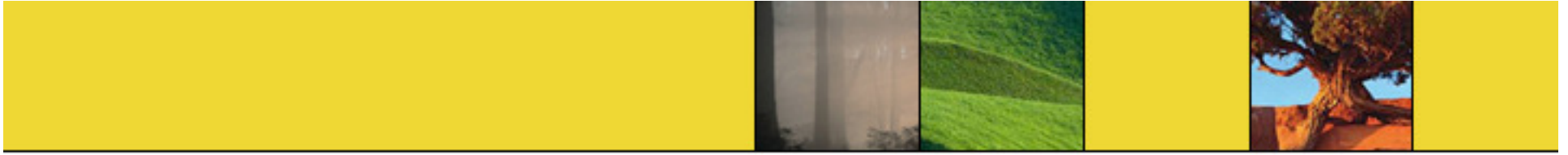




GEOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT: **Visitor management & target market development**

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Overview

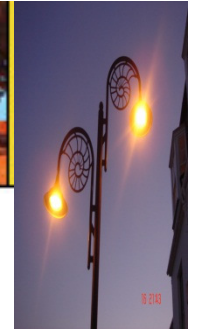
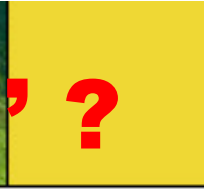
- The growth of geotourism across all levels
- My personal journey of geotourism – UK and South Australia
- Supply side of geotourism products and destinations
- Visitor management in “Jurassic Coast”
- Demand side of geotourist markets & marketing
- Potential and challenges of geotourism

Geotourism destinations

- Some destinations are naturally more geological than others.
- The Film; “Japanese Story” –filmed in the Pilbara region of Western Australia
- Any examples? (Australia; USA; Canada; U.K; China; Africa)
- Australia – Uluru/Ayers Rock; GBR
Naracoorte Caves in SA & Riversleigh in Queensland
(World Heritage Site in 1994)
Flinders Ranges National Park
- In the United States - the Grand Canyon;
- Canada - Rocky Mountains; Niagara Falls
- Europe - Geopark Network
- In the U.K – Scotland
- Jurassic Coast – Dorset and East Devon
(England’s first natural World Heritage Site in 2001)
- Korea – cave-oriented destinations without recognition of the geological value as a new niche product --> Jurassic dinosaur museum and visitor centres



What is 'geotourism' ?



- Growing interest in geotourism around the world
- Geotourism is a new term, as tourism based on geological features (Joyce, 2006; Dowling & Newsome, 2006)
- There is no universally accepted definition of geotourism

Question 1:

- The definition of Geological tourism or Geographical tourism ?

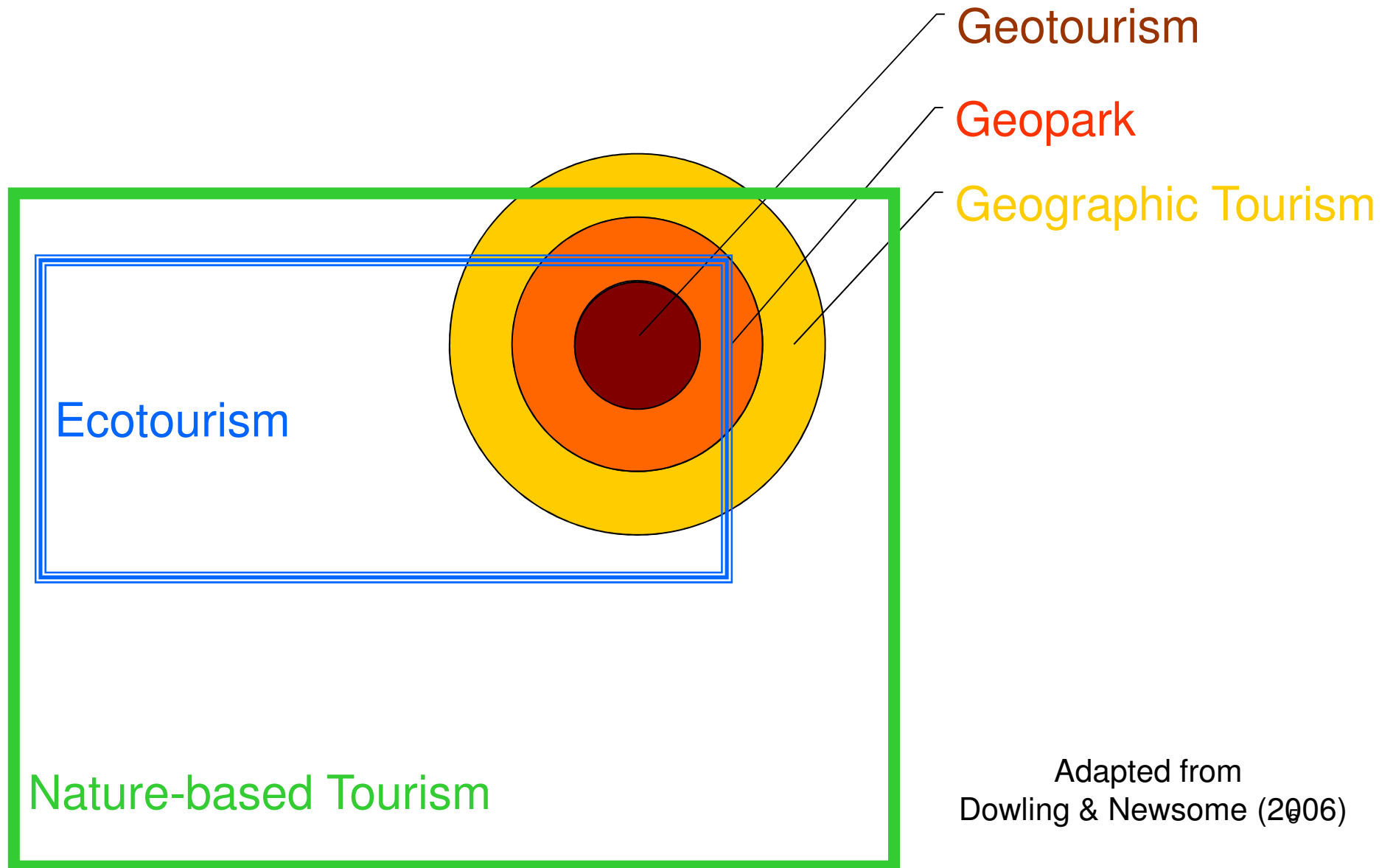
(National Geographic Society)

