



DR. DAMIEN L. DUCHAMP

# TOURISM IS GOLD

The Path to Ghana

A CURATED GUIDE FOR TOURISM  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN GHANA  
AND OTHER AMAZING COUNTRIES

*The following is a small portion of the full book to help individuals understand the scope and application potential of the publication.*

## **TOURISM IS GOLD: The Path to Ghana**

A Curated Guide for Tourism Entrepreneurship in  
Ghana and Other Amazing Countries

by

Damien L. Duchamp

Tourism is Gold© 2025 by Dr. Damien L. Duchamp

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests contact the author.

Cover picture by Emkamau

([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kwame\\_Nkrumah\\_Mausoleum\\_in\\_Accra\\_Ghana,\\_May\\_2008.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kwame_Nkrumah_Mausoleum_in_Accra_Ghana,_May_2008.jpg))<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>

All pictures are original content by the author, or being used with permission. All graphics unless otherwise credited were created by the author using Canva and ChatGPT.

# Table of Contents

<b>Welcome.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Foreword.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>About the Author.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>0 - Path to Ghana.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1 - The Tourism Industry.....</b>	<b>22</b>
Multiplier Effect.....	23
Glossing.....	25
GDP - Gross Domestic Product.....	27
Sideways Multiplier Effect.....	28
Types of Tourists.....	31
Understanding Visitors.....	34
How do you know?.....	38
<b>2 - Lodging.....</b>	<b>39</b>
Types of Lodging.....	39
Finding Lodging.....	43
Increasing Occupancy.....	44
Amenities.....	46
Lodging Water.....	47
What is Normal?.....	49
Airbnb Pro Tips.....	50
Elevating an Operation.....	54
Upgrades.....	66
Adding Value.....	67
<b>3 - Food &amp; Beverage.....</b>	<b>69</b>
Types of F&B Options.....	69
The F&B Environment.....	73
Moments of Truth.....	74
Menu Engineering.....	77
Tips & Tricks.....	80
Pricing.....	80
Ingredients.....	82
Payments.....	82
F&B Marketing.....	85
<b>4 - Nightlife.....</b>	<b>88</b>
Flexible Space.....	88

Night Snacks & Drinks.....	89
Special Events.....	90
Sponsorships.....	91
Identity Crisis.....	94
Different Crowds.....	95
<b>5 - Museums.....</b>	<b>97</b>
Tanks for Following.....	97
Different Languages.....	99
Adventure Museums.....	102
Museum Technology.....	103
Recorded & Active Audio.....	104
Immersive & Multisensory Art.....	106
Museum AR & VR.....	106
Picture/Video Policy.....	108
Secret Menus - Secret Stories.....	109
Special Times.....	110
Feedback Loops.....	111
Repeat Customers.....	114
Annual Memberships.....	116
<b>6 - Guest Choices.....</b>	<b>118</b>
Moo Cow Groups.....	119
Rochester to Accra.....	121
Standards & Assumptions.....	122
Children & Pets.....	127
Children's Leisure.....	128
Kid Friendly?.....	129
Pet Friendly?.....	134
Professionalism.....	136
Ethics in Tourism.....	139
<b>7 - Customer Service.....</b>	<b>143</b>
The Zones.....	145
Types of Customers.....	145
Tour Operations.....	147
External Customers.....	149
LTVC - Lifetime Value of a Customer.....	150
Churn.....	157
UPOD - Underpromise & Overdeliver.....	163
Takers & Freeloaders.....	164

Service Recovery.....	174
The Arsenal.....	175
Gifts.....	180
Authentic Hospitality.....	184
Empowerment.....	188
<b>8 - Tourism Marketing.....</b>	<b>192</b>
The Basics.....	192
Hustle vs. Corporate Marketing.....	194
Target Audience.....	195
Categories & Channels.....	196
Traditional vs Digital Marketing.....	198
The 4Ps - The Marketing Mix.....	200
Public Relations.....	206
Dingable Offenses.....	207
Tourism Advocates.....	213
SMERF.....	214
MICE.....	220
Call Centers.....	224
Chambers of Commerce, CVBs & DMOs.....	228
Importance of Data.....	232
Personal Branding.....	235
<b>9 - Tips &amp; Gratuity.....</b>	<b>241</b>
Origins.....	241
Tipping in Europe.....	241
Insulting.....	244
Tipping in the United States.....	244
The “Free” Tour.....	246
Ghana Tipping Culture.....	249
Tipping Ecosystem.....	250
Hospitality Included.....	251
Ethics & Legalities.....	252
Tipping = Revenue?.....	254
<b>10 - Event Tourism.....</b>	<b>256</b>
Global Events.....	256
Adventure Recreation.....	258
Tournaments & Away Games.....	259
Ghana Example.....	260
Concerts.....	261
Nuts & Bolts.....	264

<b>11 - Maker Tourism.....</b>	<b>267</b>
Fabritourism.....	267
sLOVEnia.....	269
Ghana.....	270
Fashion Tourism.....	273
New Fashion Revenue Streams.....	275
Frankenstyle.....	278
Made to Order (MTO).....	279
<b>12 - Niche Tourism.....</b>	<b>283</b>
Curious Lives.....	283
Nostalgia Tourism.....	288
Food & Drink Tourism.....	292
Music & Screen Tourism.....	297
Water Tourism.....	301
Voluntourism.....	303
Medical Tourism.....	305
Dark Tourism.....	309
<b>13 - Study Abroad &amp; Languages.....</b>	<b>315</b>
Components of Study Abroad.....	315
Rock Stars & Outsourcing.....	316
Insourcing.....	317
Frugal Tourism Living.....	318
Immersion vs. Cliques.....	318
Implications for Schools.....	319
Language Education.....	320
<b>14 - Dollars &amp; Sense.....</b>	<b>324</b>
How You Charge.....	324
UPOD vs OPUD.....	325
Signals.....	326
Bad Actors.....	326
Follow Up Plan.....	329
Charging Too Much.....	329
Smooth Experience.....	331
Revenue Streams.....	332
New Revenue Streams.....	335
<b>15 - Economic Development.....</b>	<b>340</b>
Individual Investment.....	340
Institutional Investment.....	341

Developing New Sites & Experiences.....	343
Strategic Tourism Development.....	353
The Fantastic.....	357
Long Range Plan.....	361
Super Long Range Planning.....	363
Main Street Experience.....	367
Stopovers & Shopovers.....	371
Ghana Travel Friction.....	376
<b>16 - Equipment &amp; Supplies.....</b>	<b>380</b>
Choose Your Materials Wisely.....	380
Buying in Bulk.....	381
Other Supplies.....	382
Buying Used.....	383
Maintenance.....	385
Service Contracts.....	386
The SDGs.....	388
The Environment.....	391
Sustainability.....	394
Sanitation.....	397
<b>17 - Skill Development.....</b>	<b>406</b>
The Gap.....	406
Formal Education.....	406
Other Models.....	408
Over-Employment.....	409
Pathways & Cross-Training.....	411
Continuous Self-Improvement.....	414
<b>18 - Disaster Management.....</b>	<b>424</b>
Travel During COVID-19.....	425
Unanticipated Consequences.....	426
Finding a Way Forward.....	428
More Pivots.....	430
Proactive vs. Reactive.....	431
Emergency Preparedness.....	433
Fire Drills.....	433
Active Shooter.....	435
<b>19 - Technology.....</b>	<b>436</b>
Web3.....	437
The Digital Divide.....	440
Digital Twins.....	441

Restaurants.....	442
Bars, Clubs, Lounges.....	443
Airlines & Trains.....	444
Hotels, Resorts, Casinos & Cruise Ships.....	445
Car Rental Companies.....	446
Tour Guides.....	447
Buses & Ground Transportation.....	447
Tour Sites.....	448
Venues.....	450
Conferences & Conventions.....	451
Translations.....	454
<b>20 - More Revenue &amp; 500 Tours.....</b>	<b>456</b>
Tourist Tax.....	457
Upsell Visitors.....	458
Increase Visitors.....	459
500 Tours.....	462
Overtourism & Entrepreneurship.....	464
Once in a Lifetime?.....	465
One Stop Tourism Shop (1STOP).....	466
<b>21 - Ghana's Tourism Sector.....</b>	<b>471</b>
Basic Infrastructure.....	471
Leadership.....	472
Hidden Fees.....	475
Intentionality.....	476
Money on the Table.....	476
Limited Audience.....	477
Marketing & Recruitment.....	477
Diversification.....	478
Greed.....	481
Ghana in 2050.....	483
<b>Afterwords.....</b>	<b>488</b>

# Acknowledgements

Countless people have influenced this book. Not just in terms of those that I have interacted with over the years, but also those that I am writing the book for. I think about Leticia and Gisele who are teaching at the K-12 level, Suzanne and Jennifer in undergraduate programs, or April and Tracy in graduate programs.

