

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Abstracts are invited for papers from anyone with an interest in rural entrepreneurship; we encourage contributions from academics and practitioners alike. Please indicate which of the conference themes you think is/are most appropriate and limit your abstract to 400 words.

Your Details

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Please use the following headings: (boxes will expand as you type)

Title: Rural Tourism Entrepreneurship. A case of business model innovation by Lundgren Tours.
Purpose of this paper (please also indicate whether empirical, conceptual or case study etc) Northumberland is a rural county in the North East of England and in 2015, tourism industry was worth £815m to its economy (Northumberland Tourism, 2015). The industry is built around several thousands of small and medium-sized businesses employing c.11,500 people and bringing to the local economy value similar to agriculture, mineral extraction and construction. Globally, the tourism industry has been boosted by technology developments, the birth of shared economy and advanced business model innovations, leading to formation of now multi-million valued companies such as Airbnb, Uber, VacayHero and TripAdvisor. In Northumberland however, majority of tourism businesses are dominated by family firms, property owners and experienced individuals looking for a change of lifestyle. This case study showcases the journey of a young student entrepreneur, Robert Jones, founder of Northumberland-based Lundgren Tours, a guided coach tour business established in 2016, and how he is growing his business through business model innovation.
Design/methodology/approach (including limitations if applicable) The researcher is a business coach/mentor to the founder. The business has been setup as part of the founder's undergraduate degree in applied entrepreneurship BA(Hons) Entrepreneurial Business Studies. The case study is initial step on a path to a research paper.
Findings Although there is no direct competition and it is relatively easy and cheap to set up a guided tour company, a large and year on year increase in the number of tourist visitors into the rural area does not guarantee a sufficient demand for a guided tour business. As Robert Jones has found out, majority of visitors to Northumberland would come by car and it is a challenge to get them out of their own vehicle and onto a bus tour. Learning from experience, Robert has pivoted the business and tested a different business model where the tour is pre-sold to a target group of customers rather than relying on advertising to general visitor population throughout the region. This innovation ensured every individual tour was profit generating from the outset. Building on this insight, the founder is now looking for ways to scale up the business.

<p>Practical implications</p> <p>Business model innovation is one of the key skills for an entrepreneur looking to set up a tourism business in a rural area. Additionally, having space and time to test the market and several business models would be extremely beneficial to ensure business can be developed into self-sustainable and profit-generating enterprise.</p>
<p>Policy Implications (if applicable)</p> <p>This is a single case of setting up an enterprise in rural tourism by a young student entrepreneur. Potential policy implication would be to evaluate regional enterprise support programmes to see if they promote and encourage young people to start businesses in their rural locality and if developing innovative business skills form part of those programmes.</p>
<p>What is the originality/value of paper</p> <p>The case study and subsequent paper will provide original observation of setting up and growing a tourism business in a rural area by a young entrepreneur. It will also contribute to the sparse literature and studies of tourism in Northumberland.</p>
<p>Please state if your paper is a:</p> <p>Presentation only</p>
<p>Please indicate the theme(s) that you consider most appropriate for your paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship, farming and the natural environment <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Rural Entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> International dimensions of rural entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> New approaches in rural theory, method and measurement <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities and challenges for rural development <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Innovation, EU funding and the role of Universities <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Social Entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Place Marketing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Tourism and Hospitality Entrepreneurship

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Yes No

To apply to participate in the Early-Career research development seminar, PhD applicants must submit a short project description (max 4 pages) with name, project title, affiliation, outline of methodology(ies) and a letter of recommendation from their supervisor. Post-doctoral researchers should submit a short description of their current research interest (max 1 page).