



REGIONSAMARBEIDET
Buskerud Telemark Vestfold



BTV: Morgedal

A Series of Cultural Tourism Projects in Norway



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1 PROLOGUE

Information about Glasgow Caledonian University – The Heyerdahl Institute Multi-purpose project & Buskerud-, Telemark- and Vestfold Project from 2004-2008.

Since 2002 Glasgow Caledonian University has had a formal collaborative agreement with The Heyerdahl Institute to work together on a variety of projects. The University is one of Scotland's largest with its 15 000 students and has people from 70 countries studying in its eight schools. It can offer a wide range of services across all these areas (www.caledonian.ac.uk)

The Heyerdahl Institute is a new international organisation, located in Thor Heyerdahl's home town of Larvik. According to the articles of association, it has three main objectives. It aims; to promote and continue the research and development ideas of Thor Heyerdahl; it would like to pave the way for international social dialogue through international conferences: and it hopes to increase the visibility and importance of Norway's international role. The institute was founded by Vestfold County Council in the year 2000(www.heyerdahl-institute.no).

The cooperation the two organizations has led to a number of activities taking place, including:

- The creation of a new MSc Cultural Heritage Studies with a strong multi-disciplinary emphasis. The degree is based on the study of cultural heritage, management theory, collaboration between public and private bodies and sustainable resource management.
- Grants provided by Telemark and Vestfold County Council for Norwegian students to study this Masters degree.
- Formalisation of a Europeans Union Erasmus exchange between Glasgow Caledonian University and Telemark University College.
Negotiation of an EU-contract between Glasgow Caledonian University and Buskerud University College.
- Personal and student exchange trips: Scotland to Norway and Norway to Scotland.
- Fact-finding trips by NHO-Vestfold, Innovation Norway and Vestfold County Council.

In 2004 The Heyerdahl Institute and the Glasgow Caledonian University was successful in gaining funding for the Buskerud-, Telemark- and Vestfold (BTV-project) to build on the success already achieved by working on the three main objectives:

- **To promote the building of international alliances in the Buskerud, Telemark and Vestfold region.**
- **To develop international educational co-operation across county borders**
- **To direct attention towards bridging the gap between business and research**

There has been made good progress in the majority of the planned activities from 2004-2006 and both Glasgow Caledonian and the Heyerdahl Institute are very happy with everything that has been achieved.

2007-2008

For the last period of the project , 2007-2008 the organisations will be working together with the regional network for projects in Buskerud-, Telemark and Vestfold with a focus on cultural monuments and added value.

As a result of the Institute's relationship with Glasgow Caledonian University we are proud to include the Moffat Centre, as a part of wider Glasgow Caledonian University, in this pilot project. The Moffat Centre has worked in over 30 countries on more than 350 tourism projects. In this project period we will provide the Buskerud-, Telemark and Vestfold network with the following :

1. **Initial Workshop in Stavern, Norway 23-24 January** (organised by Vestfold County council with workshop and lectures led by the Moffat Centre/GCU and the Heyerdahl Institute)
2. **Learning journey to Scotland 16-19 April** (led by the Moffat Centre/GCU and the Heyerdahl Institute)
3. **Work shop in Norway**, developing and identifying future strategies for the BTV-projects for 5-10 years (**Autumn 2007**) (led by Vestfold County council, The Moffat Centre/GCU and the Heyerdahl Institute)

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2 MORGEDAL PROJECT



Morgedal is located in Telemark and is a destination of worldwide significance for Skiing as a sport and participatory leisure activity. It is the birthplace of Sondre Norheim and it is strongly associated with his ski design, and skiing technique particularly the Telemark turn. However the village fails to attract significant visitation and it is only of late that the visitor potential has been identified and work is being done on development.



This report is intended to aid and assist the work of the development company which has been operational for approximately 6 months. It currently has limited resources and two part-time employees. However within a short space of time some valuable training initiatives, events and the essence of a guided tour has been established. A number of further potential revenue generation suggestions are offered as an element of this report.

There has been some good introductory work undertaken on destination development and the proposed ski jumps and runs are appropriate and if marketed effectively have huge potential.

3 PRIORITIES

To increase visitation, extend dwell time and encourage greater spend on site.

