lot of work to put in pre communication, in order for the customers to get to know about your business, and post communication, for your customers to keep updated about your business. Communication strategy is therefore the process of planning what you are communicating to your guests and in what way.

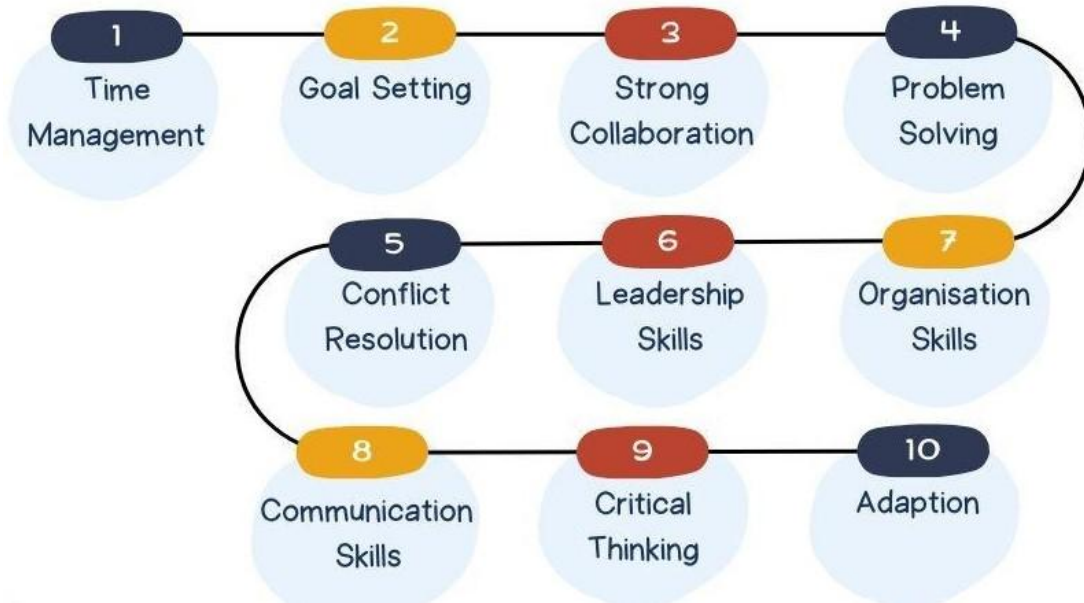
EXTRA MATERIAL

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Time for exercises!

1. Below is a list of managerial skills that are the most commonly recognised as essential to all businesses. Which one would you categorise as the top five of the most needed skills for your agrotourism business?



Answers: leadership skills, organisation skills, problem-solving skills, time management, communication skills.

Image [source](#).



Case studies, interviews, real life examples

Case study 2. New skills required for digital tools



Image [source](#).

In the agrotourism business, digital tools can be of real value to help managers with their daily tasks. Being able to transfer managerial skills to the digital world is now fundamental, even more so after the COVID-19 pandemic. In an interview, Laura Martinelli, owner of the agrotourism La Grotta della Faina in Tuscany (Italy), talks about her experience since she received support from the Rural Development Programme (RDP) for new entrants in agriculture. Her agrotourism offers activities, beehives, hens, fruits and vegetable production.

Laura has quickly jumped on board the digital train and started by managing her own website to promote her services and manage the bookings. She realised that utilising online platforms such as Booking.com and Airbnb can help boosting the promotion of her services and help managing the bookings. However, she warns that using different platforms requires being able to manage different websites simultaneously as bookings are being made. Therefore, a good understanding of the digital tools can help but does not replace organisational skills.

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LESSON 5.3 FINANCIAL SKILLS FOR AGROTOURISM

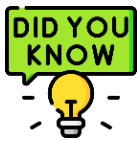


Learning Outcomes:

After completing this lesson, learners will:

- Understand the importance of careful financial planning when starting a new agrotourism enterprise.

- Be able to assess the potential costs and benefits of a proposed agrotourism venture.
- Know which financial needs to consider, such as additional labour costs, infrastructure costs, liability insurance coverage, amenities, and marketing costs.
- Recognize the importance of complying with new regulations as the agrotourism business grows, including zoning, fire and health regulations, building codes, insurance requirements, labour laws, road signs, and environmental regulations, and be prepared to account for these expected expenses.



Did you know?

- The global agrotourism market size was valued at \$ 42,460.3 million in 2019, and is estimated to reach \$ 62,982.6 million by 2027, registering a CAGR of 13.4% from 2021 to 2027. (source: [Allied Market Research](#))
- The Common Agricultural Policy (under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) that supports rural development strategies and projects has an allocated budget that amounts around €387 billion in current prices for the period 2021-2027. (source: [European Commission](#))



Let's get to the point!

Most often, agrotourism enterprises are developed to expand and diversify farm income. It is important to carefully define the added income goals and to understand the market.

MARKET ANALYSIS

The first step in estimating your finances is to do a thorough assessment of the current market and its trend. Studying the dynamics of your market will help you understand which product/service/experience has the potential to bring success to your business, what is the trend and value of this product/service/experience, what kind of buyers it attracts. It is also important to understand your competition and know what your position is in this market.

Some of the questions to put down in your market analysis are:

- Who are my potential customers?
- What are my customers' buying habits?

- How large is my target market?
- How much are customers willing to pay for my product?
- Who are my main competitors?
- What are my competitors' strengths and weaknesses?

Once you have analysed your market, the best way to clearly define income goals is to do a cost/benefit analysis.

Identifying potential new costs

Consider using a budgeting tool to begin comparing the costs and benefits of expanding or changing your farming business. First step in your budgeting is to examine changes in farm expenses specifically attributed to your added activities. These can be:

- Construction of new buildings or facility improvements
- Increased utilities costs
- Fencing, road access, parking extension, road signs
- New equipment
- Permits and taxes
- Regulation compliance
- Legal/accounting costs
- Marketing costs

Generating new income sources

Expanding your activity to agrotourism offers a variety of new potential sources of income. When developing your new product/service/experience, think about maximising your source of income per product. Some of the ways to generate incomes are:

- Entrance/visit fee
- Guided tour/educational experience fee
- Sales of fresh farm products
- Sales of processed or value added products
- Craft/souvenir sales
- Activity fee
- Tasting fee
- Facility rental
- Show fee (e.g., equine competition)
- Accommodation

- Food service

Analysing your market will also help you identify the appropriate price for the potential income sources that you will choose.

GETTING FINANCIALS SUPPORTS FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

As rural areas and the agricultural sector are struggling all over Europe, one of the priorities of the European Commission is to provide fundings that supports the development of rural initiatives that can generate new economical and social activities. As part of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027, the Common Agricultural Policy fund (CAP) is divided between two funds.

European agricultural guarantee fund (EAGF)

The EAGF is the “first pillar” of the CAP and has an allocation of €291.1 billion. Up to €270 billion will be provided for income support schemes, with the remainder dedicated to supporting agricultural markets.