- “*Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents.*”
- Geotourism highlights the relationship between tourism and “sense of place.”

Question 2:

“What is the difference between geotourism and ecotourism, or nature-based tourism ?”

Scope of Geotourism



Adapted from
Dowling & Newsome (2006)



TOURISM IMPACTS & SUSTAINABILITY



- Geotourism as a tool for geoconservation and sustainable tourism development
- **Positive impacts of geotourism** – new economic benefits, visitor experience, diversified products, new markets, etc.
- **Negative impacts of geotourism**
(e.g. hammering, digging, and collecting fossils, erosion of rocks or landforms, the removal of specimens)

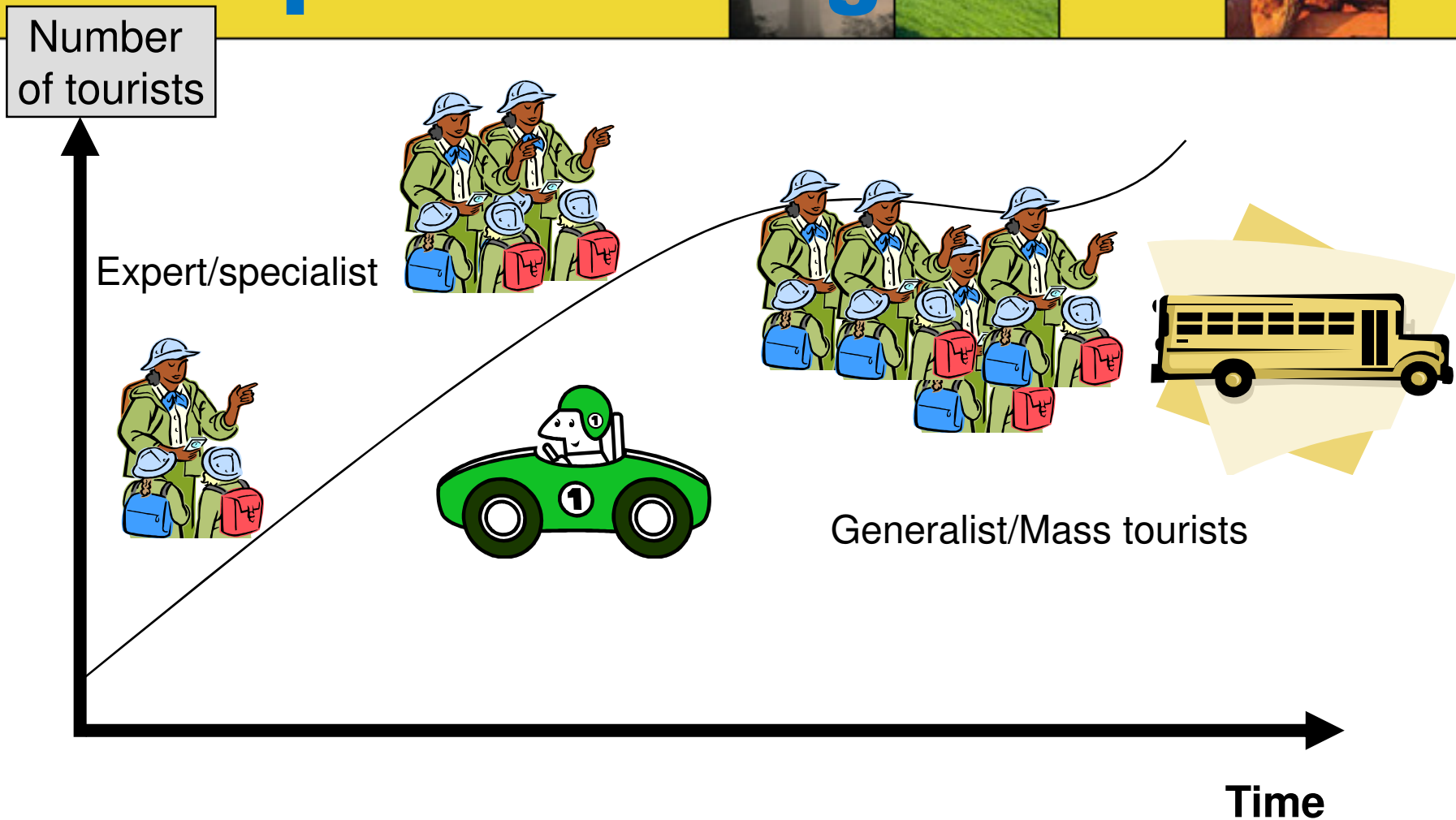


• **How to achieve twin goals of sustainable tourism development?**



Need for target marketing & careful visitor management strategies

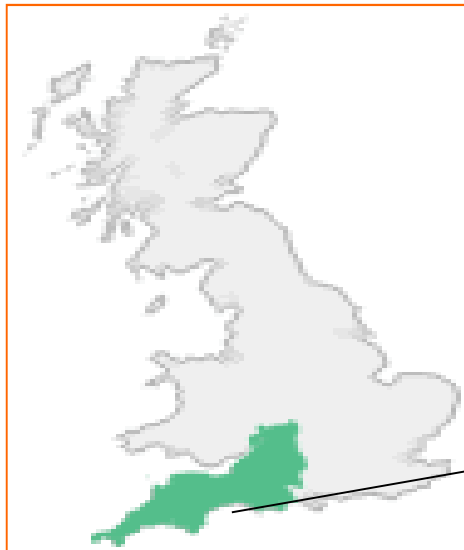
The spectrum of geotourism



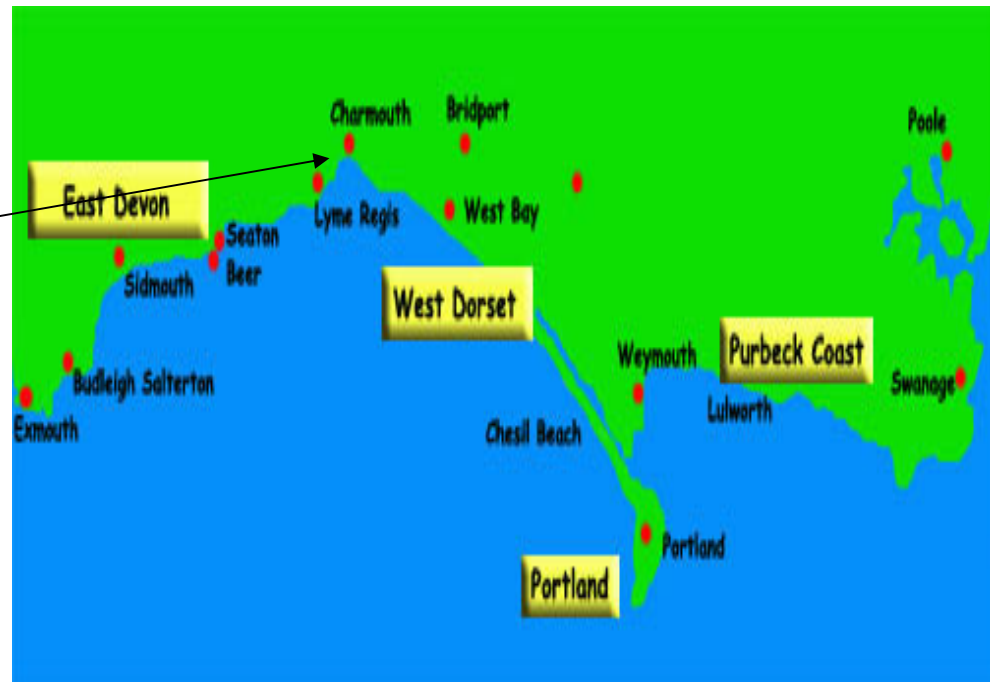
Facilities/attractions/activities required

Accommodation/transportation → resorts, entertainment facilities, tours,
visitor centers, camping facilities

Jurassic Coast



The Arch at Durdle door, Near Lulworth in East Dorset.



DORSET & EAST DEVON COAST WORLD HERITAGE SITE



OTTERTON POINT





C2C: Challenges 2 Change

What are famous for ?

- Traditional types of tourism (e.g. Lulworth coastal area)
- Beach user groups,
- Coastal resorts tourism (seaside resorts),
- Heritage tourism,
- Nature-based tourism,
- Flavour with the English writer Thomas Hardy

However, over the last couple of decades,

- The decline in popularity of the traditional seaside holiday,
- Competition from cheaper overseas holidays

Repositioning of the tourism product and marketing

- More quality short breaks and special interest holidays.
