



# Textile Quest

## Enabling reciprocity in sustainable tourism

Created for Culture Cultures  
Jessica Stephens

Author: MendelWorks  
Joanne Mendel  
1.2026

# Textile Quest Initiative & Objectives

Culture Vultures is an emerging cultural travel venture dedicated to celebrating Moroccan arts and crafts through immersive, responsible exchanges that prioritize ethnographic depth, artisan respect, and sustainability. Customers are active participants in sustaining cultural heritage rather than passive consumers.

As immersive cultural travel becomes a rapidly growing focus within the travel industry in 2025, Culture Vultures is launching three new Artisan Quest tours, the first of which is Textile Quest, offering a timely opportunity to understand what socially conscious travelers seek in deep cultural immersion and what artisans value in reciprocal exchange.

This research initiative is designed to address two core challenges: how to cultivate meaningful, mutually enriching relationships between travelers and artisans, and how to evaluate and evolve the end-to-end Textile Quest experience to differentiate it within a competitive landscape.

## Study Objectives

1. Facilitate deeper reciprocity by examining traveler and artisan attitudes, behaviors, needs, and expectations of value exchange
2. Holistically evaluate the Textile Quest experience to identify foundational principles for tour design and inform the evolution of future offerings.

# Contents

## **Trends impacting Culture Vultures**

### **Key Findings | Travelers, Artisans & Reciprocity**

- Textile Quest Traveler and Artisan profiles
- Reciprocity-Oriented Experience Model
- Textile Quest Experience Iteration Cycle

### **Key Findings | Textile Quest Tour Experience**

- Textile Quest Roadmap 2026; What to stop, start and continue
- Extending into Regenerative Tourism

## **Methodology & Approach**



# Trends impacting Culture



# Culture Vultures is operating at the center of 3 emergent trends; the rise of immersive cultural travel, 50 + women travelers and Morocco as a destination for travel.

## 1. The rise of Immersive cultural travel <sup>1</sup>

Though still a niche within the broader travel market, immersive cultural travel accelerated sharply in 2025, emerging as a top industry priority and outpacing overall travel growth.

## 2. Women over 50 are one of the fastest-growing solo travel segments. <sup>2</sup>

Driven by independence, life-stage freedom, and a desire for culturally meaningful experiences they are prompting the travel industry to redesign products, messaging, and itineraries around their needs.

## 3. Morocco has become Africa's most visited destination.

According to recent UNWTO and government data indicate on international arrivals. There are now almost daily, direct flights to Morocco out of New York.

### Sources

1. [McKinsey Skift research, The Evolving role of Experiences in Travel, 2024](#)
2. [The Guardian \(Nov 30, 2025\) — "I was hooked: the rise of the intrepid female solo traveller"](#)  
[Forbes Travel — Solo and female travel trend analyses](#)

Culture Vultures offers Artisan-Led & Community-Based experiences, grounded in a sustainable travel model. This model, along with an emergent model in regenerative travel is shaping the future of tourism.

### SUSTAINABLE Travel Model <sup>3</sup>

*Sustainable travel is now a mainstream expectation among travelers and has become an industry priority.*

#### 1. Impact management

Limits negative impacts on artisans, workshops, and daily life

#### 2. Environmental conservation

Encourages responsible sourcing and material efficiency

#### 3. Cultural respect

Avoids misrepresentation; presents traditions accurately

#### 4. Economic viability

Provides fair pay for workshops and products

#### 5. Governance & management

Uses ethical guidelines and visitor management

### REGENERATIVE Travel Model <sup>4</sup>

*Regenerative travel is an emergent, next-generation trend.*

#### 1. Impact goes beyond sustainability

Uses travel to strengthen artisan systems

#### 2. Active restoration

Revives endangered craft techniques and materials

#### 3. Net-positive outcomes

Delivers skill transfer, income stability, cultural continuity

#### 4. Community leadership

Artisans define experience, pricing, and success

#### 5. System resilience

Builds cooperatives, learning pathways, and ownership

#### 3. Sources-Sustainable Travel Model

- WTTC – Sustainability <https://wtcc.org/Initiatives/Sustainability>
- GSTC – Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria <https://www.gstc.org/gstc-criteria/>

#### 4. Sources-Regenerative Travel Model

- Regenerative Travel – What Is Regenerative Tourism <https://www.regenerativetravel.com/regenerative-tourism/>
- GSTC – Regenerative Tourism <https://www.gstc.org/regenerative-tourism/>

# Experiences are central to how travelers now choose destinations.<sup>5</sup>

As part of their differentiating approach, Culture Vultures looks to facilitate reciprocity between travelers and artisans to enable more meaningful travel experiences.

