

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space Culture: Innovative Approaches for Public Engagement in Space (9)

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EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CASE STUDY: SPACE TOURISM SOCIETY AND ZEROG

Abstract

It is well known that experiential learning has a much more profound effect in people gaining knowledge, and getting interested and excited about a subject matter. Imagine sitting in a classroom or lecture hall listening to a talk about cosmology or space. Now imagine watching a 3-D film about space, such as Gravity or Hubble, and getting the feeling of being in space through the beautiful imagery and special effects. Or imagine interacting through a Mars exhibit at a science museum and trying out various fun stations such as hanging from a contraption to get a sense of reduced gravity, or flying a spacecraft in a simulator. These, among other types and levels of experiences are the essence of the Space Tourism Society (STS), a global organization that is used as a case study in this paper.

Space Tourism Society (STS) is the world's leading professional advocacy group for the growing space tourism/experience industry. Its slogan is "We are in the Space EXPERIENCE Business" and its mission is to directly influence and to positively impact public and professional advancement, and economic and social benefits of space, worldwide. STS activities help to grow awareness among public and private sectors, to educate and connect leaders, and to develop future pathways of success.

This paper details the organizational model and offerings of the Space Tourism Society. The three mediums of space experiences are outlined, namely: TV, movies, games and virtual worlds; Earth-based simulations and tours; and real space flight. And the various levels of space experiences are discussed, from Computer Simulations/Virtual Worlds to Immersive simulations, to Zero Gravity Flights, Sub-Orbital Flights, and finally Real Space Travel. Other offerings of STS are provided, including its Space Experience Economy (SEE) Seminar Series, as well as some of the many activities undertaken by its 17 chapters (and growing) across the globe.

Finally, a personal experience of a Zero G Flight is shared, to further demonstrate an experiential learning and space experience example. Details of the process including pre-flight preparation, in-flight activities, and post-flight effects and proceedings.