- The added benefit of extending the length of the main tourism season into the spring and autumn "shoulder" months
vs the peak summer holiday period
- Various guided programs and event activities

(source: www.dorsetcoast.gov.uk)



Dorset region – 2.2 millions of visitors (in 2011)

Lyme Regis/Charmouth

One of the most popular destinations for commercial fossil collecting activity on the beach

Over 70,000 educational and family group visitors to the Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre

“Jurassic Coast”



- Protected under several national conservation designations including:
World Heritage Site, Heritage Coast, **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)**, geological and biological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and other protected areas.
- **England's first Natural World Heritage Site** in December 2001
- **Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site** for nature conservation value in terms of special features of geology, geomorphology (the landforms), and fossils
- It comprises 95 miles (155 km) of unspoilt cliffs and beaches, from Exmouth in East Devon to Old Harry Rocks in Purbeck coast, Dorset.
- This represents from 185 million years to 65 million years of earth history

Jurassic Coast

- The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan and Framework for Action,

.....“the overall aim is to manage the Site and this wider area, World Heritage Coast, in **a cohesive way**, and that recognises it as an ‘attractor’ for visitors (including local people), and leads to increased understanding, appreciation and **support for conservation of the World Heritage Site, and to tangible benefits** for the quality of life of local people and visitors.”

