



HenleyCentreHeadlightVision

Understanding the barriers to participation in outdoor recreation

Qualitative research component for 'Natural England'

Countryside Agency

English Nature

Rural Development Service

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Objectives



- To understand how the countryside/outdoors is perceived by three key life stages and how this influences participation
- To identify general barriers to outdoor experience in three key life stages, so as to highlight possible future routes to connection

Young adults
(17-21)

Young families

Seniors
(55 +)

Methodology



- A consumer focus group was conducted from each key life stage
- Attendees were chosen for their current low involvement in outdoor activity, but who didn't actively reject the idea of increasing their outdoor participation
- The focus groups were recruited and conducted in Sheffield as it was judged to be a city that provides a consistent balance between an accessible urban environment whilst remaining within easy range of a number of key outdoor leisure and recreation centres

Key lifestage overview



YOUNG ADULTS

Main focus is on themselves; their own career and social development

Key Themes: Live for the moment, personal stimulation, material consumption, social networking

YOUNG FAMILIES

Parents spend time juggling their own work and social lives against the needs and expectations of their families

Key Themes: Being a good parent, doing the right thing, logistical gymnastics

SENIORS

A new set of life priorities and family commitments as seniors get used to the new freedoms of retirement

Key Themes: Devotion to grandchildren, new time structure, taking stock and rediscovering themselves



Spontaneous reactions to the outdoors and outside activity

Best moments outdoors?



Happy times abroad

"The experience of being on holiday and enjoying a bit of free time by myself on the roof of the Hotel was great... seeing the ground and the sky and being part of it" Albert, 56

Sense of achievement

"Making an overgrown garden into a place of real beauty and seeing my family's reaction" Edwin, 68

Natural wonder

"My first visit to Howden, Looking out to the trees, the smell of fresh air. It made me feel 100 times more peaceful and happy" Margret 40

Sporting achievement

"Scoring a hole in one on my local golf course " David 40

Playfulness

"I Love working outside in the sunshine. I can play with the boss's dog" Rob, 18

Youthful nostalgia

"Primary school trip to Mansfield. Never laughed so much, being 8 years old and jumping in cow dung" Rob, 18

Worst moments outdoors?



Crime

"I will never forget walking home with my shopping and being robbed of my purse that was lying in the top of my bag" Maureen, 57

Wet and miserable

"I remember walking in Scotland this time and just being soaked through to my skin it was horrid" Gordon, 69

Threatened by nature

"On a school trip in the Lake District. The weather closed in. We were wet, cold and very frightened" Glynn 44

Being stranded

"Being stuck with a flat tyre when I forgot my mobile" Roisin, 30

Allergy

"When I was younger I had unbearable hay fever, it took me an hour to get home by which time my eyes were so sore" Joy, 18

Motoring misfortune

"Crashing my car. Lowest of the low" Adam, 21



Those over 35 demonstrate a much more positive emotional connection to the outdoors than younger people

Young adults:

Very low connection current participation or interest

Young families:

Moderate connection, currently. Some low level involvement and some interest.

Seniors:

Current connection is good. Some low level involvement currently, and a strong connection to the outdoors from the past

Connection to the outdoors varies by life stage, though it should be noted that life stage may not be the determining factor



**Understanding barriers and
unlocking routes to
connection in Young Adults**



There was little or no connection with the outdoors, or being outside in young people



A wealth of more immediate and accessible ways of killing time, compounded by image problems of “the outdoors” means that it’s easier not to bother

Critical barriers at a glance



Critical Barrier 1 – Time

Busy lifestyles and low energy levels mean young people don't have the inclination to move beyond their normal social repertoire

Critical Barrier 2 – Perceived Reward Lethargy

High stimulation needs and low boredom thresholds mean that young people seek activities that offer a buzz or a tangible reward for their investment

Critical Barrier 3 – Outdoors Image

A less than positive image around the outdoors and exertion, compounded by sensitivity to peer relations means that the countryside has difficulty connecting to image obsessed young people

Critical Barrier 4 – Cumulative Cost

Both financial and emotional cost means that "easier alternatives" appear more alluring

Critical Barrier 1 – Time

Busy lifestyles and low energy levels mean young people don't have the inclination to move beyond their normal social repertoire

Emotional Blockages

PRECIOUS TIME

"I want to spend my spare time doing my stuff, or with friends"

STRESSED LIFE

"After a hard day at work/college I just want to chill out"

NO TIME TOGETHER

"All my friends working different hours so we have to grab free time when we can"

ORGANISATIONAL STRESS

"No one has the time to organise anything like that. It's easier just to go the pub"

Time blockage expressions



PRECIOUS TIME

- When you're young, spare time is in short supply and I want to use it for the stuff that I'm interested in
- A lot of things are competing for my attention
- It's sometimes difficult to see what's important in life
- I want to make my own choices about my life
- There are so many interesting-looking things that I want to try