*Tourism is Gold* is dedicated to the countless college students I have worked with over the years. From City Tech to St. John's University in NYC, and from Monroe Community College to Frederick Community College, they have helped me develop my ideas around tourism. To the students I still teach today, primarily at St. John's, MCC and the University of Mid Florida, you inspire me every day to come up with new ways to teach. I relish moments when I see you "connect the dots."

While I certainly don't spend as much time teaching as I did in the early 2010s, I appreciate those who have given me the opportunity, especially Glenn who gave me my first class. Thank you to Almerinda, Jim, Ian, Elizabeth, Tara, Liz, Karen, Jill, Rebecca, Sal, and so many others that have given me courses to teach over the years. Thank you to Nina, Linda, and Andrea for answering all of my questions!

TIG was also inspired by thousands of high school students that I have worked with in the U.S. and abroad. They attended workshops, conferences, or listened to me at career days. A special thank you to many years of interns coordinated through wonderful people like Yairi, Gav and Corrine through Grant Associates and the DOE in NYC. Some of them have directly contributed to making TIG a reality, including most recently Zahara, Nathan and Shilah... and two of Chef Billy's classes!

I'd like to acknowledge those that I've worked with at St. John Fisher University. Thank you to those in the writing retreats that encouraged me, my annex neighbors, Katie, Angela, Todd, Lauren, Dan, and Kristin for great chats. Thanks to Dean Gatlin and the WSON dean's suite for giving me "space and grace" to write.

Thank you to Frank, Gabe and Adonis who frequently asked about my progress, and Janet for always asking what I was eating while writing. Thank you to those who would comment on my daily Instagram or Facebook posts; good vibes from people like Vicki, Tomas, Tony, Edith, Charlie, Ann, Gay, Lisa, Carri, Danielle, Karen, Hannah, Ernie, Don, Priscilla, Tee and others... You kept me going. Thank you to Caveday, GRADA, TUS, SBC, and the pétanque crew for life balance.

A shout-out to the teams at Hydra, Sasso and Fuego coffee shops where I would listen to BPM, Steve Aoki's Remix, Diplo's Revolution, and David Guetta Playlist. Having a "third place" is crucial for writing over 170 thousand words in four years.



*Repping Ghana at TST in North Carolina, 2023*

Thank you to my Ghana family; Delphine, Kofi & Raja, Edith, Daniel, and Terry, as well as countless others that I have come to know in Ghana and Africa as a whole. I appreciate those who have participated in my workshops, conferences and contests; especially *Frankenstyle*. Thanks to my brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and fellow D9 Greeks. Thanks to table-mates at Republic Bar, friends at Impact Hub, my Vida e Caffè people, friends at Street Academy, collaborators in Ghana government and various tourism organizations, colleagues in education, and of course the women of the Miss Tourism Ghana organization.

Most importantly I want to thank my wife Sonja for tolerating the early morning departures and late evening returns so that I can write or grade assignments. She named *Hospitalented* and makes it possible for me to do what I do. Thanks to my sister Tee, nephew Homer, niece Tilly and the Saltzmans for giving us that home base close by. Thank you to Jim & Janet, Davo & Hickey, PME, SBC Bros, all of my French cousins, stepmother Catherine, and brother Adrien (along with Frenchies). Thanks to Ann & Fred for being Sonja's parents!

A special note for my friend Leslie Amissah who passed away as I was writing the last pages of this book. Leslie was a true hospitality maestro who stood well above the standard of professionalism in not just Ghana, but on the continent. Leslie was one of the top event planners in Ghana, the one that people called to coordinate gatherings at the highest level. We helped each other over the years, and I'm sad not to have spoken to him before he left us. R.I.P. Leslie.

# Foreword

**By Dr. Ernest P. Boger**

As a Hospitality/Tourism educator and operations manager with well more than a half-century of global exposure and professional engagement, I've often reflected on how (or even, if) my personal wealth of accumulated knowledge can be preserved for future generations, thereby fulfilling a classic, perhaps overrated, human destiny of leaving the world a little better than it was before. In writing *Tourism is Gold (TIG)* Dr. Duchamp has certainly answered that question for me and I submit that it will do the same for you.

"Tour de force" is the first impression that came to mind as I simply perused the exhaustive Table of Contents. After skimming several select chapters, then diving in for the full 21 delicious courses (chapters) my initial impression was confirmed in spades! Now, I would not go so far as to say this effort is of the benchmark monumental stature akin to Escoffier's "Larousse Gastronomique!" However, that is honestly the epic culinary tome that incessantly bounced in and out of my mind as I engaged, chapter upon chapter. I can benchmark no comparable current hospitality/tourism text.

Each titled chapter was written to stand on its own as a user-friendly handbook segment of theoretical understanding coupled with practical paths to application, and then innovative hands-on pedagogical exercises for instructional reinforcement. While the ancient and fabled West African Republic of Ghana forms an incisive modern landscaping backdrop, Dr. Duchamp draws extensively from his steaming global cauldron of direct hospitality/tourism industry immersion. You can approach this wealth of material as an encyclopedia and zoom directly to a subject area of interest. That works.

However, the approach that allows for the extraction of maximum educational enrichment is to start from the very beginning. Pay special attention to the multi-national developmental posture and pedigree of Dr. Duchamp. He engagingly represents an extraordinary, even exotic mixture of birth, upbringing, personal and professional experience that whets your pedagogical appetite, gets your intellect salivating and stimulates your cerebral cortex to tingling with the demand; "I've GOT to see what such a man has to say!"

Pressing on, you will find a logically evolving sequence of Hospitality/Tourism focused chapters and topics that continue to build and reinforce, not infrequently in a deliberate repetitive fashion or editorial redundancy for emphasis. While every single chapter is indeed a nugget of "Tourism Gold," my personal favorites are the

four chapters that deal with Museums (5), Maker Tourism (11), Economic Development (15) and Technology (19). The latter is of utmost importance in that it is the chapter most forward-looking. Textbooks by nature tend to have a shelf-life of rapidly diminishing returns as soon as they are introduced. TIG is different and will stand the test of time due to its prescient projections of technology as well as its solid grounding in problem/solution etiology, reflected in a wealth of timeless classic hospitality/tourism scenarios.

As a Hospitality/Tourism Academic Department Chairman Emeritus, I strongly encourage the integration of this extraordinary resource compiled by Dr. Duchamp into ALL of the universally popular courses offered in global undergraduate and graduate curricular, with the long- term objective of the full text being valued as an education/ training companion/ handbook throughout a career of individual professional leadership success well beyond formal academic classroom or industry training development days.

Congratulations Dr. Duchamp!

E.P. Boger, D. Mgt  
CEO VIP Hosts Internationale  
Chairman (Retired) Department of Hospitality & Tourism Management  
University of Maryland Eastern Shore, USA  
2/18/25

# Introduction

Every year communities and countries fail to attract millions of visitors because they misunderstand the needs and wants of tourists. Ghana is one of these countries. The name *Tourism is Gold* is based on the potential of what countries like Ghana could accomplish through tourism. TIG's subtitle *The Path to Ghana* was the original name, intentionally hard to read on the cover as a way to emphasize that the path to Ghana (i.e. visas, marketing, policies) is still very unclear.

This book is the compilation of over 40 years of life experience related to hospitality and tourism. About half is from formal education and experience as a hospitality & tourism professor, including a doctoral dissertation entitled *Perceptions of the Hospitality & Tourism Industries by 18-24 Year Olds in Ghana, West Africa*. The other half of my life experience is based on growing up in both France and the U.S., and my ongoing work in Ghana.

## **Promise & Audience**

This book will help identify new revenue streams in many communities and countries. This will depend on many factors, as not one single place does everything nor do they do everything well. I promise that every reader will learn something new, and will change the way you think about tourism and its potential. The solution is often having hard conversations about the reality of one's tourism sector to reveal missing components and underserved populations.

TIG is written with two target audiences in mind. First, it is designed for education; those teaching at the K-12 up to graduate level. The content is broken up in such a way that teachers can assign specific topics that support a variety of courses. The book can also be used in more than one class, so that students can build on concepts from term to term. Second, and more importantly, TIG is written for practitioners. These are people that are working (or want to work) in the industry. It is especially intended to be a practical guide for almost 7 billion people living in developing countries that want to grow their tourism economies.

For practitioners, my brother Julio insisted that I refer to TIG as a "training manual for developing countries." I will assert that there is no perfect operation or venue, even in the most advanced tourism communities. One thing that I learned when I worked as a brand ambassador for Evian was that even the top restaurants had gaps. So if a Michelin restaurant has things that they can improve, then perhaps anyone who reads this book might pick up some ideas.

**NOTE:** You will see "brother" often in the book. With the exception of Adrien who is my biological brother, brothers like Julio are fraternity brothers.