(Jurassic Coast World Heritage Steering Group (JCWHSG) 2003, p.3).

Management Issues

Two sides of the story

- Promoting awareness of importance of geological heritage value
- International value – linking with GeoPark network in Europe and World Heritage Site
- The impact of geomorphological processes on tourism activities and infrastructures (safety issues)
- The negative effects of tourism on geological processes and forms (e.g. cliff erosions)
- The erosion of paths and landscape and the domination of the car park in the area surrounding Lulworth Cove.
- Future challenges?
 - Visitor management
 - [Fossil collecting code](#)
 - Sustainable Tourism Development



"Fossil collecting is good fun
and makes for a great day
out,

but please remember to
collect safely and
responsibly.

Cliffs are dangerous places
so try to collect from the
beach away from the cliffs
and please don't dig holes in
the cliff face."



Interpretation



- **The Coastlink network**

- Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre,
- Chesil and the Fleet Nature Reserve Centre,
- Lulworth Heritage Centre,
- Purbeck Marine Wildlife Reserve,
- Kimmeridge, and Durlston Marine Project

- Signs
- Brochures
- Publications
- Guided tours
- Events/festivals
- Education

Cohesive message & differentiation

The key concept of interpretation theme is
a unique 'Walk through Time'

→ the total picture of past life and natural earth
processes of over 185 millions years of geological
and biological change

The site-specific theme and main attributes of the site

- Always read and comply with local signs. Rules and guidelines vary along the coast.

- Fossil hunting is like beach combing, the best fossils are found amongst the pebbles and boulders on the beach.

- Stay away from the cliffs. Rock falls can occur at any time.



- Do not hammer or dig in the cliffs.
- Your eyes are your best tools for finding fossils. Look for fossils in loose material on the beach.
- Keep hammering to a minimum.
- Wear eye protection when hammering.



- Check the weather and tides before setting out. It is best to collect on a falling tide.

- Beware of mudflows, especially after wet weather.



- Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.

- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear.
- Take special care in rough weather, never underestimate the power of the sea and beware in particular of strong undertows.

Source: Responsible
and Safe Fossil
Collecting Brochure



We had a great day and the kids were thrilled with all they found

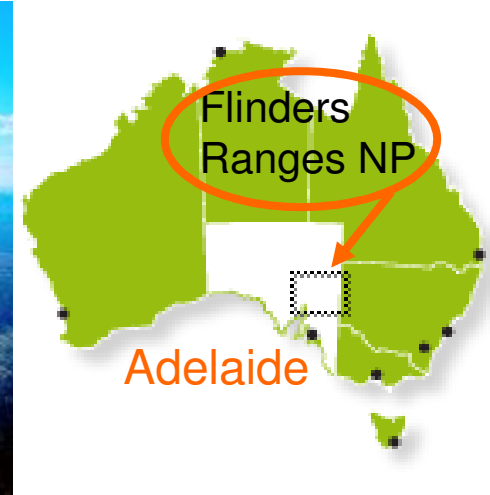
What can we learn from this?

- Recognising the negative impacts of fossil-based tourism than its positive impacts
- Not all visitors participate in this activity
- Target market segmentation - High proportion of environmentally caring tourists (ECT) who are willing to support low impact behaviour for environmental protection
- Different types of ECT with different attitudes

Key challenges!!!

- Different policies at different sites,
- Availability of tourism activities
- Visitors' interests in relevant activities
- Conflicts of different visitor groups
- Need for a clear message regarding the positive outcomes of geotourism to the low vs high ECT groups
- Questions on the effects of the fossil collecting code
- Need for high emphasis on the geological environmental protection (including the natural environment)
- A better match between the interpretive preferences and needs of different visitors (e.g. Who actually reads the brochure?)





- Wilpena Pound
 - Brachina Gorge – self-guided geological trail
- (The Ediacaran Fossils)