"My time is precious. I have to work alternate Saturdays as well as all week so when I get time off, I grab it"

"You're young, you've got a bit of money in your pocket and you want to spend it on the things you want to do"

STRESSED LIFE

- We are the busiest generation there has ever been
- There's more onus on young people to get themselves financially secure
- I've more practical worries to think about
- Whether it's parents, teachers or the boss, we get a lot of pressure
- After a long day/week recuperation is important

"I work a 40 hour week. I mean I think I deserve a lie in"

"I haven't got the time. When I'm done with work all I want to do is chill out and watch television"

Time blockage expressions



NO TIME TOGETHER

- It's hard enough to co-ordinate my social life
- I have loads of different sets of friends to see
- When you work, you have less time to see your mates
- I have to have set routines to fit all my social requirements in
- Shift work means very little social time with mates
- It's important that you dedicate equal time to all of your friends

"Friday with the lads, Saturday with the bird, Sunday at my mums"

"I feel guilty when I haven't seen a set of friends for ages so I try and work out a fair system"

ORGANISATIONAL STRESS

- If we want to do something together someone's got to organise it
- Aside from getting everyone there, collecting the money, you're responsible if it's rubbish
- Where are you going to go that everyone will enjoy?
- It's hard enough to organise my own life
- If you make a plan that falls through then that's pure wasted time

"I once tried to organise a lads holiday to Ibiza. Money, passports, airports -- Nightmare. Never again"

"Planning takes time that I simply haven't got"



Time is a critical barrier: New life patterns and perceived time stress means that young people prefer to spend free time relaxing or with friends in a range of easy and instantaneous modes

WHAT IS WELL SPENT TIME?

- Instantaneous and simple to organise
- It should connect to an established part of current repertoire (e.g. shopping, drinking)
 - Relaxing, short burst high energy or chill out
 - An appealing, accessible and interesting setting
 - A social occasion/shared experience that everyone can enjoy

Whilst time is a key barrier, there are a whole host of key leisure experiences that are currently more amenable than “outdoor” pursuits

Critical Barrier 2 – Perceived Reward Lethargy

High stimulation needs and low boredom thresholds mean that young people seek activities that offer a buzz or a tangible reward for their investment

Emotional Blockages

RETURN FOR YOUR MONEY

“You pay out all that money and effort but for nothing in return”

URBAN INTEREST

“Everything I need is in the town”

NO BUZZ FACTOR

“I need to find the stuff I do stimulating”

NOTHING TO DO

“What is there to do when I get there?”

Perceived reward lethargy expressions



RETURN FOR YOUR MONEY

- I don't have much spare money
- I want to have something to show for my hard work
- There are loads of things that I'd like to buy
- Think about all the clothes you could buy for the price of a day trip
- All the interesting stuff costs too much money

"Young people barely have enough money for living. After rent, car, clothes and the pub, what's left to play with?"

"I don't earn much... I need to have something to show for all my hard work. That's why I like shopping"

URBAN INTEREST

- All of the interesting stuff for young people can be found in the cities
- My town has almost everything I need for me
- If I want a day out I will go to Manchester or Leeds
- Cities have like-minded people and fun things to do around the clock
- You don't have to travel far to be in the action

"Everything I need is right here in town"

"If I want a special day out I'll go to Manchester. The shops are better there"

Perceived reward lethargy expressions



BUZZ FACTOR

- I need the things I do to be lively and high energy
- I need some sort of a buzz to feel like I'm having a good time
- I need to be able to feel the experience I'm having
- I enjoy risk/adrenaline
- I like to see how far I can push myself
- If I'm going to be outside, it needs to be exciting
- Extreme sports/buzz activities cost lots of money

"The countryside isn't set up for young people. They want excitement or a buzz"

"I've been skiing at the ski village and bungee jumping. Does that count?"

NOTHING TO DO

- There is nothing to do outdoors
- I get bored easily
- What is fun about walking? You can do that to the pub
- I'm young - that means I don't need to worry about my health
- TV shows you more than you can see outside
- I find it hard to make my own fun
- There are a lot more interesting things to do indoors or at least a lot closer to home

"Exercise? I do enough when I'm about day to day"

"The countryside isn't set up for the needs of young people. They need something to do"



As savvy consumers whose time and money is in short supply, incentive or perceived reward needs to be high in order to break with usual repertoire of experiences and connect to young people

BREAKING THROUGH THE “WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME” MINDSET?

