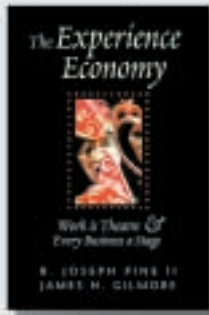


Editor's Choice



The Experience Economy : Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage

B. Joseph Pine II, James H. Gilmore

Expanded from their seminal article in the *Harvard Business Review*, Pine and Gilmore's book charts the shift away from goods and services and towards experiences as the commodity most worth selling in today's marketplace. As they memorably put it: 'The history of economic progress consists of charging a fee for what once was free.' The nature of that economic progress is pithily summarised in the shift from an agrarian economy, offering fungible commodities to the marketplace, through industrial and service economies, proffering tangible and intangible goods respectively, to reach the experience economy of the title.

The marketplace described by Pine and Gilmore is, of course, the millennial moment of late capitalism - postmodern in its logic, and polymorphously perverse in its desires.

Drawing on examples from the Disney empire to the Rainforest Café, they take the aspirational reader through the steps required to deliver the product - 'stage the experience' - leaving those competitors still busy supplying services well behind. The authors write that 'Those businesses that relegate themselves to the diminishing world of goods and services will be rendered irrelevant. To avoid this fate, you must learn to stage a rich, compelling experience.'

Readers of *Locum Destination Review* will understand immediately that visitor destinations, whether commercial or cultural in origin, are already some of the best purveyors of that elusive product, experiences. Pine and Gilmore praise the Club Disney birthday experience, for example, because it succeeds in bringing together the four 'realms' of consumer experience (Entertainment, Educational, Esthetic, Escapist). 'When all four realms abide within a single setting, then and only then does plain space become a *distinctive* place for staging an experience.' It is exactly this sense of place, experienced in all four realms, that makes a great heritage or cultural destination.

This is a smart, snappy volume, often insightful, but less successfully inspirational. Given Pine and Gilmore's excellent descriptive work on the experience economy, the reader may be tempted to follow their train of thought into what they see as the next big thing - transformations. They make a compelling case for their assertion that 'the customer is the product', and transformations do indeed seem like the best gift for the marketplace that has everything. Nonetheless, perhaps Pine and Gilmore's final speculations on the glorification of 'eternalities' should be taken with a grain of salt.

Hardcover, 254 pages, Harvard Business School Press, April 1999 (ISBN: 1565113500)

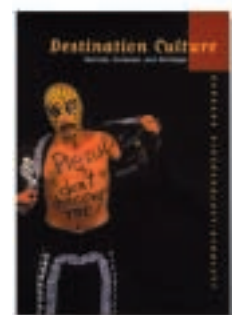


Experiential Marketing

Bernd H. Schmitt

How do you tell your customers most effectively about your product or service? The answer to this question proposed by Bernd H. Schmitt is this: involve them in a positive, innovative experience. Throwing away the traditional 'marketing handbook' template, Schmitt takes readers on a narrative journey, exploring the ways in which some of today's biggest brands, such as Volkswagen, Tommy Hilfiger, Nokia and Harley-Davidson, have attempted to create new, more meaningful connections with their audiences and how a range of new, innovative measures may be used to expand market share. For Schmitt, it is possible to break down the targets of experience-based marketing into a number of clearly defined headings. These are the sensory and cognitive responses produced in customers as they react to the experiences in which they find themselves involved. Schmitt's explorations of each of these experiential areas engage the reader and offer insight into the principles behind successful strategy. Far from undermining its credibility as a serious piece of marketing theory, the work's prosaic style adds a great deal to its appeal.

Hardcover, 256 pages, Free Press, January 2000 (ISBN: 0684854236)



Destination Culture :

Tourism, Museums, and Heritage

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

In today's economy, museums are competing with tourism destinations and visitor attractions for the time and money of customers. But what relation holds between museums and tourism in terms of their products? This intriguing text argues that both are involved in the production of heritage: while museums are staging the world as heritage, tourism is staging the world as a museum of itself. Should heritage, therefore, be reinterpreted to incorporate this new perceived role? According to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, heritage is not simply old things preserved for posterity, but rather a mode of cultural production, reviving and reinvigorating old customs, economic structures and locations. A cyclical situation is posited, in which heritage is continually being created and presented as the 'museum of the world'. In arriving at this view, the work focuses on the performance of meaning through such events as world fairs and festivals, and on a much more local level, through cultural objects and artefacts. From this discussion emerges the conclusion that we are all world citizens, capable of the creation, curation and consumption of heritage, which itself emerges constantly through cultural performance. A fascinating analysis of today's globalised consumer culture and a significant contribution to destination thinking.

Paperback, 311 pages, July 1998, University of California Press (ISBN: 0520209664)