The European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD) finances the EU's contribution to rural development programmes (RDPs). It is the “second pillar” of the CAP, with an allocated budget of €95.5 billion. This includes €8.1 billion from the next generation EU recovery instrument to help address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It consists of measures and projects that contribute to the EU-wide objectives of:

- improving the competitiveness of agriculture
- encouraging sustainable management of natural resources and climate action
- achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities
- Programmes are prepared on a national or regional basis, and must work towards specific targets relating to the EU's rural development objectives.

Read more on the [European Commission website](#) about these two funds and how you can apply to get your project financially supported by these funds.

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. One way to test your strengths and weaknesses as a future agrotourism business is to do a SWOT analysis. Below is an example of what kind of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats you need to think about when making your financial plan. Test yourself and design your own SWOT analysis

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>What are you doing well? What sets you apart? What are your good qualities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rich and unique natural heritage • rich flora and fauna • quiet geographical location • natural beauty • authentic craft and tradition 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>Where do you need to improve? Are resources adequate? What do others do better than you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of road infrastructure • isolated location • lack of visibility • lack of funding • lack of economic activity in the area
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>What are your goals? Are demands shifting? How can it be improved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional source of income • Employment opportunities • High potential for the local economic development • Rural tourism as a priority for the EU Commission 	<p>THREATS</p> <p>What are the blockers you're facing? What are factors outside of your control?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate variability • Tourism seasonality • Safety and security of visitors • Competition • Migration of young generation to urban areas



Case studies, interviews, real life examples

Case study 1. Example of agrotourism project financed by EAFRD



Image [source](#).

Name of the project: Diversification: Valle dei Calanchi organic holistic agrotourism

Technical description:

- **Beneficiary:** Valeriano Izzo
- **Territory:** Castiglione in Teverina (VT)
- **EU priority:** enhancing the profitability of farms and the competitiveness of agriculture
- **Intervention type:** diversification of agricultural activities
- **Total investment:** 293.475,46 €.

Project description:

The Bio Agriturismo Valle dei Calanchi was born in 2015 from a project by the architect Valeriano Izzo. The aim of this agrotourism is to reconnect people with nature and inspire personal transformation. The farmhouse is located in a natural cradle among the Calanchi, in the province of Viterbo, and offers lodging, catering, educational experiences such as courses and seminars about ancient knowledge.

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A colorful illustration of a farm scene. In the foreground, a green tractor with yellow wheels is pulling a grey plow through dark brown soil. To the right, a farmer in an orange jumpsuit and green cap stands with one hand on his head. In the background, there are rolling green hills, a blue sky with yellow and white clouds, and a blue windmill on a hill.

MODULE 6: LANGUAGE SKILLS

PHOTEINOS SANTAS, THANOS SANTAS, ATHANASIOS SANTAS, SP

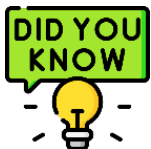
LESSON 6.1 – WHY LEARN ENGLISH



Learning outcomes:

After completing this Lesson, learners will:

- Have a clear understanding of the benefits of speaking English
- Have a firm grasp of the significance of learning English
- Have an idea of where the most numerous potential markets for an agrotourism business may be
- Have some facts on what other languages to study in addition to or beyond English



Did you know that?

- The best ice-breaker when you first meet persons speaking another language is to greet them in their own language (e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GKd50lrROc>)
- There are more than 1.3 billion native Chinese (Mandarin) speakers in the world?
- About 1.5 billion people around the world speak English as their first (L1) or second (L2) language?
- Mandarin is spoken almost exclusively in China, whereas English is the official or second language in more than 30 countries worldwide?
- English is a single language with many accents even within native-English speaking countries?

- Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world with more than 470 million native speakers?
- The EU has 24 official, 16 unofficial, 5 immigrant and 4 sign languages, but only three languages (English, French and German) are considered the working languages?
- The EU Parliament has almost stopped translating and all conferences and meetings are held in English?
- There are about 170 million people in Europe speaking Russian as L1 + L2?
- English is used by more Internet users than all the Other languages combined?



Let's get to the point!

Language skills are considered “*sine qua non*” for the tourism industry. English is so important and self-evident for prospective agrotourism entrepreneurship that a series of recent searches on Google Scholar and Crossref using various combinations of the terms “agrotourism”, “entrepreneur*”, “English as a Second Language”, “ESL”, “European context”, “linguistic skills” yielded a total of nearly 70,000 hits, but none of them having “English” or “linguistic skills” or “ESL” in the title. When the term “agrotourism” was omitted from the search keywords, and the keywords used were “English as a second language”, Google yielded over 4.9 million hits.

BENEFITS OF SPEAKING ENGLISH

Improved customer service



Being able to communicate effectively with English-speaking customers can lead to better relationships and increased customer satisfaction.

In the hospitality industry, it is important to communicate effectively with customers, as it can lead to repeat business, positive word-of-mouth, and increased customer satisfaction. Agrotourism is a special kind of tourism entailing tighter relations with client; therefore, interpersonal relations and communication with clients are essential for the business. By learning English, non-native speaking prospective

agrotourism entrepreneurs will be able to communicate effectively with customers from English-speaking countries, which can help them better understand their needs and tailor their services accordingly.

Additionally, non-native English speakers who are proficient in the language will be able to understand and respond to customer complaints and feedback effectively, which can help to resolve issues and improve customer satisfaction. They will be able to understand and respond to online reviews and feedback, which can help to improve their online reputation.

Lastly, English is widely spoken and understood in the entire tourism industry. By learning English, non-native speakers will be better equipped to communicate effectively with tour operators, travel agents, and other intermediaries, which can lead to more business opportunities.

Increased opportunities for international business

English allows non-native speakers to communicate with a wider range of potential customers and partners, including those from non-English-speaking countries. By being proficient in English, non-native speakers can communicate effectively with potential customers and partners from English-speaking countries, such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, which can open up new markets and revenue streams for their agrotourism business.

For example, if an agrotourism business based in Greece is run by a non-native English speaker, they may have difficulty communicating with potential customers from Germany, France, etc who are interested in their services. However, if prospective agrotourism entrepreneurs are proficient in English, they can easily communicate with these customers, understand their needs and tailor their services accordingly, thus increasing the chances of making a sale. Additionally, they will be better equipped to negotiate deals, create business plans, read and understand contracts, and network with other agrotourism professionals who speak English as their first or second language.

By being able to communicate in English, non-native speakers can also take advantage of online platforms, such as websites, social media, and e-commerce, to reach a global audience, thus expanding their customer base and generating more revenue.

Improved access to information and resources

Many important resources for agrotourism entrepreneurs, such as research studies, industry reports and marketing materials, are in English.

For example, non-native English speaking agrotourism entrepreneurs may have difficulty understanding and utilizing research studies and industry reports written in English. These studies and/or reports may contain valuable information that can help entrepreneurs make informed decisions about their business.

In addition, a great number of marketing materials such as brochures, flyers and pamphlets, advertisements, and social media posts are in English; these materials will be more accessible to non-native speakers proficient in English. This will help prospective agrotourism entrepreneurs to better promote their business and attract more customers.