Culture Vultures frames its unique travel experiences in Morocco as authentic encounters rooted in reciprocity and curiosity, preserving overlooked traditions while expanding understanding for both artisans and travelers.

Many (but not all) of its customers are not passive consumers but active participants in sustaining cultural heritage.

## Sources

[5. McKinsey Skift research, The Evolving role of Experiences in Travel, 2024](#)



## Key Findings | Travelers, Artisans & Reciprocity

# Textile Quest Travelers coalesced into 2 profiles

Two Traveler Profiles; Immersive Explorers and Structured Culturalists, emerged from 1:1 interviews with 7 travelers that fit Culture Vulture segment characteristics from their 2023 Market Analysis. The profiles were further amended to include Textile Quest Tour participants.

## 7 Interview Participants:

- **Seasoned travelers:** limited to U.S. based travelers
- **Age:** between 49-75 years, skewing to early 60's.
- **Ethnicity:** 1 Russian decent, 1 Indian decent, 1 Chinese descent. All others Caucasian. All U.S. citizens
- **Language:** Fluent English + other languages
- **Education:** Master's degrees in Graphic Design, Design Research, Design Strategy, Psychology
- **Occupation:** All working professionals. All but 1 work full time.
- **Children & Elder care:** 2 are empty nesters, 4 had no children. 1 involved with elder care
- **Spouse:** 3 out of 7 interviewed have spouses
- **Preferred travel modes:** Solo, Travel with spouse, Travel with family, Travel with friends