To build the reputation and increase awareness of Morgedal.



4 UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY: BUILDING THE MORGEDAL EXPERIENCE

Fundamentally, in the context of this important attraction we must build a marketing approach from the consumer's perspective which maybe understood as a **customer journey**.

The consumer's perception of the organization is enhanced or undermined at various contact points with the Morgedal.

Fundamentally, this attraction must understand that visitation is all about an experience for the consumer. This must be evident from:

- **Website**
- **Brochure**
- **Advert**

The crucial next stage is the actual contact with the attraction. Namely, the **entrance walk, arrival, contact with staff, the attraction itself and the secondary services such as food offered etc.**

Concentration on improving these elements will differentiate Morgedal from its competitors.

Every element of the experience has to be emphasized in each stage of the customer journey. From website to exit the experience has to put the consumer at the centre.

Currently you happen upon the nature of the offer, awareness of the destination is low and the magic of the experience is enjoyed by very few. The current interpretation is both special and unique and merits much stronger experiential marketing.

4.1. Website

The web must convey and better market the nature of the experience. It is key **information and marketing** tool that merits development. The front page must feature the unique selling proposition of Morgedal;

- The walk to the home of Norheim
- The breath taking views
- The guided experience
- The history,
- The heritage buildings
- The wonderful film set like experiences of the various rooms.

The website should **major on these elements** of the offer and should thus be clearly differentiated from a traditional heritage offers. It should provide a clear map and driving directions with numbered roads. Drive times to the nearest hour should also be included.

4.2. Some Basic Web Tips

Detailed below are a number of key operating tips for web and e-mail marketing which may be of value:

- Keep written passages short and absolutely no more than a 60 second read
- Do not use 'we' in the web site or in any e-newsletter
- Allow the site to fast load without images
- Ensure the destination name and the offers are in the subject line of any e-newsletters
- Always use visual images as a superior alternative to text.

The other key electronic marketing aid will be e-newsletters which should be mailed to **all email addresses** that should be collected. This is a most valuable marketing resource. These individuals have visited or made contact with Morgedal in the past and are thus well disposed to return or talk to a friend about this place.

The crucial data on the web are things like opening times and costs. A good idea is to introduce a **10% discount voucher** on the web which can be printed off and returned to the counter on admission. This at least will allow the managers to measure the significance of the web as an orientation and selling tool. These **deals and special savers** must be prominent on the front page (preferably top right) to gain attention.

The generic website should also be high on Google search optimisation. The aim here is to increase referrals. This can also be achieved via Google paid adverts (these will be found on the right hand side of the search title page). These are the 'click through' adverts which are only paid if the user clicks on the title. The other way of increasing search engine optimisation is increasing the number of references to Morgedal in www.tripadvisor.com This is an increasingly influential peer review site that allows consumers to place reviews, discuss and recommend accommodation, attractions and activities throughout the world.

Referencing an attraction will increase citation index in the search engine and will help with search engine optimisation (listing in the search engine).

The **front page** should also feature key events links to a page detailing when and where events will take place. For example the '**Morgedal at Christmas**' or the sporting events already piloted have potential to grow the business and catalyse increased sales during the traditional low season.

An e-blast / e-newsletter campaign is recommended to the Bed and Breakfast and Farm house accommodation organizations, hotel sector, coach tour operators and guided groups within 2 hours drive time. Here again an introductory discount to be offered to residents of self catering cottages or bed and breakfasts is recommended.

The website and the brochure are at the heart of the experience and should feature blogs and appreciative comments of those group and individuals that have seen and enjoyed the experience.

4.3. Brochure

The brochure must be of a distinctive style that emphasises the sport and unique nature of the experience. In this case it should be built around sensual marketing since that is what the experience comprises. The key prompts for the brochure should be:

- Visit
- View
- Feel
- Taste
- Smell

The brochure must also feature the website address, opening hours, and an attractive excerpt on what food is served with coffee etc In addition a clear and accurate map is required. This must represent where Morgedal can be found in respect of airports, ports and the capital. Then a more detailed map must feature the location of the attraction. Drive times and actual route titles are vitally important (as is the case with the website).