*Terry Oppong and I - October 2017*

### **Sigma Connection**

I “discovered” Ghana thanks to Terry ‘Kojo’ Oppong. We had met in New York City previously as we were both members of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. In early 2014 he reached out to ask if I would be interested in a Ghanaian project. Terry was born in Ghana, grew up in Botswana, and then New Jersey. He knew I was a tourism professor, and that I might have some insights on how to plan a conference focused on developing a culture of hospitality. We worked on the project with his colleague Patricia Merolle in New York, and Edith Pinamang in Ghana for almost two years. One day I decided that I couldn’t design a conference for a country I hadn’t yet visited. Terry bought his ticket the next day, I bought mine the following day, and shortly after I was in Ghana for the first time.

On that initial trip in April 2016, Terry introduced me to the owner of Twist (premier nightlife venue in Accra). After a brief conversation he invited several colleagues to have a chat at his club. Within an hour I was talking to some of the top hospitality people in Ghana, including Raja and Kofi from Republic Bar & Grill; two of my favorite people in the world. On the same trip I also met Delphine Brew-Hammond who would become one of my closest friends and collaborators. That was the beginning of my work in the country, leading to training sessions with coffee shops, hotels, restaurants, etc. I would often work with Madame Delphine and the Miss Tourism Ghana organization on projects such as the Youth in Tourism Conference and different trips with “the girls.” From 2016-2022 I visited Ghana 2-3 times a year. While the pandemic slowed things down, I was still going. Terry’s joke for the first few years was that I was there more than him!

## **Uplifting Communities**

This is not a book published to serve the needs of a publisher or organization. It is not written to satisfy anyone in particular, but rather to serve the needs of those looking for ways to uplift their communities through tourism entrepreneurship. According to the IMF (International Monetary Fund) there are just over 150 “developing countries” in the world and almost 7 billion people living in those countries. Even if you are in the “Global North,” there are communities that struggle and can learn from TIG. It is my sincere hope that this book can help even just one community develop new revenue streams.

**DEF:** The ‘Global North’ is referred to as countries like the U.S. and Germany, places where a great deal of wealth exists; generally countries not considered “developing” or “emerging.”

## **Arc of TIG**

I formatted this book to be as useful as possible. The book starts with a simple frame for understanding tourism entrepreneurship, then builds on it with specific areas of the sector; lodging, food & beverage (F&B), etc. TIG is full of concepts, worksheets and tools that can be copied and used. Some things are intentionally repeated throughout the book, what I call “intentional redundancy.” These are things that are foundational to tourism entrepreneurship.

It should be noted that I will use “hospitality” and “tourism” interchangeably in this book. Simply put, in the U.S. hospitality is the big umbrella under which tourism falls. In most other places around the world, tourism is the dominant term with hospitality being a component. I will use tourism more often in TIG.

The tone of this book is familiar, as if a friendly professor was speaking with you. It is also personalized, since much of what I have written is the result of my life experience and observations. It is also not a catch-all textbook that covers everything from A-Z. In fact, I intentionally direct readers to look at other books or resources throughout the chapters.

You will find activities sprinkled throughout the book. They are written in a way so that either a classroom, organization or business could do them. I take a “just add water” approach, inspired heavily by friends and colleagues in the K-12 arena. If something doesn’t quite make sense, I encourage you to reach out to me so that I can clarify or modify the activity for your class or team.

Speaking of “making sense,” you will find many ‘DEF’ inserts throughout the book. The DEF here is short for *Definition*, where I attempt to explain something to the reader. There will also be moments where I use this to explain U.S. expressions

such as “cart before the horse,” a favorite of my friend Frank. We speak often, and I will intentionally use expressions that he might not know (Frank is South Korean).

**DEF:** Putting the ‘cart before the horse’ means that you jump ahead to think or do something prematurely. For example if I talk to Frank about a house I found for sale in a city where Sonja and I might retire, he might say “cart before the horse.”

There is an arc to this book that is very intentional. Each section builds into the next one, though each chapter could certainly stand on its own. I joke that each chapter could be its own journal article, however I was committed from the beginning to make it practical. This book was never intended to be a ‘scholarly’ publication, so you will see the absence of gratuitous citations. If I reference someone else’s work, I will refer to a source so that readers can find it.

I feel it’s important to note that TIG was written without AI (artificial intelligence) in the ChatGPT sense. Meaning that I did not ask one of the many AI platforms to “write me a chapter on fabritourism.” I do appreciate the built-in auto-correct that comes with Google Docs, but beyond that everything here is written by me with the exception of the foreword. While I certainly believe in AI as a tool, I wanted this book to speak to people on a personal level, and I hope it comes through. Now the artwork, yes, most was created using Canva, ChatGPT and Copilot. Thank you!

### **And lastly...**

While some people are satisfied to just publish, when I visit you I want to find a bruised and battered copy of TIG on your desk or dashboard rather than a pristine copy sitting on your shelf.



## 0 - Path to Ghana

This is chapter zero. It is zero to distinguish between the primary purpose of this book and the application of the book's contents to the country of Ghana. Those of you who are reading this who have no connection to Ghana may choose to skip over this chapter, however there is value in bridging the gap between tourism education theory and actual practice. In some ways this book is one big case study focused on the amazing country of Ghana.

The title of this book is *Tourism is Gold* based on the idea that I believe through tourism you can generate a considerable amount of revenue for a community. So of course I want that for Ghana. But I also want that for so many other countries and communities. Increased tourism revenue can be key to millions of people having access to education, clean water, and so many other essentials in life.

I hate that this needs to be written, but the timing of my first edition coincides with an ecological disaster taking place in Ghana. The illegal mining of gold known as "Galamsey" is the perfect storm of illegal activity, economical challenges, and political transition. While I chose the title *Tourism is Gold* many years ago, I recognize that what I propose in this book will be referenced alongside Galamsey out of sheer irony. Still, I will maintain that there is far more revenue potential through tourism than actual gold.

For my Ghanaian friends and colleagues, this book is written with love. I truly adore Ghana and want the best for the country. You will often see me say “we” and “us” when talking about Ghana. I identify with the country even though clearly I’m a White French-American male. I will tell people far and wide that “Ghana is the most beautiful country with the most beautiful people in the world.”

### **And because of my love for Ghana, I need to be honest...**

While I can’t remember where I learned this important lesson, I will often think or say the following: “you do people a disservice if you don’t give them the straight stuff.” This is just as relevant to people as it is to organizations and communities. How can someone (or a country) get better if they don’t have all the information? So in the following pages I will be honest about what I’ve learned through research and observation.

### **Satisfaction**

The first observation is that too many decision makers in Ghana are satisfied with the number of visitors that come to the country each year. They are also satisfied with the money that appears in their pockets, and thus avoid making any changes that could change the status quo. There are others, like anyone in the world, who fear change because it is scary.

In my time in Ghana I have seen the impact of five ministers of tourism. In a 2023 workshop, I was a speaker alongside Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed Awal, then Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture for the Republic of Ghana. While in general the contents of this book are intended to be very apolitical, I appreciated his comments related to growing the tourism sector.

Dr. Awal talked a lot about entrepreneurship and the need to create two million jobs. To no one’s surprise he said that tourism is key, which I obviously agree with. But something else he said really captures the stakes. He said that we need to stop the migration of Ghanaians to Europe and other parts of the world. This is something that is often referred to as “brain drain,” where people leave their communities and go where they think they can find success and fortune. It happens more or less everywhere, and it has been going on since the dawn of time.

### **Increased Tourism = More Employment Opportunities**

Until a solution can be identified that will add those 2 million jobs, the practice has been to over-employ Ghanaians. As I write this section in my favorite Fuego Coffee shop, I can see the two staff members who handle all of the customers that make

their way in for morning coffee and pastries. There are 48 seats in this venue, and the two attendants can handle it all. In Ghana, it would not be surprising to see ten attendants for the same size cafe. Because there are so many Ghanaians needing to work, employers feel pressure to add extra people which keeps wages down.

**500 GH¢ per month x 10 = 5000 GH¢ vs. 1000 GH¢ per month x 5 = 5000 GH¢**

With the right training I believe that you could definitely have five employees instead of ten. With training + education you could get that down to the same two employees. By paying the employees more you could raise the bar for what an attendant gets paid in Ghana, making the industry also more attractive.

This dynamic is something that we are facing in the United States (U.S.) in that we are still paying too little for staff. Since the pandemic, finding and hiring solid employees has been incredibly difficult. I'll let someone else explore the effect that COVID-19 has had on the frontline workforce, but I believe that Americans are less willing to do hospitality work for the wages we have had for decades.

*But let's return to Ghana...*

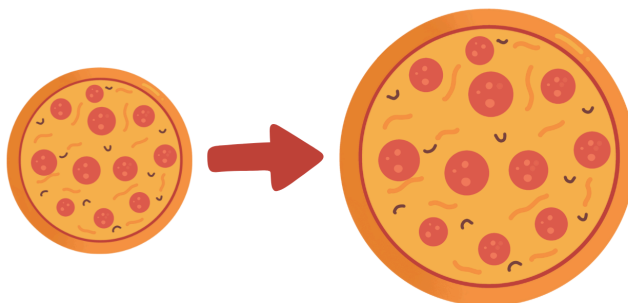
### **My Solution**

In order for us to create two million jobs and to keep Ghanaians in Ghana, we must first recognize that we are only attracting certain visitors and that the current tourism sector is not operating at 100%. If we continue to mostly focus on the African Diaspora (e.g. U.S., Canada, U.K., Jamaica), then "all of our eggs are in one basket." We need to do more to bring other people into the country, while at the same time expanding the opportunities for tourism once they get here. If everything expands as it should, there will be plenty of jobs in every region of the country.

