

Strategic Insights from Wellbeing Travel: Product Development and Operational Learnings for Tour Operators and Independent Suppliers

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This session introduces strategic insights from wellbeing travel and their practical application to tourism product development and operations. Drawing on her international experience as a tourism business advisor, Beáta shares lessons learned from working with both major tour operators and small enterprises. Participants will discover approaches to managing higher visitor numbers with limited resources, developing market-ready wellbeing experiences, and creating lasting positive impacts for destinations, communities, and travellers alike.

Presentation script (introduction, objectives...conclusion)

Introduction

My goal is to offer practical learnings and insights to help you—especially small businesses and local suppliers—navigate the growing space of well-being tourism.

These are real situations and experiences I personally went through and collected from my own work. This is a very broad topic, but I truly hope that the main points I'll share today will be very useful and inspiring for you.

I have a background in tourism and hospitality product and operations development across the world, for about 20 years now. In addition, I am a facilitator of well-being programs, a certified forest therapy guide, and hold certifications in other related modalities.

My passion is to bring together tourism and well-being, and to help destinations and suppliers do the same.

But why well-being?

Well-being tourism is a booming sector, and new guest interests and trends present opportunities for all of us—from small suppliers to large operators and destinations.

If you haven't yet considered offering well-being-focused experiences, such as forest therapy or mindful outdoor activities, I encourage you to explore this opportunity. It's a trillion-dollar market with potential for everyone.

Moreover, it enhances the guest experience, strengthens destination branding, and helps businesses diversify their offers, reach new audiences, and even create new revenue streams.

Well-being tourism is currently one of the fastest-growing areas in the travel landscape, providing major opportunities for both tour operators and small suppliers. As this trend continues to rise, it can play a key role in brand strategy and innovation.

So, the question is: how can we make the best of it, and how can we prepare ourselves and our partners to succeed?

That's exactly what I'd like to explore today through a real case study.

Objectives

The goal of this case study was to help a major tour operator brand anchor its strategy and marketing in guest well-being.

We built a very clear and strong brand positioning around well-being, self-care, and slowing down—encouraging travelers to immerse themselves in experiences that support their health and enhance their lives.

We wanted to understand how to meet the growing demand for such experiences, how to go beyond mainstream offers, and how to help destinations and operators manage that demand.

We asked ourselves key questions:

- How can we bring something completely new to a market already full of great tours?
- How can we differentiate ourselves and avoid repeating mainstream offers?

Our main drivers were clear: guests wanted experiences that benefited their health but also felt new and unique. We wanted to differentiate our brand while staying true to our identity.

With my background as both a product developer and a forest therapy guide, we were able to merge these two perspectives into a strong nature-based well-being product line.

From there, we conducted extensive research and brainstorming. We studied each destination, assessed existing well-being and nature-based offers, evaluated local partners, and collected ideas.

However, we quickly realized that communicating these concepts to local partners wasn't easy. Many suppliers didn't fully understand what "well-being tourism" meant—it's more than yoga or massages in hotels. It's about experiences that truly enhance the guest's health and connection to place.

So, clear and patient communication became essential. We had to guide and educate partners about operational standards, pricing, and logistics in large-scale tour operations.

Some of the key operational learnings included:

- Setting clear expectations early on regarding logistics, pricing, and communication.
- Educating small well-being suppliers about how large tour operations work—timelines, group sizes, insurance, margins, and all cost components.
- Balancing pricing so that the program is financially fair for everyone yet attractive for sales.
- Maintaining flexibility, since large operators plan 1.5–2 years ahead. Smaller suppliers need to adapt to this rhythm and be flexible with dates, cancellation terms, and policies.

We also learned the importance of understanding the full guest journey in multi-day itineraries—how to build well-being experiences that complement, not compete with, existing offers, and how to communicate their true value through storytelling.

Our focus was mainly on outdoor and nature-based experiences—forest bathing, mindful walks, outdoor cooking, and sensory activities that help guests slow down and connect deeply with nature.

Despite challenges, we turned them into opportunities. The results were outstanding:

- Stronger brand positioning centered on guest well-being.
- Excitement and engagement from guests, partners, and the market.
- Opportunities for local partners to diversify and reach new audiences.
- Increased visibility and business for small well-being suppliers entering the tourism landscape.

This process also brought internal learning: our team gained valuable insights about operations, communication, marketing, and innovation. It helped us continuously evolve our product development approach.

Conclusion

To summarize, here are the main takeaways from this journey:

- Clear communication and setting realistic expectations are essential when collaborating with new well-being partners.
- Training and transparency build trust and ensure smooth operations.
- Both external partners and internal teams learn and grow through the process.
- Well-being tourism drives innovation, diversification, and positive impact on destinations and guests alike.

As next steps, I invite you to:

- Start conversations with people in your network.
- Do your research and experience well-being programs yourself.
- Explore what other destinations are doing—but don't just copy. Make your offers destination-specific and highlight your unique strengths.
- Partner with others, collaborate, and build your well-being portfolio, because guests and partners will increasingly look for such experiences.

Thank you so much for your attention.

I wish you the very best in your well-being tourism journey, and I truly hope these insights help you design meaningful, successful, and sustainable travel experiences.

