



GLOBAL
**DESTINATION
SUSTAINABILITY**
ACADEMY

Destination Storytelling Workshop



Introductions



Guy Bigwood
CEO & Chief Changemaker, GDS-
Movement



A good story, well told, can change the work

Learning outcomes



Unlock the
transformative power
of storytelling

Improve how you
drive meaningful
change in today's
volatile, uncertain,
and complex world

Explore how to build
trust with your
audiences

Share, collaborate
and have fun with
peers



GLOBAL
**DESTINATION
SUSTAINABILITY
MOVEMENT**

Vision

We envision thriving places and communities activated by regenerative tourism and events.

Mission

We empower people with the mindsets, skillsets, and toolsets to create regenerative destinations to visit, meet, and live in.

Our Services



GDS-Index

Benchmarking destinations and leveraging data to drive performance and impact



GDS-Consulting

Facilitating strategies, narratives, and innovation for destinations & events (for the visitor economy)



GDS-Academy

Educating and developing changemakers



GDS-Forum

Building a dynamic, collaborative global community



GDS-Insights

Researching trends to uncover and define next practices

brisbane marketing ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD
 KERRY
 amsterdam & partners
 SÖPPRO BUSINESS EVENTS
 Hamburg

ibao Convention Bureau

DESTINATION COVENTRY

BENGEN

DISCOVER HALIFAX

Kraków Convention Bureau

LUGANO REGION

MILANO

OTTAWA TOURISM

VISIT ODENSE

Nantes CONVENTION BUREAU

MELBOURNE Convention Bureau

PROVENCE

Stockholm The Capital of Scandinavia

Belfast

GRANBY CONVENTION BUREAU

EXPLORE EDMONTON

GLASGOW CONVENTION BUREAU

LIVERPOOL CONVENTION BUREAU

LONDON REGION

Faite Ireland

WONDERFUL COPENHAGEN

VISIT OSLØ

NIAGARA FALLS ONE WORLD AFTER ANOTHER

OSLO

OSAKA

CITY OF SYDNEY

CORK CONVENTION BUREAU

visit.brussels

SG

Visit Aarhus

VISIT TAMPERE

VISIT WITTEDELHART

WILMINGTON

WONDERFUL COPENHAGEN

VISIT OSLØ

NIAGARA FALLS ONE WORLD AFTER ANOTHER

OSLO

ATYPICAL ANTWERP

TOURISME / MONTREAL

VISITNYBORG

CANADA

VLC VISIT VALENCIA

Dublin CONVENTION BUREAU



THE LEADING MOVEMENT OF DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS COMMITTED TO SUSTAINABILITY AND REGENERATION



31 COUNTRIES
 100+ DESTINATIONS GLOBALLY

Helsinki
 VISIT GDANSK
 THIS IS BASEL
 GENEVA TOURISM

DESTINATION VANCOUVER

Zürich, Switzerland.