Since 2016 I have interacted with Ghanaians at every level in the tourism sector. I have spent time with those who own or run the top hotels, restaurants and nightclubs, leading tour operators, and people at every level in government. You will read this in other places in this book, but I believe there is confusion and a misplaced satisfaction with the number of people that visit Ghana each year.

In Ghana we count non-tourists as tourists, create unnecessary obstacles for visiting, and the goal appears to be getting people here **only once**. As I have said in workshops for several years, coming to Ghana should not be a "once in a lifetime" experience. We should aim to get people here over and over again. Having a multi-entry visa for only \$100 is great, but not enough. Too many officials setting the policies lack empathy; they've never had to go through a visa application.

To go a step further, I will recognize that there are plenty of people that are prospering from tourism in Ghana. They have created impressive pipelines for groups that visit each year. Some have relationships with organizations that they leverage (e.g. fraternities), while others have forged partnerships with colleges and universities. While I'm happy for those who have developed these pipelines, it also means they are getting most of the **pie** with scraps left for everyone else.



I use a pizza pie as a metaphor, helping to create the current GDP through tourism. On the left is what it is, and on the right is what it could be. In order to grow the number of visitors to Ghana each year, you need a lot more sauce, cheese, and other ingredients. It's going to take more talented people to grow the tourism sector. It can't just be those that view tourism as a "side hustle," picking up the scraps that the big operators leave behind. It seems almost every Ghanaian I know that lives part-time in the U.S., Canada or England is giving tours these days. I'm sure what they're doing is fine in terms of quality, but if you've never been to Ghana you wouldn't know the difference!

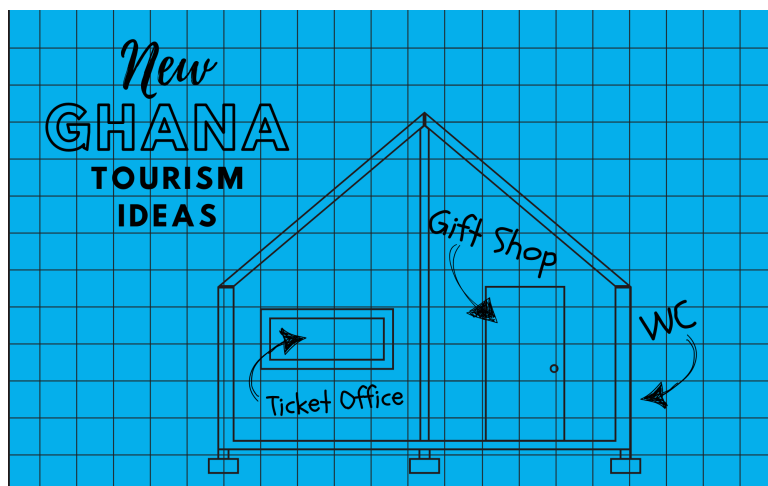
For me, a great tourism product is one that is authentic, priced fairly and contributes to the multiplier effect.

**Authentic** - The experiences that are introduced to guests are not artificial, and they are real. For example, the guests are brought into an art store where the attendant claims everything is hand-made "from the North," but in actuality they are mass produced in a Chinese factory. Another example is naming ceremonies. Some tour operators are selling an experience that is not culturally or ritually accurate.

**Priced Fairly** - While it is advantageous for anyone in the tourism sector to charge as much as they can, there's a difference between "fair" and taking advantage of people. Because the emphasis is on making as much money as possible from each guest, we sometimes forget that we may be hurting future profits. Someone who feels like they were overcharged will remember. Either they will never return or they will tell friends/family not to do business with you.

**Multiplier Effect** - It is important to put money into the pockets of Ghanaians as much as possible. This means staying in Ghanaian-owned hotels, eating at Ghanaian restaurants, and spending other money where funds get into Ghanaian pockets. This will be further explained in chapter 1.

Again, we should want visitors to have a great experience in Ghana, but also create a path for guests to come back to Ghana sooner than later. No one in the Ghanaian tourism sector should be satisfied with the current number of visitors.



*Preview of One Stop Tourism Shop (1STOP) in Chapter 20*

This book is intended to provide a blueprint for how the tourism sector can grow in any country, not just Ghana. However in this chapter it is important that I emphasize that it is the decisions by Ghanaians which will determine if the sector grows. While some know that they are restricting the growth of the sector, most do not realize it (e.g. police). They are simply doing what they think is best for themselves, their families, or village/community not realizing the impact on the country.

A taxi driver trying to make more money (overcharging) does not appreciate that a negative experience by a guest may lead to a bad impression shared with anyone who will listen. A police officer pulling a tourist from a car to have them empty their pockets does not realize the damage they cause when the story is told back home. People make decisions about where to travel every day, and if they hear someone describe a bad experience in Ghana they will go elsewhere. Especially when it's easier to travel to so many other countries.

Some decisions impacting tourism in Ghana need to be made at the very highest level. But lots of mid-level people can actually have a bigger impact on the way things could improve. There are many opinions held by those in power that may

never be realized if they can't convince those who "do" the work that it is good for the country. For instance, those who determine what programs get funding or who goes on showcase trips. If they don't believe in the bigger picture, then money may get wasted and Ghana doesn't benefit as much as it could. Perhaps this is similar in other countries.

Ultimately I believe that only a small number of people in the world even know about Ghana, and even fewer would consider visiting. Part of this is marketing, but the everyday decisions by those in MOTAC actually can have a more profound impact. For non-Ghanaian readers, MOTAC is the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, and they execute a mandate through implementing agencies like the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) and the Ghana Tourism Development Company (GTDC).

*The Ministry aims at establishing a suitable environment for tourism, arts, and culture to flourish and develop in a way that contributes significantly to GDP through the effective and efficient application of relevant policies, plans, programs, and initiatives. It also entails establishing and maintaining public-private partnerships with the Diaspora in order to increase resource mobilization and investment. – <https://www.motac.gov.gh> May, 2024*

I want to be very clear that Ghana has a bevy of talented people, as well as enough resources to operate a premier tourism industry. The 'product' is also as good as it gets. There are so many tourism destinations, experiences and millions of hospitable people to welcome them. Again the goal is to increase the **pie**, to expand the capacity for tourism and attract more visitors.

Given the fact that I have been writing this book over several years, some of the things that I include have actually begun to happen in Ghana. Maybe not exactly the way that I would have done it, but there's been progress. This reinforces the idea that this book is not just for those in the Ghanaian tourism industry.

As I close out this chapter I want to bring the non-Ghanaians fully into the conversation.

From an African tourism perspective, Ghana has almost everything that countries like Egypt, Kenya and South Africa market to the rest of the world. Ghana may not have pyramids (that I know of), but we have the slave castles and other UNESCO World Heritage Sites. We also have safari in the North. The tourism ministry of South Africa does an incredible job of making people see South Africa as synonymous with safari, which is exceptional marketing.

**Tourism is Gold.** To expand the metaphor, gold isn't always sitting on the surface easy for us to pick up. Sometimes you have to dig for it. Sometimes you have to drill for it. It's not always easy to find that gold.

For Ghana, a lot of the gold has already been found. There is a long list of tourism sites and experiences that are fairly easy to find. They may not be easy to get to (roads!), but they are known. I believe there is a lot more gold to be found and created, and that almost anything can be turned into a tourism attraction. The remaining chapters are intended to give readers the tools to discover more gold.

In a way, this book is my love letter to Ghana.





## TASTE #1 - The Multiplier Effect

Let's talk about what happens with money that comes into a country or community through tourism. We often describe the "trickle down" of resources as the multiplier effect. To illustrate this, I will use two examples; one from the Global North and the other from Ghana.

**DEF:** The 'multiplier effect' is when money comes in from outside (the circle represents the community/country), and visitors spend money at shops, hotels,

restaurants, etc. Those businesses use that money to pay staff and vendors, they use that money to pay their bills (car note, data bill, rent, school fees, etc.), and those businesses use the money received to pay other people... it multiplies.

### 1. New York City Marathon

Every year nearly 50,000 runners travel to New York City (NYC) in the U.S. so that they can compete in the world-famous marathon. Some of these runners may live in NYC, but most are traveling in from somewhere else. They could travel in from Rochester, NY or they could come in from Koper, Slovenia. No matter what, they are always going to put money into the city. They are often not traveling alone, sometimes bringing multiple family members and friends. Together they are spending money on lodging, food, shopping, entertainment, etc. When they pay for food at a local restaurant, the revenue received by the venue is used to pay their staff, and in turn their staff can pay their bills. Hence, the money multiplies.