Lastly, many software, apps and online tools used by agrotourism entrepreneurs to manage their operations and finances are in English and will be more accessible to non-native speakers if they are proficient in English. This will help them better manage their business, track their finances, and make better decisions.

Enhanced ability to network

English is the language of international business, and proficiency in it can help non-native speakers connect with other agrotourism professionals from around the world.

Networking is an important aspect of any business, and in agrotourism, it is especially important as it can lead to new partnerships, collaborations, and opportunities. By learning English, non-native speakers can attend international networking



virtual or in-person events, such as conferences, conventions, trade shows, webinars, workshops, round table discussions, summits, subscribe to newsletters, join clubs, associations and groups where they can connect with other agrotourism professionals from around the world. They will be able to build relationships, exchange ideas, and learn from their peers, which can help them grow their business.

Being proficient in English can also increase the chances of being selected, included or appointed to international business delegations, Hotel Chambers, trade missions and business roadshows, which can lead to further networking and business opportunities. For example, an English-speaking agrotourism entrepreneur has better chances to be selected in an official business group included in a global marketing campaign promoting the national tourism product.

Enhanced competitiveness

In a global market, being able to speak English can give non-native speakers an edge over their competitors who do not have English speaking skills.

English is the de facto *lingua franca*¹ in the agrotourism industry. Prospective non-native English speaking agrotourism entrepreneurs that have English as a second language (L2) will be able to communicate effectively with English-speaking customers and partners. This can lead to new opportunities, new business development and increased revenue. Additionally, they will be able to access and understand important material, such as research studies, industry reports, and marketing materials published in English, which can help them stay up-to-date on the latest trends and best practices in the industry.

Being proficient in English can also give non-native speakers an advantage in international trade shows, competitions and tenders, as they will be able to present their products and services effectively to an international audience, and thus attract more clients.

Moreover, non-native speakers proficient in English will be able to communicate effectively with international investors, lenders, and business partners which will help them secure funding and expand their business.

In summary, by learning English, non-native speakers in agrotourism will be able to communicate effectively with a global audience and have a competitive advantage, which can lead to new business opportunities and increased revenue.

Access to funding and investment funds

Many venture capitalists and angel investors are proficient in English even though they might not be based in English speaking countries; thus, being able to communicate with them in English can increase the chances of securing funding for an agrotourism venture.

When non-native English speakers are looking to secure funding for their agrotourism business, they may come across potential English-speaking investors. Communicating with these investors in English language, whether as their first or second language, can be crucial in making a successful pitch, as it shows a level of professionalism and competence. Being able to effectively communicate the details of the business, the financials, and the future plans for the business growth can help the non-native English speakers to secure funding or investment.

Furthermore, many business plans, financial reports, and other documents used to secure funding are written in English; therefore, non-native speakers proficient in the English language will be able to evaluate them and decide on whether to fund the application or not.

Non-native English speakers with a good command of English will be able to understand and communicate effectively with legal and financial experts, such as lawyers and accountants, who are often involved in the process of securing funding.

¹ a language adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different.

EXTRA MATERIAL

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Time for exercises!

1. Decide if the following sentences are true or false

- English speaking may result in enhanced competitiveness (T)
- Information leaflets and brochures in the local language can attract native English speakers (F)
- Non-native English speaking agrotourism entrepreneurs proficient in English will probably have more sales (T)
- Filing a funding application with investors having English as their second language is not a good idea and the application will be rejected (F)
- English speaking investors stationed in non-English-speaking countries are good prospects for funding, provided the funding application is in English (T)

2. Choose the correct answer

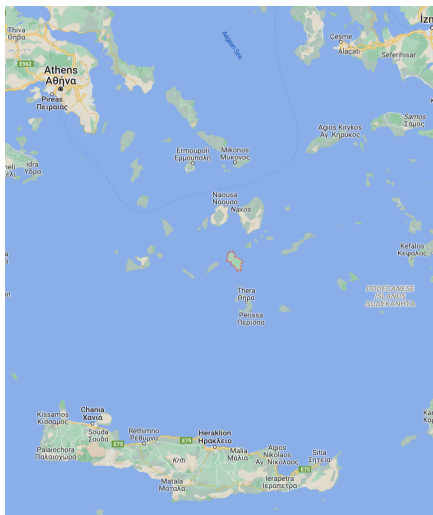
- Which of the following is NOT a benefit of English speaking for an agrotourism entrepreneur?
 - a) Access to funding
 - b) Enhanced competitiveness
 - c) **Greater crop yield**
 - d) New business growth
- Which of the following is a benefit of enhanced ability to networking?
 - a) Waste recycling
 - b) Energy conservation
 - c) Organic vegetable production
 - d) **Attending conferences and international trade shows**
- Improved customer service in an agrotourism business is the result of:
 - a) Increased fertilizer utilization
 - b) More animals in the agrotourism farm
 - c) **Ability to communicate in English**
 - d) Better working conditions

- Which of the following documents are required when filing a funding application
 - a) Wedding certificate
 - b) Business plan**
 - c) School reports
 - d) Blood tests

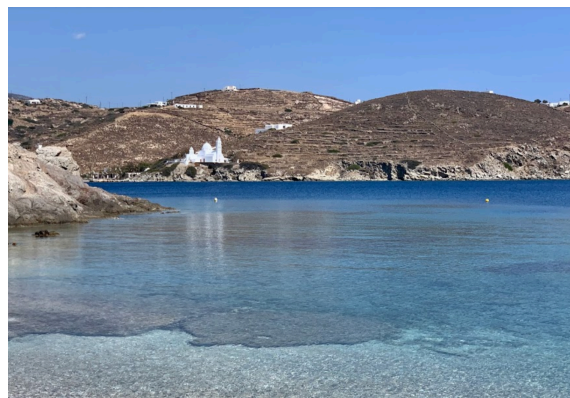


Case studies, interviews, real life examples...

Case study 1. Stratos and the taverna Laini



On the island of Ios, a small picturesque island 111 miles SE of Piraeus, right in the middle of the Aegean Sea, there was the small taverna “Laini” at the main port of the island. Stratos, the owner, and his wife Eleni were running the business in the summer months, with help from a cook, a dishwasher man and a waitress. Eleni did not want to quit her work in Athens, so every weekend was traveling to Ios by boat to help Stratos with the heavy workload, and Monday morning she was back to Athens. She was spending her summer vacation in the kitchen; rarely she and Stratos would go on a daily cruise



around Ios, and would return in the afternoon to take care of business. The taverna was open every summer from May to mid-October, the busiest time of the year, with about 1500 port calls and docks. Ios island is a destination visited by younger people, mostly from Israel, and other European countries, such as Italy, the UK, Germany, etc. and it is known for its beautiful beaches and wild party nights. The taverna served the typical Greek food, like Greek salad, calamari, Greek meatballs, moussaka, etc. What made it special was the super pleasant personality of Stratos. He was fluent in English, something that made him stand out from the rest of the crowd of restaurant owners of the island, but also his extrovert and friendly nature. He would sit down at the tables and take orders, and would immediately start an informal chit-chat with the clients about every possible subject to make them feel at home. He would also bring the food to the tables, and continue the conversation where they left off. To the Greek

clients he would be telling jokes endlessly. The clients loved the food, the setup and would come back night after night and year after year for Stratos. Every night Laini was full and it was impossible to find a table without reservations. The rest of the restaurants on the island were just struggling to get clients. The big show was every night when the moon was shining. After serving the tables, Stratos would switch off all the lights of the taverna, and would go around exclaiming in pure excitement *“Guardate. Guardate la luna. Ah, que bella luna. Mamma mia!”* to his Italian clients, or singing *“You are wonderful tonight”* to the English ladies, and serving drinks on the house, and staying up with the clients until sunrise the next morning. On the nights without moon, the lights would still be switched off, and Stratos would take the guitar and start signing and the clients would join.



