



TOURISM FOR A BETTER WORLD

Building Long Term Resilience

Build Lasting Resilience: Knowledge, Innovation & Diversification

In this topic you'll explore how **knowledge, information, and continuous learning** are crucial for long-term resilience. We'll dive into the vital role of **innovation** within tourism and hospitality, and how **diversifying your products, services, and markets** can create robust, enduring businesses.

What you'll gain from this lesson:

- An understanding of **stakeholder roles** in resilience, including a responsibility matrix.
- Insights into the importance of **innovation and diversification** for resilience.
- Practical ways to **contribute to building resilience** in your organization and the broader tourism sector.

Ready to transform challenges into opportunities?

Keywords: Sustainability, tourism, resilience, diversification, building resilience, innovation

Long Term Resilience

Building a Future-Proof Tourism Sector: Your Path to Long-Term Resilience

Welcome to the fifth and final unit in our "Resilience in Tourism" course series!

As we've explored throughout this journey, tourism businesses and the livelihoods they support are inherently vulnerable to a variety of hazards. This vulnerability is especially pronounced in regions where tourism forms a significant portion of the GDP and where operations are located in sensitive, exposed environments like low-lying islands, coastal areas, or mountains. In these areas, the sector is often classified as highly susceptible to diverse risks.

Given this reality, **adaptability**—the capacity to effectively respond to and evolve with change—is not just important, but absolutely critical for these regions, and indeed, for the broader tourism industry.

Why Long-Term Resilience Matters

Resilience can manifest in many ways, but for a truly sustainable impact, it demands a **long-term perspective**. This unit will delve into what this means in practice and how you can achieve it.

Building resilience is an **ongoing process** because social, economic, and environmental conditions are in constant flux. Beyond simply identifying and assessing risks (through a risk assessment, as we discussed) and planning for crises to reduce vulnerability, businesses must proactively:

- **Initiate:** Take the lead in preparing for future challenges.
- **Restore:** Rebuild and recover effectively after disruptions.
- **Redesign:** Innovate and transform organizational structures and relationships to thrive in a changing world.

In essence, the ultimate goal of building resilience is to **safeguard what is valuable** within your business while simultaneously being **prepared for change** to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

So, let's jump straight into the topic.

Role of Stakeholders

Knowledge, information, learning

Powering Up Your Resilience: The Keys of Knowledge, Information, and Learning

To truly build long-term resilience, especially in a dynamic industry like tourism, you need to master three crucial elements: **knowledge, information, and continuous learning**.

Tapping into Diverse Knowledge Streams

Understanding risks, the forces driving change, and effective response options is paramount. This involves drawing from different types of knowledge:

- **Scientific Knowledge:** This comes from research and provides critical insights into areas like climate change predictions, new technologies, and various mitigation and adaptation strategies. However, as Julia points out, "Scientific knowledge is often not easily accessible, which is a problem." To bridge this gap, tourism bodies and associations can form **partnerships with universities and research institutions**. This not only provides access to cutting-edge information but also helps ensure the knowledge generated is practical and relevant to the industry's needs.
- **Practical Knowledge:** This is invaluable knowledge gained through real-world experience, often within the industry itself. Businesses highly value this type of insight because it's been

tested and proven by organizations in similar situations or locations. This includes both the experiences of other businesses and your own valuable lessons learned from past crises or disasters. Tourism associations can play a vital role here by sharing practical knowledge through **case studies** or by facilitating **workshops and events** where operators can discuss challenges and share their learnings.

Learning from Your Own Experience

To ensure your business genuinely benefits from its own experiences in managing risks and building resilience, make sure to:

- **Conduct debriefing sessions** after any event, no matter how small.
- **Involve all staff members** in these discussions.
- Provide opportunities for **anonymous feedback** to encourage open and honest insights.
- Crucially, **monitor and evaluate** any new practices you put in place to ensure they are effective.

By actively seeking out, sharing, and learning from both scientific research and practical industry experiences, your business can significantly enhance its long-term resilience.

What specific challenges does your business face in accessing or applying new knowledge?

The role of stakeholders in building resilience

Stronger Together: The Indispensable Role of Stakeholders in Building Resilience

In times of crisis and recovery, forging **strong, lasting relationships and networks** isn't just helpful—it's critical. This applies to everyone, from your own team to external partners. Building robust networks is especially vital for smaller businesses, where internal resources, knowledge, and expertise might be limited.

Your Team: Employees as Your Greatest Asset

There are compelling reasons why businesses should strive to retain their employees during a downturn. Evidence shows that many businesses go to great lengths to support key staff through tough times. Fostering **trusting relationships** can lead to mutual understanding, where employees might willingly reduce hours or take on different tasks to keep their jobs. However, approaches to staff management during recovery often differ, with significant implications for long-term resilience. Consider these two contrasting viewpoints:

Manager 1: The Rational Manager

- "My top priority is ensuring the business survives and stays profitable."
- "If the business survives, future jobs will exist."
- "Cutting staff is the most efficient way to reduce fixed costs."
- "I'm accountable to shareholders, and my boss at HQ expects me to lay off staff to secure my own position."

Manager 2: The Empathetic Manager

- "In this service industry, good employees are everything."
- "I've invested heavily in training my staff; if they leave, that investment walks out the door with them."
- "In our small business, employees are like family."
- "My staff trusts and relies on me. As their boss, I feel responsible for doing everything I can to protect their jobs and livelihoods."
- "As a responsible business, we must support our staff through difficult times."