- New experiences need to be instantaneous and accessible
 - Activities needs to be exciting, high energy
 - Reward needs to be tangible, little and often
- A new experience needs to be decoded as unique and value for money to aid experimentation

Pandering to the lethargies of buzz-hungry youth may seem futile. However more youth focussed pursuits should emphasise value, accessibility and fun

Critical Barrier 3 – Outdoors Image

A less than positive image around the outdoors and exertion, compounded by sensitivity to peer relations means that the countryside has difficulty connecting to image obsessed young people

Emotional Blockages

LACKING CREATURE COMFORTS

“The countryside smells, it's muddy and wet. Where's the fun in that?”

NOT COOL

“Walking is for old people and anoraks”

LACK OF ROLE MODELS TO CONNECT TO

“Who can you name who's cool and is an outdoors person? ”

PEER PRESSURE

“Can you imagine what your mates would say if you were like lads, “I'm going for a run””

Outdoors image blockage expressions



LACKING CREATURE COMFORTS

- The countryside smells of manure
- I don't want to get muddy
- The weather is always crap
- What's the fun in getting cold and wet?
- I'll probably get lost
- What do I do when I get there?
- I don't have the right equipment
- Sitting in the garden is just more convenient

"I have nothing to wear. I mean, I'm not going to wear my new trainers just to get them muddy"

"The countryside? It stinks of shit!"

NOT COOL

- There's a certain type of person who enjoys being outdoors
- You have to be old and past it to get a kick out of nature
- I only went to museums and attractions when parents and teachers forced me go
- I've never found anything interesting about outdoors
- My mum and dad are ramblers (so I'm not)

"It's for granddads and geography teachers getting high off fresh air"

"Since when have anoraks been trendy?"

Outdoors image blockage expressions



LACK OF ROLE MODELS TO CONNECT TO

- I need someone I respect to endorse what I do
- You never see cool people taking walks
- My role models are either pop stars or actors
- The outdoor life is not aspirational
- Everything I read and see reinforces "urban" culture

"You never see Beckham in heat magazine - "England Captain goes for a Walk - shock". Do you?"

"Who've you got? Ray Mears? He's a nutter"

PEER PRESSURE

- It's important that I fit in with what my friends want
- I don't want to stick out
- It's easier just to go along with my friends' suggestions than suggest something new
- It's too much effort to convince them to try new things
- We often do the same old thing because it's something we know and like
- LCD denominator often prevails

"It's impossible to do anything new. You get stuck in a rut but at least it's easy"

"Imagine if you said to the lads "I'm off out for a walk." You'd never hear the end of it"



In the image conscious mass mediated world of youth culture, more natural pursuits suffer at the hands of more urban, consumption-centric pastimes – something which is reinforced by peers and role models

OUTDOORS IMAGE MAKEOVER!

- Needs convenience
 - Urban focus
- Needs a materialistic component (Perhaps Image improvements could be built via clothing/equipment companies/retailers?)
 - Perceived youth relevance (music festivals?)
- Outdoor advocates to push the youth appeal of time outdoors?
 - Health may be a key driver for some

However, whilst positive endorsement of key youth attributes in urban/closer to home spaces this may fail to overcome deeper motivational/image issues

Critical Barrier 4 – Cumulative Cost

Both financial and emotional cost means that “easier alternatives” appear more alluring

Emotional Blockages

INTEREST/COSTS

“All the interesting stuff costs money”

VALUE FOR INVESTMENT

“I haven’t got the time or money to waste on things I know I’m not going to enjoy”

ROUTINE AND HABIT

“I like to know what I’m doing and where I’m going so I stick to the stuff I like”

ALLURE OF EASIER ALTERNATIVES

“We have so many things available at the touch of a button that there’s no need to go outside”

Cumulative cost blockage expressions



INTEREST/COST

- Money is very important to me
- Nothing comes for free
- Everything I want to do costs money
- The more interesting to me, the more expensive it usually is
- It's easier just to spend money as you get it
- I only save for really big things like a car or a holiday
- I don't know how much some stuff costs

VALUE FOR INVESTMENT

- I work hard for not a lot of money
- it's important that I get a return for my money
- Trying new stuff is a risk that it's easier not to take
- I'm good at spotting when I'm not getting value for money
- I define value for money by how good something makes me feel
- I need something I'm proud of in return for my money

"When you're young, you haven't got the money to spend on expensive activities"

"You either spend what you've got (and more) or save for a holiday. Nothing more"

"We're full time consumers...of course we know when we're getting ripped off"

"At the end of the day you need something to show for your money"

Cumulative cost blockage expressions



ROUTINE AND HABIT

- You just get into a habit of work and pub
- I like the routine of my life. I know what to expect
- My routine is the same as everyone else so it can't be all that bad
- It's nice to finally have your own freedom to do what you want

ALLURE OF EASY ALTERNATIVES

- My life is set up to make me as comfortable as possible
- I have everything I need at my finger tips
- If I am going out, I don't need to go far to enjoy myself
- TV or DVDs is an easier way of killing time. I have both in my bedroom
- If I want to explore the world I can do it watching TV or surfing the net

"I've spent the last five years waiting for my life to be like this. Money, mates and fun..."

