



Understanding the Mountain Bike Customer

Small Business Mentoring Program - Mackay Regional Council

Webinar Three - Presented by Robert Potter

PIONEER VALLEY MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

Today's Webinar

1. Mountain bike tourism.
2. The destination mountain biker.
3. What makes a successful mountain bike destination?

Mountain bike tourism

- Travel with primary purpose of mountain biking.
- Growing market within Australia and internationally.
- Market size not accurately understood but existing destinations receiving 30000 visitors annually.
- Mostly intrastate visitation with significant interstate and limited international visitors.
- Established destinations and more mature markets internationally.
- Increasingly competitive market.
- Success will rely on strategic development of targeted trail experiences.
- Trends: less event travel, increasing female participation, lift/shuttle accessed trail riding, e-bikes and pump-tracks.

Destination mountain bikers

- Primary motivation is riding.
- Not a homogenous group but made up of overlapping market segments with differentiation by disciplines, difficulty, age.
- Have higher incomes and spend more than other visitor types.
- Well-educated.
- Owns one or multiple bikes worth \$4000+ each.
- Mostly male with female participation increasing.

Travel behaviours

- Travel 1-3 times per year spending \$1700 per trip.
- Stay 2-5 days depending on trail volume and quality.
- Travel with their own bike.
- Primarily use the internet for research and booking of products.
- Consult mountain bike media outlets for trail information and reviews.
- Group sizes of 2-8.
- Often book accommodation and other services 6-12 months in advance.
- Seek trail riding with challenge appropriate to their ability.
- Will use shuttles where available.
- Increasing use of e-bikes though air travel makes this difficult.

Their Needs

- Unique settings.
- Convenience and accessibility.
- Trails and destinations that offer:
 - Connection with nature.
 - Escape from society.
 - Fun and the opportunity to feel the flow of a trail.
 - Challenge that tests a rider's technical skill.
 - Exercise that strengthens the body and mind.
 - Variety of trails that have their own personalities.
 - Connections to other trails and routes that create a range of possibilities.
 - Camaraderie between friends and new acquaintances.
 - A sense of belonging from trails that welcome mountain bikers.
 - Convenient facilities that make the riders experience complete.

Non-mountain bikers

- Great opportunity to offer mountain biking to non-mountain bikers where significant visitation already exists.
- It can:
 - Disperse existing visitors further through region and increase length of stay.
 - Supplement destination mountain biker visitation with only slight changes to trail offering and products.
- Will require entry level trails as part of the offering.
- Wanaka Bike Tours is an example of tapping into this visitor market.

Successful mountain biking destinations

- **TRAILS** are key – the combination of what they are like to ride and their location.
- Mountain bike businesses: Shuttle operators, bike shops, tours, guiding, instruction.
- Hospitality and service businesses: Food and accommodation, transport.
- Complimentary activities.
- Effective marketing.
- Community support, engagement and benefit.

Accommodation must haves

- Style and budget - from camping to boutique luxury.
 - Majority in existing Australian destinations are self-contained AirBnB former residential dwellings.
 - Resort/hotel offerings popular internationally and in alpine areas.
- Proximity to trails is critical. Ride in/ride out.
- Secure bike storage with e-bike charging opportunities.
- Workshop facilities.
- Laundry.
- Bike wash facilities.
- Bike box/bag storage.
- Informed staff able to provide information about trails and best way to use them.

Food and beverage

- Diverse demand including for higher end options.
- Strong interest in local produce as part of the destination experience.
- Burgers and pizza common.
- Brewery experiences and craft beer popular.
- Great Coffee is a MUST.
- Options to suit the days activities; light, healthy lunches.
- Vegan, vegetarian options.

Transport

- Airports, rental companies, transfers and shuttle providers may all impact the destination experience.
- Work with airports as primary contact for visitors.
- Preservation of bikes is critical to all transport activities.
- Transfers between point of entry and trail destination, between destinations in a region and for non-mountain bike markets.
- Shuttles: transport of riders to the high point of descending trails or to and from point to point trails.
- Shuttle and lift-accessed trail riding key growth area and direct business opportunity.

Bike shops and rental

- Focal point of riding and visitor community.
- Universal source of trail information.
- Necessary for maintaining visitor experience in event of mechanical failure.
 - Most destination mountain bikers will travel with own bike.
- Rental market strongest amongst regional visitors, new to mountain biking, complimentary market.
- E-bike hire.
- Battery hire.
- Destination/trail merchandise.

Complimentary activities

- Existing tourism products reflective of the natural or cultural environment.
- Demand for retreat, massage, sauna, yoga increasing with female participation.
- Local produce, art, breweries, cellar door, farm-gate experiences popular.
- Other active and passive outdoor recreation activities.
- Increases the appeal of the destination to both mountain bikers and to groups with non-riders, increasing duration of stay.

Blue Derby Pods Ride

- All inclusive tour experience based around unique accommodation.
- Within trail network.
- 3-4 day packages ranging from \$1850 to \$2850.
- Visitors mostly 45 years plus.
- Groups including non-riders common.
- 5% local, 90% interstate, 5% international visitors.
- Strongly seasonal visitation.
- Focus on local food and wine.
- Feature in many Tourism Tasmania and RTO campaigns because of strong brand alignment.

The Floating Sauna - Derby

- Architect designed sauna within the trail network and on Lake Derby (Briseis Hole).
- Attracts non-mountain bikers who then participate in mountain biking as a complimentary activity.
- Extremely strong bookings with plans to develop similar experiences elsewhere.
- Sensibly, provides safe bike storage.

Marketing

- Understand your product and its value to your visitor.
- Understand the visitor and what sources inform their decision making.
- Choose appropriate platforms and channels to communicate your offer to your audience.
- Develop relationships with local, regional and state tourism organisations to participate in campaigns and media famils.
- Events - direct economic opportunities for larger population centres with hospitality capacity, potential marketing activity for regional centers.
- Choose the right events for your destination by understanding differentiation of market segments.

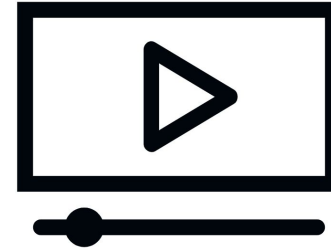
Recap

- Successful destinations rely on not only great trails but great experiences, products and communities around them.
- The destination mountain biker is a new, high-yield visitor to the Pioneer Valley Region with understood needs and behaviours.
- The demands of the destination mountain bike market can be met by adaptation of existing businesses and development of new products and experiences.
- Understand your product, and the market segments that are your audience and how to effectively communicate with them.
- Develop relationships with tourism organisations and government agencies to maximise your marketing reach.

RESOURCES & TOOLS



PRESENTATION
SLIDES



VIDEO
RECORDING

Questions



THANK YOU

If you have any questions regarding this webinar or the mentoring program, please email the Sparrowly Group mentoring team mentoring@sparrowly.com

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