MODULE 5

Imagining a Better World: Ideation, Exploration & Creative-visioning

We Lead

WOMEN IN TOURISM, HOSPITALITY & LEISURE

Co-funded by the European Union

Imaging a Better World

This module embarks on a transformative journey, highlighting the crucial role of creative thinking and visionary ideas in reshaping these sectors. In an era marked by rapid changes and challenges, the ability to ideate and explore new possibilities is not just an asset but a necessity for the THL industries. Here, we delve into how innovative thinking can lead to groundbreaking practices, sustainable solutions, and a reimagined future for all.

01 Encourage Creativity and Innovation

02 Foster a Culture of Inclusivity

03 Promote Lifelong Learning & Development

04 Foster a spirit of Exploration & Adventure

05 Create platforms to collaborate & network

06 Foster a Sustainable Mindset

01

Encourage Creativity & Innovation

Let's start by summarising what Innovation is...

Innovation can be a confusing topic as there are so many different kinds of innovation. You often hear about innovation in terms of technology and although technological innovation has indeed been, and will likely continue to be, the most obvious form of innovation, it comes in other forms too.

Most innovations are smaller, gradual improvements on existing products, processes, and services, while some innovations can be those ground-breaking inventions or business models that transform industries.

The Innovation Matrix

IMPACT ON THE MARKET

Sustaining
A significant improvement on a product that aims to sustain the position in an existing market.

Disruptive
Technology or new business model that disrupts the existing market

Incremental
Gradual, continuous improvements on existing products and services

Radical
Technological breakthrough that transforms industries, often creates a new market

LOW   **TECHNOLOGY NEWNESS**   HIGH

One way to categorise innovation is to classify it based on two dimensions: **the technology** it uses and **the market** it operates in.
We can use the innovation matrix to visualise the four most common types of innovation:

1. **Incremental**
2. **Disruptive**
3. **Sustaining**
4. **Radical**
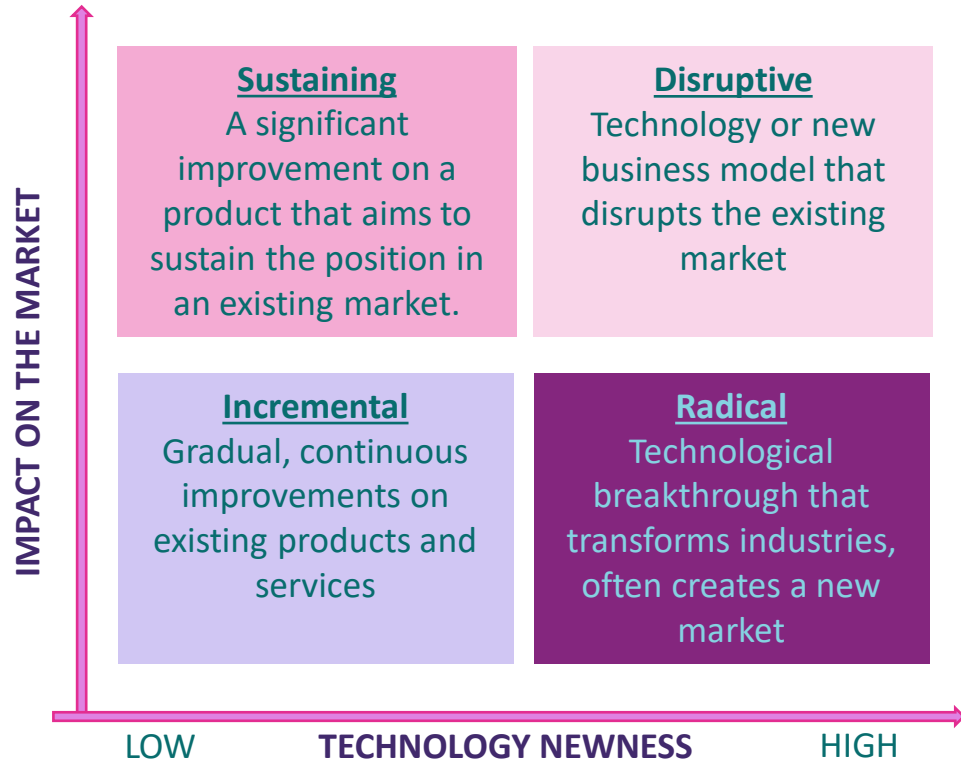
An Introduction to Innovation Categories & Types

In this video, the most common ways to categorise innovation are explained. While not THL sector specific, it encourages us to look at innovation from different angles to better understand how innovation really works.