Clarifying Roles: The Responsibility Matrix

A **responsibility matrix** is a powerful tool for building organizational resilience. It helps you:

- **Map and assess existing skill sets** within your team.
- **Assign and manage responsibilities** effectively.
- **Identify skill gaps** and future training needs.

To develop one, first pinpoint **all tasks** required for projects or daily operations. Then, define the **skills needed** to successfully complete these tasks, and finally, identify the **skills each team member possesses**. Responsibilities are then assigned to existing roles, carefully considering your team members' skills and experiences.

As Julia notes, "When responsibilities for deliverables or tasks are identified, it is important that these are clearly communicated so that staff understand what is expected of them."

Beyond Your Walls: Engaging External Stakeholders

Guests and Customers

Your **customers are essential** to your business's survival and growth, making them a critical stakeholder in building resilience. Guests who feel a genuine connection with your business are more likely to return. Being **proactive and positive in your communication** with guests is a crucial step in building these relationships. A **loyal and diverse customer base** can be a lifeline during recovery.

Suppliers and Partners

Cultivating strong relationships with your **suppliers and partners** also significantly boosts resilience. Trusted business relationships can serve as invaluable **sources of information and advice** during a crisis, enhancing your adaptive capacity. Trust often means suppliers and partners will be more **accommodating and supportive** during difficult times, providing much-needed stability.

Tourism Associations and Industry Bodies

Being a member of **tourism associations and industry bodies** can significantly increase your resilience. These organizations offer invaluable support during crises and recovery by:

- **Representing the industry with a united voice**, often lobbying governments for assistance.
- **Providing training** to support industry recovery efforts.
- **Offering updates on policies** and their specific relevance to the industry.

- Helping identify relevant regulations or risks.
- Facilitating access to crucial information and knowledge exchange, as we discussed earlier.

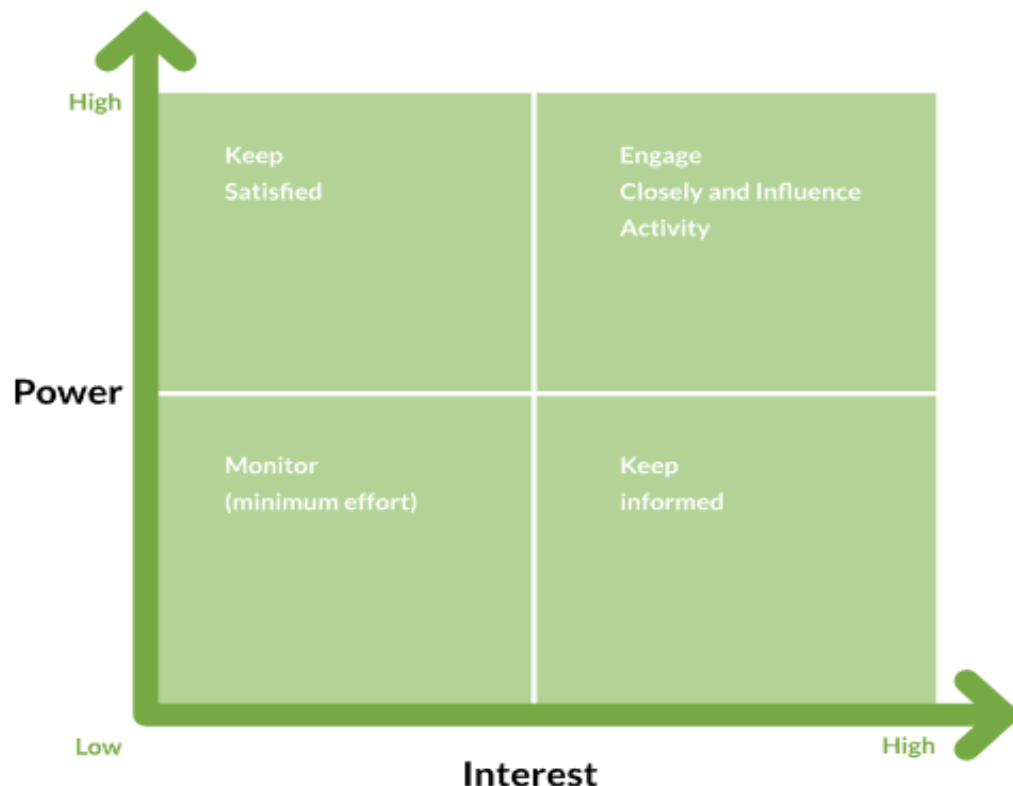
What steps can you take this week to strengthen your relationships with one key internal or external stakeholder?

Stakeholder mapping

Stakeholder analysis involves a systematic identification, evaluation and prioritization of anyone who can influence or has an interest in your business (or destination). A common way to analyze stakeholders is through stakeholder mapping. There are different approaches and types of maps.

Stakeholder map - type 1

A common approach is to plot all stakeholders against two variables: their interest in the business (low to high) and their influence on (or power to influence) the success of the business (low to high). This creates four quadrants. For resilience building in particular, the second variable may rate the stakeholder's influence on responding to change or disasters, or their influence on building resilience.



Stakeholder map - type 2

Another way to map stakeholders is in a circle whereby the most important stakeholders are placed in its core, the direct stakeholder in the middle ring and the indirect or less important stakeholders in the outer ring.

