



## Tour Guiding and the Art of Telling Stories

On – Site Coaching for Effective Visitor Interaction and Storytelling

*"A man who tells stories must think of who is hearing or reading, for a story has many versions. Everyone takes what he wants or can from it and thus changes it to his measure. Some pick out parts, some strain it through their prejudice and some paint it with their own delight. A story must have points of contact with the listener to make him feel at home in it. Only then can the audience accept wonders". John Steinbeck*

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### The Power of Stories

Stories are and always have been interwoven in our lives throughout civilisation, from the tribesmen around the campfire to digital content developers.

Stories engage our imagination, our ability to dream and help us understand complex ideas and lessons. Stories draw on emotions, experiences and history.

Great powerful stories are honest and authentic; they connect the brain, get attention and put people into the shoes of others.

Great powerful stories can build relationships and make people care.

### Ireland's Landscape

Journeying through **Ireland's Ancient East**, the **Wild Atlantic Way**, through the heartlands and cities, we find stories that are heroic, that speak of human endeavour, achievements and frailty; stories that cross the threshold from the ordinary world to the adventurous and the mythical.

These stories appeal to all.

### The Power of Storytelling

Communicating our true culture and history in an engaging and inspiring manner to a wide cross section of people is a challenge. Maximising local culture and character is essential to delivering an authentic unique and memorable experience.

A great storyteller understands the different audiences, what they want to see, hear and in particular, what they want to feel. A great storyteller inspires, entertains and ensures visitors have a positive, memorable experience. He or she hooks the visitor, makes a promise of a unique experience and delivers on the promise; is confident, clear and in control.

A powerful storyteller delivers this performance with enthusiasm and energy as if for the first time, every time!

### Our Coaching Programme

**Our unique storytelling programme is site specific, focused to meet your site requirements and delivered at your site.**

This is for personnel engaged in front line communication with tourists and visitors to towns, tourist attractions and heritage sites, ambassadors and staff at tourist information points, for guides who are new to the role of storytelling and for experienced guides who may benefit from a refresher programme.

## **Programme Content**

We offer three distinct elements to our programme.

We will customise the details to suit your specific requirements.

You may wish to avail of one or all three.

### **1 Effective audience engagement and optimal delivery**

Speech awareness

Correct methods of breathing, articulation, effective fluency

Voice relaxation techniques

Communicating in your own voice and own accent

Attention to pitch, pace, projection and clarity

Attention to colloquialisms and any individual speech limitations / challenges

Personal and audience awareness

Understanding your own personality and how one appears to others

Posture and using your body to reinforce your message

Understanding your different audiences and building the relationship:

Strategies for making visitors welcome and comfortable

How to empathise and respond to their needs and expectations

Engaging with people of different abilities

Assertive communication techniques

Setting the boundaries, listening, keeping time and keeping control

How to negotiate with difficult, bored or tired visitors

Energising strategies to overcome lethargy

How to combat any feelings of boredom and to sustain mutual engagement

### **2 Your site- specific story narrative**

Relating to your audience and building the relationship

Reaching, connecting and making them a part of the story

How different audiences relate and engage

Providing orientation and starting with the familiar

Leading into the unknown, repeating and checking

Identifying what is unique and original

Capturing the essence of your site

Finding the narrative hook and building the structure

Creating memorable characters that connect to the audience

Emotional engagement, feeling versus fact

Creating tensions with your stories, between the place, objects and the audience

Appropriate use of drama and theatre

Working with the space, the mood

Connecting with the exhibit displays and artefacts

Ensuring the story flows quickly smoothly and fluently

### **3 Trial runs and appraisal**

We can return to site to appraise the individual tours / storytelling by the participants, help refine and polish out any issues.

## Duration and Methodology

The programme can accommodate a maximum of 8 participants  
The average programme can be delivered over **5 site days** in one or in three individual phases.

The tutor will require existing tour scripts in advance preparatory or may conduct a site visit to hear existing tour presentations  
The time spent on this will be determined by the existing site tour content and the tour duration

For a maximum of 8 participants:

Effective audience engagement and optimal delivery	x 2 days
The site specific story narrative	x 1 day
Trial runs and appraisal session	x 2 days

The programme involves a combination of teaching, guidance, demonstrations and enjoyable role play within the group. The tutor will provide on-going assessment, addressing specific weaknesses in a positive manner.

Programme hand- outs for participants

An aide memoir of the topics covered will be provided including home exercises, guidance notes on appropriate dress, manners and general behaviour and references to further reading

Concluding questionnaire

Participants will be invited to complete a questionnaire giving their assessment of the programme and the coach.

Post programme report

On completion, a report will be provided to the Client with an appraisal of participants, their appraisal of their own experience. We will provide options for any further coaching/ refreshing if required.

*The course does not deal with Health and Safety training, Garda vetting of candidates or legal requirements*

**For further details on our course and tutors please contact:**

**Scroope Design**

**e**                    [scroope@scroope.com](mailto:scroope@scroope.com)

**mob**                **087 2357538**