

It pays to listen to customers



Shhhh ... your customers are trying to tell you something!

“We think it’s really important to listen to customers because it adds so much to the quality of the experience,” says Alex Hale, Guiding Coordinator for Hobart Cruises, which operates the daily Peppermint Bay Cruise.

He sees two key ways in which good listening improves the experience: during delivery and as part of monitoring and evaluation.

“When we’re doing a cruise, listening is important so we can help our guests create their own experience. It’s just a small example, but if someone asks me a question, I’ll often put that over the mike and use their name.

“Just yesterday in the D’Entrecasteaux Channel a guy was asking me if we ever see white pointers. I said we hadn’t seen any around here but literally seconds later, we saw a thresher shark in the water, which we pointed out. This guy got quite excited and it heightens the sense of spontaneity for others.”

Listening to customers means you can hone in on what interests them and, Alex says, it gives you a better chance to get them involved. Encouraging customers to communicate with you can pay off in other ways, too.

It’s one thing to offer a successful visitor experience – and another to keep evolving it so it doesn’t lose its ability to attract customers. Which is why regular customer surveys have also reaped benefits for Hobart Cruises.

“We do surveys every six months on our regular cruises and we do them for our special cruises, too. People bring all sorts of useful things to our attention. Some things we can’t do for cost reasons but some are great ideas we haven’t thought of.

“One of the best examples is the suggestion that we mount a camera on the foredeck. That way, even if you’re inside the vessel, you can see the view at the front. It’s worked really well – it may be a fairly small thing to do but it’s really improved the experience from inside the vessel.”

The half-day Peppermint Bay Cruise, from Hobart to the Peppermint Bay regional food destination, focuses on Tasmania’s island life, from its connection to the sea to wildlife, local food and wine, and heritage.

