

TOURISM INNOVATION RELIES ON LEADERSHIP AND EXPERIMENTATION



Tourism innovation is one of the hot topics discussed among the travel stakeholders these days. Therefore, the annual Francophone E-Tourism Meeting, which took place in June in Valais, Switzerland, focused on the very question – How to innovate tourism? 25 experts from Quebec, Wallonia, France and Belgium discussed the topic for three days and released a list of ten factors that affect tourism innovation the most.

Leadership is essential. Be it a committed tourism office director, an elected official or a business leader, there always need to be someone responsible for moving the innovation forward.

Strategic vision is another crucial factor. Even though sometimes the tourism innovation is impromptu, its development is always linked to an established strategy. What is a leader with a vision without any **trust**. Innovation of the destination, or travel business heavily depends on the trust of the people.

An essential point for innovation is also the need to break down the barriers which separate people and to encourage diversity – **open-mindedness** is the gate of innovation.

When innovating, failures often come. The right to **make mistakes** should be a firmly anchored concept within the mindset of tourism stakeholders because through failures and mistakes we learn to seek different solutions.

Client-based approach is essential for tourism innovation, yet too often it is neglected. Innovated products are always targeted at clients, thus it is necessary to be in touch with the customers and learn from them.

Many examples of innovation were contributed by men and women from outside of the industry. It is always wise to treasure **external contributions** and give them a serious thought. Another factor is **experimentation**. In order to innovate it is necessary to experiment, to test ideas and of course to evaluate the results.

Moreover, it is only possible to innovate by being part of a network. **Governance** controls and balances all the innovation, co-construction, and collaboration.

Management goes hand in hand with governance. Management should be understood as the suitable preparation of all teams by means of empowerment, individual responsibility and a stimulating and creative working environment.

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