"it's impossible to do anything new. You get stuck in a rut but at least it's easy"

"TV, DVD, Internet, PS2... that's all before I've even left my bedroom"

"All the inspiration you ever want, and more right there on the internet"



In the image conscious mass mediated world of youth culture, more natural pursuits suffer at the hands of closer in, consumption-centric pastimes – something which is reinforced by peers and role models

PLAYING BY CONSUMER CULTURE'S RULES

- Affordability is a key determinant of experimenting outside of usual repertoire
 - Close in and convenient
 - Investment only when guaranteed reward

The wealth of easy, cheaper and closer in alternatives present a series of potent practical and emotional barriers to spending time in parks and countryside



Understanding barriers and unlocking routes to connection in Young Families



There was a level of connection to the outdoors in some parents



However, with multiple and conflicting expectations, time schedules and desires, and cumulative costs, "outdoor" trips often represent a riskier and more daunting investment of family resource

Critical barriers at a glance



Critical Barrier 1 – Time

Time stress of different schedules, mismatched free time and exhaustion mean that free time becomes optimal

Critical Barrier 2 – Logistics

The balance of planning, organisation and resource weighed against the level of positive engagement and experience

Critical Barrier 3 – The Right Choice

Balancing the expectations of a number of people as well as my own conscience about what we should be doing

Critical Barrier 4 – Cumulative Cost

Both financial and emotional cost means that “easier alternatives” appear more alluring

Critical Barrier 1 – Time

Time stress of different schedules, mismatched free time and exhaustion mean that free time becomes optimal

Emotional Blockages

NO TIME

“I feel I have no time and certainly not time for me”

PRECIOUS FAMILY TIME

“Family time is really precious. The children grow up so fast and I want to make the most of the time we have”

ENERGY LEVELS

“I feel tired all the time so it's difficult to get the best out of my free time”

KIDS FIRST

“I want to be a good parent so the children's needs come first. Their time is my time”

Time blockage expressions



NO TIME

- Shift work mismatched between partners
- Long working week
- Need to accommodate a number of children's activities
- Need to maintain own hobbies and sense of free time
- Traditional family time is very limited – now grabbed on a Sunday afternoon

PRECIOUS FAMILY TIME

- Watching TV/DVD has replaced the traditionally family outings/quality time
- Time together is grabbed
- Two hour shopping trip to Meadowhall is special
- All together is rare – family splits into teams (mother/daughter, father/son)
- Experience must be enjoyed by all so often lowest common denominator prevails

“It's life a relay race, both of us juggling work shifts and ferrying the kids to and from school and work”

“We both have to work, which means we get little time as a family, let alone just the two of us”

“A DVD is great time to spend with the kids. It gets me off my feet too”

“It's easier if we do something that I know we're all going to enjoy”

Time blockage expressions



KIDS FIRST

- Kids' needs paramount
- Lots of time spent as kids' chauffeur
- Parents do activities that kids want
- Need to accommodate children's friends
- Make sure that kids have lots of opportunity to do what they want/need
- Satisfying the multiple needs and schedules of 2-3 kids

ENERGY LEVELS

- Happy to collapse in front of a DVD
- Resists physical activity (eg football) as don't want to show they can't keep up with kids
- Too tired to make the effort to plan
- Kids are happy doing their own thing – I can have my downtime
- Relaxing happens indoors, not out

"As a parent, you are obliged to put your kids first"

"It often means that they each have a friend come along. Is that family time?"

"I'm scared of getting to the park and just being too tired to run around – and what the kids will think"

"Sometimes you just want to have a family video and duvet day"



Time is a critical barrier: Time is precious so it needs to be well spent

WHAT IS WELL TIME SPENT?

- Shared time together that is easy to organise
- Spending time with the children doing something that they want to do
 - Relaxed low energy time: chill out (such as watching a DVD)
 - Fits with parental working pattern and schedule
- Short time enjoyed together is often more rewarding than long day out

There is clear opportunity for providing a low intensity, accessible and “short burst” outdoors experience to fit in with schedules and energy levels

Critical Barrier 2 – Logistics

The balance of planning, organisation and resource weighed against the level of positive engagement and experience

Emotional Blockages

INVESTMENT

“I feel that it takes a lot of time and energy to work out where to go and what to do”

LESS THAN EXPECTED

“I worry that when I get there the experience would be less than I hoped for”

TRANSPORTATION NIGHTMARE

“I feel tired all the time so it's difficult to get the best out of my free time”

FACILITIES FOR KIDS?

