

Experience Dedicated™ *Destination*



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can we stay competitive with other destinations?
How is Rochester doing in the eyes of our visitors?

We won't know, unless we ask.

Here's an FAQ to help you learn how to be a part of this exciting initiative to capture valuable visitor feedback and align our community.

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WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT A QUALITY VISITOR EXPERIENCE?

The *visitor experience* is the next competitive battleground in this age of consumerism and social media. **The experience is our product — that we strengthen together!**

A quality experience is paramount to our mutual goal of:

- More Visitors
- More Spending
- Return Intentions

WHY IS ROCHESTER DOING THIS COMMUNITY-WIDE?

Traditional sales and marketing approaches are no longer enough to **stay competitive with other destinations.**

Extensive research by *The EXPERIENCE Institute®* shows that visitors will gravitate to a destination that is working together to make their overall *total visitor experience* the best it can be.

EXPERIENCE DEDICATED™ DESTINATION WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

We are one of the very first destinations to be accredited as an *Experience Dedicated™ Destination* (EDD — We are **Ed**) by *The EXPERIENCE Institute®*. The institute has spent over 2,000 hours of primary research defining the consumer-driven standards and best practices to measure the destination experience.

The system provides a way to *measure* how we're doing and prioritize initiatives and resources to *take action* on the things we need to work on — together.

In short, EDD is a framework of **continuous improvement to the total visitor experience** — exactly where the focus should be!



WHO IS INVOLVED? HOW WILL SECTORS CONNECT?

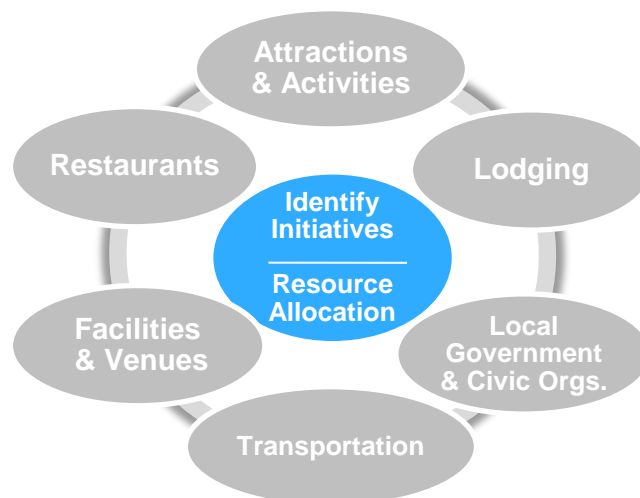
Creating a destination-wide, positive experience — at every visitor 'touch point' — is everyone's responsibility. It's a marathon, not a sprint, involving an ongoing, year-over-year commitment from the following:

- **Destination / Community Leaders** (e.g. city officials, convention and visitors bureau, chamber of commerce, economic development, arts, etc.)
- **Six Industry Sectors** (Lodging; Restaurants; City Government/Civic Organizations; Transportation; Attractions/Activities; Facilities/Venues)
- **Stakeholders** (e.g. agencies, businesses, organizations, owners, managers, citizenry)

Businesses that complete the '**Count Us In**' form are organized into six Sector Panels which comprise the mix of businesses within that sector. Each Sector Panel is led by a Sector Leader and will meet quarterly to review the destination's **Experience Scorecard** report, as well as a **Sector 'Vital Signs'** report. The interactive panel sessions provide a forum to brainstorm how each sector can impact the visitor experience from their perspective.

The more businesses/entities that come on board, the more information we'll have and the more competitive our destination will become!

Plus, part of our destination's *Experience Report* is based upon how many businesses participate. Encourage other businesses to sign on!



Six Sectors

WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS? WHAT IS MEASURED?

Everything is grounded in the consumer-driven standards and best practices of the *Experience Dedicated™ Destination*, developed from 2,000 hours of stakeholder input and a Leisure Traveler Survey of 2,500 consumers.

These standards include all possible elements of a positive experience, from the destination's brand image, to safety, to friendliness and more.

The questions within the ongoing visitor/consumer survey and the regular stakeholder/business surveys are written based on the consumer-based standards & best practices. All of the data goes directly into a centralized database where it is weighted against the industry standards and best practices.