Viima is on a mission to help organisations around the world make more innovation happen. Visit their YouTube channel on Viima - YouTube

Different Types of Innovation Explained - YouTube

The entry of women into leadership roles in the Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure (THL) sectors can foster and encourage creativity and innovation in several ways...

Empathy and Customer Insight:

Women often excel in empathy and emotional intelligence, key for understanding customer needs and preferences, leading to more **innovative** customer service and experience design

Collaboration & Communication:

Women's leadership styles often emphasise **collaboration & effective communication**, both essential for fostering a creative and innovative work environment.

Breaking Stereotypes:

Women in leadership roles **challenge traditional norms and stereotypes**, inspiring innovative thinking and encouraging others to think outside conventional paradigms.

Risk-taking & Resilience:

Women leaders can bring a **balanced approach to risk-taking** and demonstrate resilience, key drivers for innovation and adapting to market changes.

Mentorship & Role Modelling:

Female leaders serve as **role models and mentors**, inspiring other women and young professionals to pursue creative and innovative careers in the THL sectors.

# Innovation can offer numerous opportunities for THL businesses, including:

New Product Development

Innovation can enable THL businesses to create new products that meet changing consumer demands, e.g., healthier or more sustainable options.

Differentiation from Competitors

By innovating & offering unique products/services, THL businesses can stand out and create a competitive advantage.
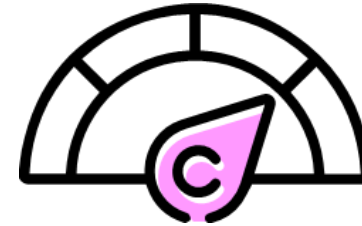
Improved Efficiency & Productivity

Innovation can help THL businesses streamline their operations & reduce costs, leading to increased efficiency & productivity.

Increased Revenue & Market-share

By developing innovative products and solutions, THL businesses can increase revenue & capture a larger share of the market.

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Innovation can offer numerous opportunities for THL businesses, including:

Improved Sustainability

Innovation can help THL businesses to become more sustainable by reducing waste, conserving resources & minimising their environmental footprint.

Improved Safety and Quality

Innovation can help THL businesses to improve the safety & quality of their products/services or experiences through the development of new technologies and processes.

Enhanced Customer Experience

By leveraging innovation, businesses can improve the customer experience, via new products, services, or technologies that enhance convenience, speed, or personalisation.

02 Foster a Culture of Inclusivity

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"Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance."

This is a famous quote by Verna Myers, a leading diversity and inclusion expert.
About Vernā | Vernā Myers (vernamyers.com)

Diversity & Inclusion should span **10** key areas

01 GENDER

02 ETHNICITY

03 SEXUAL ORIENTATION

04 DISABILITY

05 AGE

06 RELIGION

07 NATIONALITY

08 SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

09 MENTAL HEALTH

10 PARENTHOOD

Diversity & Inclusion…

Embracing diversity involves fostering an environment **that respects and appreciates these differences**, creating opportunities for equal participation and engagement, and **actively challenging and dismantling any biases, prejudices, or discrimination** that may hinder inclusivity.

Inclusion can be defined as a person's universal human right to **the same access and choices** as everyone else, with everyone being made to feel that they belong and are valued so that they can all develop equally.

Inclusion is the principle that everyone should be able to use the same facilities, take part in the same activities, and enjoy the same experiences.

The Benefits of a Culture of Inclusivity

In Module 1, we briefly discussed the importance of inclusion and diversity. Fostering a culture of inclusivity is not just a moral imperative but a business necessity. **It directly contributes to a more dynamic, creative, and innovative workplace**, ultimately driving business success.

