

# Giving the Gift of an Experience has Limitless Benefits



As we emerge from the clutches of Covid and our freedom of movement is fully restored, giving the gift of an experience is more appealing than ever before.

Whether it's for a family member or friend's wedding, a birthday, or even Christmas, deciding what to give a loved one on their special day can be often extremely challenging.

Put simply, when it comes to buying something meaningful, a unique gift of an experience is a wonderful surprise. A diverse range of items can be gifted and priced at a premium, because customers love something bespoke and different.

Anna Prior, head of Marketing & Trade Sales at Brighton-based visitor attraction BA i360, said: "We offer an e-gift voucher through MaximWeb for nearly all of our experiences, the latest one being the BA i360 Tower Top Climb, which is the perfect gift to give a 'difficult to buy for' teenager.

"The gift of a voucher for the BA i360 Tower Top Climb provides the recipient with a unique and exhilarating experience which they can then book on a date that is suitable for them."

Gifts of an experience are meaningful and impactful, giving the recipient something to look forward to and firing their imagination. In an age of buy less, throw away less, they are also sustainable, with no postage, delivery or wrapping paper involved.

Anna added: "When we launch a new experience we consult with TOR Systems to ensure we can also offer the new experience as an e-gift voucher. Vouchers have always been an essential part of our business in terms of delivering great customer service and providing additional revenue streams."

Customers are prepared to pay more for the privilege of having a tangible voucher, sometimes with a gift box, whilst the immediacy of e-vouchers are also very popular with shoppers who have left it a bit late.

Having established that a gift of an experience is a fantastic idea for customers, it is also hugely beneficial for visitor attractions. It provides:

- Regular cashflow (buy now, may not visit for several months)
- Attracts a different audience through the door
- Increases secondary spend (upselling) – as the guest isn't the person who spent the money
- Repeat visitors - those that come on an experience may want to come back to explore a different part of the attraction
- Customer data – gifters are different to the general consumer
- Huge range of price points, what you'd spend on a wedding gift may differ greatly to what you'd spend on a friend's birthday
- Groups of friends/work colleagues pull money together
- Different to gift memberships, they shouldn't be mistaken as an either/or. A different type of audience and guests receive a completely different benefit.

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Sarah Bagg, TOR Systems' business development director, said: "BA i360 is an excellent example of a visitor attraction which was earning long before opening its doors.

"Gift vouchers went on sale in autumn 2015 and it didn't open until summer 2016, so it was a great way of gauging a level of interest in product/attraction, engaging with marketing and bringing an immediate income stream."

## Key things to remember when creating experience-based gift vouchers:

- Who is your target audience?
- Think outside the box to your usual admissions audience
- Think about price points, as spend per head may vary dependant on 'experience' or who/what occasion the customer is buying for.
- Ensure the process for booking and redeeming is easy, with little need for manual intervention.
- Ensure gift vouchers expiries can be extended to provide the best customer service.
- If there are 3 different prices when compared to just 2 it's proven that the consumer will opt for the middle-priced option, think about the benefits £ that will bring.
- Ensure the options are clear and not overly confusing in terms of £ and offering.
- How can you up sell, or add value?
- If your experience is an online gift voucher, how about offering a gift box with a unique retail product. People often want that something extra to present their voucher in, as a stylist present.
- Who is your competition for this audience? Consider this being not your normal admissions market competition.
- What is your competition doing? Who's doing it well?
- What's worked for you in the past, and how can you leverage this?
- How useful is your reporting/CRM in supporting your gifting strategy?
- Can you ensure the whole guest experience is maximised for this audience online and onsite?
- The recipient may not know too much about where the voucher has come from, so make a good job of packaging the information which accompanies it.

## What are pricing strategies?

Pricing strategies refer to the processes which attractions use to set prices for their products and services. If pricing is how much you charge for your products, then a pricing strategy is how you determine what that amount should be.

Having an effective pricing strategy helps solidify your position by building trust with your customers, as well as meeting your business goals.

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Here are three factors which form the basis of a winning pricing strategy:

## 1, Portrays Value

The word cheap has two meanings. It can mean a lower price, but it can also mean poorly made. There's a reason people associate cheaply priced products with cheaply made ones. Built into the higher price of a product is the assumption that it's of higher value.

## 2, Convinces customers to buy

A high price may convey value, but if that price is more than a potential customer is willing to pay, it won't matter. A low price will seem cheap and get your product passed over. The ideal price is one that convinces people to purchase your offering over the similar products that your competitors have to offer.

## 3, Gives your customers confidence in your product

If higher-priced products portray value and exclusivity, then the opposite follows as well. Prices that are too low will make it seem as though your product isn't well made.

Sarah added: "If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that spending time with our loved ones is a higher priority for most that material gifts, so when you're considering your offering, how about giving your experiences a priority?"

TOR Systems ticketing and CRM solution "Maxim" has the functionality to support experiences such as gift vouchers, which can be sold and redeemed through all sales channels.

It provides an excellent commercial opportunity to maximise the gift market, without any additional administration cost incurred by the attraction. Vouchers can be personalised with the inclusion of individual messages.

It also provides opportunities to upsell during the online customer journey, whilst promotions allow attractions to offer a variety of discounts to customers.