

## Get your piece of the three million, start a tourism side hustle

Three million people visit the Olympic national park and forest each year. What if a tourism side hustle could help you tap into that enormous wealth? These visitors are coming here to play!

Watch millions of dollars worth of RVs drive by as the tourists go home after a weekend of play. How about just a taste of that cash? Remember Sam Walton's advice; find out what people want and then sell it to them.

There are many businesses here, some of them new, catering to tourists. In spite of this, industry insiders would still call us "underserved." This means there's plenty of room for **more tourism services**.

The even better news is that **tourism is a synergetic industry**. The more participants serving the market, the stronger that market becomes. Variety strengthens our appeal.

**More tourism business is also good news for those not enthusiastic about tourists visiting our communities.** Why? Tourists tend to get under foot when there is a lack of structured activities. More tourism business means busier tourists. Busier tourists means fewer lost souls wandering around going west on First.

Because we live in a tourist destination, we might not see the opportunities here. We're like projectionists in a first run movie theater. We're immersed in the wonder of the North Olympic Peninsula, so we just don't see our town as our visitors do.

To help open our eyes, we can visit sites like Trip Advisor or read customer reviews of the now defunct Amazon Explore virtual experiences, popular activities offered during the pandemic. These and other research sources can help you hone in on concepts that will be interesting to you and your potential customers. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

**Want to be an actor?** Play the role of a historic North Olympic Peninsula character and teach visitors our wild history. Sequim once had sand dunes, Port Angeles was platted by a *commune*. Where else would visitors learn about these and other crazy peninsula facts, if not from you?

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**Already a personal trainer?** How about workouts or yoga in the park, beach or forest?

**Like to cook?** Personal chefs can offer campsite cuisine or lead tours of our local restaurants. We have so many specialty farms and ranches.

I have no idea why no one has **replicated Tillicum Village** here, that legacy attraction out of the Seattle waterfront, featuring indigenous entertainers, storytelling and foods of the local tribes.

Remember that enterprising guy who **rented ice chests pre-filled with ice** to successful fishers? His sign was Front and Race street.

**Short term pet care**, many people bring pets here when visiting the park. Some park locations no longer allow dogs, some travelers might want to take a day trip to Canada or otherwise travel in a way or to a destination that is not pet friendly.

**A traveler's pet care business** might be just what these visitors are looking for!

**A traveler's shopping service** could help resupply visitors mid-trip or solve the problem of a forgotten item. You could also provide valuable delivery services if you already own a boat or other specialty vehicle.

To get more ideas, download the visitors' guides for other popular tourist destinations. You can read the articles later, but look at the advertisers. These businesses are paying to reach visitors, what are they selling?

**Tourism businesses can easily advertise** on social media, web and even with old fashion flyers and postcards.

**Your tourism experience business can sell tickets through third-party merchants like** AirBnB, FareHarbor, Eventbrite or PayPal.

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## **Get your piece of the three million, start a tourism side hustle**

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**And now, it's time for a quiz. What is it that:**

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- Has more square footage than the Mall of America
- Is twice as long as the Miracle Mile
- Offers thirty retail stores and forty restaurants
- Has more excursions than a Ca-ribb-ean cruise
- Is accessible by air, water and motor vehicle

Wouldn't you love to start a side hustle for tourists in a place like that?

You can! It's our very own Port Angeles city center, from Del Guzzi to Valley and First to the waterfront. Yes, this is part two of "get your piece of the three million, start a tourism side hustle!"

I think it's important to acknowledge that several organizations are working on tourism at the strategic level. That strategic work will be vital to our long term success, but I'm a street-level guy. I'm a small business development center guy. I'm a business coach guy. I work with people at the ground level.

I'm hoping to invigorate some interest in earning money from the visitors we already have. Visitors who are already here. Visitors who are already looking for products and services. I'm encouraging our local entrepreneurs to fill the needs that are already presenting themselves. What needs are those? Let's look at the numbers.

A recent economic analysis tells an important story. Mastercard, in collaboration with the Kennedy business school at Harvard, looked at money collected from tourists.

This study discovered a formula for a healthy tourism economy. Tourism economies performing well showed a specific pattern of tourist spending. One third of the money collected from visitors was for hotels and restaurants. The other two thirds was generated by retail and services for tourists. The ideal tourism dollars relationship is one third from hotels and meals, two thirds from retail and services.

Here's Clallam, by the numbers. Historically, money collected from visitors in Clallam County shows enormous potential. Almost two thirds of the money Clallam County collects from visitors comes from hotels and restaurants. Only one third of visitor money

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is generated by retail and services. In other words, the tourists are here! They are willing to buy! Let's give them more ways to spend their money!

Let's consider one way to measure the opportunity. Our visitors now spend \$170 million each year on accommodation and restaurants

That \$170 million would ideally be one third of tourist spending. This could mean we have the potential to generate up to an additional of \$340 million in retail and services. We currently generate \$130 million in retail and services, so there's plenty of headroom. Looking at our \$340 million potential, **this suggests a market opportunity of as much as another \$210 million dollars.** Would an extra \$200 million dollars in tourism revenue make a difference here?

**Could this be magic?** What an exciting laboratory to explore! It's a great market for starting a minimum-viable-form business to test the waters. Regular listeners will know what comes next. If you have a side hustle in your vision of success, we just described a need, pain or gap. Start looking for an attractive market by building a personal tourism-business network.

### Research ideas

Build your tourism-business network with people who deal with tourists every day. You'll want a network made up of:

- Chamber visitor center volunteers
- Hotel desk attendants
- Mainstreet shopkeepers
- Downtown restaurant waitstaff
- Taxi and rideshare drivers
- Farmers market vendors
- Travel agents

Your tourism business network will help you discover opportunities. Your "make dollars to make sense" calculations will help you choose the right opportunity.

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These visitors are already here, no strategy required. What is needed is action. I'm recommending research and planning to serve this market in 2024. Start tourism side hustles to help us get some of our \$210 million!

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