

**WEST KENT**  
GARDEN *of* ENGLAND

**EAST KENT**  
GARDEN *of* ENGLAND

**NORTH KENT**  
GARDEN *of* ENGLAND

# Peer Eco-Systems

How to upscale your Experience  
without the growing pains



**EUROPEAN UNION**  
European Regional Development Fund

**Interreg**   
France (Channel  
Manche) England  
**EXPERIENCE**  
European Regional Development Fund

# Welcome to Visit Kent Peer Ecosystems

# How to upscale your Experience without the growing pains

## Session Format

- Introduction
- Key Speaker: Smarter society
- Learnings for the Visitor Economy
- Breakout Session
- Summary and Close

# THE JOURNEY SO FAR

- 1 1:1 Specialist Consultation**  
Specialist consultancy to support the development of a business plan for the launch of your new product
- 2 Product Testing**  
Market testing of your concept with consumers and travel trade, and feed back to further develop your product
- 3 Content Development**  
New photography for your product and inclusion in inspirational content
- 4 Consumer marketing**  
Inclusion in targeted off-season consumer campaigns to market your product
- 5 B2B distribution**  
Distribution of your product to the travel trade through our established B2B connections and networks



384 businesses proactively contacted  
130 businesses joined the programme  
203 new products launched to market

# THE JOURNEY SO FAR



Over 1000  
hours of 1:1  
support  
provided to  
businesses



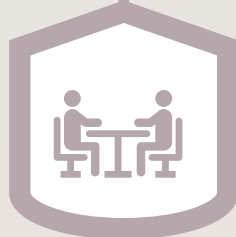
8 product testing  
reports 4 focus  
groups 4500  
respondents 4  
resident surveys



11 influencer  
trips 11m+  
impressions 89  
inspirational  
features



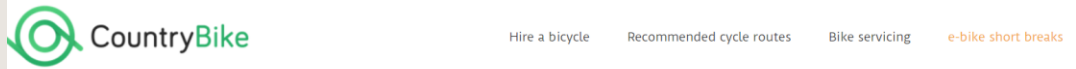
261 attendees  
across 8  
Experience  
Development  
Workshops



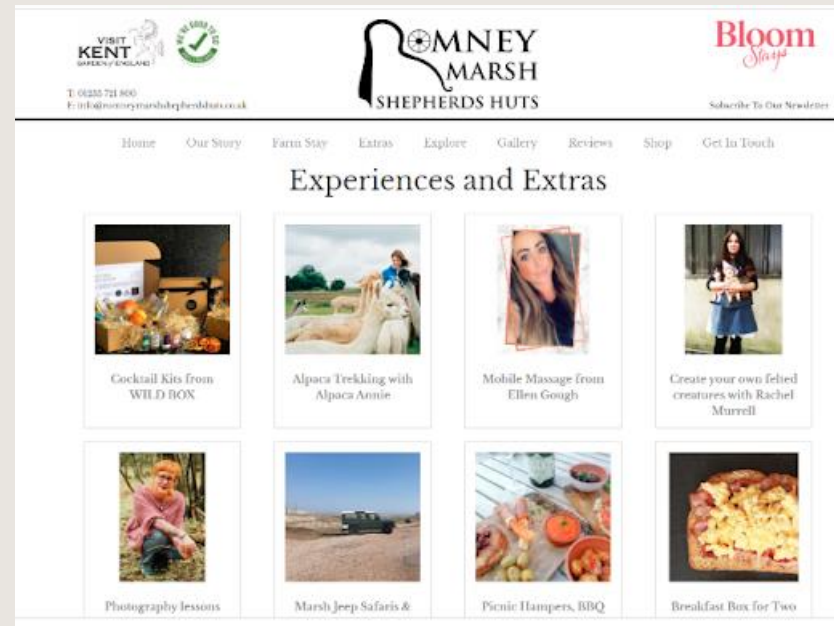
231 attendees  
across 12 Peer  
Networking  
sessions  
covering 5  
topics



