

*Principle Four:
Focus on Quality and Authenticity*

**HANDOUT: 10 Creative Ideas for
Authenticity and Quality**



1. Tamarack Visitor Center, West Virginia

West Virginia's visitor center, Tamarack, was designed to reflect the best of everything from the state. The building was designed by a West Virginia architect and uses native materials. The décor, including the wall sconces, stained glass, and even the tiles on the checkout counters were designed by local artists. Food is catered by the renowned Greenbriar resort and features local specialties such as fried green tomato sandwiches and locally raised rainbow trout. West Virginia artists and craftspeople are selected through a competitive jury process to show their work at the center. Several artists are always on hand to demonstrate their skills.

2. Silver Hand Program, Alaska

The Alaska Silver Hand Program helps shoppers identify handcrafted items that have been made by native Alaskans. The program protects the work of Alaska Native artists while guaranteeing the public that items bearing the Silver Hand identification seal were handcrafted in Alaska by an Alaska Eskimo, Aleut or Indian craftsperson or artist and made wholly or in significant part of natural materials from Alaska. Information about the program and the distinctive "silver hand" logo is included in the state travel guide so that visitors know what to look for when they arrive.

3. Authenticity Guidelines, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

To help heritage visitors find sites and services that truly represent Lancaster's authentic heritage, the Lancaster County Heritage Tourism Advisory Committee developed "Guidelines for Authenticity for Heritage Sites, Services and Events." In order to qualify, sites, services and events must reflect the authentic heritage of Lancaster County. In addition, they must interpret their history for the visitor and must offer basic visitor services. A Lancaster heritage logo has been developed and eligible sites can use the logo on printed materials as well as signage as the "good housekeeping seal of approval."

4. George Washington, Pioneer Farmer

Historians at Mount Vernon did extensive research on the 18th century farming practices of George Washington. Based on research, Washington's 16-sided round barn was reconstructed and demonstrations are given of horses and mules treading wheat in the barn. The recreated farm area includes rare breeds of farm animals (oxen, mules, roosters, sheep and chickens) similar to

varieties that Washington had. Eight fields also provide an area for demonstrations of Washington's advanced farming methods including crop rotation and fertilizing. Interpreters dressed in period attire demonstrate farming techniques according to the season and invite visitors to participate in the activities to learn about the authentic farming methods.

5. Ensuring Quality, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

Hospitality training programs are an excellent way to ensure a high quality visitor experience. In Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, the local Main Street program teamed up with the Chamber of Commerce to develop a 50-page *Chippewa Expert Guide*, a three-ring binder filled with tourist information. The guide is sold at cost to local businesses to help educate employees. Each year, updated pages are provided to everyone who bought a guide, and a Chippewa Expert seminar is offered to train new front-line employees. Participants are given "Chippewa Expert – Ask Me" buttons, and table tent cards are provided at local restaurants.

6. Pike Place Market, Washington

The Pike Place Market began in 1907 as a place where shoppers could buy fresh produce directly from the farmer's wagons. The Market was renovated in the 1970s and is still serving as a farmers market much as it did a century ago. To maintain the uniqueness of the quality of the original market, chain and franchise stores are not allowed. One notable exception is Starbucks coffee – but Pike Place Market is the home of the original Starbucks Coffee Shop.

7. Hospitality Training, Mississippi

The Mississippi Division of Tourism wanted to ensure that visitors to the state had a high quality experience. Organizers developed a unique hospitality training program that had instructors go to tourism businesses to work one-on-one with front-line employees. They provided instruction in how to provide quality service, and employees were able to implement what they learned immediately. Students then participated in the next level of training by attending a class on hospitality. After completing both phases of training, students were eligible to become instructors for the program.

8. Anecdotal History Tour, Washington D.C.

The D.C. Heritage Tourism Coalition offers tours that encourage visitors to Washington D.C. to look beyond the monuments and experience other authentic parts of the city's history and culture. The Anecdotal History Tour offers unique tours such as a two-hour hike through the Victorian Adams Morgan neighborhood or a motorcoach tour past the homes of 20th century presidents. Each tour is carefully researched and information is presented to visitors in a lively, storytelling fashion by certified local tour guides.

9. African-American Culture Tour, North Carolina

As part of the state's heritage tourism program, a tour was developed to focus on attractions and events that authentically represented African-American culture. A publication titled "The Rich Heritage of African-Americans in North Carolina" was published. Requirements for inclusion stated that all entries must contribute to an understanding of African-American art and culture in North Carolina, that museums have ongoing or permanent exhibits of

significant African-American artworks or artifacts and that sites have an interpretive or educational element.

10. Kentucky Crafted

Kentucky Crafted is a craft marketing program within the Kentucky Arts Council. Kentucky craftspeople must go through a rigorous jury process in order to be included in the program, and those who are selected have a chance to participate in a wholesale marketing event called “Kentucky Crafted: The Market,” national trade shows, cooperative advertising, special events and have a right to use the distinctive Kentucky Crafted logo.



Made possible by a grant from the American Express Company and the National Endowment for the Arts



Prepared by National Trust for Historic Preservation Heritage Tourism Program