

WORKSHEET #3

PLANNING YOUR EXPERIENCE

Ready to create your unique Nova Scotia experience? These questions will guide you through key planning considerations, while keeping you focused on your visitor. It's OK if you don't have all the answers yet. Working through these questions will help keep you on the path to creating a new experience.

Remember, an experience doesn't need to be complex, but it does need to be well planned and promoted!

YOUR EXPERIENCE CONCEPT

1. Describe your experience.

2. What is your business goal? How will this experience help you achieve it?

3. What is the theme of your experience? A theme helps you determine the activities, stories, flavours, and locations to include. These provide local connections, added-value, and make your experience unique (some theme examples are an exclusive island adventure, or a sea-to-table feast).

- 4. What differentiates your experience from what you currently offer, and from similar products in Nova Scotia? In Canada? In the world?** Consider the unique combination of experts, flavours, activities, or locations you're sharing with guests.

- 5. During your experience, how will visitors learn something by doing something with someone who lives here?**

- 6. How will you provide added-value or the WOW factor to visitors, such as exclusive access or connection to a person or place they can only get through your experience?**

- 7. How will you welcome visitors and set the stage for them to mingle and make personal connections with your host and other visitors?** This helps increase their comfort and create a friendly, welcoming and fun vibe.

- 8. What memories, messages or new learning do you want guests to leave with?**

- 9. What memento will your guests make or take home to remind them of their experience?**

PLANNING

To create an engaging experience that exceeds visitor expectations and earns a premium price, it's critical to ensure the smallest details are taken care of.

10. Draft a detailed itinerary for your experience. From start to finish, how will this experience unfold for your visitors and how much time will it take?

If your experience takes place over several hours, consider breaking it into smaller intervals (i.e. if it lasts two-hours, think in 15-minute intervals; if it's a full day or longer, consider hour-long intervals). Outlining a detailed itinerary will make it easier to create a thoughtful, engaging, and well-timed experience.

11. Who is your target Explorer Quotient (EQ) segment? How do the included activities and the way they are delivered align with their preferences? (i.e. Authentic Experiencers like to have enough time to explore locations, ask questions, and immerse themselves in the history. Free Spirits, on the other hand, like to sample activities, take in the highlights, and feel pampered.)

12. What timing considerations and other details need to be considered in advance? (tides, sunsets, food, partner availability, shuttles.)

13. What props, equipment, or materials are required to deliver your experience?

- 14. Where will your experience take place? If offered at multiple or remote locations, how will all supplies and materials be in place before guests arrive? How will visitors get from one location to another?**
- 15. If the experience takes place outside, will weather impact its delivery? What alternative location or experience can be provided?** If there are no alternatives available, ensure your cancellation policy is very specific to manage expectations and clearly outline your refund policy.
- 16. Can your experience elements be simplified for delivery? What planning or advance preparation is needed from your business (and partners) to deliver this experience?** (e.g. meal preparation and advance set up of dining or activity location.)
- 17. How are the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch) engaged during this experience?**
- 18. How will you incorporate sustainability in your experience?** Sustainable and responsible tourism practices are important in creating authentic experiences that have a positive impact on the economic, social/cultural, and environmental footprint of your business (such as local food, reusable plates, ensuring all partners are paid, following pack-in pack-out guidelines.)
- 19. How often will you offer your experience?** For an experience to be listed on NovaScotia.com, it needs to be available for purchase at least four times per year.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

You don't need to be the expert on all elements of your experience – you can partner with other experts! For example, a restaurant or catering company (with equipment, licenses, permits) could deliver a food component, or a local expert may provide an authentic, personal connection to enhance a hike or visit to a significant site.

If you're working with a partner, it's important to be on the same page. Plan collaboratively, ensure a partnership agreement is in place, and request proof of insurance and any required licenses/permits applicable to their portion of the experience. For an example partnership agreement form, check out [Worksheet #5: Partnership Agreement Template](#).

20. Who will you partner with to deliver your experience and which elements will they be responsible for? Clarifying roles is essential to a positive guest experience, particularly around partner availability, managing promotions, booking, and communicating with visitors.