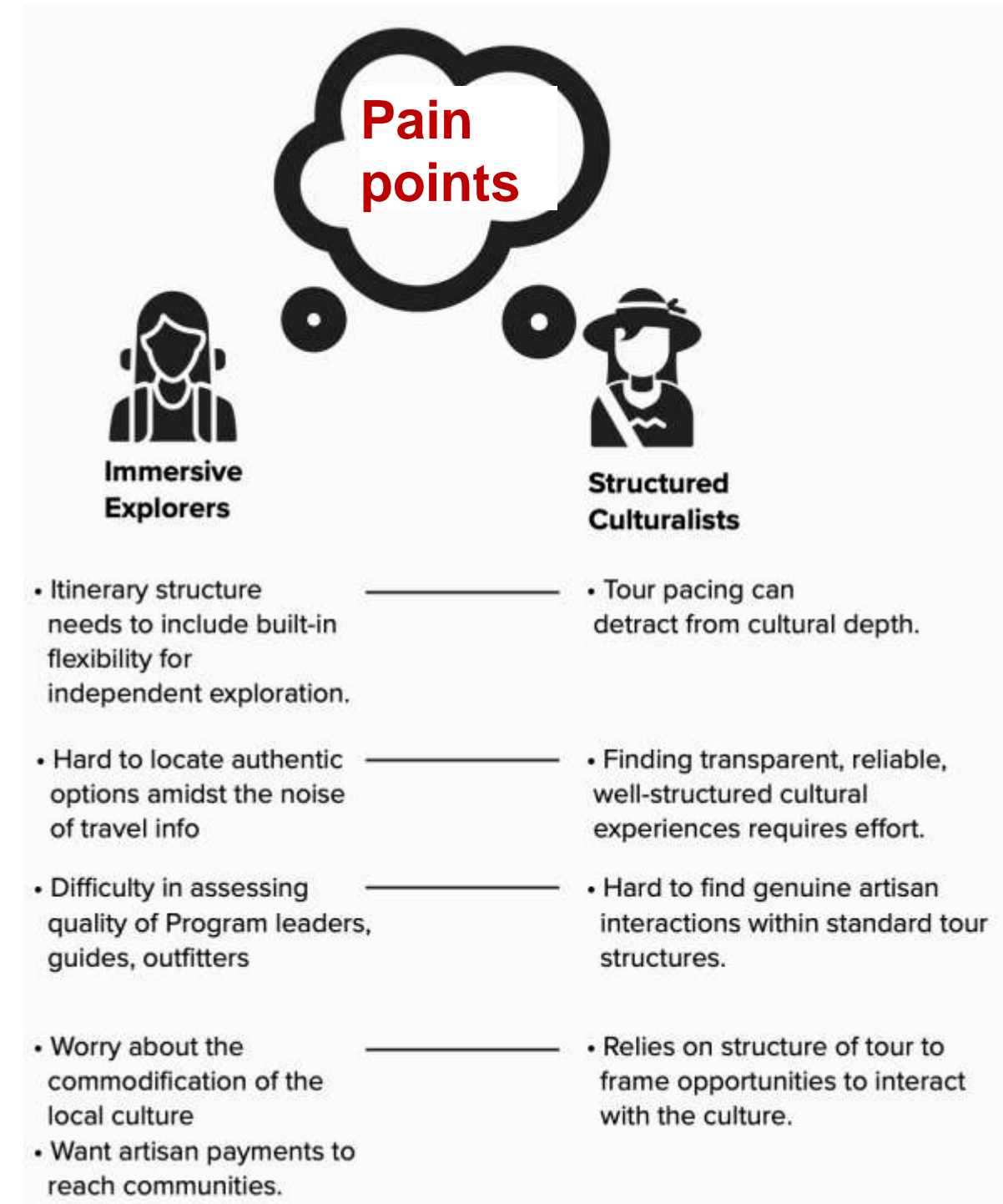