In the following slide, we present a range of strategies that can lead to a more inclusive workplace, and we outline the impact this can have on enhancing creativity and innovation.

Each of us contributes to inclusion—we all have a role to play. * *"Our culture is the result of our personal commitment, our curiosity, how we collaborate, and the ways that we courageously share our perspectives and encourage others"*

* Adapted from Deloitte

Strategy	Description	Impact on Creativity & Innovation
Leadership Commitment	Actively promote inclusivity, setting a positive example for the organisation.	Sets a tone that values diverse perspectives.
Diverse Hiring Practices	Recruit from a diverse talent pool to bring varied perspectives.	Enhances problem-solving with diverse viewpoints.
Inclusive Policies & Practices	Implement policies supporting diversity & inclusion (flexible hours, anti-discrimination policies, equitable pay).	Creates a fair and equitable environment for innovation.
Training and Education	Regular sessions on diversity, equity, and inclusion to raise awareness and combat biases.	Broadens understanding and acceptance of diverse ideas.
Open Communication	Promote open dialogue where employees feel safe to share ideas and concerns.	Encourages sharing of diverse and creative ideas.
Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)	Support ERGs for different minority groups to give them a voice.	Empowers diverse groups to contribute unique insights.
Celebration of Diversity	Celebrate different cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives within the organisation.	Reinforces the value of diversity in creative processes.
Inclusive Decision Making	Include diverse team members in decision-making processes.	Ensures varied viewpoints are considered in innovation.
Regular Assessments	Continuously assess and adjust the workplace culture based on employee feedback regarding inclusivity.	Maintains and improves the inclusivity for creativity.

Time to Reflect...

Inclusion is about the actions we take each day. Think about specific conversations or situations where you can be exposed to new ideas and perspectives, walk in someone else's shoes, or encourage those who may feel like outsiders to join a conversation. I bet you will discover something new about yourself and about others too
– Terri Cooper, DEI Leader, Deloitte

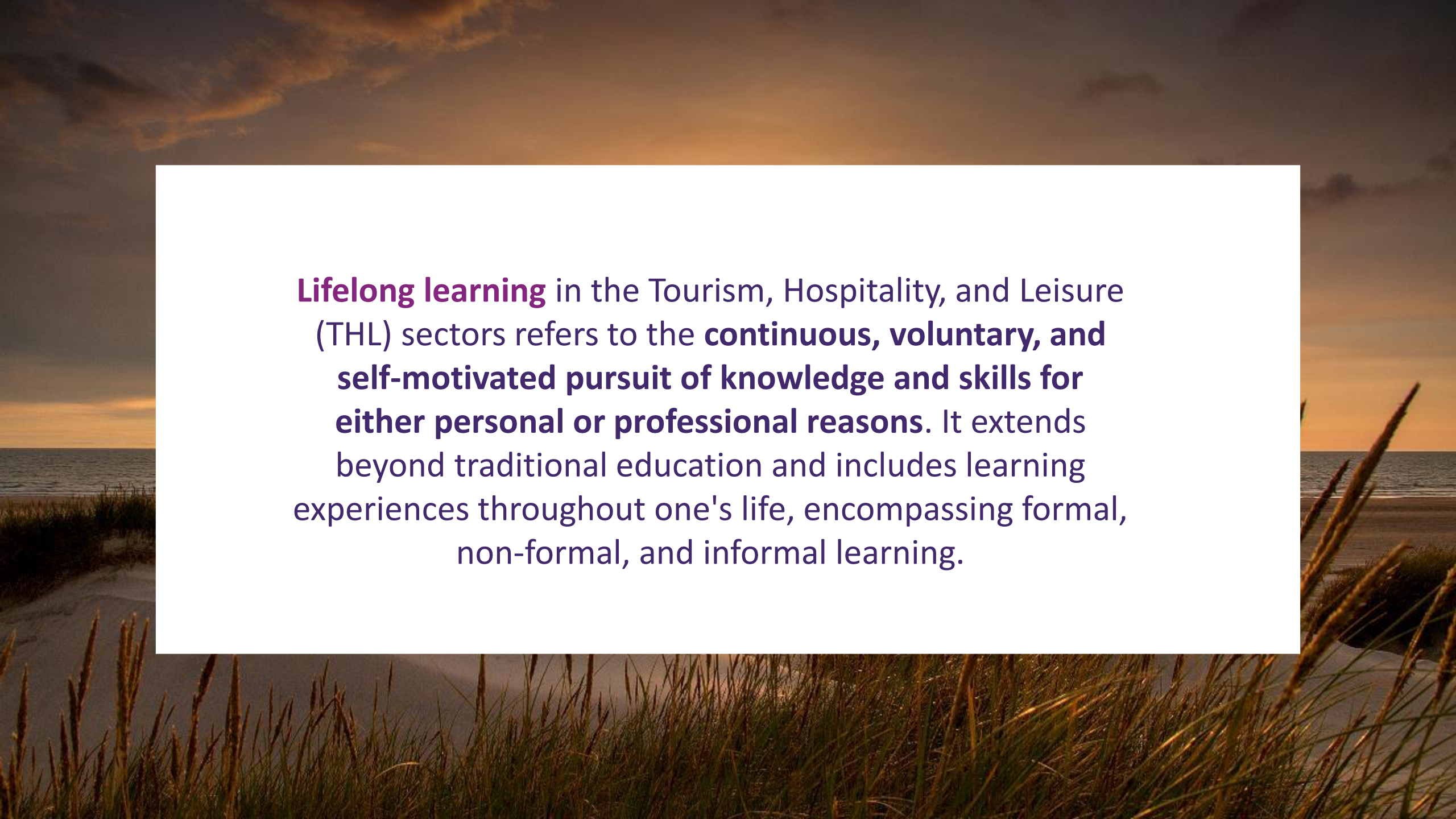Reflect on the above statement and then try to answer these questions:

1. **Do you have an inclusive mindset?**
2. **As a leader in tourism, how can YOU bring inclusion into your work?**

03 Promote Lifelong Learning & Development

Lifelong learning in the Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure (THL) sectors refers to the **continuous, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge and skills for either personal or professional reasons**. It extends beyond traditional education and includes learning experiences throughout one's life, encompassing formal, non-formal, and informal learning.

Promoting Lifelong Learning & Development

As a Leader in the THL sectors, you can effectively promote lifelong learning and development by embodying a commitment to continuous personal growth and facilitating diverse learning opportunities for your teams.

- You need to **demonstrate that you value ongoing education**, mentorship, and knowledge-sharing, by providing access to training programs, workshops, and collaborating with educational institutions. This will lead to enhanced skills and innovation within the workforce.

- Additionally, **incorporating learning objectives** into performance reviews and offering support for further education ensures that professional development is aligned with both individual aspirations and organisational goals.

This holistic approach not only cultivates a knowledgeable and adaptable workforce but also drives the overall success and competitiveness of the THL sectors.

Benefits of Professional Development in the THL Sectors:

Adaptability to Industry Changes:

These sectors are dynamic, with frequent shifts in preferences, technology & trends. Continuous learning helps them stay adaptable and relevant.

Career Advancement:

Lifelong learning & professional development allow for career progression, helping you or others to acquire new roles or greater responsibilities.

Employee Satisfaction & Retention:

Providing opportunities for professional growth can increase job satisfaction, employee engagement, and retention.

Global and Cultural Awareness:

The THL sectors are globally interconnected. Continuous learning helps the workforce gain a deeper understanding of different cultures & global market trends.

Competitive Advantage:

Businesses that prioritise lifelong learning and development are more likely to gain a competitive edge in the market, due to a skilled & knowledgeable workforce.

Regulatory Compliance:

These sectors are subject to various regulations. Ongoing education ensures that you & other staff stay compliant with industry laws and standards.

04 Foster a spirit of Exploration & Adventure

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Exploration & Adventure…

Fostering a spirit of exploration and adventure, especially in the context of the Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure (THL) sectors, can be a dynamic and enriching endeavour.

Over the next couple of slides, we suggest some strategies that may help leaders in the THL sectors to instill a spirit of exploration and adventure, enhancing the appeal of their offerings and enriching the experiences of both their employees and customers.