Finally the brochure should feature a discount deal (say 10% of admission for one adult). This stimulates brochure retention and gives this relatively remote destination a chance to appeal over the opposition.

Note to Admission Pricing:

The concern that management may feel with the emphasis on discount can be simply reduced by increasing prices by 10% for 2008 and in reality with the 10% discount we are simply ensuring appeal and retaining admission charges at 2007 levels.

4.4. Entry Signage

The **experience of commencing** the tour at the moment is somewhat low key. There is a clear need to highlight the start point via signage and symbolic indicators as one drives in and enters the settlement.

The **car park and the statue** must also build anticipation. This is a key element of the visitor journey and signs, props and details can help significantly in ensuring nobody decides to reverse the decision to enter and experience and what the tour has to offer. Every effort has to be made for this to become more interesting and inviting.

The key here is the appearance and attitude of the Guide staff. It is vital that every member of staff is immersed in the experience and plays a character part. Accordingly, it is suggested that guides appear in period costume in order to build the experience. The major problem this experience faces is that it has no obvious start point or signifier. Guides meet customers in the street or in a museum and there is limited chance to build expectation and begin to create an experience. In other walking tours elsewhere in the world this is how the experience begins and is heightened.

4.5. The Sale of Tickets

This is a crucial element of the experience and it would be appropriate if ticketing was available on line. On line ticketing will trigger positive cash flows and no show after purchase is between 10-15% (a major consideration for larger attraction operations).

The tour will need some form of paper / souvenir and an orientation guide in the style of an old newspaper trumpeting the success of Nordheim may be of appropriate.

4.6. The Proposed Food Offer

The **food offer** currently envisaged is appropriate and its use of local traditional recipes and foodstuffs builds the experience. It simply has to be linked to the heritage experience and up-sold on the website and brochure offer.

The climb and house can be a cold experience and hot soup maybe a useful addition.

4.7. Orientation and the Nature of the experience

This is perhaps the **strongest part of the existing experience**. The recommendations here are all about marketing and getting wider awareness of the experience. The web site is vital here in communicating atmosphere, destination and brand.

The experience is also the platform for relatively simple alteration and development of the experience that can emphasise sporting events, Christmas etc. The development of events offers a real chance to build the appeal of the destination outside of traditional opening times. Dual offers such as sporting event and Morgedal Experience would be an attractive combination.

Other key event sources of income are related to **Private Hire or Exclusive Use** for tours. The key here is inclusive pricing which appears to offer a deal. Marketing the product to companies for away days and specific events again offers a range of potential sales options. The pricing formula will be critical and the event sale should propose alternative scenarios with and without activities, team building etc.

Once again emphasis has to be placed on the Morgedal Experience and when visitors enter this unique location service, orientation and friendliness should be second to none.

Marketing must commence this winter in earnest. All associations, trade unions, work organizations, ladies guilds etc will have to be contacted with information as well as tour groups, accommodation providers, activity offers etc. A drive time minimum of 2 hours should be targeted.

4.8. Exiting the Morgedal Experience

In returning to the analysis of the customer journey the end of the visit must be as pleasurable and theatrical as the beginning. As visitors return to car park at the end of the experience this is the key time to give them a positive conclusion and a reason to return. The Guide in appropriate costume is crucial to this element.

Critical in building the customer data base will be data capture on exit. This will be best achieved with an incentive. The aim being to get customers to leave their email addresses. The incentive being the potential to win a ski souvenir in a prize draw.

Existing customers have the greatest potential to become repeat users and ambassadors for the experience. The relationship has to be built via an e-newsletter / e-brochure with discounted offers to return.

Beyond this regular communication every 3 months, prior to key events is recommended.

4.9. Other proposed Marketing Activities

It is my considered belief the Morgedal experience is unique and appealing attraction that does have real potential to grow customers if marketing is increased.

Further marketing efforts should be focused on:

- On board marketing for in-bound cruise ships and at departure ports (via brochure and poster display)
- Marketing aimed at bed and breakfast and self catering operators (via brochure distribution, electronic links and customer discounts)

Marketing through all local hotels and accommodation providers that allows the operator to pass on to guests to trigger local usage.

