

Inclusive Flanders: a total experience

Presentation abstract

Inclusive Flanders: a total experience

As the northern region of Belgium is nearly fulfilling its attempt to become a travel destination for everybody (a goal that was set - ambitiously - for 2018), Visit Flanders is ready to share its experience with other destinations worldwide.

In time, the key elements needed to create a common project were identified and combined into a synergy that enhances the general concept of quality in tourism. It's important not to settle for the low hanging fruit, but to find the partners that allow to tackle more delicate matters, like disclosing classified buildings and heritage.

According to our findings, focusing on geographical entities with a shared tourism product is probably the best way to make progress. The search for the best tone of voice is ongoing, but certainly an honest style is the foundation. Systematic involvement of experience experts and peer consultations have taught us important lessons about the over-all approach one needs to follow, where every value chain is as strong as its weakest link. This brought Visit Flanders to the principle that every investment made by the tourism administration is connected to high accessibility standards. These investments now serve as levers for newly developed tourism regions.

Unlike many other places, Flanders hasn't started from a disability-specific model. But in favour of those who need specific care while on holiday, a dedicated peer network of holiday providers was launched, in order to develop a total holiday experience within an environment that would provide in-house personal assistance, medical care and equipment.

This presentation introduces new working fields that allow to give more attention to the visitor's journey and multi-sensorial travel experience, not only in leisure tourism but including professional visitors (MICE, business tourism).

The key of success is ever so simple: simultaneous attention to a few key domains – infrastructure and service, awareness raising and training, reliable information – triggers a vivid dynamic of growth. The choice to start with regular, mainstream tourism has raised the opportunity to bridge the apparent gap between the specific needs of visitors with disabilities and the general benefits of a new personal, experience-oriented and quality-centred style of tourism.

Lead speaker : Ewoud Lagring

Organisation : VisitFlanders

City (Country) : Brussels(Belgium)

Biography : Experienced product manager on accessible tourism and cycling culture in Flanders. Proudly working on an accessible and cycling friendly Flanders for every visitor by giving advice and information to both the tourism industry and tourists.



2nd speaker :

Organisation :

City (Country) : ()

Biography :