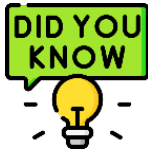
LESSON 6.2 – WHAT TO LEARN



Learning outcomes:

After completing this Lesson, learners will:

- Have a pretty good idea of what to learn
- Have identified the types of language skills
- Have understood some of the subtle differences in everyday expressions
- Have prepared a list of possible uses of English in their agrotourism business, and thus will know where to focus
- Have a list of greetings and what each one of them means.



Did you know that...?

There are:

1,000,000	English words counted by Google in cooperation with Harvard University.
600,000	English words, including many archaic ones, usually defined in dictionaries.
170,000	English words currently in use.
30,000	words in the vocabulary of adult, native-English speakers.
200-400	English words used in 80% of the daily conversations.



Let's get to the point!

As an agrotourism entrepreneur, the first thing you will do when international visitors arrive at your agrotourism farm is to greet them. Coming from an agricultural background, the entrepreneur is probably the introvert guy and the lonely tractor rider. So,

How do you welcome your visitors?

Do you greet them by “Good morning. My name is Bond. James Bond”, “Hello”, “What’s up?”, “How’s it going”, “How do you do”, “How you doing”, “Hello, I’m SmarterThanYou?”, or some other way? [How do you say hello to them?](#) What are the slight differences between greetings?

How do you recommend that they wash their hands to avoid COVID-19? And how do you wish “cheers” when having a glass of wine? How do you even [start](#) or [keep](#) a conversation with them? [How do you talk about your business](#) to prospective clients or business associates?

What will you say when you take visitor around on a garden tour? Or when you all sit together to have the welcome or the good bye dinner? Or when they ask you to recommend where to go and what to see? Or about the methods used to cultivate or harvest plants? Or what kinds of animals do you have on the farm and how you feed and keep them? Or when they have a request about the hot water? Or how do you ask them to turn off the air conditioning when they leave the room to help conserve energy?

In what language?

Are there any typical greeting phrases? And what’s the difference between them?

ESSENTIAL LANGUAGE SKILLS

The essential language skills can vary depending on the language and the context in which it is used. In general, however, there are five main language skills that are considered essential for effective communication:

Listening

This skill involves understanding and interpreting spoken language. Effective listening requires focus and concentration, as well as the ability to identify and comprehend the meaning of words and phrases, intonation, and nonverbal cues.

Speaking

This skill involves expressing oneself through spoken language. Effective speaking requires the ability to articulate words and phrases clearly, use appropriate grammar and vocabulary, and adjust one's speaking style to the audience and the context.

Reading

This skill involves understanding and interpreting written language. Effective reading requires the ability to recognize and comprehend words and phrases, understand sentence structure, and identify the main ideas and supporting details of a text.

Writing

This skill involves expressing oneself through written language. Effective writing requires the ability to organize one's thoughts, use appropriate grammar and vocabulary, and convey meaning clearly and effectively.

Vocabulary

English vocabulary skills for non-native English speakers refer to the ability to understand and use English words effectively and accurately in both written and spoken forms. It involves developing a strong knowledge of English words and their meanings, as well as understanding how they are used in different contexts.

All five language skills are interconnected and essential for effective communication in any language, and there is no way of isolating any one of them. However, the importance of each skill may vary depending on the context each language is used. For example, in an agritourism business environment, listening and speaking may be more in demand everyday, as the entrepreneur will have to communicate face-to-face with the visitors of the agritourism farm. Reading and writing skills will be used perhaps less frequently in oral communication, by email, with business partners and prospective clients, such as travel agencies or tour operators, for bookings and reservations. Still, reading and writing are extremely important and being less proficient in them can have severe consequences. For example, misreading or misunderstanding a clause in a contract can be an expensive mistake or it can ruin a business relation that took a

long time to build. Not being able to write succinctly what the entrepreneur anticipates from a cooperation, or spell out a business obligation, can lead to suboptimal contract performance and risk of terminating or not extending the cooperation next year.

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Decide if the following sentences are true or false

- For effective communication with clients by email, only listening skills are required (F)
- To respond to comments on an online platform after client departure from the farm, speaking skills are most frequently used (F)
- To welcome clients upon arrival, listening and speaking skills are required (T)
- Reading skills are required to understand contract obligations (T)
- To greet guests upon arrival, escort them to their rooms, show their rooms to them and answer their questions, speaking and listening skills are most frequently used (T)

2. Choose the correct answer

- Which of the following is NOT an essential language skill?
 - a) Writing
 - b) Reading
 - c) **Grammar**
 - d) Vocabulary
- The skill(s) an agrotourism entrepreneur will use most frequently with guests staying in his farm are (check all that apply):
 - a) Spelling
 - b) Dictation
 - c) **Speaking**
 - d) **Listening**

- In the contract signing phase, the language skills mostly in demand are: (select one)
 - a) **Reading**
 - b) Speaking
 - c) Writing
 - d) Vocabulary

- For reservations by email, the language skills most frequently in demand are (check all that apply):
 - a) Listening
 - b) **Writing**
 - c) **Reading**
 - d) Vocabulary



Case studies, interviews, real life examples...

Case study 2. Greetings

It's pretty easy to greet someone in English. For example, we can say "good morning" or "hello" or just "hi". And if you meet someone for the first time, we can add something like "my name is George Smith". The cliché "my name is Bond. James Bond" has been almost exclusively reserved for movies featuring the iconic "007" character. For more informal greetings, and especially with people that you may be familiar with, you can say something like "how's it going" or "what's up". In the case, the typical answer is "Not much. What's up with you". For more formal greetings, the greeting is "how are you" or "how are you today" instead of "how's it going?".

If the conversation is with someone you meet for the first time, such as at visitors at check-in, you need to be friendly and professional. So, how do we do that? You can say something like "Hello" or "Hi" or "Good morning, Mr and Mrs Smith. Welcome to our farm". You don't say to them "welcome to my farm" because you want to let them understand that the farm operates as a business unit, and you are not the only person working on the farm.