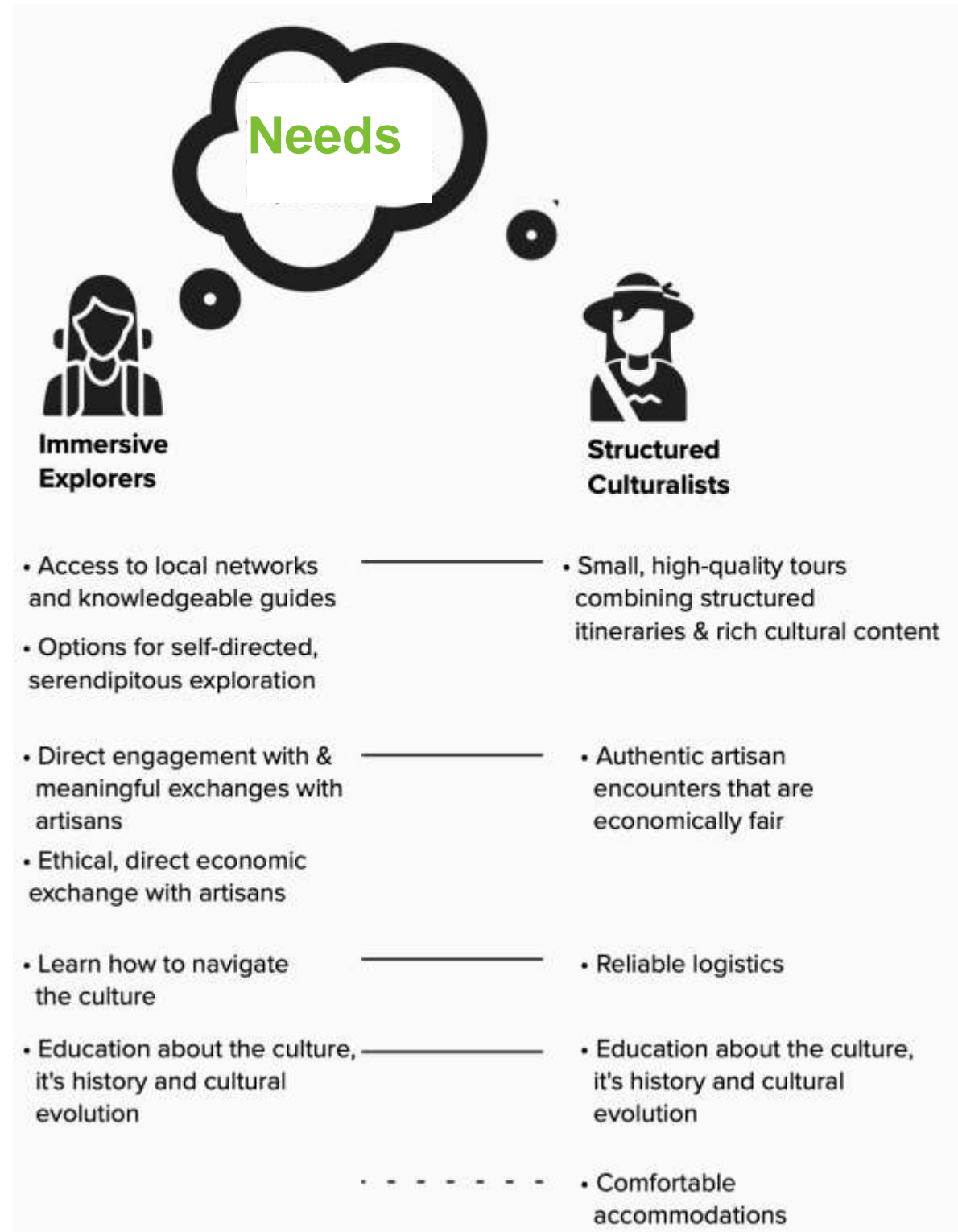
Immersive Explorers