Shanghai

the Faroe Islands

Toulouse

Visit Birmingham

DESTINATION GREAT VICTORIA

GOYANG

Prima Education Island

VISIT FLANDERS

Tirol

STRATFORD SLV

Visit County Durham

Newcastle

SARAWAK

VisitSvendborg

VISIT RAPID CITY

VISIT BERLIN

SKELL EFTA

TORONTO

DESTINATION NORD

GAIAWAY CONVENTION BUREAU

PARIS

TOURISM WARRIOR

DESTINATION COVENTRY

ONLY LYON

NICE CÔTE D'AZUR

VISIT SOLIHULL

calgary

KANAMATSU JAPAN

DISCOVER SAGINAW

Visit Tallinn

WASHINGTON DC

Visit Vejle

DESTINATION ST. JOHN'S

STRASBOURG CONVENTION BUREAU

BOZEMAN

Barcelona Turismo Convention Bureau

gothenburg

québec

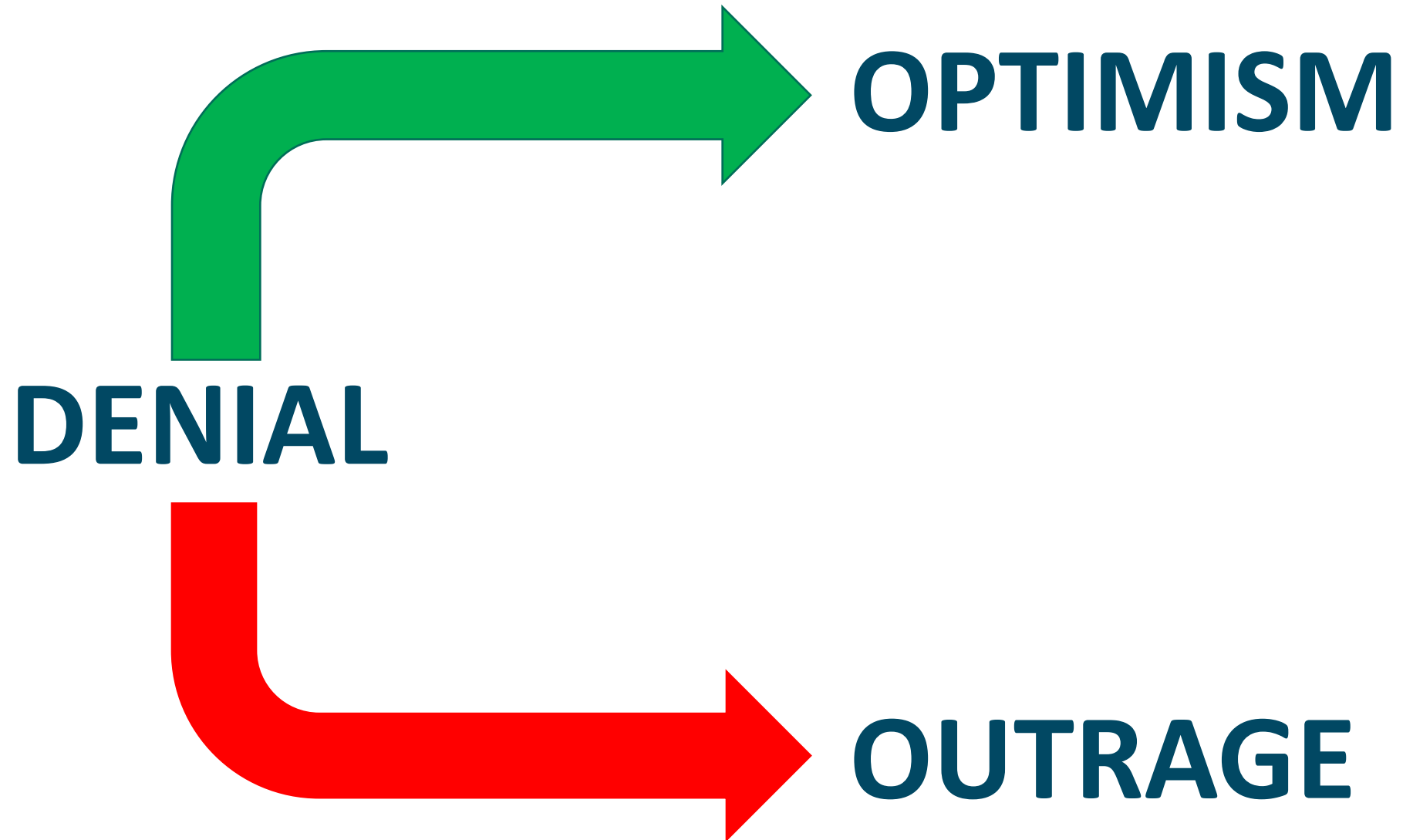
Destination Kystlandet

REGENERATION RISING



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How do you feel?



“We are now entering an age of *unreason*, a time when the future, in so many areas, is to be shaped by us and for us;
a time when the only prediction that will hold true is that no prediction will hold true;
a time therefore for *bold imagining* in private life as well as public;
for thinking the *unlikely* and doing the *unreasonable*.”

Charles Handy



Our focus on “sustaining” is insufficient



It's not working, and it is not fit for the future!



We need to change our mindsets



Stop doing **harm**

Minimize **risks**

Create **positive impact**



Degenerative



Sustainable



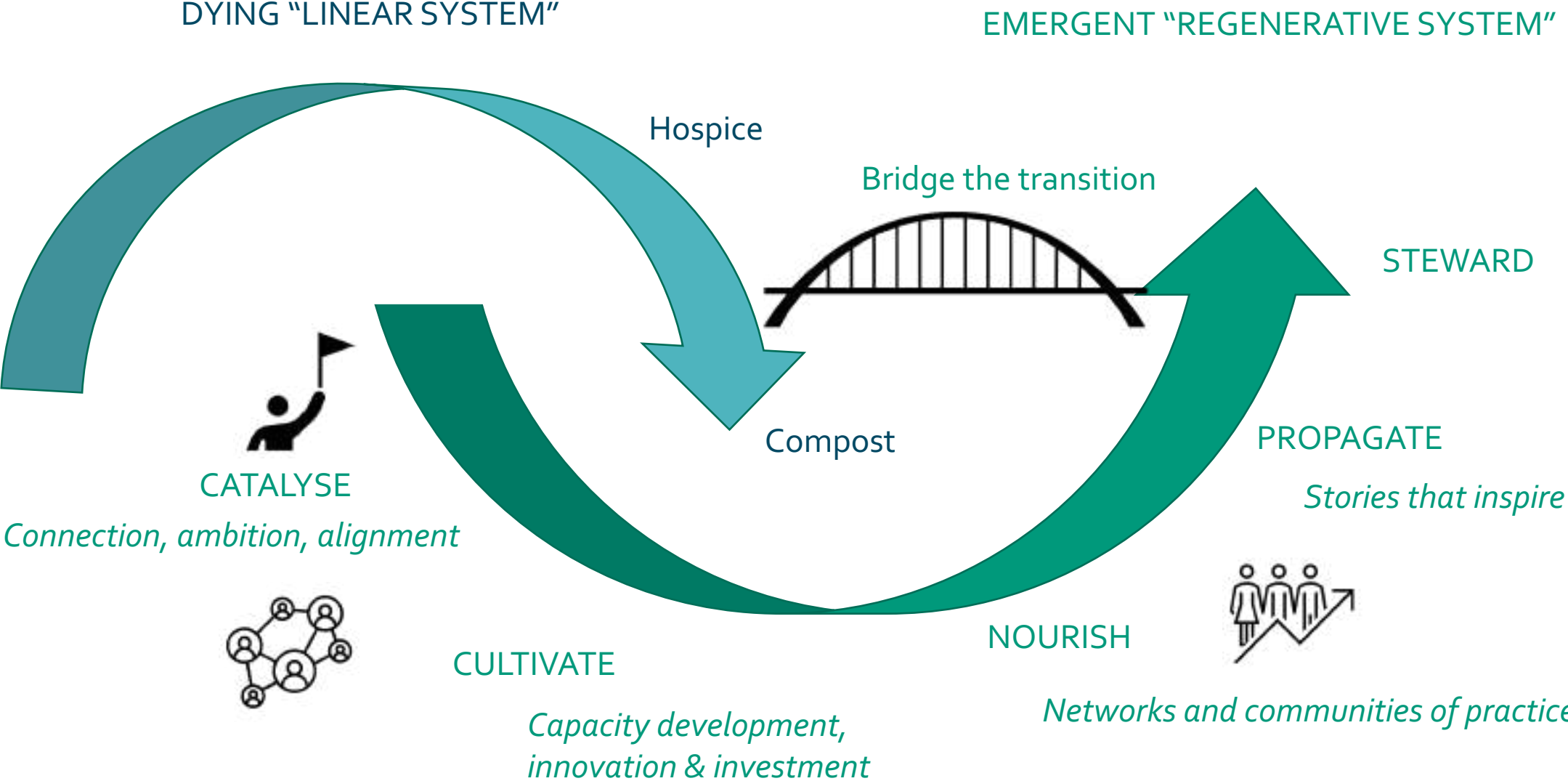
Regenerative

It's also about how we create value

“To succeed will need to take a more integrated systems approach where value is created together with other people, other organizations, and the natural ecologies that sustain us all, rather than extracting value from them as expendable resources.”