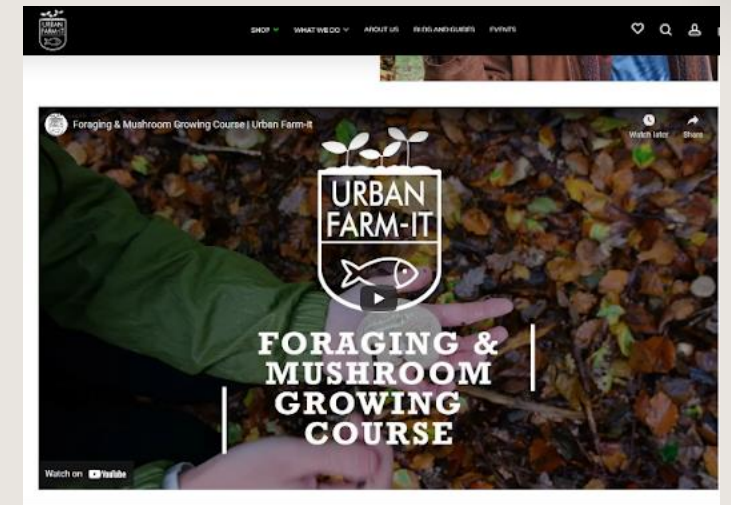
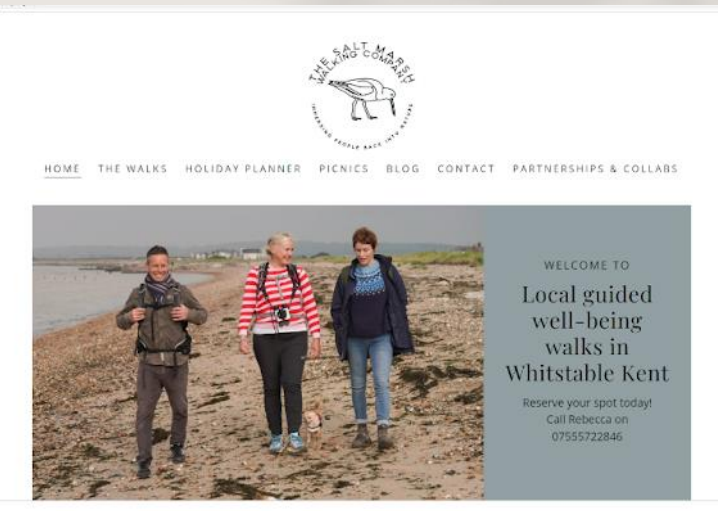
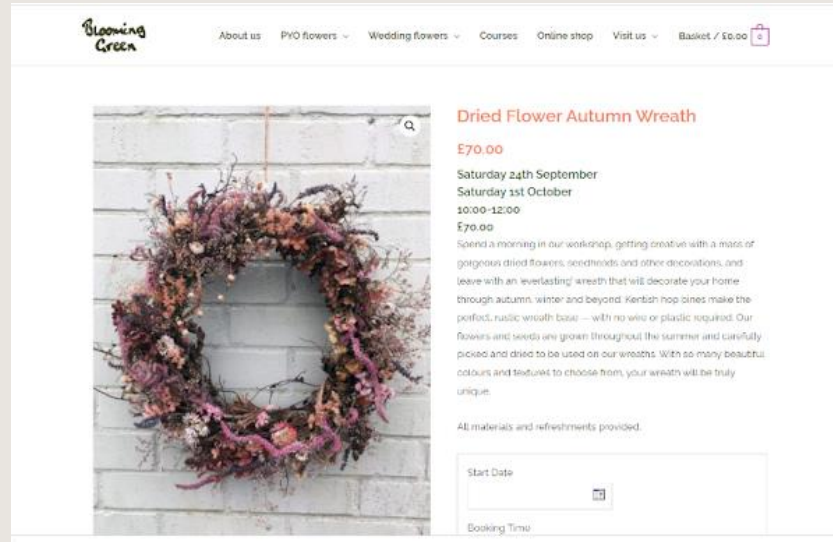
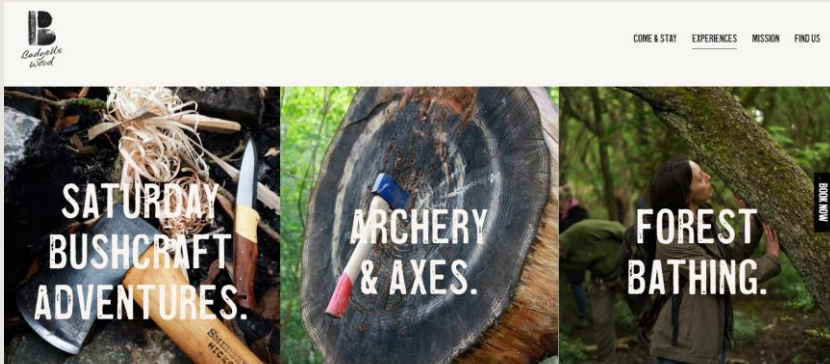
# OVER 200 NEW PRODUCTS LAUNCHED