Structured Culturalists

Role / Context	Immersive Explorers	Structured Culturalists
<b>Role / Context</b>	Culturally curious mid-career to retired travelers who <b>actively plan and structure their trips around cultural immersion, craftsmanship, and human connection.</b>	Retired or mid-career travelers who <b>combine guided, planned travel with moments of personal exploration, seeking comfort and reliability alongside cultural learning.</b>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience authentic, everyday culture beyond tourist sites (Kat, Abbey, Terri)</li> <li>• Learn directly from artisans and communities; understand history and practices (Abbey, Masha)</li> <li>• Support ethical, transparent cultural exchange through travel (Kat, Abbey, Masha)</li> <li>• Balance structured access with freedom for serendipity (Kat, Terri)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in local culture through organized, high-quality experiences (Jean, Jan)</li> <li>• Learn about craftsmanship and daily life through tours, workshops, or guides (Jan, Meeta)</li> <li>• Ensure comfort and ease during travel (Jan, Jean)</li> <li>• Discover authentic, less touristed experiences without heavy research (Jean, Meeta)</li> </ul>
<b>Motivations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driven by cultural curiosity and desire to understand daily life and heritage (Kat, Abbey, Masha)</li> <li>• Motivated to connect personally with artisans and communities (Abbey, Masha)</li> <li>• Seeks meaningful, sensory-rich, and story-driven experiences (Kat, Abbey)</li> <li>• Drawn to destinations facing cultural or environmental change (Kat)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivated by cultural learning within comfortable, reliable structures (Jean, Jan)</li> <li>• Driven by interest in history, craftsmanship, and food (Jan, Jean)</li> <li>• Seeks meaningful local experiences without extensive independent research (Jean, Meeta)</li> <li>• Values ease, predictability, and trusted guidance (Jan, Jean)</li> </ul>
<b>Forms of Reciprocity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefers <b>direct economic exchange</b> with artisans rather than donations — e.g., Abbey buying rugs and crafts directly from Moroccan weavers rather than through intermediaries (Abbey)</li> <li>• Seeks <b>ethical operators that give back to communities</b> — e.g., Kat's preference for outfitters that hire and train locally (Kat, Terri)</li> <li>• Values <b>transparency in money flows</b> — e.g., Abbey questioning where artisan payments go on tours (Abbey, Kat)</li> <li>• Engages through <b>respectful cultural exchange</b> — e.g., Kat's momo stand interaction in Pakistan; Terri chatting in local cafés (Kat, Terri, Masha)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports artisans through <b>curated visits</b> arranged by trusted operators — e.g., Jan's home dinner in Morocco arranged via Intrepid Travel; Jean's guided market visits (Jan, Jean)</li> <li>• Interested in <b>transparent artisan exchanges</b> during tours — e.g., Meeta questioning authenticity and value chains on artisan visits (Meeta)</li> <li>• Relies on tour company structured opportunities rather than self-organized reciprocity for giving back to artisans &amp; locals.</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviors &amp; Traits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk extensively, use transit, or rent cars to explore less touristed areas (Kat, Abbey, Masha)</li> <li>• Hire small, local guides for deep dives (Kat, Abbey, Terri)</li> <li>• Visit markets, workshops, festivals, and homes to observe daily life (Kat, Abbey, Terri)</li> <li>• Actively bargain, converse, or observe to learn (Abbey, Meeta)</li> <li>• Use trust networks more than commercial platforms (Kat, Masha, Terri)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit markets, artisan spaces, museums often with curated introductions (Jean, Jan)</li> <li>• Value private amenities and comfort after culturally intense days (Jan)</li> </ul>
<b>Travel Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan flexible itineraries with some structure;</li> <li>• Uses <b>personal networks</b> and <b>trusted blogs</b> to find authentic experiences — e.g., Kat leveraging personal contacts; Terri relying on solo women's travel forums and blogs (Kat, Terri)</li> <li>• Builds <b>loose itineraries with flexible structure</b>, often planning just anchor activities — e.g., Terri intentionally leaving gaps for discovery (Terri, Kat)</li> <li>• <b>Selectively hires guides</b> for specific cultural or linguistic access — e.g., Abbey using local medina guides in Morocco for artisan access (Abbey)</li> <li>• Prioritizes immersive activities (markets, artisan demos) over rigid scheduling — e.g., Masha focusing on workshops and festivals (Masha, Kat)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balances structured small-group or private tours with some flexibility for local, independent exploration (Jan, Jean Meeta)</li> <li>• Pre-book key experiences through <b>tour operators and curated guides</b> for key experiences, then explores independently around them — e.g., Jan joining Intrepid small group tours; Jean relying on structured museum and market tours, combining guided visits with city walks (Jan, Jean)</li> <li>• Uses <b>planning tools like ChatGPT</b> to create base itineraries and identify cultural stops — e.g., Meeta using ChatGPT for road trips (Meeta)</li> </ul>