5 BENCHMARKING & BEST PRACTICE ANALYSIS

Crucial to the promotion of this destination is the web site and the optimisation of the key meta tabs:



- Telemark
- Telemark Skiing Technique
- Morgedal
- Home of Skiing
- Father of Skiing
- Sondre Norheim
- Norway Ski History
- International Renown

The site is a vital element in raising profile but should also be interactive allowing guests to book guided tours on line in advance and to purchase merchandise. Key offers will include:

- Limited selection of Ski items
- Norwegian Confectionery
- Base ball Caps with logos
- Shoulder Bags with Logos
- Back Packs with Logos
- Christmas Decorations

- T-Shirts (contemporary design)
- Ski souvenirs(wall mounted skis)
- Ski Wax (from Morgedal if possible)



New York Yankees



Manhattan Museum Branding: Met, MOMA, Statue of Liberty

Please check merchandise listing on New York Yankees

<http://shop.mlb.com/shop/index.jsp?categoryId=1452360>, Met Museum.of Art, MOMA New York, US Sporting Hall of Fame <http://www.halloffamemorabilia.com/index.php> for other ideas and suggestions

6 TELEMARK/MORGEDAL BRAND VALUE

The potential of the Telemark logo, the name and similarly the Morgedal names is enormous and registration of any brands, icons or designs is both appropriate and recommended. The baby in the wooden crib with skis is particularly vulnerable and care should be exercised with development of this particularly attractive.

The other key for Morgedal is data capture. Those persons that currently visit the site or are attracted to the website are enthusiasts. Accordingly, both the website and the site itself should be oriented to capture visitor web addresses. This will provide the most effective method of building a data base of potential consumers who may be interested in the programmes of events, retail offers and tours. Effective network marketing and web based sales will be the most economical way of building a customer and potential donor base.

7 UNDERSTANDING DYNAMIC DEMAND

In terms of effectively marketing the destination consideration will have to be given to dynamic packaging. This allows consumers to basically construct their own itinerary and choose key elements of the destination/ experience that is required. Examples of cultural itineraries can be found on http://www.toescapeto.com/PDF/ClientFeedback/Mauritius_Le_Telfair.pdf

This is central to tour operation at the moment and is effectively developing packages (guided walks, museum visits, food, and overnight accommodation) where in consumers feel they have choice but are actually purchasing prepared package elements.

8 FOCUSING EFFECTIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

It is vital that the new web site includes a peer review element where the comments of users, visitors and interested parties can be logged. This is the most read element of many travel or tourism sites and its influence in destination choice is considerable. The website www.tripadvisor.com is now a key influence on destination choice. The site manager must of course exercise an editorial function on this however the value of posting honest and meaningful reviews will offer significant returns to the site.

The other aim of management should be to interest new channels and production companies in the site development plans and skiing lessons and extreme sports packages envisaged. This type of TV based PR could be the most effective marketing and promotion that can be undertaken and the human interest and national appeal of such a production should not be underestimated.

9 GUIDES AND NARRATIVE ORIENTATION

The idea of advancing and extending the product with guides is absolutely appropriate. The use of authentic local residents following a pre-determined script and orientation to the site is highly appropriate. The theatricality of the experience could of course be further enhanced with costumes, seasonal variants to the tour and evening or special events.

10 SPONSORSHIP & DONATION



Morgedal is renowned in the international ski market as the birthplace of Sondre Norheim, the pioneer of skiing and as the location of the Olympic Fire Lighting ceremony at the Winter Olympics in 1952, 1960 and 1994. This fame is the key to developing a strategy to source donations and other sources of funding. Links to the Japanese and US markets are particularly important and special attention to building data bases will be key here. A 'Campaign to Remember' should commence to build funds for the local economy and local initiatives. This can also target former visitors and potential donors to make a range of donations. For larger donors some form of recognition, listing of donors etc should be made. Good examples are named stone plaques etc.

The other suggestion is to consider twinning of the Morgedal site with other (semi-analogous) ski resort destinations in order to build knowledge of the destination and its importance in Ski history.

11 CONCLUSION

Morgedal has much to offer and huge potential to grow through marketing and development. The potential is built on the sound foundations of the heritage and a great narrative.