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all."

– Helen Keller

Strategies to Foster the Spirit of Adventure & Exploration

1. **Encourage Curiosity and Open-mindedness:** Encourage employees and customers to ask questions, seek new experiences, and be open to different cultures and ideas.

2. **Create Experiential Learning Opportunities:** Offer hands-on learning experiences that are both educational and adventurous. This could include field trips, cultural immersion programs, or participation in local festivals and events.

3. **Promote Travel and Exploration:** Encourage employees to travel and explore, either through company-sponsored trips or flexible leave policies.

4. **Innovative Product Development:** Continuously develop new and exciting products or services that push the boundaries of traditional tourism and hospitality experiences.

5. **Adventure-based Team Building:** Organise team-building activities that involve adventure and exploration, such as hiking, camping, or scavenger hunts in new locations.

Strategies to Foster the Spirit of Adventure & Exploration

6. **Collaborations with Adventure Experts:** If suitable, partner with adventure and exploration experts to offer unique experiences, like wildlife safaris, mountaineering, or underwater exploration.

7. **Utilise Technology:** Leverage virtual reality (VR) & augmented reality (AR) technologies to provide immersive experiences that simulate exploration & adventure.

8. **Encourage Storytelling:** Create platforms for sharing travel stories and experiences, whether it's through social media, blogs, or community events, to inspire a spirit of adventure.

9. **Diversity in Destination Offerings:** Offer diverse or alternative experiences that cater to different interests, from serene retreats to adrenaline-fueled adventures.

10. **Sustainable Adventure Practices:** Ensure that adventure and exploration activities are conducted in an environmentally sustainable and culturally respectful manner.

05 Create Platforms to Collaborate & Network

Platforms for connection…

Fostering collaboration and networking in the THL sectors is not just about immediate benefits; it's about laying the foundation for a future that is innovative, sustainable, culturally rich, and economically robust.
By creating or becoming a part of various platforms you as a leader in the THL sectors can build valuable relationships, foster a culture of collaboration and shared learning, and drive innovation and growth in these industries. The THL sectors thrive on connections and cooperative efforts.

> *Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than the one where they sprang up.*
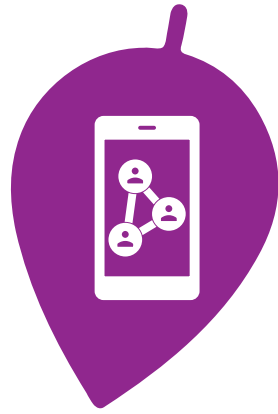
Oliver Wendell Holmes

Platforms relevant for THL Sector collaboration...

Professional Networking Events

Organise or participate in industry conferences, seminars, and workshops. These events are prime opportunities for peers to connect, share insights, and discuss trends.

Online Communities and Forums

Establish or engage in online platforms like LinkedIn groups, specialised forums, or social media communities where industry peers can connect, share experiences, and seek advice.

Collaborative Projects

Encourage collaborative projects between different entities within the THL sectors. This could include joint ventures, partnerships for events, or shared marketing campaigns

Industry Associations & Clubs

Join industry associations, clubs, or groups that regularly meet and provide networking opportunities. These can be geographically focused or themed around specific interests within the THL sectors.

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Platforms relevant for THL Sector collaboration...

Trade Shows and Expositions

Participate in or organise trade shows and fairs, which are excellent for showcasing new products, practices and services and for networking with peers, suppliers, and customers.

Roundtable Discussions and Think Tanks

These can be held to discuss current issues and future trends in the THL sectors, inviting diverse participants to share their perspectives and expertise

Digital Collaboration Tools

Utilise digital tools like Slack, Microsoft Teams, or Asana for project collaboration, allowing professionals/peers from various locations to work together effectively.

Educational Partnerships

Collaborate with academic institutions on research projects, internships, and guest lectures, which can foster ties between industry and academia.

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Be Inspired...

In the **We Lead Good Practice Compendium** one of our case studies; Susan Heffernan uses several platforms to collaborate and educate for a better future. Susan is a member of **Ballina's Green Town**, a collective community drive to make Ballina Ireland's Greenest Town, and a Board Member of **Sligo Volunteer Centre**. She is aware of how important and effective it has been for her & the Mary Robinson Centre to engage with local stakeholders.