21. If you are relying on a partner, what do they need to know to ensure the experience flows smoothly?

22. How will you ensure your experience partner shares your commitment to quality and delivers the best possible guest experience?

23. How and when will your partner get paid?

24. How will partners be notified of any changes or cancellations?

Refer to [Worksheet #5: Partnership Agreement Template](#) in this section for more information.

BOOKING AND CANCELLATION POLICY

25. What is the minimum and maximum number of guests for your experience? If there are multiple components to the experience, consider breaking into smaller groups to maximize capacity, while maintaining an intimate feel. Also consider capacity limitations of your venue and the number of experience partners involved. Worksheet #4: Experience Pricing can help you determine a minimum number of visitors required for sustainable and profitable experience.

24. If your experience has a culinary component, can you accommodate dietary requirements? How will you communicate with guests your ability or inability to accommodate?

25. Can you modify activities to accommodate visitors with varying abilities such as mobility challenges? If modifications are not possible, how will you communicate this to manage expectations and give visitors the information they need when deciding to book? Some activities and locations may be challenging for visitors, such as getting into a boat or navigating an uneven surface for an island experience.

26. What important details do visitors need to know in advance of participating in your experience? (e.g. arriving in advance, parking, physical demands of the experience, minimum number of guests required, cancellation policy, special clothing or footwear they should bring.)

27. How will you communicate with guests before and after the experience? Once guests have booked, how will you communicate before the experience to confirm required details and welcome them. Or after your experience to reach out and thank them for visiting and invite them to share their experience in a review?

28. What is your cancellation policy? How will guests be contacted in the event of a cancellation? Make sure to address factors such as weather, travel delays, minimum number of guests, late arrivals, waivers, and refund policy if you or your guest cancels. Also consider the need for alternative contact information for guests while they are travelling.

PERMITS, INSURANCE, AND SAFETY

For more information on regulations and permits that may impact your experience, contact [Nova Scotia's Business Navigators](#) for personalized assistance.

29. What special requirements need to be considered regarding your experience location? (e.g. access permits, land-use permission, parking.)

30. Will additional insurance or training, for yourself, staff, or partner(s) be needed to offer this experience?

31. What is your risk management and safety plan in case of emergency?

32. What municipal, provincial, and/or federal regulations must your experience adhere? (e.g. food safety guidelines, licenses, alcohol permits.)

33. How will you test the quality and condition of materials, supplies, and/or equipment before each experience offering?

34. How will guests be briefed on safety details they may need to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience? (e.g. boat evacuation, using safety equipment like life jackets or helmets.)
Is there information you could collect in advance to prepare for guests? (e.g. waivers, sizes.)

Congratulations!

You're well along the path of planning your new experience. Although the above list of considerations will apply to most experiences, it doesn't cover every situation. Consider any additional special elements that need to be planned for your experience specifically.

NEXT STEPS

Testing your experience: Before offering your new experience, test the flow, timing, and delivery of all activities with friends, family, or local connections – ideally those who fall within your target segment. Potential testers can find their segment by completing the [‘What’s your Traveller Type’ quiz](#). Gather feedback and insights to ensure your visitors are engaged and wowed by your experience.

Pricing: Once you finalize the details of your experience, refer to [Worksheet #4: Experience Pricing](#) to ensure no cost is overlooked, to price your experience for sustainability and profit.

Marketing: How will you promote your experience and close the sale? The first step is writing your experience description. Use [Tip Sheet #9: Guide to Describing Your Experience](#) to get started. The Marketing Opportunities & Closing the Sale section of this toolkit will walk you through opportunities and best practices for Nova Scotia tourism operators.

Tracking results: Included in this toolkit is [Worksheet #7: Measuring Experience Success](#) to help track your results, including the number of experiences sold, where your visitors are coming from, and more.

GOING FORWARD

Listen to visitor feedback and look for opportunities to improve the visitor experience. Adjustments made over time can contribute to the long-term success of your experience.