Then, you can introduce yourself "My name is George Papadopoulos and I am the farm owner". It is OK to let them know who you are and what you are doing on the farm. But remember, visitors are coming from another country and they are not familiar with family names in your language. So, you better leave family names out of the picture. At this point, it is much better to break the ice and leave the formalities behind by saying something like "You can call me George". What you have done so far is that a) you told visitors your name and capacity, b) you

showed them that the farm is running on professional standards, and c) you have created a friendly atmosphere.

But, it gets better.

You will want your guests to remember your name. Since neither you nor anybody else on the farm will be running around wearing name tags, find a short version of your name or shorten your name to something the guests can remember. Unless of course, you want to keep the traditional name. It is OK to keep your full name if your guests will stay for a long time, so they will get use to it. But for the short time your guests will stay on the farm, they will not have time to learn your name.

The above hints about last names are directed mostly to Greek prospective agrotourism entrepreneurs, because Greek names are hard to remember, except some very few exceptions of course. But they will probably be equally useful to other partners of the TREASUREHUNT project.

Now you will need to add something more to start a small conversation and make your guests feel at home. So, go ahead and say something like “So nice to have you with us” to show your appreciation, and continue with “How was your trip?” or “how was your flight? Did you have a nice flight?” to show that you care about them.

References

www.hospitality-school.com

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6CQ7apl_8PgsmfIlmVakb-N2qoNGSumr

50 PHRASES

Phrases to use In business English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkmAhUtoyDw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj9uj1FRinw>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTM_bnkrz-c

Phrases to use in conversation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GB2kGiThc5w>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgikjsqAzvo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mH4hAMqAnWw>

Phrases to use in online meetings

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOUOsneeB-w>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3kg_dWkmCA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sL4LsTLRIk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBMLJiavD6s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKOKQYs4aJg>

How to write e-mails in English

[18 office ready email writing tips](#)

[How to Write Formal Emails in English](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xay5TeJVSC0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Tu1jN65slw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=molucWGGvMc>

How to be a good listener in English

[10 tips for active listening](#)

<https://www.wikihow.com/Be-a-Good-Listener>

<https://www.nytimes.com/guides/smarterliving/be-a-better-listener>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43e51vkffQE>

How to start a conversation/small talk in English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itATuQDfReA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICyadQTp32Y>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGoIoDuf83o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmx07H3sn1w>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGoIoDuf83o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDVAfXnwu-Y>

How to keep a conversation in English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vU-ibdHkz4Y>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTpAvHcU9oI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fnVcXfPe5c>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fnt6P7Rnho8>

How to talk about/introduce yourself in English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tj1w86bw4EM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgjkjsqAzvo>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xR_Ysd-8qW4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5v-wyR5emRw>

Imitate/Shadow/Echo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T91p6pTPpSY>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljEP_ywBm7I

Pronunciation practice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l69yZ5xabbo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdpvo4w0mZc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k57UkxLV-XU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcONw2BBfb8>

Improve/Practice your vocabulary

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-improve-your-vocabulary>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzza-E38UeY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5KXJMj6a6Ts>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88QCdtR65cs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLN6ldRtDhg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgty3Bgu-YY>

Things avoid/not to say when speaking English

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_6B6tIpldM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIlbp2YK86o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqeA407ce74>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQ6bGUOKq7Q>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUyNHOR-R2Y>

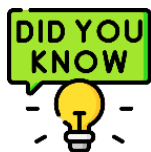
LESSON 6.3 – HOW TO LEARN ENGLISH



Learning outcomes:

After completing this Lesson, learners will:

- Have a solid idea of how they will learn English as a second language
- Have understood the challenges and facilitators in learning English
- Prepare a roadmap about learning English
- Compile a list of available methods, apps and tools to learn English
- Have a step by step procedure to learn English
- Have become acquainted with language acquisition and attrition and what to do about it.



Did you know that...?

- English is the language studied most and by most people?
- [Teaching and/or learning English can be nerve wrecking, but can be fun too!](#)
- Typical [Australian](#), British, [Scottish](#), American and Indian English accents.
- There is no such thing as “proper” English, but there examples of [upper class British accent](#), [British accent](#), American accent ([Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)),
- [Australian English has three different accents](#) and [UK English about 20 local accents](#) (In case of panic, click on “CC” to turn on subtitles)!!!.
- [Using English to communicate can lead to unpredictable situations??](#)

(The above examples of accents are not intended to act as a discouragement or a road block to learning English, but just for fun and as an indication of the variety of English accents around the world. Suffice it to say that even native English-speakers find it hard to understand different accents and have to re-learn or at least improve their English listening skills.

On the other hand, there is a wealth of online educational material such as tutorials, lessons, podcasts, lectures, video conferences, tips&tricks, presentations, travel vlogging sites, TV cooking shows, etc available on video sharing platforms, such as YouTube, Vimeo, TEDx, Spotify, etc. Frequently, this audiovisual content is spoken by non-native English speakers with heavy accents, or native English speakers from different parts of the world, and thus different accents. Therefore, leveraging this information requires advanced listening skills and familiarization with different accents.

Prospective agrotourism entrepreneurs do not have to be fluent in any of these accents; moreover, visitors will probably tone-down their accent to more international standards to make themselves understood. Recognizing the accents, however, will give entrepreneurs some hints about their visitors’ cultural background.)



Let's get to the point!

LEARNING FACILITATORS

Motivation

Motivation is the driving force behind human actions and describes why a person does something (<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-motivation-2795378>). Or, motivation is the desire to act while servicing a goal or a purpose

(<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/motivation>). It is the process that starts, guides and maintains goal orientation. For example, motivation is what pushes you to lose weight, or get a good grade on the exam, or want to learn to play a musical instrument.

There are two types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is the urge arising from external factors, such as getting rewards, respect, money or social recognition. In other words, extrinsic motivation is something that is not specific to someone, but may be shared by many people. For example, the drive to do something for money, or to get good grades at school, is not something specific to one person, but many people in the same work or learning environment may share the same drive. It is known, however, that rewards, such as good grades or higher income or position within a company, may be limited. Consequently, a company may be able to give only a certain amount of bonuses, until its reserves are depleted, and thus some individuals, who worked hard for the year-end bonus, may not receive what they expected and may become disappointed. Similarly, it is virtually impossible for all learners in a class to get A's (or F's), and thus educators resort to adjusting [grades on a curve](#), i.e. there are a few grades at the two extremes, and most grades accumulate towards the middle of the grading scale. Therefore, extrinsic motivation is a driving force, but its effects remain elusive.

Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is the drive to do something, such as solving a complicated math problem or painting the house, just for the fun of it, and without expecting any praise or gratification. It is giving the motivated individual a sense of self-fulfillment that nobody else can understand or experience. Hence, it is possible that others will fail to see the value of what the motivated individual does. In the case of language learning, the learner enjoys learning, whereas [motivation involves a group of mental processes that lead to initiation and maintenance of action](#).