“I'm not sure that there will be everything I need for the children (and my mum)”

Logistics blockage expressions



PLANNING INVESTMENT

- No time to plan
- Don't know where to get info from so don't bother
- Can I trust the information?
- I rely more on what my friends tell me
- I need to do other things with my time rather than plan
- The children want such different needs and I'd prefer to focus on them rather than plan

"Where do you go to get information. And then how do you know how accurate or "in date" it is?"

"Something a friend has recommended cuts out so much guesswork"

LESS THAN I'D HOPED

- Because I'm unsure I don't bother
- There is more entertainment inside than out
- We haven't the money to risk on days like that
- The kids moan if something isn't right
- The weather will make a difference

"You just can't rely on the British summertime anymore"

"The last thing you want. You get somewhere and the kids start moaning"



TRANSPORTATION NIGHTMARE

- It will take too long to get there
- Congestion on the roads is bad at the weekends/holidays
- Driving is stressful with the kids in the car
- Public transport doesn't do where we want to go
- Petrol and parking is stressful
- They want to go with friends and we have to take two cars
- I always forget something

FACILITIES FOR KIDS?

- There are never enough toilets
- Toilets are not "nice"
- Will I be able to find something for the children to eat?
- Will the food be suitable for my kids (allergies)?
- Will it be healthy?
- Or affordable
- Is there enough to do for all of them?

"The kids want to go on the train, my husband wants to drive. You can't please everyone"

"Stuck in a hot car on bank holiday Monday when everyone is on the road? Hell."

"You just can't guarantee that the place will be set up to look after kids"

"If the children decide they don't like something we've had it"



Logistics is a huge area fraught with **BLOCKAGE EXPRESSIONS** that really limit connection to the countryside. Participation must be easy, hassle free and rewarding

WHAT IS EASY, HASSLE FREE AND REWARDING?

- A range of modern, interesting and varied activities for children of all ages
 - Easy journey to get there
- Great facilities: lots of parking, choice of food, affordable, modern and child/parent friendly
- Easy to find out about and recommended by a friend

A few practical steps to ensure a smooth visit can drastically improve the experience for young families

Critical Barrier 3 – The Right Choice

Balancing the expectations of a number of people as well as my own conscience about what we should be doing

Emotional Blockages

SATISFYING STAKEHOLDERS

“What we do has to be fun for all of us”

KUDOS FOR KIDS

“Looking cool in front of their mates is important”

EASY LIFE

“Often it's just easier to give the kids what they want”

PARENTAL RECOGNITION

“You want to be the best parent you can”

The right choice blockage expressions



INTERESTING FOR EVERYONE

- It's important that we all have fun
- It's difficult for us to agree on stuff when it's just us, let alone with the kids too
- Kids wanting different things just to be difficult, means that it's easier not to
- I'm paying for it so I feel that I should at least enjoy myself

"It's all of us going and all of our free time so it's important that we all have fun"

"It needs to be an experience that the whole family is going to enjoy"

KUDOS FOR KIDS

- A day out has to be "cool" in their eyes
- They'll want to invite a friend and I'll end up looking after someone else's kids
- Popular destinations are going to be busy and crowded
- Places that are cool for kids are going to bore me silly
- Places that are cool for kids are going to be expensive

"There are definitely venues that kids want to go because all their friends think it's cool"

Legoland has become the trophy destination for kids of their age

The right choice blockage expressions



ANYTHING FOR AN EASY LIFE

- At the end of a long day the last thing I want to do is have an argument about how we spend our free time
- If the slightest thing goes wrong we won't hear the end of it
 - The kids' happiness is our happiness
- Sometimes it's just easier to let them have their way

PARENTAL RECOGNITION

- I want to be seen to do the best for my kids
- What I would consider good for their development is probably not what they want to do
 - I want to feel that I am contributing to their development
- I want to feel like I know what they want without asking
- I want my kids to see us as superheroes

"It's sad but true – it's just sometimes easier to let the children have their way"

"After the blackmail and the tears, I haven't the energy to fight my corner"

"What your kids think of you is really important"



Making a choice of what to do with family free time means meeting the expectations of multiple stakeholders

WHAT MEETS EVERYONE'S EXPECTATIONS?

- A range of modern, interesting and varied activities for children of all ages
- Activities that are fun and exciting but also aid learning/education
- A focus on fun and release that adults can enjoy with their children

Key family destinations such as Legoland provide inspiration as to how to appeal to a range of family fun and developmental needs

Critical Barrier 4 – Cumulative Cost

“Both financial and emotional cost means that “easier alternatives” appear more alluring”

Emotional Blockages

CUMULATIVE COSTS

“When you have to multiple everything by 4, then the cost soon adds up”

VALUE FOR MONEY

“We want to know that we’re getting what we pay for”

TRIED AND TESTED

“It's a lot easier to stick to formulas that you know everyone know/likes”

ALLURE OF EASIER ALTERNATIVES

“When you consider the investment that you have to put in on a gamble there are loads of easier alternatives”

Cumulative cost blockage expressions



CUMULATIVE COSTS

- Paying admission for the whole family
- Getting there, and parking the car is going to be expensive
- Food costs have to be multiplied by the number of members in the family
- Even if I make a packed lunch the kids will still want a snack for the sake of buying it
- Keeping everyone happy (i.e. ice creams and souvenirs) will mean hidden costs

VALUE FOR MONEY

- What exactly are we getting in return?
- Food and drinks are always more expensive in attractions
- I can't guarantee that we will come away with happy memories
- Whilst it's vital that the kids have a good time, sometimes it's just enough that we are there with them, watching them
- Could our money be better spent elsewhere?

