

Professor Beverley Sparks – Customer Experience and Engaging with the Tourism Industry

ON-SCREEN TITLE: Professor Beverley Sparks, GIFT

Beverley Sparks: In the tourism research or event research, customer experience is very important because every customer is unique and the way they experience something will of course vary. Traditionally we've used surveys in this sort of research but at our institute we're trying different methods and today we want to talk about photo elicitation.

Wei Liu: Photo elicitation is a visual technique involving people's emotions, behaviours and thoughts.

Beverley Sparks: The beauty of photo elicitation is that people can use their smart phones. Nearly everybody has a smart phone today, which means that they are able to take photos out in the field. It's absolutely perfect for capturing the experiences that people have when they are attending an event.

ON-SCREEN TITLE: Wei Liu, Research Assistant, GIFT

Wei Liu: Mr Mike Winlaw the CEO of Surfers Paradise Alliance came up to me and discussed my research.

Beverley Sparks: I'm here today with one of the participants from the Sand Safari Surfers Paradise event and I would just like to welcome you Julene.

ON-SCREEN TITLE: Julene, research participant

Julene: It was a great day as you see the was blue skies, so it's always nice to go visit Surfers Paradise on a nice day and I think it was just a great opportunity for families and young children to go in and enjoy the sand sculptures and I really like that there was a tent there that the kids could go in and do their own sculpting of the sand.

ON-SCREEN TITLE: Alexandra Coghlan, Department of Tourism, Sport and Hospitality Management

Alexandra Coghlan: So one of the really interesting results that we found from the study was just how people connected really well between the foreshore and the beach, because of the Sand Safari Art Festival. People were watching the sculptures and were getting really inspired to come back down and rediscover the beach and start playing around with sand on the beach. So a lot of people were taking photos of this area as well as the sculptures along the foreshore.

ON SCREEN TITLE: Mike Winlaw CEO, Surfers Paradise Alliance

Mike Winlaw: Based on the feedback we reshaped our thinking so that our Art Festival will actually be inspired by sand and sea and in future all the artistic elements of the event will

have interactive components that will actually engage the broader community from very young people through to people of all ages who connect with the art.

ON SCREEN TITLE: Christophe Broadway Event Director, Surfers Paradise Alliance

Christophe Broadway: The great thing about the research is that it pointed out the need for greater engagement in fact there is almost a point where there is a crying out for more engagement. So this year we have been very careful to make sure it's not just exhibits or display but there is some kind of interaction, some connection with the audience.

ON SCREEN TITLE: Phillip Bradstreet Marketing Manager, Surfers Paradise Alliance

Phillip Bradstreet: I think the key finding that we had with the marketing department was the increased communication by utilising the photographic contest, so much so that we have used that in other events throughout the year.

The point of innovations taken from the research that we learnt from Griffith University was the take a selfie promotion and we have increased the portfolio of the take a selfie campaigns throughout each of our tier one events.

Alexandra Coghlan: Understanding consumer experiences in a way that is fun for participants gives us a deeper understanding of the meaning of those experiences and delivers industry relevant results is what consumer behaviour research here at Griffith is all about.