Some researchers say that there is a third type of motivation: family motivation, i.e. doing something for the good of or to support your family in exchange for what your family has done for you, such as paying for your studies.

The boundaries between the types of motivation are not clear. For example, family motivation may be confounded with the obligation to reciprocate to your family for all the things your family may have done for you, while intrinsic motivation may be obscured by extrinsic motivation. In the case of agrotourism, the prospective entrepreneur may be motivated to start the business and do well in it, because he/she inherited the farm or land and regards it as a family heirloom.

How to motivate a prospective agrotourism entrepreneur to learn English

Motivating an adult non-native English speaker, such as a prospective agrotourism entrepreneur, to learn English can be a challenge, but there are several strategies that can help. The following suggestions are based on the premise that an agrotourism business is a family enterprise, and running the business is a one-man-show. The head of the household will be in charge of almost everything in the farm: from feeding the animals, through light plumbing repair works, to electrical appliance replacement.

1. Set clear goals
2. Make learning English as a Second Language (ESL) relevant
3. Focus on communication
4. Provide positive feedback
5. Create a supportive environment
6. Show them the money

LEARNING INHIBITORS

Procrastination

There are several TEDx talks on YouTube on how to end procrastination. But deal with it: Just kick yourself in the butt and get going. Do not hide behind perfection. Remember: perfect is the enemy of good.

One language, many accents

There are many 'Englishes' in the world, and each one of them has different accent and pronunciation. All of them, however, share a common vocabulary (more or less), rules and grammar, are good and acceptable, and none of them is preferred over another.

Accent has a number of components, such as word choice, how to vocalize consonants and vowels, and intonation. Standard British English pronunciation is known by different names, such as Received Pronunciation (RP) or standard accent of the people in the South of England, or BBC English or Queen's English (now King's English?).

Vocabulary

Studies tell us that typical everyday conversations are made with about 200 words ([Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)). Sweet!

Grammar

You don't have to be concerned with English grammar as you already have learned quite a bit of it. For an introductory presentation of English grammar, see the [Khan Academy Grammar Playlist](#). Nonetheless, because web searches are based on clusters of loosely connected keywords, grammar may play a secondary role in web browsing.

Spelling and pronunciation inconsistencies

Top 200 most common words with an American accent ([Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)).

Colloquial expressions, idioms and slang.

How about some fun with [English slang](#)? Or [Australian slang](#)?

METHODS TO LEARN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

Immersion courses

[Don't study English; live it.](#)

Immersion courses, where non-native English learners are exposed a minimum of 8 hours per day in class for one or more months in English reading, writing, listening and speaking, and vocabulary building activities. Such activities include listening to lectures, staging and holding conversations with each other, preparing and giving oral presentations, reading of popular magazines and newspapers, all the way through reading articles retrieved from literature searches, writing essays, building vocabulary skills in their spare time, organize field trips to socialize and have small talk with the locals. Do a web search for summer school intensive English learning courses organized by various Universities and Community Colleges (e.g. <https://summer.yale.edu/courses-programs/intensive-english-program>).

Self-study

Non-native English speaking agrotourism entrepreneurs can use self-study methods, such as textbooks, workbooks, and online resources, to learn English on their own. They can also use English language learning apps and tools to practice grammar, vocabulary, and listening and speaking skills.

Language classes/tutors

Non-native English speaking agrotourism entrepreneurs can enroll in language classes, such as online or in-person courses, to learn English in a structured and guided setting. They can also find a tutor who can provide one-on-one instruction and feedback (e.g. <https://preply.com/en/online/english-tutors>).

Language exchange programs

Non-native English speaking agrotourism entrepreneurs can participate in language exchange programs, where they can practice speaking English with native speakers and receive feedback on their language skills. Find a language exchange partner, preferably a boyfriend or a girlfriend,

who is a native English speaker and interested in learning your native language. You can practice speaking English with them, and they can help you correct your grammar and pronunciation.

Online courses

Language learning platforms like [Duolingo](#), [Babbel](#), or [Rosetta Stone](#) can help you learn English in a fun and interactive way. For a two-week executive summer course, with 4.5 daily hours of English, [Oxford University](#) charges £2,400 or £3,300 for a four week intensive or executive course, respectively. For a 42.5 hour intermediate Complete English language Course, in which students will learn English grammar, English speaking, punctuation and British or American pronunciation, [Udemy](#) charges about \$90.

Learning apps

Top 5 apps for learning English fast:

1. [Preply](#). The language resource hub to reach fluency. Grammar, vocabulary, and speaking tips to accelerate your language learning. Many languages offered, join 1-on-1 tutors, group classes, etc.
2. [Quizlet](#). Online flashcard application. The site is based on the principle that the more you practice recalling information from memory the more likely you are to remember it later. Variety of subjects such as Arts & Humanities, Languages, Math, Science, Social Science, etc. Multiple choice questions, goal setting, fading guidance, pretesting, etc.
3. [Spotify](#). Mainly a music streaming app, but can be used to listen to podcasts on different topics.
4. [Beelinguapp](#). Language learning app combining reading and listening to audiobooks and songs from beginner to advanced levels. Reading and listening to stories they know motivates learners to continue and improve their vocabulary.
5. [Tandem](#). A language learning app where people teach each other their respective language. Once you have signed up and declared your native language and which language you want to learn, Tandem finds the right language exchange partner. The partner will help you learn his/her language and you will help the partner learn your native language. Making new long-term friends is a side benefit of the app.

Learning tools

1. **Flashcard apps.** Download and use spaced repetition flashcard apps, such as [Anki](#), [Quizlet](#), and [Memrise](#) that allow users to create their own flashcards with vocabulary words and phrases, and then test themselves on those words through interactive quizzes. These apps also allow users to access shared flashcard decks created by other users, which can be useful for learning industry-specific vocabulary.

2. **Word of the day apps.** Word of the day apps, such as Vocabify, provide users with a new word or phrase each day, along with its definition, pronunciation, and example sentences. This can be a convenient way for non-native English speaking agritourism entrepreneurs to learn new vocabulary on a daily basis.
3. **Vocabulary building games.** Vocabulary building games, such as Wordscapes, crossword puzzles, can make learning new vocabulary fun and interactive. These games challenge players to find words hidden within a grid of letters, and can be customized to focus on specific vocabulary lists or themes.
4. **Language learning software.** Language learning software such as Rosetta Stone and Duolingo include vocabulary building as a part of their curriculum, and offer interactive ways of learning new words and phrases, including matching games, fill in the blanks and multiple choice questions.
5. **Word lists.** Word lists and flashcard generators, such as Word Dynamo, an offshoot of [dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com), allow users to create custom vocabulary lists, and thus flashcards, based on specific themes, such as business English, travel English, or industry-specific vocabulary.
6. **Vocabulary enhancement browser extensions.** Vocabulary enhancement browser extensions such as [Vocabulous](https://www.vocabulous.com), provide users with definitions and synonyms for words as they browse the web. They also allow users to save words to their vocabulary lists, and review them at a later time.
7. **Audio-visual learning.** Using videos, podcasts, and audio files to learn new vocabulary can be effective for non-native English speaking entrepreneurs, as it provides them with the opportunity to hear the words pronounced correctly and in context.