"Just an afternoon spent looking round Chatsworth can cost over fifty pounds for the lot of us"

"Souvenirs, ice creams and snacks.. Kids expect stuff from a day out"

"With everything else, you want to feel that you are getting your money's worth"

Cumulative cost blockage expressions



TRIED AND TESTED

- When you find something that works you will stick to it
- The kids are happier when they know what to expect
- You can plan your time and money better with known quantities"
- Our routine seems to work well at the moment
- If you choose to do something you know works, there is less pressure for it to succeed

"You are safe and comfortable doing the things you are used to"

ALLURE OF EASIER ALTERNATIVES

- If we go to Meadowhall I can at least be sure that there will be something for everyone
- Lay out, parking, safety, toilets etc are all predictable
- Despite what I promise is best for the family, I sometimes end up just opting for the easier alternative
- The kids seem just as happy watching TV so why bother them

"I know we should do more stuff, but with no one watching over you, you can let it slip"

"If you take the kids to town, you all come away with something new, stress free and it doesn't cost too much"



Cumulative costs, both in terms of time, effort and money wagered against the happiness of four people is perceived as a risky investment when compared easier alternatives

HOW TO MINIMISE THE CUMULATIVE COSTS?

- Practical routes: facilities and features should be user friendly and accessible
- Marketing route: family promotions or money back guarantee can help temper expectations

By managing their level of expectation and pressure for a seamless day, families will be happier to experiment with investing in unknown quantities



Understanding barriers and
unlocking routes to
connection in Seniors

Critical barriers at a glance



Critical Barrier 1 – Time

A new life routine/structure, and changing family commitments change seniors relationship with and perceptions of their free and leisure time

Critical Barrier 2 – Expectations of Other People

Older consumers have a growing awareness of how they will fit in with those around them and see increasing safety in the company of 'like-minded others'"

Critical Barrier 3 – Personal Comfort

Older people have an increasing awareness of the importance of being made to feel welcome, comfortable and accepted

Critical Barrier 4 – Practical Expectations

Concerns about being interested in what they see means that "known" alternatives will often be seen as safer

Critical Barrier 1 – Time

A new life routine/structure, and changing family commitments change seniors relationship with and their perceptions of their free and leisure time

Emotional Blockages

HAPPY WITH LIFE

“I feel like I’ve developed a routine that really suits me. I’m doing what I really want to do with my life now”

FAMILY COMMITMENTS

“I drop everything for my family. That takes up most of my time”

STRETCHING TIME

“I know how precious my time is and I want to use my time well and stretch myself”

SELF INTEREST

“I feel that I want and need to be selfish with my time because I don’t know how much time I have left”

Time blockage expressions



HAPPY WITH LIFE

- After years of working for someone else, I finally have some time to myself
- I have a routine that satisfies me
- I like to potter between jobs and to fill the day
- A routine means that I know what to expect and that makes me happy
- I'm old enough to know what I like and what I don't

PRECIOUS FAMILY TIME

- Being a grandad/ma is really important to me
- My children wouldn't be able to cope if it wasn't for our support
- I would drop anything to help my family
- This time is sacred and needs to be savoured
- I'm always planning and preparing for our next visit
- I worry about my family coping without our support

"You don't understand. I'm happy with the way my life runs"

"I go to the shops, the pub and visit friends. That's just what I like to do"

"Grandkids – it's a full time job, picking them up, looking after them. Of course we're happy to do it"

"We're always on call for the grandkids"

Time blockage expressions



STRETCHING TIME

- After retiring I know how important it is to keep myself active
- I need to set, and achieve goals to make me feel my minds' working
- I choose hobbies that will help me stay connected and in touch
- I don't know how much time I have left and I want to make the most of every minute

"We've started doing salsa dancing. We're going for medals too"

"We've taken to doing a computer course. it's important to set goals"

SELF INTEREST

- I'm busier now than when I worked
- I don't have much leisure time
- It's important to spend some time on yourself
- I feel like I deserve to spend my time and money on me
- There are certain things that I'd like to achieve before I die

"This is the time of your life when it's okay to be a bit indulgent, you know, spend some money on yourself"

"You'd think you had more time when you're retired but trust me, you don't"



Time or a perceived lack of it is a key barrier to countryside/outdoor experience. Time spent needs to be savoured, indulgent and rewarding

HOW TO MAKE TIME INDULGENT AND REWARDING?