### 2. AfroFuture (formerly Afrochella)

In December of each year thousands of people travel to Ghana to celebrate the end of the year. Part of that celebration is AfroFuture, formerly known as Afrochella. While this is only one of many major events that are going on throughout the month, it is clearly the most recognizable internationally. Individuals and groups hire tour operators to plan their "once in a lifetime" trip to the African continent, with many of the visitors coming in from the U.S., England, and Canada. Just like the NYC Marathon, they are booking hotels like the Marriott, Kempinski and Mövenpick, or lodging in airbnbs and guest houses. They are eating/drinking at The Republic Bar & Grill, dancing at Twist, and grabbing a late night cocktail at FrontBack. They are paying drivers to visit Cape Coast, entry fees to visit the castles and shopping at Accra Mall. All of these funds are coming into the country and it is multiplied in many directions. Twist can pay their bartenders, Frankie's can pay their cooks, and Kempinski can pay their housekeepers. Everyone can then pay their MTN (cell phone company) or school fees.

To provide a negative example of the multiplier effect for clarity, let's consider that there's almost no beef cattle industry in the Bahamas. So, when Ernie flies in from Florida, those steaks may be traveling underneath him in the plane's refrigerated baggage compartment. He may enjoy the steak at Sandals Emerald Bay, but when he flies back home a chunk of the money he spent is sitting in that first class seat up front, heading right back to Florida with him! The goal should be to spend money on as much local business as possible, allowing funds to be reinvested into the community. For instance, when you order the local Lobster Thermidor most of those funds are circulated because it is a local product.

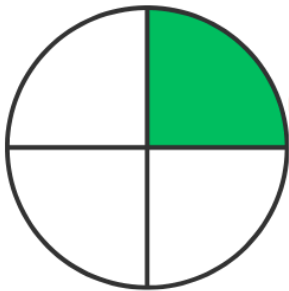


So what happens when no one is visiting? In early 2020 the pandemic began to impact travel and tourism around the world. I was in Ghana at the end of February 2020, and just after I returned to New York there was a ban on business travel by my institution. With no visitors going into communities there was no multiplier effect, and funds/resources began to be recycled internally to communities/countries. Three years later the impact is still being felt.

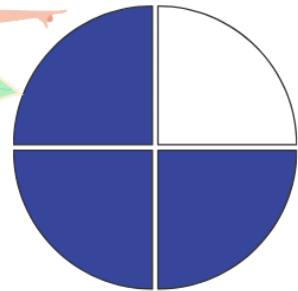
### **Domestic Tourism**

While I touch on domestic tourism in different ways throughout the book, I will be transparent by stating that I am more committed to attracting visitors from other countries than inside the country. As we just touched on the impact of COVID-19, if you think about it many communities and countries were restricted to just domestic tourism. While this was good to keep things moving, the reality is that it was more recycling of funds rather than growth. In order to grow a country's GDP (Ghana or another country), people and resources need to come in from the outside. That being said, most if not all, of the strategies in this book will apply to domestic tourists just as much as international tourists.

## Part-Time Visitors



## Full-Time Visitors



### TASTE #2 - Types of Tourists

One of the challenges that some communities have is understanding what a tourist is. I know that sounds strange because we all think we know, but I promise you that we don't.

In marketing there is a strong emphasis on knowing your audience. It's based on the idea that you can't effectively create a marketing plan if you don't know who you're trying to reach. As I teach in my marketing courses, the only catch-all channel for marketing in the U.S. is to pay over \$7 million dollars for 30 seconds during the Super Bowl. Still, there's no guarantee that your audience will see it.

#### ***So tourists...***

I learned a lot about visitors when I was writing my dissertation years ago. My study was on the perceptions of tourism in Ghana, so naturally I had to understand the people that visit. In many years of going in and out of the country, I shared space with all types of travelers. While many of them checked off the "tourism" box on the airport form, their primary purpose may have been something else entirely. Still, the government would classify them as tourists yet some of them (maybe most) never visited a single tourism site during their stay. Though once again, the definition of a "tourist site" might be different depending on whom you ask.

If a community is unclear about who is actually going to engage in tourism activities, then we may not prepare the sector appropriately. We may put resources into areas that don't need them, and increase expectations to a point that is unattainable. Restaurant and hotel managers hate it when they pay for more staff than they need, so imagine if an entire country hired too many people?

### **Part-Time Visitors (PTV)**

- They come into your community with a purpose other than tourism
- They have minimal time to visit sites or participate in experiences
- They may have time available to engage in tourism activities if they are convenient enough

Example: Let's say my friend Corrine is doing a site visit for Break Through Tech in Worcester, Massachusetts. She's only there for about 36 hours, spending one night in the hotel. She is in meetings most of the daytime, but has a few hours to spare. So she decides to visit the Worcester Art Museum.

Keep in mind that you have to offer options for part-time visitors if they are to be pulled into the sector. If every legitimate tourism site or experience is an hour away or more, then you are not allowing them to be a tourist.

### **Full-Time Visitors (FTV)**

- They come into your community with the sole purpose of visiting sites and participating in experiences
- They have maximum time to visit sites or participate in experiences
- They are not conducting business, often cutting off work communications so that they can enjoy where they are in the world
- In most communities outside of popular destinations like Paris, London, New York City there are less people who are full time tourists

Example: Let's say my friend Adam is visiting Bordeaux in France. As a lover of all things beverage-related, he is intent on seeing as many sites and engaging in countless beverage experiences. While he is in fact a professor, his visit is purely about his passion for wine.

We can certainly debate what a part time or full-time visitor is, but let's focus on the impact. The intention is to equip you with what you need to leverage tourism for the purpose of revenue generation. Simply put, you just need to understand that we need to have options for all types of visitors.

### **Accra, Ghana**

To illustrate the impact of understanding who's visiting your community, I will use Accra as an example. There are a million or so people that pass through Accra each year, and many are in town for reasons other than tourism. They are students, researchers, NGOs, diplomats, business people, and others visiting family. For those unfamiliar with Ghana, the African Diaspora is quite extensive, meaning

Ghanaians have relatives throughout the world. Descendants from other West African countries also see Ghana as “home” due to the quantity of slave castles.

If you are not in Ghana simply for tourism, then you may have limited time to engage in anything beyond the perimeter of Accra. To visit the slave castles in Cape Coast and Elmina takes a full day (to do it right), so you are limited to staying locally in Accra. There are certainly options, including the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park, Black Star / Independence Square, and the W.E.B. Du Bois Centre. Each is easily accessible with a short Uber or taxi ride from most locations in and around Accra.

**DEF:** A ‘site’ for the purpose of this book is a place to visit that requires little time to experience it. Think of it as a photo opportunity. Go, take the picture, then go somewhere else.

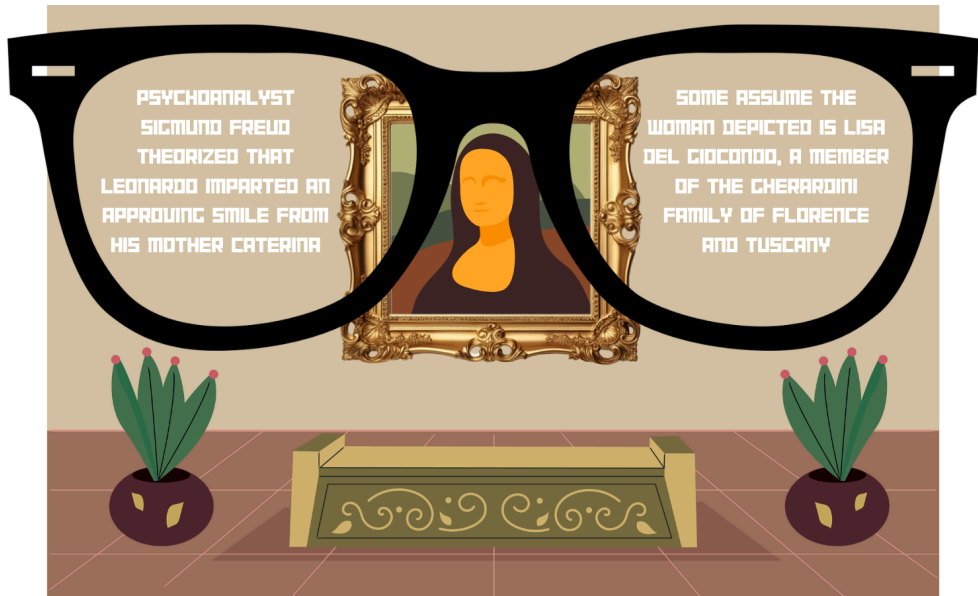
**DEF:** ‘Experiences’ are those things you may do that will take considerable time. Examples include museums, botanical gardens, food tours, and sporting events.