The result is an *Experience Report* that is based upon the balanced scorecard management model to align people to strategy. The four areas of measurement are:

Achieving a Strengthened Competitive Position — Financial Measures

Zealous Focus on Visitors/Customers — Customer Measures

Excelling at Processes That Drive Our Destination Strategy — Process Measures

Equipping Our People Infrastructure and Sustaining Our Ability to Change & Improve — People Measures

These measures are then represented in charts & graphs within the *Experience Report* — given to all participating businesses — providing valuable information you can't gain on your own.

In short, *The EXPERIENCE Institute®* has developed the formula to deliver metrics that demonstrate how the destination measures up against the standards, which are actionable and grounded in consumer insight, involving:

- 1. What the Visitor Says** — via ongoing, real-time visitor feedback/data
- 2. How Well We Activate the Standards** — “walking the talk” throughout the destination; how stakeholders act day-to-day to support the standards

From this ongoing data, Rochester will know if it's meeting or exceeding the standards and identify ways to improve and/or celebrate!

WHAT ARE WE ASKING VISITORS? CAN LOCALS TAKE THE SURVEY, TOO?

Questions range from their overall satisfaction with their destination experience, to whether this is a first-time visit, to whether they will recommend Rochester to their friends and more. The mobile-based survey can be taken on any device or desktop computer.

There are more than 60 questions in the visitor/consumer survey. But, to keep it short, the system “serves up” only five per encounter. So, even if they've completed the survey once, it's okay to encourage them to do so again and again...they'll get a different set of questions each time!

And, yes, locals also can take the survey, as they're experiencing the destination, too. If the question only applies to visitors, locals can simply mark “Not Applicable.”



WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Growing the number of visitors to Rochester helps all of us. And, through the ongoing capture of visitor/consumer data, your business can gain validated, third-party data and marketing “intel” you can't get on your own, e.g. aggregate metrics by industry sector, including overall growth in customers; specific trends such as repeat visits; overall visitor satisfaction; and more.

And, the *Sector 'Vital Signs'* reports help businesses gain consumer insight and trends that you can use in your marketing or day-to-day operations.

Important Note: All reports are based on *aggregate* results for all businesses – across the entire destination; no *individual* business data is reported and no proprietary data is captured.

WHAT ARE WE EXPECTED TO DO, IF WE SIGN ON?

In order to help our community maintain its formal designation as an *Experience Dedicated™ Destination*, businesses that sign on are expected to do four key things of great importance:

- 1. Push Visitors or Consumers to Online/Mobile Surveys (e.g. through URL links, signage, websites, e-newsletter wording, etc) to Give Feedback on Their Visit and on the Destination, in General.** WHY? Without this ongoing data, we don't know how we're doing and what we need to work on across our destination. Once you submit this *Count Us In* form, you'll receive more info on how to order free survey tools and materials to push visitors to the online/mobile survey. It's easy and fun for your team and the visitors! And, most importantly, it carries the "We Care" message across our destination.
- 2. Respond to Two Stakeholder/Business Surveys:**
 - (1) A Brief Six-Question *Monthly Customer Growth Survey***
 - (2) A Six-Minute *Semi-Annual Business/Stakeholder Insight Survey***WHY? (a) To provide monthly, non-proprietary measures of overall visitor growth and changes in spending that can be used by business owners and managers to gauge how their business is doing compared to the aggregate for their sector (e.g. sales are up overall for our sector, but our company's sales are down). (b) To semi-annually obtain your valuable insight into what you're seeing and hearing from your customers (e.g. overall visitor satisfaction, way-finding; transportation options; safe; clean; etc.).

These two ongoing surveys lead to meaningful measures to help our destination stay competitive and fuel future destination initiatives.
- 3. Include a Link on Your Website to the *Experience Rochester Website (MinnesotasRochester.com)*.** WHY? The more people learn about our destination, the more likely they are to come, stay longer and do more things. Help give them the entire picture of the vibrancy of our destination!
- 4. Maintain Accurate, Timely Information on Your Website.** WHY? Visitors now research everything and create an overall image of a destination by looking through a websites throughout a destination – nixing consideration of destinations that have poorly organized sites.

Bottom Line: If we can get hundreds of businesses providing this input — all across Rochester — think of the trend data we'll have as a destination to know how we're doing over time!

We hope you will join us!

QUESTIONS?

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