Marsha Walden
Chief Executive Officer, Destination Canada

The role of destinations: to accelerate the transition



Regeneration is about systems change



Transformational change

MINDSETS

Relational change

RELATIONSHIPS

SKILLSETS

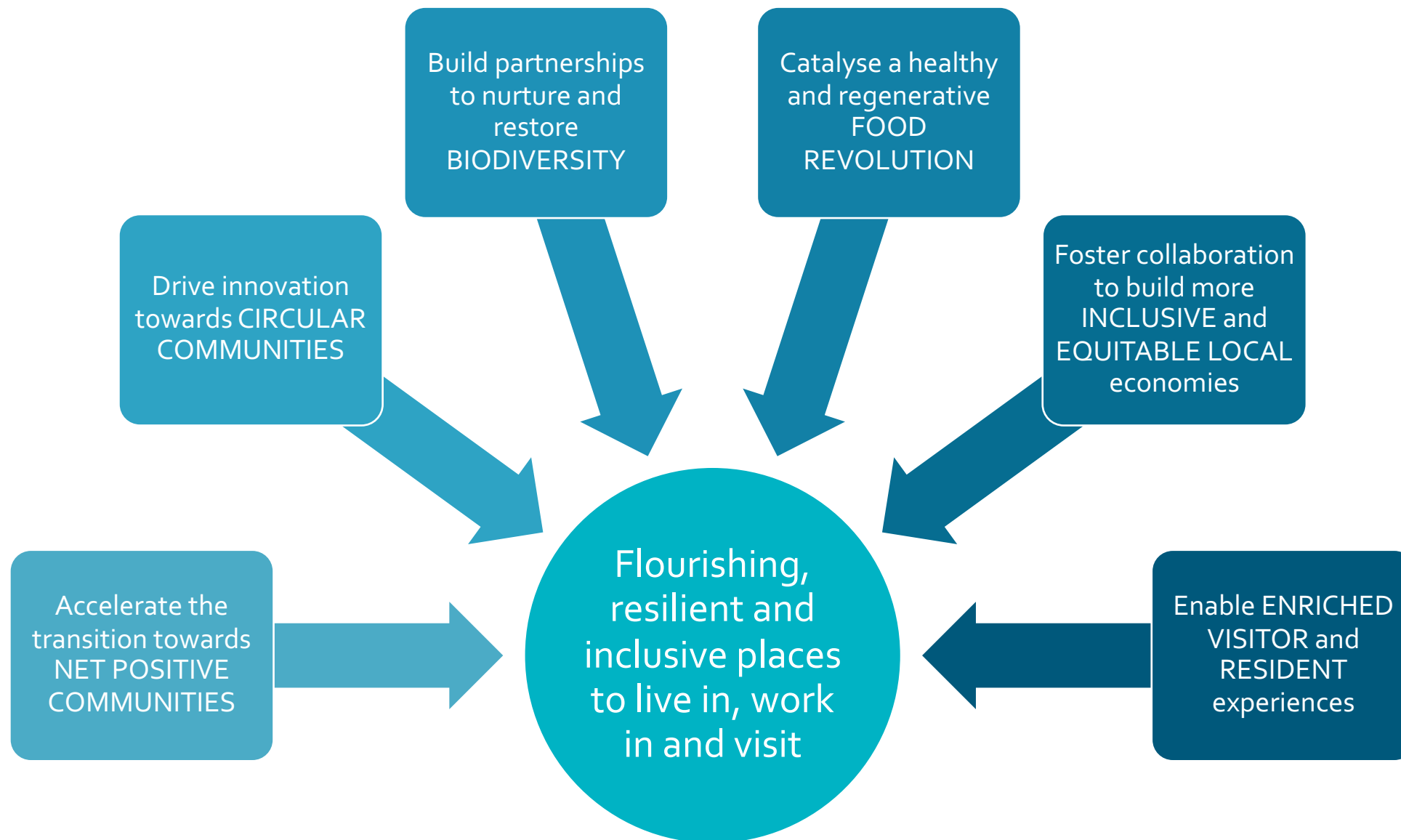
Structural change

POLICIES and
STRATEGIES

PRACTICES

TOOLSETS

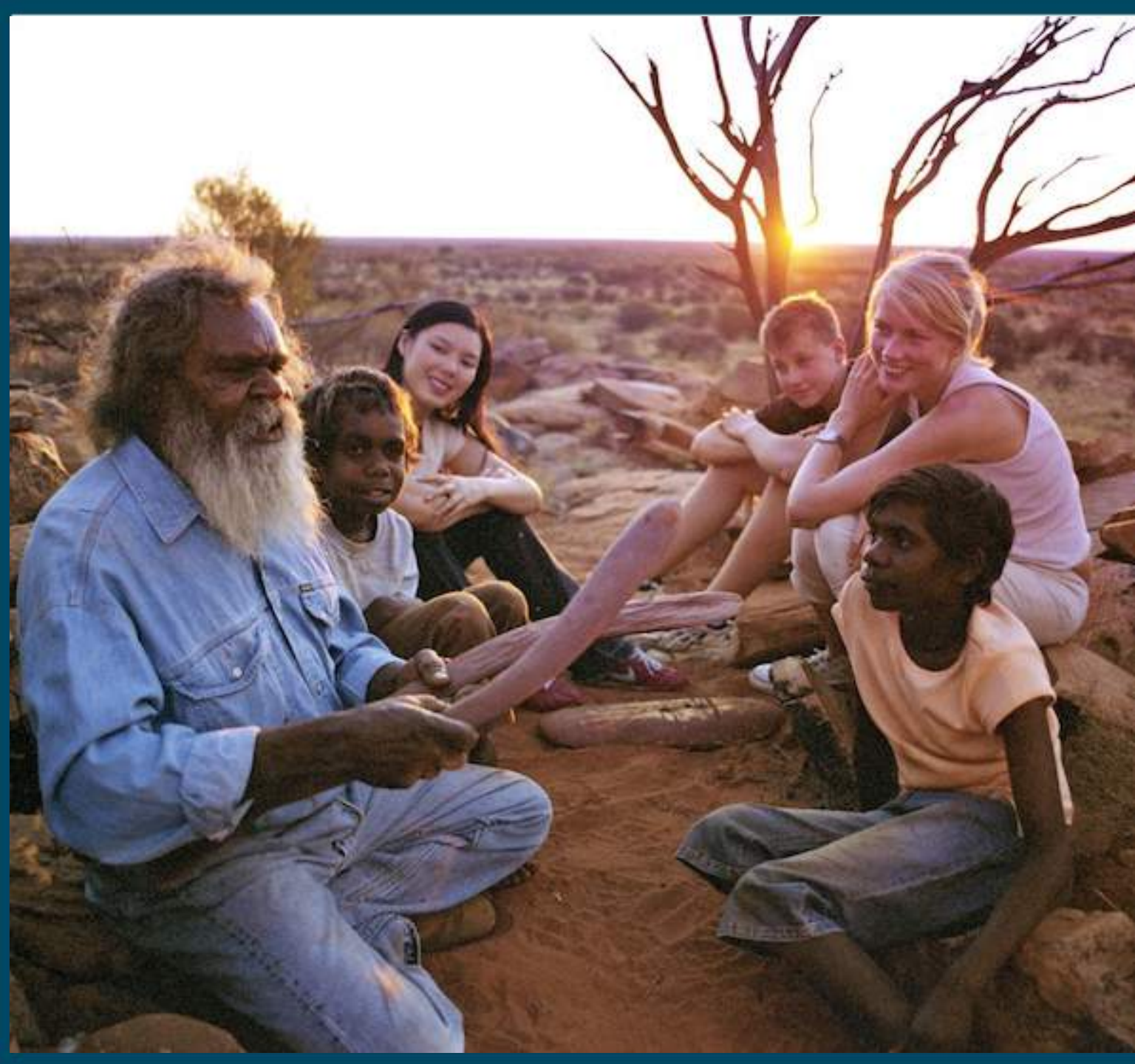
Tourism as a catalyst of transformation

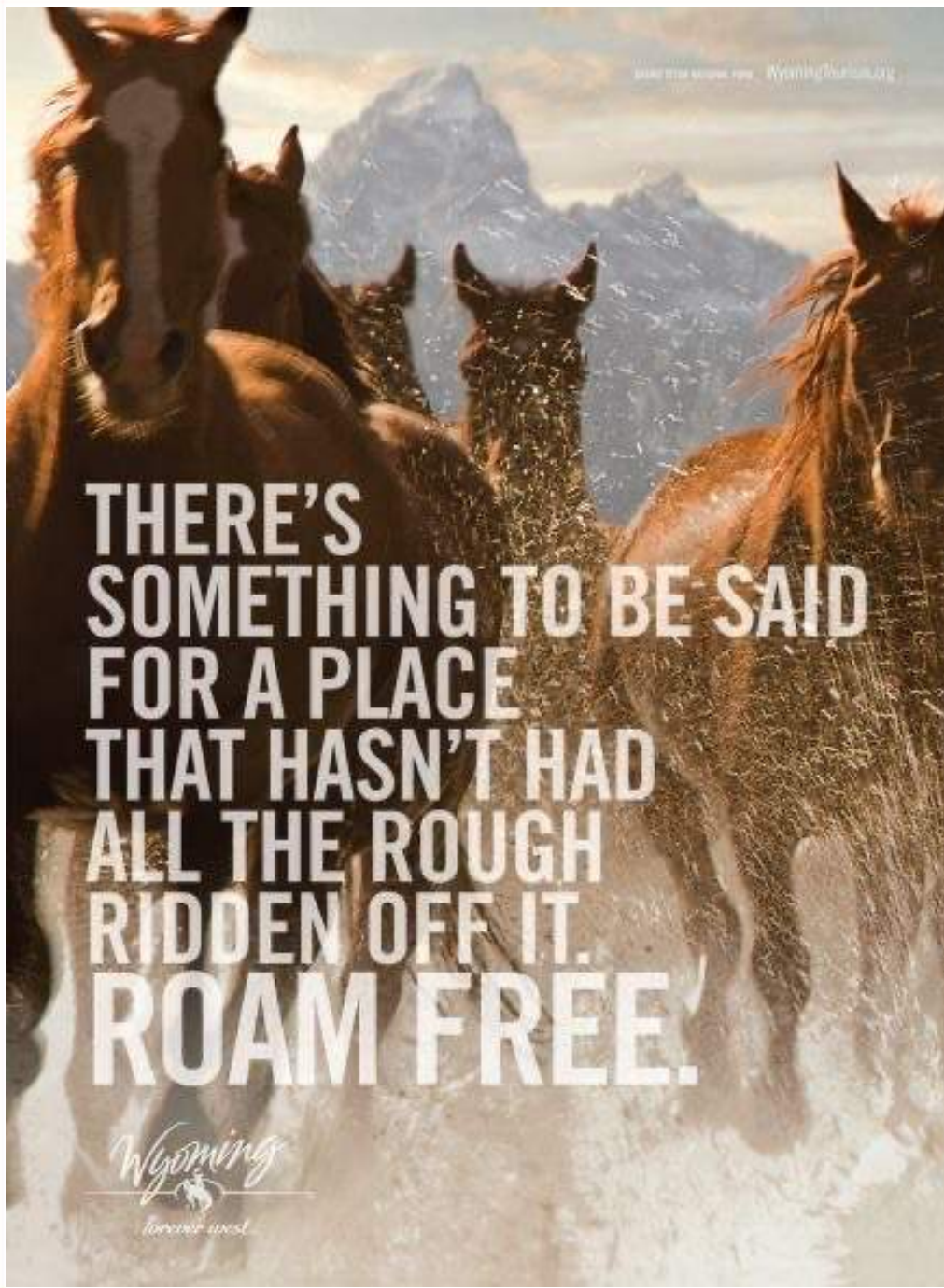




