

Destination
Feel Good

Case Study: Monty's Lounge Restaurant

Local, sustainable, ethical business



The Project

Through the creation of a network of tourism destination stakeholders, Destination FeelGood aims to establish Bournemouth University as a central knowledge exchange partner and the National Coastal Tourism Academy as a knowledge broker, sharing tourism wellbeing expertise with the local public and private sector. Thus inspiring innovation in health and wellbeing focused products and enhancing business performance and ultimately the local tourism economy.

This case study is a useful example of how sustainable wellbeing can be used as a strategy to create business networks and improve local community wellbeing.

The Background

Destination FeelGood offers the opportunity for connecting different destination stakeholders. Through inter-stakeholder dialogue, tourism businesses are in a position to increase their market through developing new products and services that will provide an enhanced value-added experience for visitors and local people alike. This project can accelerate tourism business growth via an improved understanding and implementation of wellbeing as it can facilitate the exchange of knowledge between tourism businesses, policy makers (both public health and tourism), and tourism and public health focused academics.

Through the Destination FeelGood project Ideas Cafés were run and a network established to share examples of best practice and act as a catalyst to foster innovation in co-creating destination and wellbeing products.

Case study



This case study is based on a local burger restaurant. Monty's Lounge was opened by two Bournemouth University graduates in 2013. The idea behind it was to create an ethical, sustainable business that would provide a welcoming and friendly environment. Although it is a small local business that targets primarily local residents, the range of customers varies greatly across different age groups (e.g. from students to eighty year old couples). James and his business partner want Monty's to be the type of place where customers feel at home and relaxed. Monty's Lounge is a sustainable restaurant attempting to make ethical decisions every step of the way.

"We are trying to meet the demand... being as ethical as possible" – James.

The Action

One of the most promising outcomes of the Ideas Cafes was the ability for the University and other stakeholders such as the Local Authority to connect with the business community to create or inspire innovative products and emerging areas of commercial interest. Attending the Ideas Cafe James got useful information on current legislation which led him to adjust the menu to these standards (e.g. included information about ingredients and allergens). James also came up with the idea of creating connections between businesses and suppliers. The concept is to organise local meetings to enable contacts between suppliers and businesses with a focus on ethical and sustainable business.

Results

The needs and wants of customers are changing, as well as the way they buy food (e.g. increasing number of vegetarians and vegans, and an increasing demand for gluten free meals and more information about the source of the food we eat). Monty's Lounge is trying to meet customers' desires by providing healthy and high quality food. The restaurant transparently sources its products based on locality, seasonality and trustworthiness of suppliers.

The restaurants day to day `practices` are focused on sustainability. In order to achieve a high level of sustainability procedures such as recycling, water restrictors on taps and toilets and managed waste reduction are all implemented. This business has also signed up for the cycle to work scheme, which is sponsored by the government, to obtain discount on bicycles.

Furthermore, the variety of customer segments and building connections with other local businesses give a foundation to build a community that could improve the local physical environment. Friendly welcoming local businesses make people feel generally happier and more confident in their environment, and give a feeling of belonging, which can enhance psychological wellbeing for local people as well as visitors.

Among the reasons why people come to Monty's Lounge are locality, a sustained high standard of quality ingredients, (e.g. locally sourced fresh ingredients) choice, staff knowledge of the products and a relaxed and welcoming place to eat.



Conclusion

This project offered the opportunity to connect different destination stakeholders, with the specific aim of innovating in relation to health and wellbeing focused products while contributing to a competitive local economy. The main impact of this project is seen as the co-creation and fusing of academic and practitioner expertise to innovate within the emerging wellbeing agenda and enhance commercial potential. This is done through providing a platform for dialogue for tacit and explicit knowledge exchange.

The connection between businesses that the project aims to help establish can benefit small, independent producers and suppliers. In turn this can help the local community, and boost the local economy, as well as creating new jobs.

Sustainable and healthy food may currently be seen as a niche market. However it is clear from the emerging evidence base that sustainable ethical approaches to business are linked to emotional wellbeing for tourists, local residents and business staff; who feel they are benefitting their local community and environment. All of which of course in the long term will benefit environmental wellbeing.

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