Wilpena Pound, South Australia

C2C: Challenges to Change

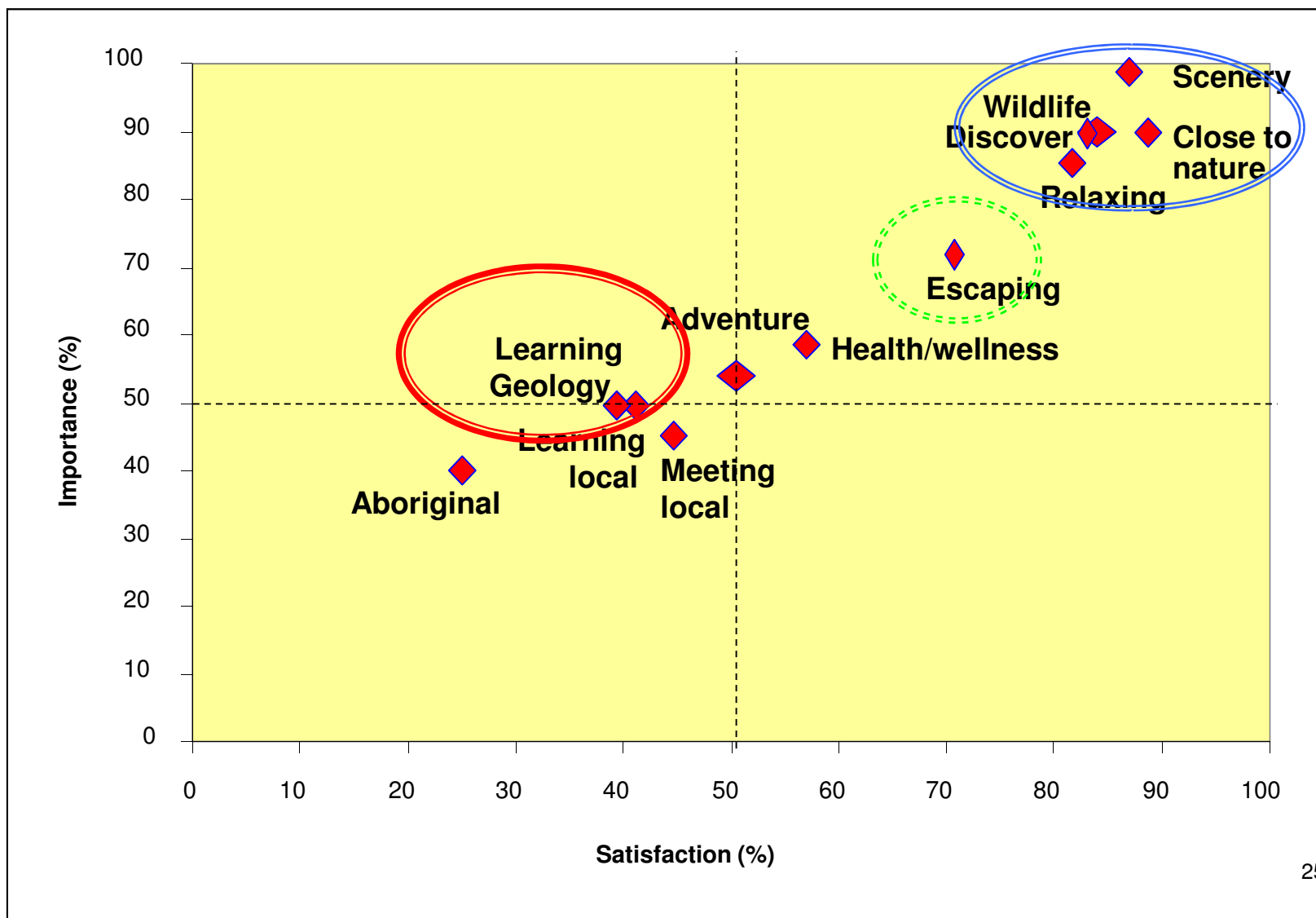
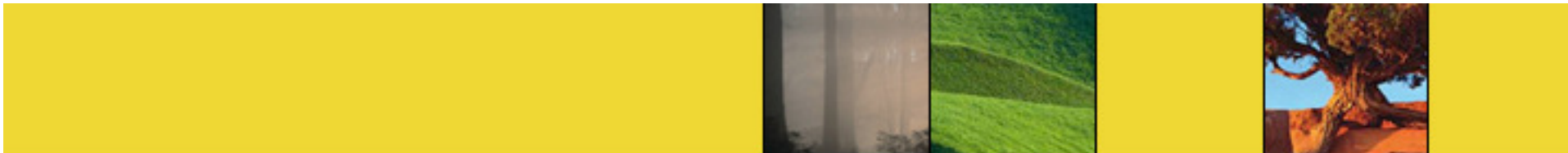
- **New Tourism product development & promotion**
 - Increasing recognition/awareness of geological values/features - landscape and fossils
 - **Repositioning regional brand and image**
 - Special interest group
- Flinders Ranges Tourism Operators Associations
- SA Museum and scientists

Market Overview

- Family-holiday markets
- Independent self-drivers
- Outback tourism
- Nature-based tourism
- Wildlife watching
- Aboriginal arts
- Educational markets

