

The Future of Travel & Tomorrow's Emotional Consumer

Talk by Anne Lise Kjaer at [Vestnorden Travel Mart](#), Faroe Island, 13 September 2011

Changes in our everyday lives are profoundly influencing the way we choose to travel. Hyper-connectivity means, across the globe, a growing middle class is aware of material goods and lifestyle possibilities.

The New Ethics

Value sets shifted after the financial crisis. The realisation that money alone won't buy happiness means consumers are ever more selective about their spending. People want meaning and fulfillment. Increasingly they choose life-enhancing experiences, like adventure holidays, over possessions. They also see sustainability and ethics as the new norm.

Self-optimisation

Emotional consumption is key – as people are asking themselves: 'How can I get more out of my life?' Today's work/life convergence brings time pressure and consumers look for self-optimisation and stress-free travel experiences, when they do meet up with family and friends. There are huge opportunities in helping people achieve quality of life through meaningful, inspiring, and educational experiences.

Balancing Contrasts

Contrast and diversity rule today's world, as FAST and SLOW approaches to life collide. Reconciling these disparate influences presents a tough set of challenges, which is why it's important to adopt a whole brain strategy. This means combining left brain (analytical) and right brain (visionary) approaches in order to understand and decode cultural contexts in society. Used in combination with a Trend Atlas, this shows us the whole picture and allows us to identify challenges and opportunities. Using this approach, I have highlighted eight key trends to inspire successful future strategy in the travel industry.

Honest Dialogue

Total Transparency is essential, as people choose travel on the promise of good times and happy memories. They want to know exactly what they will get so providing honest and accurate descriptions is the only way to earn trust. Cloud Culture fuels this desire for accurate information, as collaborative networks enable people to peer review and swap tips. Participating in social media and speaking directly to consumers with custom-made offers is essential.

Culture & Community

The Global Citizens want Diversity and unique offerings and seek out good value, as well as meaningful engagement. Connectivity, sharing and mobility are key to engagement – although the desire for freedom may mean people increasingly look for ultimate 'get away from it all' experiences. Providing opportunities for Cultural Consumption and community, with experiences that enable consumers to discover the world around them, satisfies their thirst for knowledge. It's vital though to celebrate the local differences and tell engaging narratives focusing on people, heritage and nation identity.

Quality of Life

Holidays and travel experiences also offer opportunities to tap into the universal desire for A Better World and social participation through volunteering. Scandinavian countries have a huge natural advantage, as people view their lifestyles as healthy and pure, with a focus on ecology. This is also relevant to consumers' desire for Intelligent Health, as they are seeking out mindfulness, personal coaching and the healthy option (be it adventure or simple retreat) in holidays, as well as in everyday life.

Personal Narrative

Ultimately all travelers are looking for The Real Thing and authenticity – journeys and experiences that surprise, awaken or even terrify them. This reaction to the 'too planned and perfect' means the days when travel companies could be 'all things to all people' are over. The solution is to become a facilitator for Happiness Hunting, engaging with people as individuals and enabling them to be more mindful and 'reconnect' with their own personal narrative

Patchwork Society

We live in a Patchwork Society where we are moving away from traditional demographic segmentation into a more profound holistic understanding of people. The society drivers are closely linked to people's value sets – reflecting their preferences and lifestyle choices. Two contrasting mindsets dominate. WE tribes ask: *'Will it benefit all of us?'*, while ME People say: *"What's in it for me?"*.

Good Value but Unique

What this means for the future of traveling is that people are looking for Diversity and unique offerings, through honest Dialogue with the brands they engage with. Not only do they want 'good value', but they also expect Authenticity and Engagement, in order to fulfill their quest for meaning and personal fulfilment.

Meaningful Experiences

The most essential point to recognise is that travel is one of the ultimate acts of emotional consumption. It sits at the very root of people's identity – their choices reflect who they are, their desires and dreams. Increasingly travelers are not just 'passive' consumers, but active participants, curators and holiday experts who seek out meaningful experiences to improve their everyday lives.

Heartfelt Storytelling

To become a 'heart quake' destination - a place that inspires, enhances and enriches lives - you must offer something special. Looking from the outside in - a heartfelt local narrative with a global relevance invites people's passion for authentic experiences. **REMEMBER:**A good story will always win.