



CENTRAL COUNTIES

Executive Director Update – May 2017

I spend a lot of time talking about developing destinations. I use catch-phrases like “make big bigger” and “when the tide rises, all the boats go up”. I explain a destination as “the whole being greater than the sum of its parts”. I do like a good catch-phrase when it comes to something I believe in so deeply. It takes work, courage and belief in your products/services to open yourself up to working with others for your mutual benefit – especially when you don’t think you have anything in common. At the Tourism Symposiums this year, our keynote speaker did a fun exercise that had us all making connections between two things that at first glance had nothing in common. But everyone still managed to find a connection between the two.

What do a limo company and a brewery have in common? In Durham Region, a unique partnership between several breweries and an entrepreneurial limo company created a Brew Tour Destination to fill downtimes for the limo company and drive additional visitation to the area’s fantastic breweries. Wouldn’t it be great if some partners got together to develop a two- or three-day cycling route where a limo or transportation company acted as a support vehicle, moving luggage from accommodation to accommodation and storing purchases made along the route.

What’s the connection between a mill, fruit orchard, soap and bees? To the diverse businesses that developed, and mutual support, *A Country Path*, they represent four of ten great rural agri-tourism experiences that provide a unified and compelling reason to spend several hours or even days in Clarington. If you are a huge fan of handmade soaps but live three hours away, you may not commit the time to visit. But if you are a huge fan of handmade soaps and really like pottery, art, cider and/or have an interest in learning about apiculture, you may spend the whole weekend on Clarington, staying at the Model “A” Acres B&B.

These people made connections that others couldn’t see, had the courage to share control and, in doing so, created destinations where none existed. There is no magic bullet to say what is going to work or not. And there won’t be overnight windfalls. But, by reaching out, making connections, sharing the risk and sticking to it, there is a good chance that you will move the needle of your success.

At the end of the day, you are responsible for the success of your business. Central Counties is here to provide you with resources and assistance to help you succeed. Our business website, www.centralcounties.ca, has great information on partnership opportunities, cooperative advertising opportunities, workshops and courses to fill knowledge gaps, and how to engage with us and leverage our resources to your advantage. Please feel free to reach out to me directly to talk about what we can do together to grow your business. I can be reached at cthibeault@centralcounties.ca

Have a great day!
Chuck