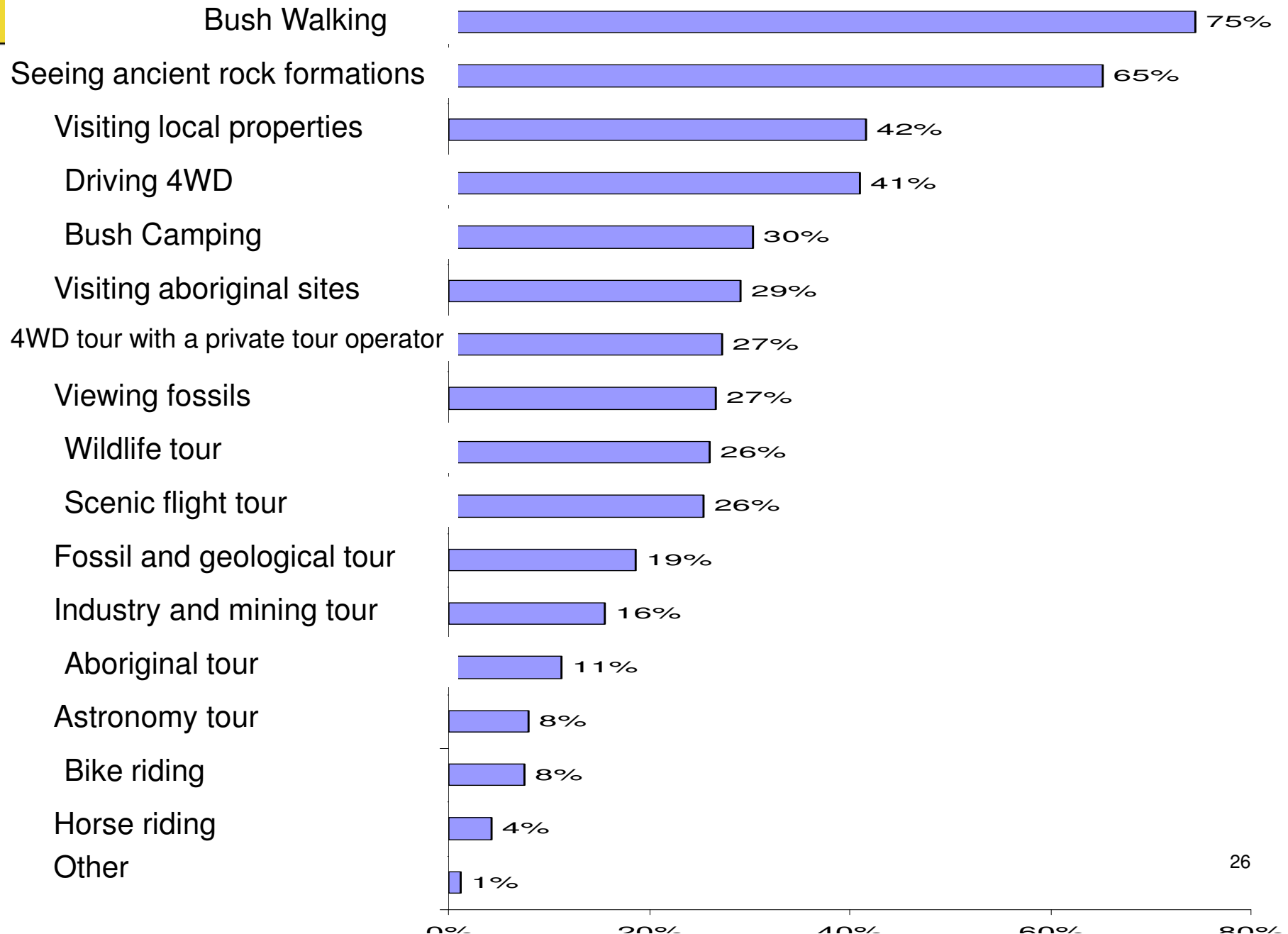


- Over 400,000 visitors
- Domestic/VFR visitors
- The majority age group – over 56 years old
- Higher level of education
- A couple
- First time visitors
- 2-4 days stay in the Flinders Ranges



Note: percentages of combined responses in 'important'/'very important' or 'satisfied'/'very much satisfied' categories were only calculated.

Activity Participation (N=161)



The potential role of geological and fossil-based experience

Secondary motivation for learning about the local geology/fossils

However,

The potential value of geology/fossil-related attractions and activities
the quality of visitors' travel experiences and enjoyment of their visits to the area

Repeat visitors



Key findings



Supply

- Lack of geo-oriented facilities, activities, and out-dated programs
- Iconic value??
- Strong promotion of nature-based tourism

Demand

- Passive nature lovers (not geo-savvy/geo-lovers)
- The first-time visitors
- Domestic markets – family-oriented and self-drive markets
- Different motivations and interests

Why ?



- **Competitive advantage** of the destination – **does it have iconic value?**
- Some did not perceive the Flinders Ranges region as **one of the fossil-iconic destinations**

vs a larger scale of fossils such as dinosaurs available in other global geotourism destinations (e.g. Jurassic Coast in England).

- **The first-time visitors to the site – new promotion?**
- They do not often realise that they had experienced the unique **geological attractions**, as part of the nature-based tourism experiences with **the general natural environment** (e.g. fauna, scenery, landscape, wildlife, plants)
- **International visitors (more interested in Aboriginal culture) vs domestic visitors (more interested in geo-learning)**
- The need for new destination marketing strategies to the geotourists

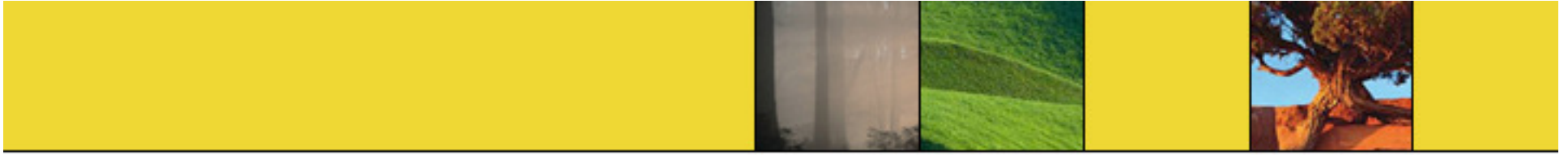
Q: What should we do?

What did we learn from this?

