

Persuasive communication of authenticity and sustainability in cultural Tourism

Dr Xavier Font
Leeds Metropolitan University

Abstract

This presentation will review the opportunities for persuasive communication of culture as authenticity and sustainability, for private and public tourism enterprises. We base our recommendations on hundreds of analyses of websites using the respondeco methodology that empowers small businesses to improve the productivity of their communication. Based on our research we have found that committed businesses communicate only 30% of their sustainability practices and that their communication is myopic (these companies focus on communicating facts, not emotions, making them passive not active, for example). We outline case studies from interviewed companies explaining why they make their communication choices as found on their websites, and then review a range of persuasive communication criteria to study the missed opportunities encountered on their customer-facing communications. We make the case for rethinking how small tourism firms engage in their communication practices of what makes them authentic and sustainable as green hushing and not greenwashing as previously suggested.