**“If we hope to bring about
transformative, paradigm- shifting
change, we must
replace the old stories
with new ones
embodying
the beliefs, values, norms,
and ethics of
a regenerative future.”**

- Sahana Chattopadhyay





What are the brand stories that have shaped you?





réserve à une poignée d'élus.



Be authentic. Be yourself



We're all screwed?

patagonia



“When you activate new stories you transport people to new points of view, change meaning, behaviour, and in that way, you change the future.”

Annette Simmons,

Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins (2007)



Questions?

Why are they great storytellers?



Lets talk risk and
opportunity



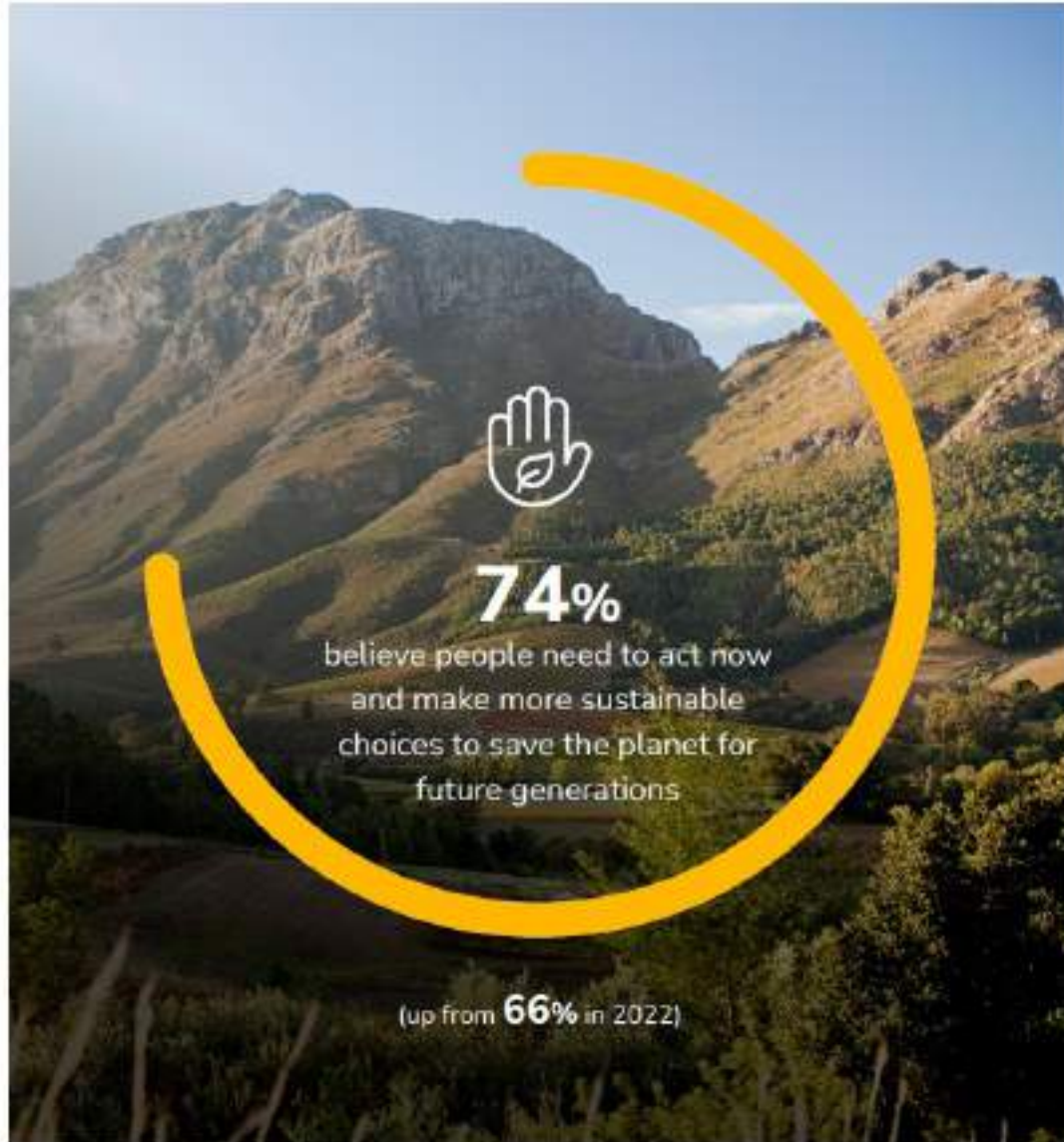


2024
Edelman
Trust
Barometer
Global Report

**We're having global
trust crisis**



A new audience: responsible travellers



Opportunities abound...