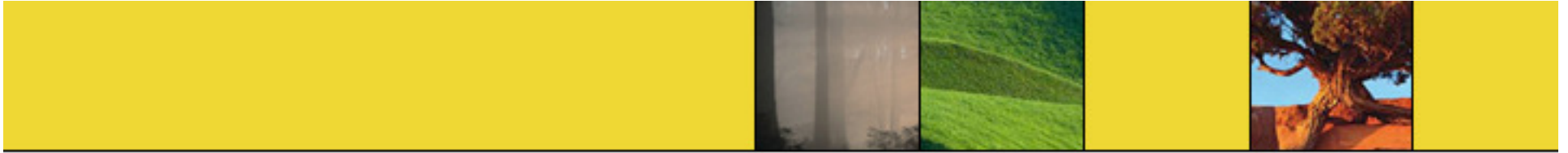
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- Geo-enthusiasts were less critical of a specific geo-activity, but preferred to have **the totality of their travel experience**
- Targeting the popularity of **multiple activities** in rural or natural areas
- Self-drive market who are more likely to have new and different types of experiences in a single trip with flexible itineraries (Frochot, 2005; Mehmetoglu, 2007)
- More viable for a planner or marketer to generate **a multi-interest tourist experience** as the onset of a new tourism life cycle through modifying the initial values of the sites and broader features of the product for both existing tourists and potential geotourists,

vs emphasising a single minority niche market-based attraction
- The need to understand the behavioural patterns of the self-drive and multiple activity-seeking geotourists



What to do next?



Local destination network

GeoRoute

- Connecting several geological sites in the region
- Promoting multiple tourist destinations rather than just a single destination.
- Creating a distinctive and consistent regional branding
- Encouraging an extended length of stay
- Maximising economic benefits to the tourism industry and the region

Quality control

- Code of conduct
- Visitor Centres

Reaching out to geo-enthusiasts vs nature/adventure tourists

- The development of destination marketing and positioning strategies
- The demands of potential active geo-enthusiasts while maintaining the existing ones
- The activity-based market segmentation approach is useful in differentiating the degree of demand for geotourism products
- Which stage of product development??
- The early stage of geotourism development in FR
- Understanding limitations
- The size of the niche geo-enthusiasts market
 - Diversification within this geotourism
 - Astronomical tourism, cultural tourism

Destination positioning

Flinders Ranges National Park –
National Landscape Positioning

KEY WORDS

This is an important aspect of your positioning.
Words should be tied back to the National
Landscape. Words such as:

honest unspoilt native
ancient
integrity
authentic
down to earth natural stark
diverse spiritual
contrasts genuine
remote spiritual
vivid passionate
wild respected