- Family time spent with grandchildren
- Self indulgent time spent with partner
- Goal oriented time driven by a need to achieve
- Private and reflective spent alone

A key number of time usage categories should be recognised and communicated to seniors to inspire them to “make time” for the outdoors

Critical Barrier 2 – Expectations of Other People

Older consumers have a growing awareness of how they will fit in with those around them and an see increasing safety in the company of 'like-minded others'

Emotional Blockages

US AND WHO ELSE?

"You don't want to have your occasion ruined by someone else's"

CULTURE OF FEAR

"It's not safe to go out these days"

GETTING IN THE WAY

"I don't want to get in the way of other people"

ADULTS ONLY

"I want a peaceful time with likeminded people"

Other people blockage expressions



US AND WHO ELSE?

- You never know who else might be there
- You don't want to be surrounded by the wrong sort of people
- A stag do or hen party might be in the place we stay
- There are a lot of people who are just out for themselves and don't care about the needs and feelings of others
- I don't want to spoil someone else's fun

CULTURE OF FEAR

- It's not safe to go out on your own anymore
- Young people represent a real threat to my safety
- I'm scared that people might see me as a paedophile
- The roads aren't as safe as they were and I worry about driving
- The countryside is full of people riding quad bikes
- Older people are easy target for muggers and robbers

"When you go somewhere, you need to know who else will be there"

"We once stayed in the same hotel as a stag do and we didn't sleep as wink"

"If you've ever had to walk around here at night then you'd know what I mean"

"You hear so many stories on the news of this and that, that you don't know how safe things really are"

Other people blockage expressions



GETTING IN THE WAY

- I'm worried that I'm going to be a nuisance
- I'm scared what I'll feel like when I can't keep up with everyone
- I don't want to let other people down
- I want to be able to keep up with my grandkids
- I don't want to be seen as old and "past it"

"You don't want to spoil other people's day by being a nuisance"

"You've got to know that you're going to be able to keep up with others"

ADULTS ONLY

- You need to know that you are going to have a relaxing and peaceful time
- I don't want my experience interrupted by someone else's grandkids
- I won't enjoy somewhere full of young families
- I enjoy peace and quiet
- I haven't the patience or energy to deal with lots of screaming children

"I mean I love my grandkids but that doesn't mean that I love everyone else's"

"You need to know before you book something that it's not going to be full of families"

Routes for connection



How they will fit in with others, and the types of people that they may have to share their leisure experience with can be a key barrier to trying new events or attractions

OVER COMING THE BARRIER OF OTHER PEOPLE?

- Age specific sessions at key peak and off peak times managed via promotions and offers
- Clear markers of park or attractions; well lit, fenced and maintained
 - Staff/marshalls in usually unattended areas

A few practical steps which are well advertised can manage the comfort expectations of older consumers

Critical Barrier 3 – Personal Comfort

Older people have an increasing awareness of the importance of being made to feel welcome, comfortable and accepted

Emotional Blockages

PAINFUL NOSTALIGIA

“Certain activities/places hold painful associations”

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

“It's important that we are made to feel welcome”

FACILITIES

“It's important that I have the confidence in their being clean and modern bathrooms and food I recognise at hand”

NOT AS YOUNG AS I WAS

“I'm worried that there will be something that I can't do because of my health/fitness and how that will make me feel”

Personal comfort blockage expressions



PAINFUL NOSTALGIA

- Certain places remind me of friends and family I've lost
- Some places round here have negative memories
- History can often have very difficult associations
- Certain places (such as the mining museum) bring back memories from hard times that I'll find hard to deal with

"It's strange but you do find yourself avoiding certain places because of the way they'll make you feel"

"We used to walk with a couple who died recently.. So we've stopped walking"

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

- I want to go somewhere I will be made to feel welcome
- I'm at a time in my life where I should expect a good level of service
- I expect staff to be friendly and courteous and understanding of my needs
- Being treated with respect is important to me

"It's really important that you get a warm welcome from a place"

"You expect at this age to be treated with a bit of respect"

Personal comfort blockage expressions



NICE FACILITIES

- I need to know that there will be toilets for us to use and that they will be clean
- I need to know that they will be well maintained and easy to use
- I need somewhere to have refreshments that aren't too expensive
- The restaurant needs to serve real food and drink, not burgers or a Costa coffee

NOT AS YOUNG AS I WAS

- I like to keep active but I don't want to push myself beyond my limits
- I need to enjoy the things I do without worrying about being unable to do it
- I don't know what certain activities will entail/demand of me
- I don't like the idea of extreme sports or dangerous activities

"English attractions should have refreshments that reflect their heritage. Cream teas not foreign franchises"

"It's one of the biggest put offs when you go somewhere and the toilets are a real mess"

"Extreme sports. I have no interest in the slightest in doing those"

"I'm not as young as I was and I have to make sure that the things I do are well within my limits"



The perceptions of personal comfort and the comfort of those they are with is a strong emotional barrier for older consumers

HOW TO BOOST PERSONAL COMFORT?