- 66% want to leave a place better than they found it
- 65 % would feel better about accommodation if they knew it had a sustainable label
- 69% want to know why specific options are known as sustainable vs the other option and
- 69% would like money they spend travelling goes back to the community

(sustainability.booking.com)



You have an opportunity to guide...

- 44% of travellers don't know where to find more sustainable options
- 40% don't know how or where to find tours and activities that will ensure they give back to the local community
- One on five industry professionals said sustainability will be their top investment priority in 2024.



How to reach travelers with good stories?



SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL STUDY

Consumer Attitudes, Values,
and Motivations in Making
Conscientious Choices

RESEARCH | 22



- 54% via listings and information on travel sites
- 49% via travel shows
- 48% via video
- 46% via reviews from other travelers
- 44% via news or magazine articles
- 37% via blog posts
- 37% via advertisements
- 30% via podcasts
- 8% via social media posts

What information do these new travelers want when planning a trip?



45% recommendations for locally-owned businesses and restaurants near their destination

45% lower environmental-impact transportation options

43% information on how to best engage with local cultures and communities at their destination

42% lodging and accommodation that has a lower environmental impact

41% walkable or bikeable destination recommendations

41% eco-friendly activity recommendations

39% recommendations for locations that are not over-visited

34% information on volunteering with or supporting local organisations at a destination

Rise of greenwashing

The EU found that 53% of green claims were vague, misleading or unfounded, and 40% were unsubstantiated
(2020 EU Research)



7 Sins of Greenwashing

Sin of worshipping false labels

"All our hotels are certified with Green Engage"

Sin of fibbing

"We recycle 100% of our waste" – when that's is not true

Sin of vagueness

"We have eco-friendly practices"

Sin of lesser evil

"Our cruise ships are zero waste"

Sin of irrelevance

"Our fridges are CFC-Free"

Sin of the hidden trade-off

"Thanks to offsetting, our agency is sustainable. "

Sin of no proof

"We are the most sustainable destination in the world"

Based on framework from TerraChoice: The Sins of Greenwashing, 2010

Regulation



JULY 9, 2024 NEWS ALERT

Canada Amends the Competition Act to Target Greenwashing



EU Parliament approves Green Claims Directive to enhance environmental accountability



FTC to revise its guidance on environmental marketing as it seeks public comment on the Green Guides

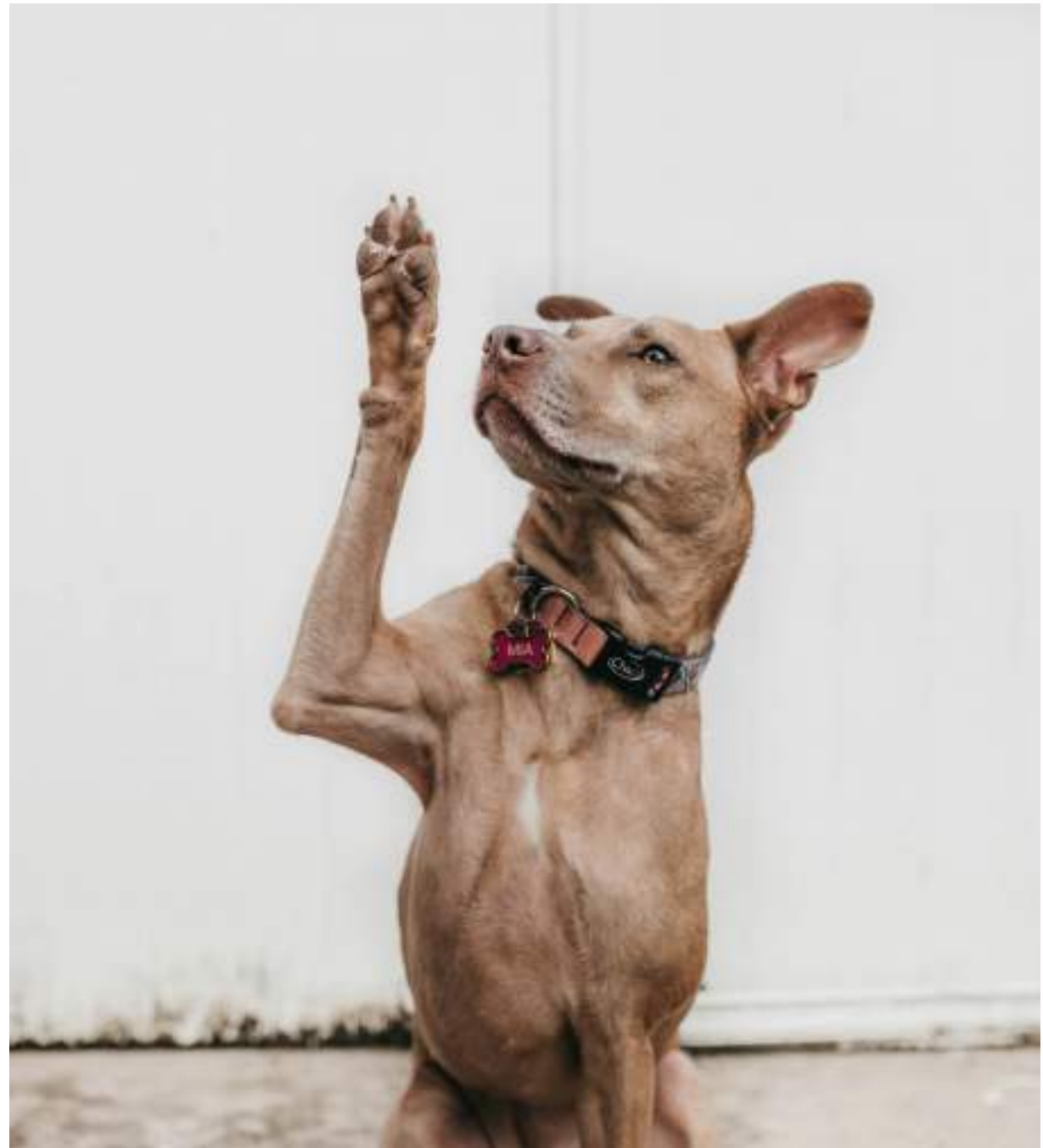


We are not just washing: - We are greenhushing

- Only 53% of destinations are talking about their sustainability efforts and strategies via their websites (GDS-Index)
- Only **19%** of organizations mention their sustainability efforts (ICCA)
- 30% of hotels communicate their sustainability practices (Uni Surrey)

Who is guilty of
greenwashing?