The following is a short list of Accra sites and experiences:

- Independence Arch & Black Star / Independence Square (site)
- Makola Market (experience)
- Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park + National Museum (experience)
- W.E.B. Du Bois Centre (experience)
- Accra Sports Stadium (site)
- Art Center (experience)
- The Flagstaff House (site)
- Osu Castle (experience)

There are certainly others, but the list is likely adequate for a part-time visitor. Most are easily accessible and can be visited in less than an hour each. For those that are reading this from Ghana, you may notice that the Jamestown Lighthouse is missing from the list. It is very close to major hotels yes, but it is the perfect example of a site that needs to be developed. I recommend that people avoid this area, unless they are going with an experienced tour guide. For more on this, visit [TripAdvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com) and read the reviews.

Another implication is the development of part-time tourist options in different cities throughout Ghana. While I provided a short list, there should be a consistent experience in terms of services; gift shops, bathrooms, WiFi, credit/debit cards accepted, etc. But that’s another chapter!



*Floating text using Augmented Reality (AR)*

## TASTE #3 - Museum AR & VR

In 2025 all sorts of businesses have begun adopting augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) as a way to enhance the guest experience. The equipment necessary for seeing hidden images or immersive content has also become more accessible, with technology going 'up' and prices coming 'down.'

### **Augmented Reality / AR**

In the 2020s you can't ignore the emergence of augmented reality as a way to enhance the experience in almost any physical location. When we think about the typical 'walk into a room with paintings' moment, that can be changed with a smart phone or AR-enabled pair of glasses. Think of looking at the Mona Lisa by itself in the museum. It is a wonderful moment because of the iconic nature of the piece.

But how much more interesting would it be if the painting came off the wall and you could see it in amazing up-close detail? Info about the artist could float in the air, as well as pictures of where the painting was made. You can also highlight lesser-known details about a piece, the artist, or the journey it took to get to the museum. With AR, you are no longer limited to a small description on a piece of foam board.

### **Virtual Reality / VR**

I separated AR and VR to make a point; they are not the same. As we think about virtual reality I would ask that you accept the premise that most of the time VR will

get you 70% of the actual experience. This is not the whole experience, but you can get “most” of what it is intended to accomplish. When I think of how people generally walk through museums, I would actually say that VR could get you up to 90% of the experience. I say that because the percentage is based on the ability of the technology to simulate what you would actually experience.

If the standard museum visit consists of standing and looking at a wall, that is almost the least challenging thing for VR to tackle. On the other hand, doing a trek through the Amazon might only equate to 30% of the experience if done through VR. Some things are certainly better in person. So if a museum “stand and look” experience is the most basic way to use VR, should that be the extent? **NO!**

I see two ways that museums can benefit from virtual reality.

1. Preview: Create a VR experience where people can ‘walk’ through the museum and see the art or artifacts. My only warning is that if you show everything you are reducing the possibility of them actually coming to the museum. Maybe show them 10% of the art in a stationary way, but everything else in passing.
2. Game: You can create a VR experience that is somewhat different than the real in-person experience. You can highlight some pieces, and add components that make it fun. If done well, it could lure people to come see the real thing.

### **5B - ACTIVITY: *Museum VR***

In this activity you’ll design a VR experience for a museum you know.

- Break the group up into teams of 2-3
- Identify a museum you all know, which each team will use
- Each team will answer the following:
  - What is the current experience walking through the museum?
  - What are five important pieces in the museum? (you can use your phone/laptop)
  - What are 2-3 pieces that could be experienced using VR?
  - If you were to create a VR experience, what would it be like? (please be very detailed)
- Each team presents their concept to the bigger group
- Discussion
  - Based on what was presented, would you be interested in a team’s VR experience?
  - Were there any elements that made it fun?
  - What would make it better?

- How can you make a museum visit even better using VR without giving away the whole museum?
- Are you more likely to visit the museum in person if a VR experience gave you “a taste”?
- What are challenges to developing VR?



*Welcome to Accra Cowboy!*

## TASTE #4 - Standards & Assumptions

Let's talk about the difference between perception and reality related to the visitor experience. On one end you have assumptions that are made about all sorts of people that may visit your community or country. This influences the way we communicate, prioritize aspects of a product/service, and impacts the value we assign to different elements. On the visitor end, they come in with certain expectations. These are "standards," things they come to expect based on how they live their life in other parts of the world. How we balance these standards and assumptions will make a huge difference in terms of their overall experience.

### **Perception vs. Reality**

More than once I've stepped into an Uber in Accra only to be met with a series of country music songs. I once asked the driver why they played that music, and they explained that they thought I would like it.

This is an illustration for how we look at designing experiences for visitors. Though we think that they may want something as part of their experience, assumptions are not always accurate. If we put on country music for guests because we think it's what they want, and they actually don't, we might negatively impact their stay with us. A better option would be to ask the guest what kind of music they enjoy, as this is a good way to engage someone that is new to your community.

## **The Media**

It's no surprise that we make assumptions about people we don't know. We make assumptions about our neighbors, our colleagues, our teachers, and certainly tourists. Depending on who we listen to, we may take their word for something that actually isn't real. Sometimes we listen to people we know, and sometimes we listen to people that "speak" to us through different platforms. I will call this "the media."

I will never forget my brief time at the University of Plymouth-Exmouth in Southwestern England while I was a graduate student at Clemson University. A bunch of us lived in a big house with graduate students from another university. They were K-12 education majors, and would visit various classrooms in this part of the U.K. In one of their first class visits a little boy came up to one of the graduate students and asked to see her gun. At first she thought it was a joke, but he was serious. He also didn't believe her when she said she didn't have one. The little boy assumed that all Americans packed a gun likely because of something he heard or saw on TV.

This example of stereotyping is important because people aren't always able to distinguish between what is reality, or just the opinion of a small group of people. We don't know where the little boy got this information. It could have been something a family member said, or something he saw on TV. The scary part is that he believed it. Some things are just stereotypes, others are exaggerations, but sometimes they are accurate.

Living in the U.S. for most of my life now, I am careful in terms of who I trust to give me information. I choose to avoid local news (too depressing), and I generally will skip over social media posts that appear to be angry or intentionally divisive. If I want to know about something I will ask my wife or do some research on what I consider "reputable" sites. I do my best to stay open-minded, which is hard to do but important so that I can continue to learn.

I share all this to say that it is easy to build or reinforce stereotypes depending on who or what you listen to. Tapping into a particular viewpoint generally will attract more supporting narrative rather than opposing viewpoints. If we are committed to creating a positive experience for visitors we must accept the premise that they are unique individuals who have a range of interests. If you want to deliver an amazing experience, do your homework and adjust your product/service based on truth instead of assumptions.

***If you want to know what they like, just ask!***



## Standards

One thing I've tried to do over the years is to help Ghanaian tourism colleagues craft a positive experience for visitors. Because of my upbringing, I have a pretty good understanding of what U.S., Canadian, and European visitors are expecting when they come to Ghana. While I certainly have limitations and cannot create a perfect experience for everyone from all countries, I do have a good idea of the standard they expect. I cover some of these things in another section, but I will reiterate a few key points here. They expect...

- **Access to the Internet** in the apartment or hotel room you rent them, or at the tourism site, store or restaurant
- **Ability to use credit cards** to purchase products and services
- **Access to water and air conditioning** where they are staying ("what do you mean use a bucket!?")
- **Multilingual signage** or people that can interpret into widely-spoken languages
- **Consistency of prices** so visitors don't feel they've been 'bait and switched'

These are just a few of the things that are standard for people coming from the U.S./Canada/Europe. You may react to this short list by saying "visitors should recognize that they are in a different country and accept the fact that things are different." To this I will respond that this would be contrary to the very nature of hospitality. I am not suggesting that we make hundreds of adjustments to make visitors comfortable, but rather that we recognize they will be looking for things that you may not think to provide.

Back to Ghana specifically, there is a complicated relationship with water. I have a whole section on this, but will use this as a simple example. Visitors will likely not react well to being told water is only sometimes available in the apartment they've rented; especially their first visit. This is incredibly hard to fathom when it is perfectly normal to flush drinkable water down the toilet. However, you can be proactive about the water situation by providing information about water management in the community. It's not about scaring visitors, but rather giving them actionable intel so that they are prepared.

To take a step away from Ghana, I want to emphasize that the visitor experience is not always what you think it actually is. You may think "they must love our traditional meals" when in fact the tourist is thinking "how much do I have to eat before they stop staring at me." If the goal is truly to create a pipeline of visitors over time, and to have people want to return over and over again, then we have to consider some small adjustments in the way we do business.

The key is to listen to those people that you are inviting into your culture. If you are in Peru and want people from Slovenia to have a good experience when they visit your country, it pays to learn a little bit about their standards. You can do this by simply asking. For example, if you are in Wales and want to attract more Nigerians it will benefit you to learn more about their standards by talking to those visiting from Lagos. Some hotels have improved this practice over time, reaching out to guests before they arrive with a simple questionnaire. Some do it through email, and others simply provide a link.