START LEARNING

There are many ways for a non-native English speaker to start learning English. Here are some suggestions:

The traditional method of language learning included a structured series of steps: it started with learning the English alphabet, followed by increasingly complicated words, building progressively on grammar, irregular verbs, prepositions (for example, do you live on a farm, or do you live in a farm?) and [prepositional phrases](#), [phrasal verbs](#), while simultaneously augmenting vocabulary, etc (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqGD2cVfLv0&t=11>).

This process, however, has received criticism and has been abandoned in favor of a method that follows closely the natural way babies learn to speak their mother tongue while developing into adulthood. Babies start from a clean slate: they have no knowledge of the alphabet, grammar, spelling, tenses, phrasal verbs, association of concepts with sounds, etc. They first learn to

produce sounds, then to control their vocal cords, and to produce words by imitating with their voice the sounds they hear. Once they have reached the level bLearn English step by step

Learning English is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration. You can reverse that by motivating yourself.

There is plenty of free learning material on the Internet, but there is no “hack” or shortcut to learn English fast. However, there are “fast track” methods that [you can learn basic language skills within weeks](#). These skills will allow you to understand phrases and the technical terminology in your field. The more learners study and/or use English, the better off they will be.

1. Set your goals. Why do you want to study English? To take an exam? To pass an IELTS test? To visit or move to an English speaking country? As an agrotourism entrepreneur, you will use English to communicate with clients on and off the farm. What other needs of English do you have?
2. Assess your baseline knowledge. Take tests to determine the starting point of all five linguistic skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening and vocabulary.
3. Trace a route of how you are going to get from the baseline to the end points you set for yourself. If you want to become proficient and truly bilingual, you should reach a point where you do not translate from and into your native language, and your thoughts (and dreams) are in English.
4. Set more useful targets than “I will become fluent”. Go SMART, i.e. set goals that are **Specific, Manageable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound**. For example, “within three months I want to be able/to have learned 500 agrotourism terms”. Be careful, it is absolutely clear when you say “in three months I want to have learned 500 terms”. It is vague and, therefore, a very good excuse for escaping from your learning schedule, when you say “in three months I want to be able to learn 500 terms”. You are able to learn at any time, why do you have to wait three months to become able to learn 500 terms?
5. Immerse yourself in English. Make sure English surrounds you. Make English present in every aspect and every moment of your life: speaking, listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary; going shopping or to the supermarket, taking the bus to go to school, or coming back from work. If you can afford it, move to an English-speaking country until you get to a certain level of English.
6. Reserve some of the time spent with old friends who do not speak English, to make time for new native-English speaking friends and/or regular online or in person conversations with them.

7. Start speaking as soon as possible. Do not wait until you have reached a satisfactory level of understanding. By speaking, you are training your mouth and tongue muscles to the sounds of English. For example, walk around your garden and start talking in English about the plants, the flowers, etc in the same way you would talk to the guests. Repeat

8 Ways to Develop Metacognitive Skills
by @inner_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk

- Know You Don't Know it All**
Knowing the gaps in your knowledge is key
- Set Yourself Great Goals**
Goals should be both challenging and realistic
- Prepare Properly**
5 minutes spent preparing is an hour saved later on
- React Better to the Feedback You Get**
Feedback that is sought but not actioned is a wasted opportunity
- Monitor Your Performance**
Don't wait until the end to see how you are doing
- Seek Out Feedback**
This improves your knowledge base, helping you make better choices
- Keep a Diary**
This will improve self-awareness
- Ask Yourself Good Questions**
'Is this similar to previous tasks?', 'what should I do first?' and 'what would I do differently next time?'

with the animals or pets on the farm.

8. Love your mistakes and learn from them. Don't hesitate to [go out on a limb](#).
9. Stop being the introvert type, and speak up. If you don't open your mouth to speak, you are not making any progress.
10. Imitate. Do your own impersonations and impressions of English speaking people! Pick up your favorite celebrity or person and try to copy the sound, the intonation, the accent, the moves, the voices, etc. Never mind if you are not perfect. You are here to learn, not to become a standup comedian.
11. If you decide to hire a tutor or take classes, make sure they are native-English speakers. Ask them if they teach metacognitive skills, i.e. skills that will help learners think and improve their learning process, and eventually will become self-learners.
12. Start reading. Anything you like, but mostly about your special interests or uses of English in your business. Home alone or on the beach or in the forest. Loudly.
13. Make yourself accountable. Make a study plan and stick to it. Do not give yourself a way out by preparing a Plan B.
14. Get out of your comfort zone and widen your interests and attempts. Start practicing your English language skills in every opportunity. Create the opportunities yourself.
15. Try flashcards to boost your vocabulary or play [word games](#), such as crosswords, hangman, puzzles, Scrabble, etc. For practicing agrotourism-specific terminology, make your own flashcards and add pictures, stickers, drawings, bells and whistles, doodles, or anything else to help you memorize the content. Or consult the multilingual vocabulary of the TREASUREHUNT project.
16. Explore and use free online general and comprehensive English dictionaries, such as [Merriam Webster](#), [Cambridge Dictionary](#), [Collins English Dictionary](#), [Oxford Learner's](#)

- [Dictionary](#), etc. Very good sources for general English language learning; helpful applications and interesting games in each.
17. Learn whole sentences. Start with relatively easy ones with 2-3 words and move up. Use these sentences to buy yourself some time to think when you need to answer questions. For example, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkmAhUtoyDw>, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4F9n8Q_Fe8, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj9uj1FRinw>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TR0JZiapxXM>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSyjjmq2V-o>
 18. Sing along. Pick your favorite English song, organize a karaoke night at home, featuring yourself as the star performer, or a group of apprentices, and find the lyrics of the song at <https://www.azlyrics.com/>. Repeat without looking at the lyrics.
 19. Watch TV and/or podcasts on subject relevant to your agrotourism business. YouTube is a great resource, and it has subtitles on most videos. Subtitles offer a combination of reading and listening comprehension. Later, when you have trained your ears, you can turn the subtitles off to improve your listening skills. However, there will certainly be some that you will immediately turn down either due to bad sound quality, or bad pronunciation, or due to a non-native English speaker, or due to speaker having a speech disorder, or due to too many filler words (“Umm”, “Ahhh”, “Errr”, “So”, “Like”, “You know”,...), or due to a computer-generated voice. Pick the ones you like best.
 20. Listen to [native English speakers \(try to!\) speak your language](#). Try not to laugh, and learn from their mistakes (exaggerated in the above link, but useful).
 21. Your native language is keeping you from learning English! Break free! Change your TV, phone and social media settings to English. Why didn't you think about it before!
 22. Find a community of language learners. Socialize and engage in active conversations with them.
 23. Ask for feedback from your native-English speaking friends about your progress. Revise and recalibrate your learning plan and continue.
 24. Do not quit! Persist! No pain, no gain.