Who is guilty of
greenhushing?



The Principles of Good Sustainability Storytelling

Betsy Reed
Chief Storyteller
GDS-Movement



What destinations are doing a great job with sustainability storytelling? Why?



Back to basics

Golden rules of good storytelling

1. **Have a clear objective** – what are you trying to achieve and why?
2. **Know your audience** – how do they need to hear your message?
3. **Have a clear core message** – what are you trying to say?
4. **Take people on a journey** – a story should have a clear beginning, middle and end.
5. **Provide a clear context** (ie. social, cultural, environmental) to your story



Explicit vs implicit sustainability



Explicit Communication:

- *Directly conveying sustainability practices to guests or customers with clear, specific information.*

Example:

- "Our hotel is committed to sustainability. We use 100% renewable energy, compost all food waste, and provide locally sourced, organic food in our restaurant.

Implicit Communication:

- *Suggesting sustainable practices subtly, without detailed explanations or direct statements.*

Example:

- The hotel decor includes small signs near the light switches saying, "Help us conserve energy by turning off the lights when you leave."
- In the restaurant, they note "Farm-to-Table Ingredients" on the menu without further details.

When to use explicit vs implicit messaging



Explicit messages work best when consumers already are aware of the sustainability issue and will value the company acting on it.

Implicit messages work best for less knowledgeable markets that can misunderstand the issue.

explicit
vs.
implicit

Principles of good sustainability storytelling



Be authentic, be yourself

Don't be afraid of humour

Inspire with heart, respect, and humility

Tell stories of transformation

Be specific. Use data to enhance credibility and bring your story to life

Use the power of many voices / collective storytelling

Use visuals - 'a picture is worth a thousand words'

Appeal to your audience's values

Oslo: using humour to change perceptions



Iceland: using humour to change perceptions



Iceland: using humour to change perceptions

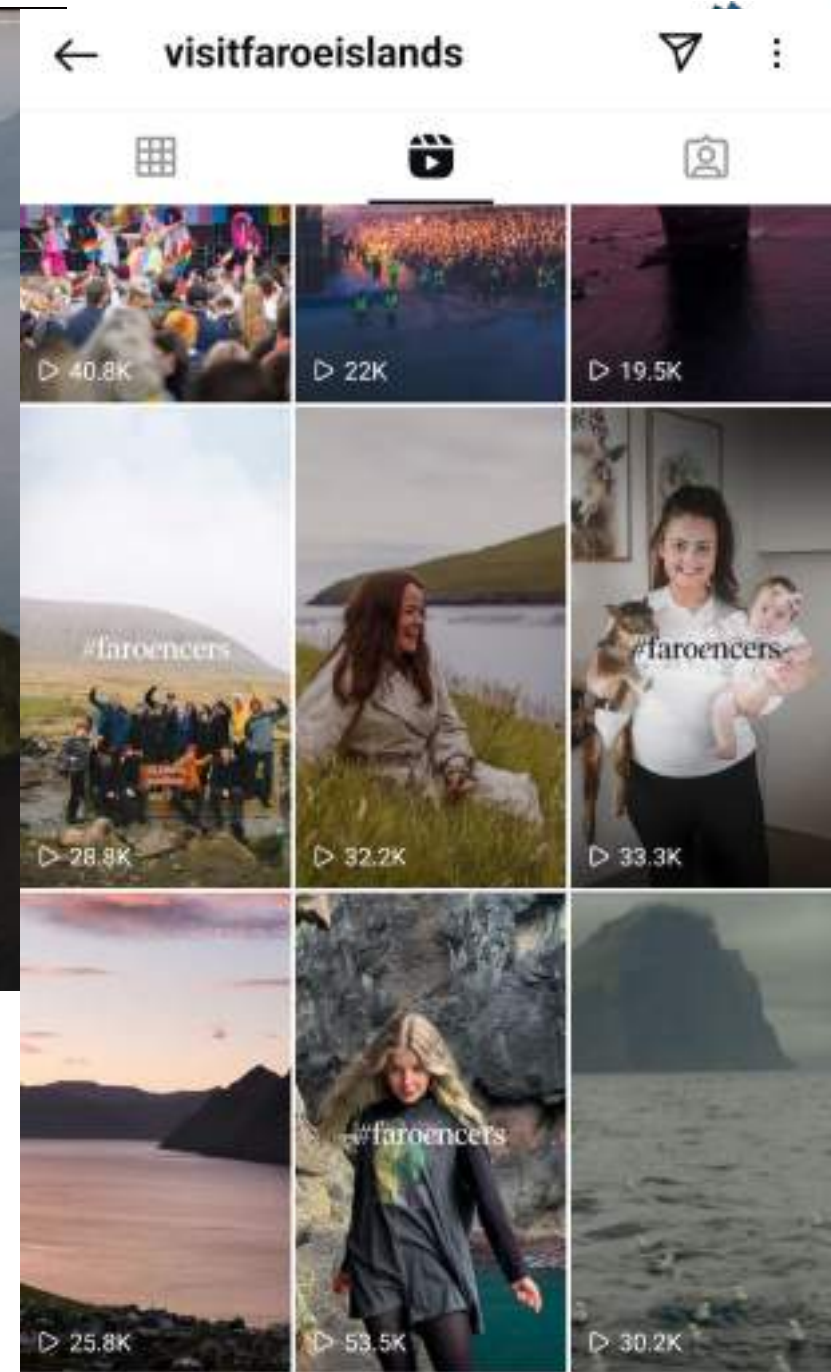
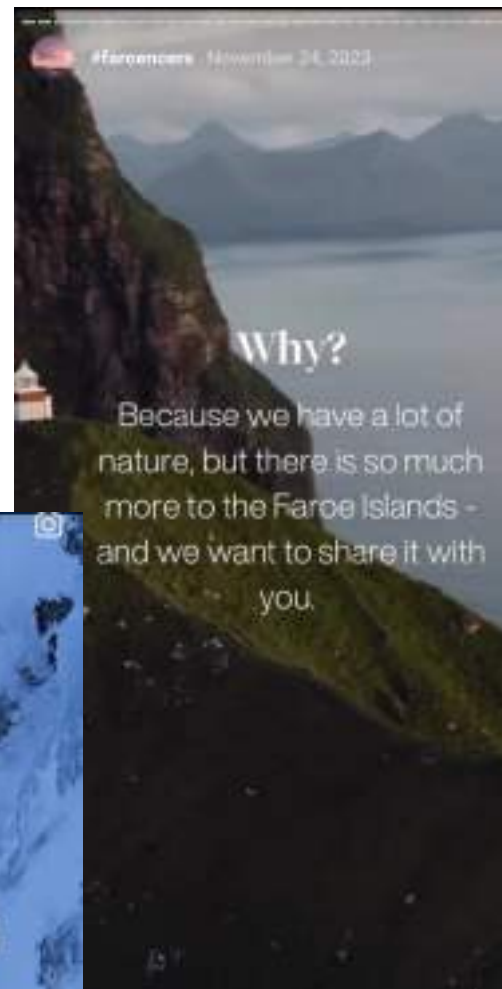