- Well advertised details on accessibility and event set up
 - Focus on amenable facilities
 - Accessible and clean bathrooms
 - Traditional and affordable refreshments
 - Courteous and friendly staff
- Wellbeing assistants (similar to 'life assistants')

A few practical steps which are well advertised can drastically improve perceptions of comforts and safety

Critical Barrier 4 – Practical Expectations

Concerns about being interested in what they see means that “known” alternatives will often be seen as safer

Emotional Blockages

PERSONAL INTEREST

“I have to know that I’m going to enjoy what I’m going to see”

AFFORDABILITY

“I haven’t got money to fritter away on something I don’t enjoy”

VALUE

“I need to feel like I’m getting value for money”

ADEQUATE FACILITIES

“There has to be ample parking, toilets and somewhere to eat when I get hungry”



PERSONAL INTEREST

- I know the sort of thing that I want to see
- I don't have the time and effort to waste on something I know I'm not going to enjoy
- I can find interesting things to do at home or in the paper
- I'm not interested in being outside

"I'll only go if I know it's something that I'm going to be genuinely interested in"

"There are a lot of things I'm interested in, but they aren't outside"

AFFORDABILITY

- I haven't got money to waste
- I don't know how much money attractions cost
- I imagine that some will be expensive
- I don't know if I'm eligible for discounts and besides it probably isn't very much
- A senior citizens card will make me feel old
- Where would I be able to use it?

"I'm sure there are discounts but I don't know what they are"

"A lot of these places you'd like to visit are probably too expensive"



VALUE

- Getting value for money is very important for me
- I like to think that I recognise value for money
- I'm worried about being taken for a ride
- I haven't got time and money to waste on a bad experience

"Value for money is very important indeed. And more often than not you don't get it"

ADEQUATE FACILITIES

- There needs to be somewhere where we can park the car (safely)
- The car parks are always congested at popular times
- There needs to be facilities/attractions for the grandkids that we can appreciate
- I need to know that there will be something affordable to eat for all of us

"You expect these places to be set up for lots of visitors but they are often not"

"Food, clean bathroom and a good car park. But in more remote places that's not always possible"



The practical expectations of older people have a critical impact in their perceptions of, and willingness to experience countryside or out doors activities

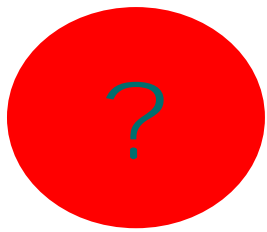
WHAT ARE THESE PRACTICAL EXPECTATIONS?

- Interesting and engaging attractions
 - Close and affordable car parking
- Smooth and easy access to parking and attraction
 - Clean and well maintained bath rooms
- Restaurants that cater for themselves and grandchildren
 - The experience needs to be affordable

A few practical steps can be taken to improve the experience. However the focus needs to be on communicating this benefits to consumers



Recommendations



Consider whether young people are a lost generation



- A current and powerful indifference to the outdoors, with little or no previous connection to outside activity makes young adults a very challenging proposition
- Similarly, a bias towards urban, consumer culture and mass mediated past times means that young people feel that there is currently little need to connect to outdoor pastimes

Given the strong focus on indoor stimulation it may not be possible to reach this generation with current funding



Invest in reconnection strategies for young families



- There is clear opportunity for providing a low intensity, accessible and “short burst” outdoors experience to fit in with schedules and energy levels of young families
- Key family destinations such as Lego Land provide inspiration as to how to appeal to a range of family fun and developmental needs
- Facilities; toilets and refreshments to reflect current family needs and concerns
- Support these with an attractive financial package/incentive

With young families there currently exists a need, if not the means for more interaction with the countryside/outdoors. Shrewd investing in facilities and access can help foster a long term and meaningful relationship with the outdoors



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Focus strategy on seniors

- A few practical steps can help bolster Senior's connection to the outdoors
- **PRACTICAL:** Attractions should be affordable, with good access and well maintained facilities and good car parking
- **COMFORTABLE:** Seniors should be made to feel welcome and comfortable via amenable facilities and welcoming staff
- **TARGETTED:** The virtues of an interesting and value for money day out need to be well communicated as an attractive and safe prospect for seniors (possibly with their grandkids in tow)

A few practical steps which are well advertised can drastically alter the perceptions of barriers in a demographic



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