diverse

respected

authentic

integrity

honest

remote

ancient

down to earth

spiritual

unique

passionate

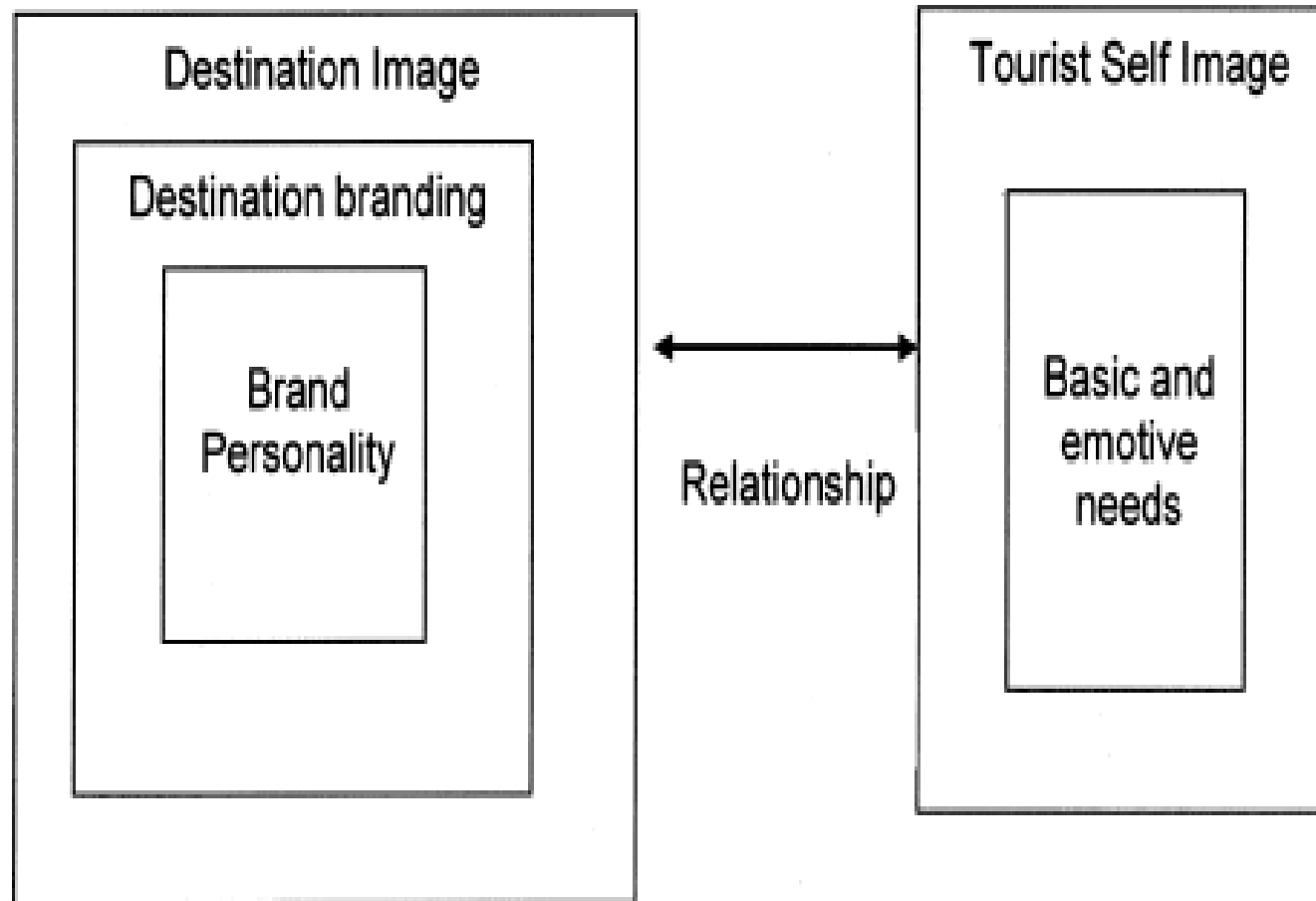
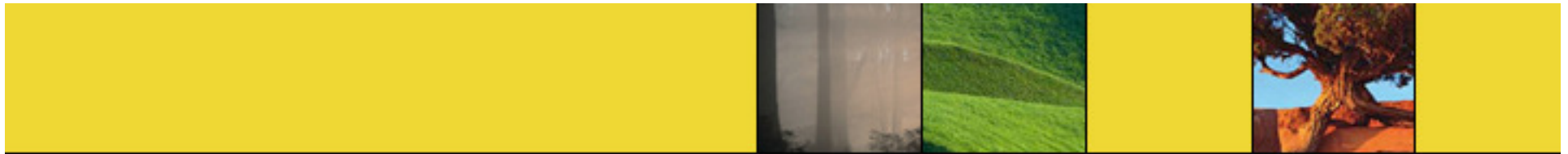
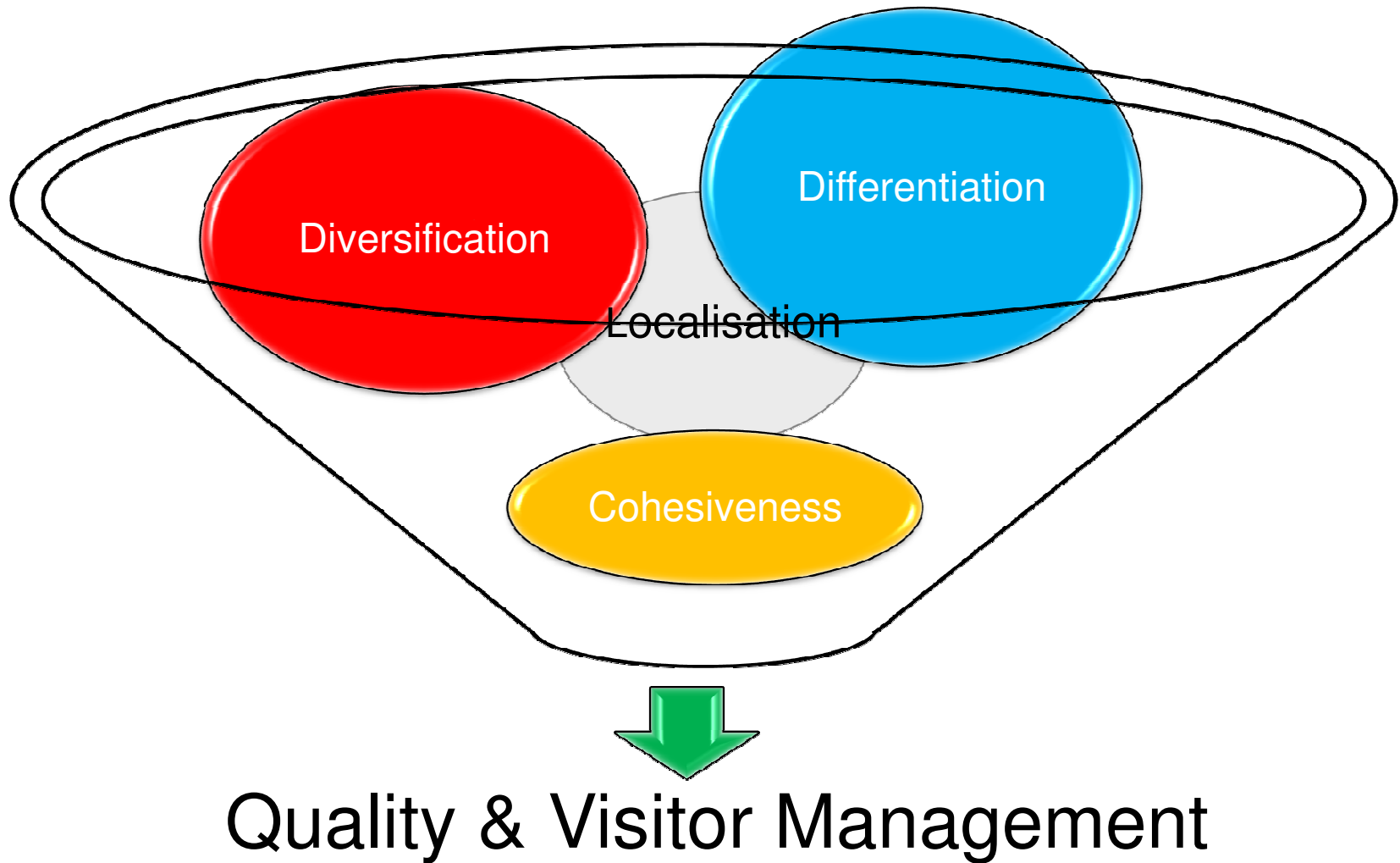


Figure 1. Destination image and destination branding. Source: Ekinici (2003).

C2C – repositioning and repackaging





- **My history**
- **My memory**
- **My identity**
- **My experience**
- **My discovery**