**Great example:** <https://archerhotel.com/austin/pre-arrival>

Again, I'm not suggesting that you need to change everything that you do for the target audiences you work with. However it will be a great benefit to your tour company to make small, important tweaks. For example there are certain cultures that don't eat certain things because of their religion. It would be a BIG mistake to put those things on the menu for the final meal.

## **6A - ACTIVITY:** *What We Eat*

This is intended to help participants recognize differences between people.

- Break the group into pairs
- Pairs will ask each other three questions:
  - What have you seen others eat that is strange to you?
  - What is something many others eat that you can't because of religious or dietary restrictions?
  - What is something you eat that is different from others?

- Bring the group back together and have each pair share
- Discussion
  - What was the most surprising thing you heard today?
  - Any “aha moments” where you realized why someone may not have eaten food on the menu?
  - How can you be proactive to make sure visitors have access to food they can eat?

For the academics using this activity, you can create the same discussion in an online class. In the groups area, create as many groups as half the class student number. In other words, if you have 24 students create 12 groups. Then create the groups at random or manually with two students in each. Then create a discussion for the group, and each pair will have their own discussion space to do this activity.

As I wrap this section about standards and assumptions, just remember that this is an ongoing discussion. New stereotypes pop-up every day, and old ones return when you least expect it. On the flip side we have to be cautious not to make too many adjustments based on the standards that visitors may expect because then they may not have an “authentic” experience. It’s a delicate balance.



## TASTE #5 - Churn

Let's take a closer look at the reasons why businesses lose customers. To do this in a way that you might remember, I will discuss different ways to look at churn both from a micro level and macro level.

### **Micro Churn**

Every day countless tourism businesses are interacting with customers, clients and guests. They are selling a variety of products and services. These are micro exchanges, as they are happening at the very lowest and most common levels. These are people buying ice cream, paying for park access, and staying at a hotel.

Consider this fictional micro level example:


*Matilda has been working at Bizarro Beanery for almost five years. She knows most if not all of the regulars and has witnessed the shift of the neighborhood from residential to slightly touristy because of its proximity to a popular music hall. With the added interest in people visiting the area, two other coffee shops have opened within a few blocks. In both instances they generally charge more than Bizarro, but they still seem to do very well. Matilda has noticed however, that business is noticeably slower where she works. Her tip jar is less full, and it's starting to make her rethink if working there is in her best interest. She shares her concerns with the owners, but they assure her "things are fine."*

There are a few observations that can be made about this scenario. In addition to Matilda's concerns as an important feedback loop, there are others that the owners could consider:

- *Other Employees* - Though their observations can be anecdotal, your team is the front line and "knows" a lot about your business.
- *Tip Jar* - Some businesses track what is given, but employees like Matilda likely know what they are taking home and can compare from week to week.
- *POS* - Depending on what system you are using, most POS systems can give you summaries of purchases over time. For example, if you sold 800 croissants last month, but only 700 this month.
- *Inventory* - There's usually one or two items that are integral to your operation, so looking at how much has been used will give you good info. For example, are you using more or less milk than last month?
- *Order History* - Similar to inventory, your vendors can give you a breakdown of orders (like coffee beans) over months or years. It's in their best interest to know this info, as they want to sell you more!
- *Electric Usage* - As a coffee shop with people likely working on laptops, a significant decrease in electric bills could suggest fewer people are coming through.

**DEF:** In case you missed it, POS stands for 'Point of Sale.' These are the systems used as 'registers' to process sales of products and services. Popular companies in the U.S. include Square, TouchBistro, Toast, Revel, and Clover.

Though she might not use the word churn, this is what Matilda believes she is witnessing. Whether or not the owners agree with her, there will be feedback loops in every business that will provide evidence that you are either gaining or losing customers. Just like any data, you have to have ways to gather it, be willing to evaluate it, and then do something about it. Let's take a closer look at churn.

$$\text{CHURN} = \frac{\text{Number of customers lost during period}}{\text{Total number of customers at start of period}} \times 100$$


Using the churn formula, assuming you keep good numbers from week to week or month to month, then you can establish the rate at which you are losing customers. For instance, you can take a snapshot of how many customers you had in February 2025, and then compare to the number of customers in previous months or years.

You may track numbers on a spreadsheet or by using your POS. It is good to do this year over year, as we know some months are naturally busier than others. Let's imagine the owners for *Bizarro Beanery* tracked their customers from year to year using data from the Toast POS system.

*Example for Feb. 2025:*

- 1552 customers in January 2025
- 1352 customers in February 2025
- $1552 - 1352 = 200$
- $200 / 1552 = 0.129 \times 100 = 12.9\%$  churn

Now let's compare that percentage to previous months.

October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025
3.5%	4.2%	3.3%	7.8%	12.9%

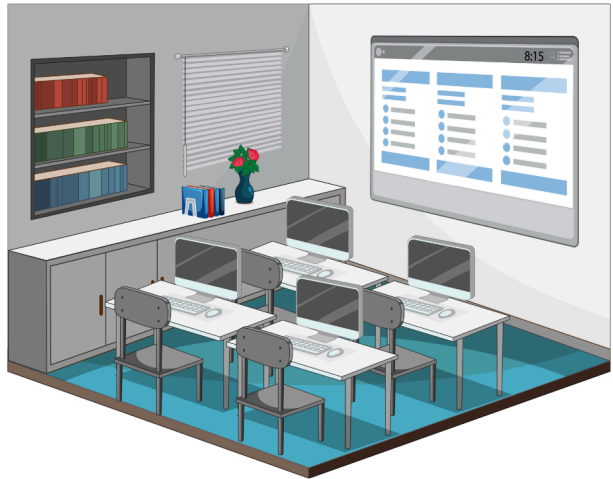
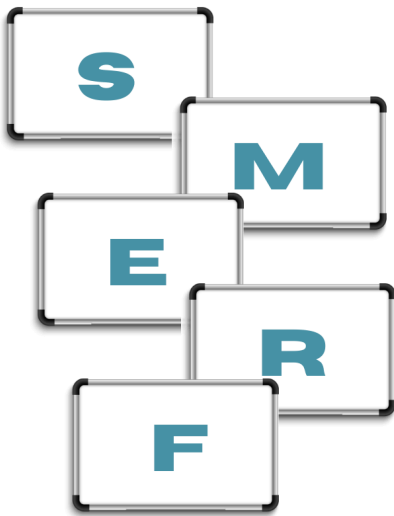
After looking at previous months an owner might say "we know that our customers tend to travel in February so we expect a drop in numbers." But what if they compared that number to previous years...

February 2021	February 2022	February 2023	February 2024	February 2025
4.7%	6.6%	8.2%	10.6%	12.9%

Remember that churn is calculated from the month before, so even though the pandemic was still a factor in February 2021 you should still be retaining customers from January 2021. Over years you can observe that churn is increasing. You can do the same analysis 12 months out of the year.

At a micro level your goal should be to have good retention, to keep as many of your customers from month to month. The standard for churn and retention will be in a certain range depending on the kind of business you have. In other words, a coffee shop should not compare their retention to a surf school (apples to oranges).

**PRO TIP:** It is far easier (and cheaper) to keep a customer than to gain a new one.



## TASTE #6 - Call Centers

So now that we have discussed SMERF organizations and who they are, let's talk about how to find them and attract them to your country or community. This is where I introduce the PMCC, or purely mobile call center.

The typical call center is often depicted as a room full of people (telemarketers) with computers and phones. Each person spends eight or more hours calling numbers that come up on their screen, and they have a script that they read to each person who answers. They are trying to sell a product or service, and this illustration is perpetuated through countless movies and TV shows.

While this type of call center still exists globally, I see the PMCC model to be more appropriate for DCEN (developing country / emerging nation) operations. While space isn't hard to find, electricity is expensive as is data. Why have a room of computers if everything can be done by call center operators through their phones?

So in terms of the operation, you can take each category; S - M - E - R - F and break that down into all sorts of subgroups. Logistically, that means you can create teams that focus on smaller target markets. I'll use one of the most obvious examples; colleges and universities. Consider the following example:

*You assemble a team of ten Belizeans who share the responsibility of contacting colleges and universities throughout the U.S. and Canada. There are thousands of institutions, and they are at different levels. Most will have at least three offices that could be contacted with the idea of bringing students to Belize; a) the study abroad*

*office; b) the office of multicultural affairs; and c) the office of student activities (which may include fraternity & sorority life). Each office has a different responsibility for creating unique experiences for students.*

*The team of ten Belizeans could work their way through all of the organizations. Led by Deborah, she works with David, Daniel, and Patrick to send emails, follow on social media, and even send a postcard by mail. Some institutions may also have departments with a focus on South American culture, which would allow for more of an academic partnership. Marlowe gets a postcard and is thrilled. Clem gets an email and he's interested. Joe, Christine, David, Maureen, Jeff, Rick and others from NENA are curious... and Rob Mackay from QEDC wants to collaborate!*

As a reminder, I am not writing this book to simply identify challenges in developing countries or emerging nations. I'm also not necessarily interested in starting the businesses I suggest. I am describing opportunities with as much detail as possible so that you can create solutions in your country or community.