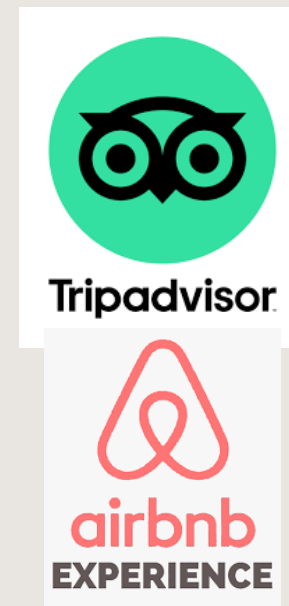
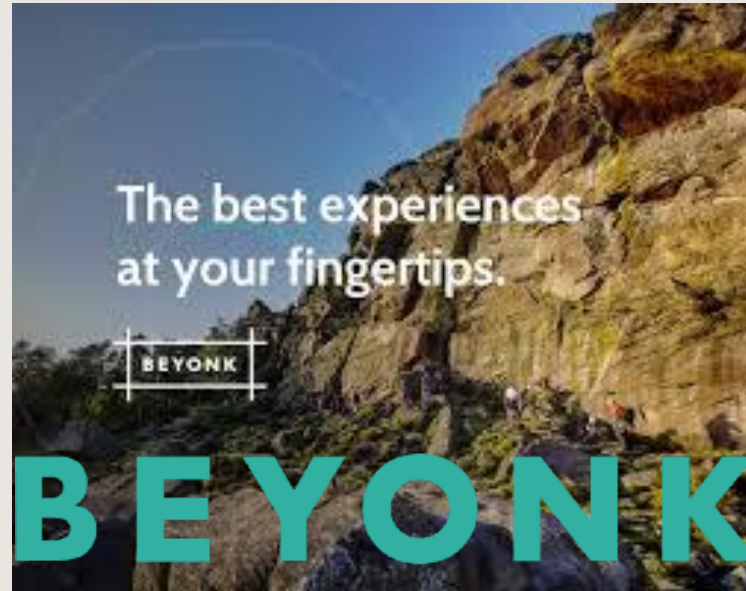
## The Castles and Houses of West Kent e-bike cycling experience



# OVER 200 NEW PRODUCTS LAUNCHED



# DISTRIBUTION





# CONSUMER CAMPAIGNS



## Discover Your Kent Experience



Your Kent Experience  
Family getaways



Your Kent Experience  
Storytelling, traditions  
and new discoveries



Your Kent Experience  
Green spaces and rural  
retreats

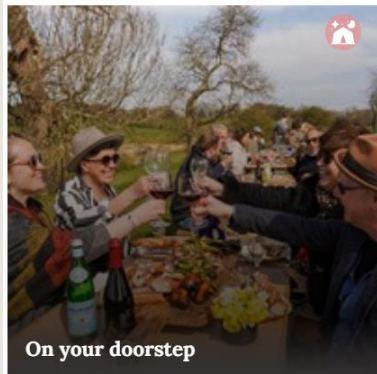


Your Kent Experience  
New discoveries right on  
your doorstep

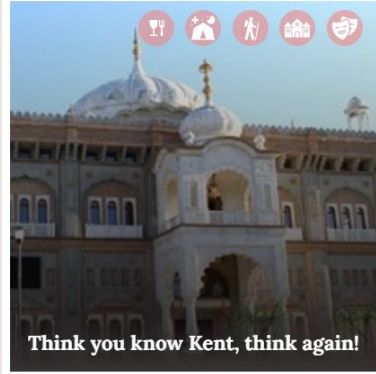


### Sustainable Breaks in North Kent

Taking a get away doesn't have to mean harming the environment! Take a pew and learn a tip or two as we look at some of the most sustainable things to do in North Kent...



On your doorstep



Think you know Kent, think again!