06 Foster a Sustainable Mindset

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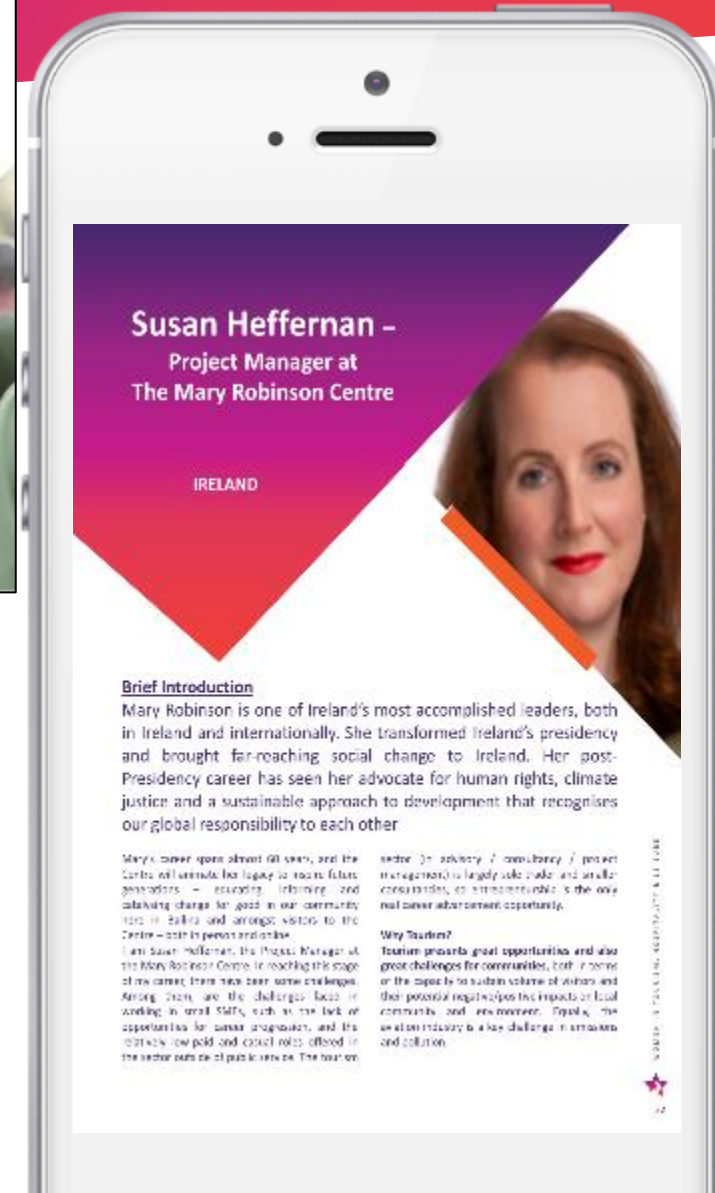
"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

- Native American Proverb

Imagining a Better Future

By fostering a sustainable mindset, the THL sectors can not only contribute positively to long-term environmental stewardship and society but also drive innovation, improve efficiency, and create a unique value proposition that resonates with environmentally-conscious consumers.

How to Foster a Sustainable Mindset:

Embed sustainability as a core value in the organization's culture

Be transparent in sustainability performance reporting, this can drive continuous improvement and innovation.

Provide training and workshops focused on sustainable practices and innovation

Solicit feedback regularly and use it to continuously improve and innovate sustainable practices.

Incorporate sustainability into the design and development of new products, services, and infrastructures

Engage with other businesses, NGOs, and governmental organizations in sustainable initiatives

Use innovative technologies to reduce carbon or resource consumption and waste

Educate customers about sustainability efforts and how they can contribute while using services

Leaders in the THL sectors should act as role models in sustainability practices

Challenge employees to find innovative solutions to environmental challenges

Learning Assessment:

Upon completion of this module, please grab a pen and paper and write down 5 points that promote creativity and innovation for a Better Future!

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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