### **Ghana Spotlight**

How you might organize teams to market Ghana depends on the group that takes this on. Ideally there would be a centralized operation through the GTA, but the alternative is for a private entity to initiate this. I must be clear that this is not a quick process. U.S. colleges and universities, for instance, are generally afraid of risk. That's why they would rather pay someone locally to coordinate something 10,000 kilometers away.

### **Target Small - PMCC in Action**

Given all of the potential target markets, I would encourage those thinking about starting a call center to "target small." This means that you should not try not to market your services to everyone. That is like trying to "boil the sea." It is better to focus on a specific target market, then grow from there. I have used colleges and universities as an example because that is the easiest one for people to think about. But I promise you, for most countries and communities it is a saturated market. You could dominate an ignored market instead!

Let me further explain what this could look like in a PMCC. It organizes operators using the following:

- Smart phone
- Facebook account
- Instagram account
- Twitter/X account
- LinkedIn account
- WhatsApp account
- Gmail account
- Simple Website\*

\*The website is the only thing that should be created using a computer/laptop.

*Social Media:* An array of social media accounts are needed to find and communicate with different groups. Every college and university has countless entities that use social media in a variety of ways. Finding “leads” to reach people in one university generally comes down to looking everywhere you can. I would encourage call center operators to create professional profiles that they keep professional. Post and follow people and organizations from your professional account, and keep your personal accounts for friends and family.

**PRO TIP:** It is a good idea to keep your religious or political views off of professional profiles if you want to be approachable by anyone.

*LinkedIn:* This is necessary from a professional presence perspective. The entity that takes on the creation of a call center needs to look professional. You also need to be professional, but that is a subject for another chapter. Looking professional on LinkedIn means having a sharp logo, professional sounding name, clear description, and staff that people can get to know. Individuals working in the PMCC should all have professional photos, titles, and clear information (no spelling errors!). This establishes trust.

*WhatsApp:* This is a great tool for creating groups. While it is not a platform that is used everywhere in the world, it is growing every day and dominant in DCEN. You can create groups for discussing travel plans with a potential client, organize service providers (drivers, tour guides), or keep your team up to date about new or existing clients. I know that most Africans and South Americans already use WhatsApp, but not everyone reading this is familiar. As a note, please resist the temptation to add people to a group without their consent. There are rules against this.

**PRO TIP:** Spelling is important, and a signal that communicates professionalism. While it may seem like a minor issue, everything you do can have an impact on your business. I have seen invoices for Ghana trips with many spelling errors, including UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Attention to detail is key.

*Simple Website:* It is important to have a simple website that serves as a hub for information that you may be sharing with potential leads. While a LinkedIn account is enough for most people, a website still carries more credibility. The logos and pictures should match what is on social media, LinkedIn, and your website. You can use sites like Squarespace, Weebly, Wix and Strikingly to create a professional-looking web page. For years I have recommended Strikingly, a website platform that I use to manage all of my websites. There is a free site option by using a sub-domain, and a reasonable cost for your own domain. Using a website builder like

this removes a lot of frustration from website management. They have great templates, membership add-ons, and pretty good customer service.

*Gmail*: Having a Gmail account is important because of the tools that come with it. You can create Google Docs and Google Sheets to organize how each team communicates with potential clients.

**Danger**: While I could skip over this part, it must be said. West Africa has a poor reputation when it comes to fraud. So creating an authentic and transparent presence online is crucial to getting organizations to believe you can deliver what you claim you can. They are not going to commit thousands of dollars for trips with someone they don't trust.

### **8G - ACTIVITY: SMERF Country**

- Break the group into teams of 2-3
- Assign each team a country that is not their own. It should be a country that does not currently send a lot of travelers to your country/community.
- Each team is tasked with developing a call center (PMCC) plan focused on attracting SMERF from that country.
- The team will be the 'starter' call center. As such, they want to create the blueprint and protocols for reaching out to the target audience.
- Each team will answer the following:
  - What is the country your team will focus on?
  - What are five reasons why the chosen country may not send people to your country/community?
  - What are ten reasons why the chosen country should visit your community? These are talking points that you will promote through different channels (e.g. social media), but also directly.
  - What are ten SMERF sub-categories in the chosen country that your call center will target? (e.g. archaeological professors)
  - What are ten things in your community that should be marketed to the identified sub-categories?
  - What are five strategies your team can use to reach specific organizations/entities within the identified sub-categories?
- Share your plan with the bigger group
- Discussion
  - What was the hardest part of this activity?
  - What did you discover about your chosen country that was a surprise?
  - Was there a strategy that worked with all SMERF sub-categories?
  - What do you see as the challenges to initiating this plan?



## TASTE #7 - Once in a Lifetime?

Having lived fifty years on this fine earth, I have lost count of the times people have referred to something as a “once in a lifetime experience.” When I began traveling to Ghana in 2016, the times I heard this increased dramatically, as people back home would often describe the opportunity to visit Africa as something they would only be able to experience a single time—if they were that lucky.

This section is dedicated to correcting this notion, which is an extension of what I have done for years related to travel in general. In the summer of 2024 I presented *Becoming a World Traveler for Under \$500* for Rochester City School District’s *Acceleration University*. Similar to a program I did for Travel Unity’s partner high schools, the idea was to help young people realize that travel was not out of reach. We should be promoting Africa as not just possible, but reasonably accessible.

Whether it be Africa, Europe or Asia, I believe countries do themselves a disservice when they reinforce the idea that people will only have one opportunity to visit. Why promote this kind of thinking when you could plant seeds for them to come back?

### **Ghana Spotlight**

Today there are a certain number of restaurants, bars, lounges, hotels, guest houses, and other elements that provide options for visitors in Ghana. It is an adequate amount of businesses based on the number of people that come to the country each year. Part of the equation is based on an assumption that most people will only come once. In a way, the numbers are a self-fulfilling prophecy.

With “once in a lifetime” as a common theme, I believe Ghana is only scratching the surface of how many visitors could come to the country each year. While many Ghanaians are satisfied and only focused on the steady stream of people that seem to arrive daily, I would argue that this is a mistake. To be content with the current numbers means the GDP will likely not change. I’m not sure what the Ghana economy will look like after 2025 when this book is published, but I have seen the cedi struggle over the last eight years.

### ***Africa should not be a once in a lifetime experience!***

I believe Ghana is the most beautiful place in the world, with the most beautiful people. Why should people only visit once? Ghana is leaving money on the table by not working hard (or sometimes at all) to get people to come back.

You may have heard of this expression “don’t leave money on the table.” This is the notion that in certain situations when there is an exchange of funds for products and services, that sometimes those “selling” walk away with a lot less than they could have. This describes many Ghanaians in that they are focused on the money that they can make today instead of the revenue that could be generated over time. The cause and effect however is more complicated.

I am convinced that the need to make money now has a negative impact on the country, but I also recognize that the rationale is sometimes justified. A colleague recently put it perfectly; that many Ghanaians live “hand to mouth.” Even if they know that they could make more money later, they cannot wait to make more as they need to feed themselves and perhaps their families today. So they squeeze.

Sadly the “don’t leave money on the table” mantra can sometimes be mis-used by those that aren’t struggling. Tour operators will squeeze cedis out of visitors because they don’t think they’ll see them again. The danger is that sometimes when we squeeze, it is enough for people to decide “I’m not coming back after that.”

Thankfully some colleagues are very good at developing relationships, avoid the squeeze, and people are excited to return. An example is my friend Moe Cheetham of Africa Roots Travel. He curates experiences for a spectrum of clients, largely from the U.S. He delivers a top-level experience which does Ghana a great service. These visitors have a greater chance of coming back, which is what we want!

**Thank you for reading!**

*Damien@ProfDuchamp.com*  
*WhatsApp +19146216522*  
*@ProfDuchamp*

# **TOURISM IS GOLD: The Path to Ghana**

A Curated Guide for Tourism Entrepreneurship in  
Ghana and Other Amazing Countries

by

Damien L. Duchamp

---

*Dr. Duchamp has taught hospitality & tourism management since 2010 and serves as the Executive Director for Hospitalented.org. He is committed to global hospitality education for those that otherwise would not have access.*

---

**Book Orders & TIG Resources**

[www.tourismisgold.com](http://www.tourismisgold.com)

**Speaking & Media Inquiries**

[www.profduchamp.com](http://www.profduchamp.com)

**Hospitality & Tourism Education**

[www.hospitalented.org](http://www.hospitalented.org)



DR. DAMIEN L. DUCHAMP

# TOURISM IS GOLD

The Path to Ghana

A CURATED GUIDE FOR TOURISM  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN GHANA  
AND OTHER AMAZING COUNTRIES