# Geoff Baxter, Director Smarter Society

How to upscale your Experience without  
the growing pains

# Introduction



Geoff Baxter

SMARTER**SOCIETY** 

 **Devoted**

**STIR  
IT UP**

# What is upscaling?

- Growth is seen increased customers, sales, visits but that's not relevant
- Higher growth of Sales Revenue than of your operational cost base
- It means you are generating more profit
- Its also about the ability to sustain that growth in the long term



# The importance of measurement



# OCIETY



VISIT KENT  
BUSINESS  
GARDEN of ENGLAND



# Lets look at some growth strategies

## 1. Increase prices

- It's the perfect strategy as investment is minimal
- Under-pricing is a key mistake that many SMEs make
- Tourist Economy is less price sensitive than other markets
- You can maintain your base price with a clever pricing strategy and still increase average spend





## So can you achieve price increase without changes to your product

1. Yes but the increases are likely to lower and unsustainable in the longer term as others innovate
2. What will be more effective is a restructure of your product to be able to
  - a. Clearly differentiate it from the competition and demonstrate its competitive advantages
  - b. Tiered the service levels - 20% of customers are looking for a premium offering and can pay up to 4 times more than a normal customer

## 2. Restructuring your tiered product offer



## 2. Restructuring your tiered product offer

### 1. Participant experience



- What is the best in class offer in the UK market
- Where are the gaps between you and them
- Walk in the shoes of the consumer - it can be helpful to get an independent to do this
- What gaps could be filled or narrowed at low cost
- What gaps require investment
- Consumers can forgive rustic if your site is tidy and well looked after

## 2. Restructuring your tiered product offer

### 2. VIP



Winemakers lunch represents  
The same £ margin as 23 General Admission

Tier	Average sales	Cost
General Admission	£10	£2
Premium Tour	£25	£10
Winemakers lunch for 2	£250	£60
Luxury Glamping in the Vineyard for 2	£450	£150

## 2. Restructuring your tiered product offer



3. Customer stories

### 3. Partnering reduces the customer acquisition cost

1. Build like-minded partnerships that compliment
2. Go and see their offer and really think through how you can work together
  - luxury glamping X kebab van OR
  - luxury glamping X sourdough pizza van
3. Your customer will expect the partner to have at least the same values and service offering as you
4. Revenue can be in the form of referral fees or shared revenue - ultimately you want customers for less cost per acquisition or to make more money from your existing

Partner

What are the  
growing pains  
that you will  
see?



SMARTER **SOCIETY** 

# What haven't we covered?

1. Upscaling is a huge area and so focusing on one part and doing it really well (execution) is the best approach
2. Areas that we haven't covered
  - Efficiency and process changes
  - Expansion of your offer - vertical/horizontal integration
  - Geography
  - Leveraging marketing/social media
  - Improvements to your sales funnel
  - Loyalty and management of returning customers
  - Use of growth tools e.g. CRM





Website  
[smartersociety.org](https://smartersociety.org)

Email  
[hello@smartersociety.org](mailto:hello@smartersociety.org)

SMARTER**SOCIETY** 

# Why is Upscaling important for the Visitor Economy?

- Brings more visitors to the area
- Helps to keep customers engaged and loyal
- Allows Experiences to grow and expand their offering
- Increases revenue, which has multiple benefits for the business and the local community

# How to avoid the growing pains of upscaling

- **Do your research** – find out what worked well for others and look to replicate
- **Seek expert advice** – speak to advisors who can help alert you to any issues or areas of concern before they happen
- **Discuss with your peers** – discuss your plans with your network and utilise their insight
- **Create ‘reverse disaster scenarios’** – Write down all the things that could go wrong and then work backwards to figure out how to prevent them from happening
- **Ask your customers** – If you are unsure about the merits of a certain activity, run a poll with customers to gauge their views on any new developments or offerings

# Breakout Session

# Analysis/Questions

- What are the objectives for upscaling your business – revenue, capital investment, personal objectives?
- How do you evaluate the opportunity vs. risk/investment?
- What have other businesses like you done – follow with success, increased customers, social media impact?
- What are the key pinch points within your business that prevent growth?
- How can you gauge the impact of upscaling?
- Do you have a maximum capacity, above which it doesn't make sense to expand? – follow up with what is the key limiting factor?
- What would you need to do to your business to build capacity?
- Will upscaling require investment or not? follow with, Could you build some capacity with little/no investment?
- What Upscaling stories can you share? (can be personal or anecdotal)?
- What worked? Follow up with What didn't?
- What lessons can be learned?

# Participant Thoughts

- What new Upscaling initiatives could you implement?
- What is stopping you implementing right now?
- What are your feelings about upscaling?

# Session Summary

# Key Learnings

- Upscaling your Experience can open the door to new and lucrative markets
- Customer demands are increasing, upscaling is often required to keep up with the competition
- The benefits of Upscaling when done right can greatly outweigh the initial investment
- However, upscaling is not without risks and should be approached carefully