USE IT OR LOSE IT?

Native language attrition

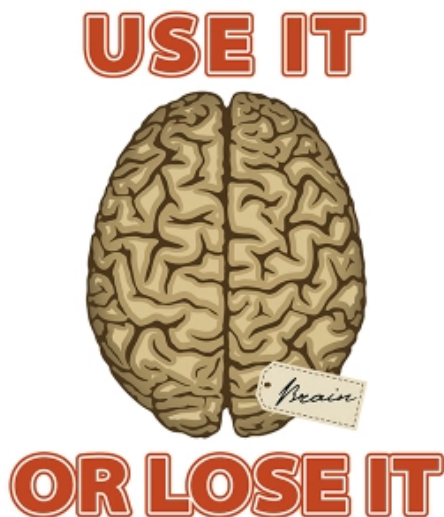
Can people forget their native language after not speaking it for a long time? The official term for the process of forgetting one's native language is “[first language attrition](#)”. In contrast, “language acquisition” is the process by which someone learns a new language and can refer to either the native or a second language. To answer the above question, [BBC Magazine](#) asked

readers under which circumstances a person could lose their native or first language. From the answers received, it seems rare that people will lose permanently and completely their mother language. It is just easier for them to speak the second language they have been speaking regularly. It is not certain to what extent and how long it will take for the mother language to return. Age, degree of immersion or interference from the second language, brain injuries and emotional trauma might be [some factors responsible](#) for language loss.

Second Language Attrition (SLA)

The field of language acquisition and attrition is a relatively new one ([Barbara Köpke](#) and [Monika S. Schmid](#)). Compared to second language acquisition, second language attrition is a much younger field of research and much remains unknown about it. Many theories of forgetting, language attrition hypotheses, and processes of language attrition have been developed, and multiple factors affecting attrition [have been identified](#). Language attrition happens to everyone and every day. Many people are panicked by this, because they believe it is an indication of their sloppiness or laziness to learn a language, or a sign about the [onset of a neurodegenerative disorder](#).

If it is possible to forget temporarily our native language, why don't we ever forget how to ride a bicycle?



Because the sequence of [movements involved in riding a bike is stored in different centers of the brain](#), where fewer new nerve cells may be formed in adults. If fewer new nerve cells are formed, it's less likely those memories (riding a bike) will be erased. In contrast, language skills are stored in brain centers with higher replacement rates, and thus new nerve cells do not carry the information for language skills stored in the older nerve cells that have been replaced.

Whereas the “use it or lose it” maxim [seems to be true for second language attrition, it is not true for native language attrition](#).

What should we do to avoid SLA?

Whereas there is a lot of advice on [what you should do to maintain your native language](#), there is not so much information about avoiding SLA. Although the “use it or lose it” motto [may not be completely true for maintaining one's native language](#), currently there is no corresponding advice for second language maintenance. An interesting hypothesis generated from this

observation might be that first and second language skills are stored in different parts of the brain. Due to lack of better advice or until conclusive research is published, we will stay the course with “use it or lose it”, or “practice, practice, practice” for learning English as a second language.

A method to restore SLA is to take “refresher” courses or classes. The intensity and extend of refreshers will be determined upon an initial assessment of the state of knowledge and the goals learners have set for themselves.

EXTRA MATERIAL

In this part of the Handbook you will find extra material that complements what has been covered in each lesson. To start with, you will find practical exercises to review the concepts and exercise your skills in this area. Afterwards, some case studies, interviews or real-life cases of agrotourism businesses are presented from which you can learn and get inspired for your own!



Time for exercises!

1. Decide whether the following sentences are true or false

- Motivation is a learning inhibitor (F)
- English accent is a learning motivator (F)
- Agrotourism entrepreneurs should learn British English because this is “proper” English (F)
- People should wait to start speaking English until they have reached a satisfactory level of understanding (F)
- By learning whole sentences, learners will have to learn less English (F)
- Watching TV shows and podcasts relevant to agrotourism can be an accelerator in learning English (T)

2. Choose the correct answer

- Which of the following are tools for improving your vocabulary
 - a) Flashcard apps
 - b) Crossword puzzles
 - c) Online dictionaries
 - d) All of the above**
 - e) None of the above

- Which of the following are methods for learning English?
 - a) Language exchange programs
 - b) Immersion courses

- c) Language classes/tutors
 - d) Self-study
 - e) **All of the above**
- Which of the following statements is correct about English language learning
 - a) Grammar is not important
 - b) **Grammar should not be the first priority**
 - c) Vocabulary should follow grammar learning
 - d) Irregular verbs should not be included
 - e) None of the above
 - Singing along English songs is a method to improve your _____ skills.
 - a) Reading
 - b) Writing
 - c) Listening
 - d) **Speaking**
 - Language attrition is
 - a) the process by which we learn a language
 - b) **happening to everyone and every day**
 - c) accelerated among younger ages
 - d) slower in older ages
 - Refresher courses are most appropriate
 - a) when learning English for the first time
 - b) when we want to order refreshments
 - c) **when we want to remember a language we used to know**
 - d) when we want to go skiing
 - The “use it or lose it” logic applies
 - a) equally to first and second languages
 - b) to first language only
 - c) **to learning a second language**
 - d) to selected languages only
 - e) to bicycle training
 - Before starting to learn English
 - a) **an assessment of the current English language skills is required**
 - b) a visit to an English-speaking country is recommended
 - c) forget everything you knew about French
 - d) take a vacation with an English-speaking friend

e) practice any language you may speak



Case studies, interviews, real life examples...

A) The US Foreign Service Institute and other government agencies, organize [44 week long courses](#) for diplomats and other personnel to reach language level '3' knowledge, i.e. being able to read and understand a newsmagazine like 'Time' or 'Newsweek' and hold in depth conversations in the language to be learned. Speaking proficiency can come in a matter of weeks. The courses included several cultural exchange field trips, with learners going out to socialize with the native speakers.

B) One of the best examples of motivation is avoidance behavior. People are motivated to do something because it gives them a good reason to avoid doing something they don't like. For example, after the end of WWII, many Greek people left their families and the rural life and moved to the cities or to other countries for studying or working. The reason for taking such a life-changing decision was that staying in the village would entail cultivating the family-owned land, and probably no exposure to new ideas, ways of thinking, progress and innovation. Many of the most prominent and internationally recognized Greek scientists, artists, architects and engineers, politicians, educators, businessmen, ship owners, etc came of that generation of young people that escaped the farm life. Those that moved to other countries did not speak the local language and had to learn it by cultural immersion and hard study. A graduate of the Greek law school moved to Paris and used to take frequent walks in the Bois de Boulogne speaking loudly by himself to practice French. Of course, self-study includes the risk of making pronunciation or grammar mistakes, but it was more important to learn to speak and correct any mistakes later, in the presence and with the help of native-French speakers. All of the people that emigrated to other countries maintained the close family ties and returned to their village, after they achieved their goals, to renovate the family house or build nice houses for their retirement.