Faroe Islands - Collective storytelling

#faroencers

A lovely bunch of Faroe Islanders that are here to give you a deeper sense of life in the Faroe Islands

The Faroencers will share their stories, and give you a glimpse into their daily lives



Faroe Islands



Use data (it doesn't have to be boring...)



"Over 70% of this city's land area is covered by lush, green parks, making it an urban oasis for nature lovers."

"This destination saw a 25% increase in visitors last year, especially among adventure seekers."

"With over 100 museums and galleries, this city offers a rich cultural experience."

"The city has one of the lowest crime rates in the country and offers over 200 wheelchair-accessible attractions."

"Visit during the annual flower festival in April, which attracts over 50,000 visitors each year."

Visual storytelling: A picture is worth a thousand words



[View the story](#)

150

million tonnes of
plastics in the world's
oceans

10 million tonnes added
every year.

Predicted to triple by
2040!

Appealing to values: Helsinki, Finland

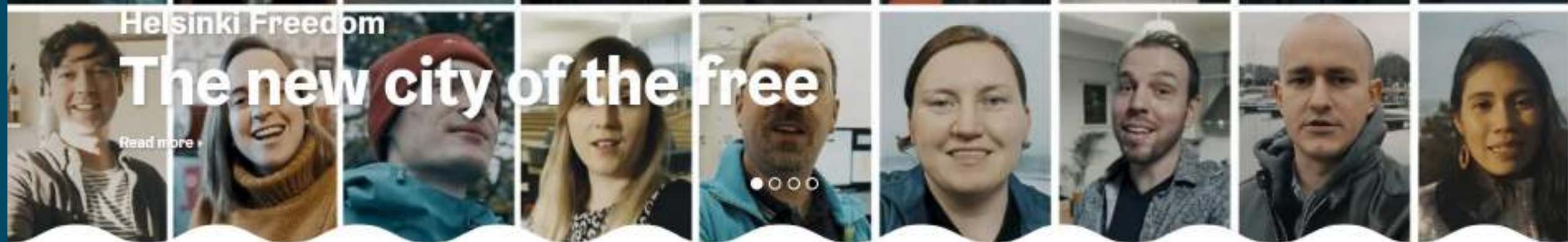




Helsinki Freedom

The new city of the free

Read more





Belonging to Belfast

Questions?

What have we missed?

Do you have other top tips you have learnt for good storytelling?





The End

Almost

Summary – Good storytelling



Golden Rules

- Have a clear objective – what are you trying to achieve?
- Know your audience – how do they need to hear your message?
- Have a clear core message – what are you trying to say?
- Take people on a journey – a story should have a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Provide a context for your story (ie social, cultural, environmental)

Principles

- Be authentic, be yourself.
- Don't be afraid of humour.
- Inspire with heart, respect and humility
- Tell stories of transformation
- Use data to enhance credibility and bring your story to life
- Use the power of many voices / collective storytelling
- Use visuals - 'a picture is worth a thousand words'
- Appeal to your audience's values

Your 'Wash Filter'

- What's our objective in weaving sustainability into our storytelling / making any sustainability-related claims?
- Is it aligned with our brand / does it make sense coming from us?
- Is it relevant to who we're trying to reach? How?
- What are the proof points to back up any ambitions or claims we're making?
- How will those proof points be gathered or measured?
- How will we communicate those?
- Do we need external validation?
- How is this baked into our governance (how we manage this)?
The culture?





Thank you!

For more info

Guy@gds.earth

www.gds.earth

**I'M NOT AN OPTIMIST.
I'M A PRISONER OF HOPE.**

DESMOND TUTU