# Both profiles desire cultural immersion, but in slightly different ways

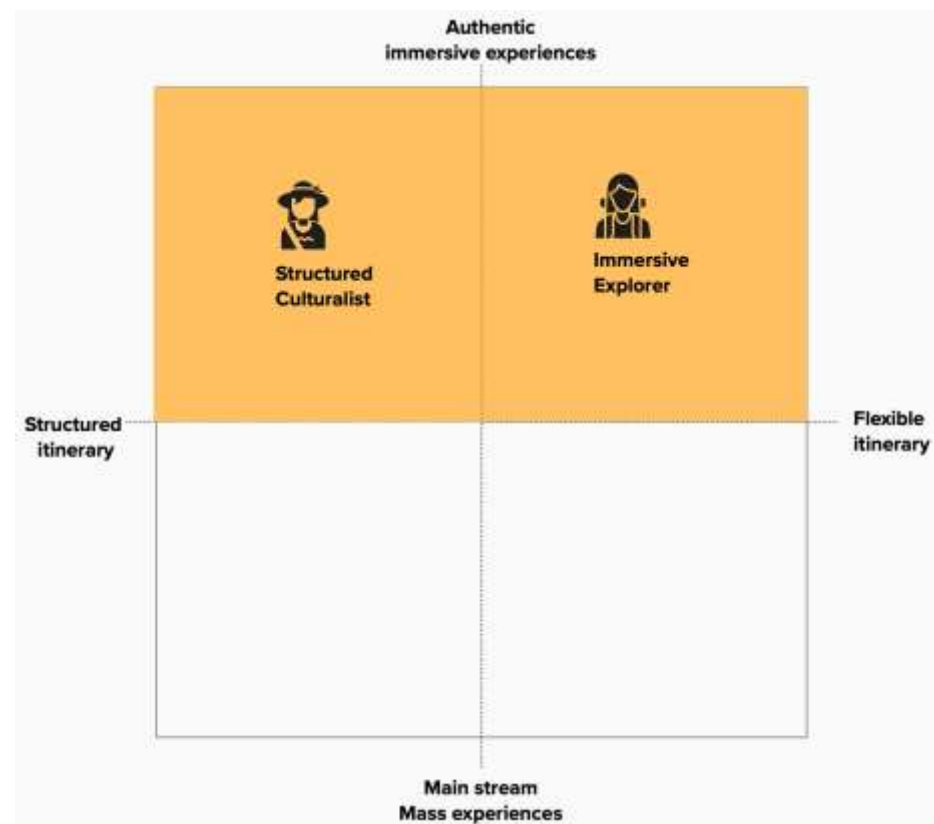


Sources

1. Text

# Traveler insights | Considerations for Culture Vultures

## Territories occupied by Textile Quest traveler profiles



### Profile preferences are small but significant:

- Structured Culturalists look more to the tour itinerary for curating authentic, immersive travel experiences vs. Immersive Explorers who enjoy being off the beaten path.
- Culturalists also look more to guides for mediating interactions with locals than Immersive Explorers who are interested in learning how to navigate the culture on their own.

## Key insights from traveler interviews

- **Textile Quest could potentially attract a broader range of age groups than it's targeting.**  
Travelers representing both profiles expressed having a life-long interest in travel
- **Consider travelers from other geographies with fewer time constraints on travel.**  
Working professionals in the U.S. reported a 2-week window of availability for travel a year.
- **Textile Quest Tours may have a broad appeal across additional ethnicities.**  
Of the 7 travelers interviewed, 1 was of Russian decent, 1 of Indian descent and 1 Chinese, all of whom expressed interest in the tour.
- **Immersive Explorers and Structured Culturalists expressed 4 preferred modes of travel. Consider the appeal of Culture Vulture tours to these 4 modes:**
  1. **Solo travel for cultural enrichment**  
*Solo or small groups, private guides, theme-driven cultural quests, authentic, site-specific*
  2. **Self-Guided or lightly scaffolded independent travel**  
*Returning to familiar places to deepen knowledge, road trips to explore everyday life & small towns, loosely planned city exploration, planned cultural immersion activities*
  3. **Themed deep dives: cultural, artistic, ethical**  
*Craft culture, food & markets, history, architecture, spirituality, conservation*
  4. **Relational travel (solo or shared)**  
*Travel with partners & spouses, Girlfriend trips, family travel with grown children, travel that blends personal & creative interests*

# Two Artisan profiles expanded to include 4.

Two additional profiles were identified during the Textile Quest Tour: Transitional Artisans and International Artisans. Initial research focused on 2 artisan profiles; University-Educated artisans and Traditional Artisans (shown here).

## Artisan interviews and direct observation conducted:

- 1 (1:1) interview with a University-trained artisan and educator
- A7-8 artisan encounters and observations in Textile Quest Tour activities

Textile Quest should consider continuing the research on artisans and travelers as input to evolving tour activities that enable authentic and mutual value exchanges between them. (see Textile Quest Experience Iteration cycle p. 16)







	University-Educated Artisan	Traditional Artisan
<b>Role</b>	A Moroccan artisan who received formal academic training at the Academy of Traditional Arts in Casablanca, specializing in a traditional craft and trained to professionalize her practice through structured education.	Traditional artisan practitioner educated through unstructured guild/apprenticeship systems, often illiterate, working within regional craft traditions. They focus on inherited knowledge, regional identity, and reliance on direct community interactions.
<b>Educational context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morocco has one program in design - the National School of Art in Tetouan that combines craft mastery with commercial training, language skills, and project development</li> <li>• Represents a new generation of artisans operating at cultural and economic levels</li> <li>• Emphasizes selective entry (portfolio) and merit-based progression through testing and oral interviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutes offer step-by-step courses to equip illiterate or semi-literate artisans with essential skills to participate in the market:</li> <li>• Basic language skills (e.g., literacy, likely Arabic and/or French)</li> <li>• Basic accounting / numeracy ("counting") to handle money and run small businesses</li> <li>• Digital skills: basic computer use to enable artisans to sell products online and interact with marketplaces</li> </ul>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master a traditional craft through academic and artisanal training to build a sustainable professional practice</li> <li>• Develop business and communication skills to bring traditional crafts to market effectively</li> <li>• Differentiate herself professionally from traditional artisans by combining craft mastery with marketing and design knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and continue regional craft lineages learned through apprenticeship</li> <li>• Attract visitors to their workshops for visibility and livelihood</li> <li>• Sustain craft without formal education or state support</li> </ul>
<b>Motivations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pride in Moroccan craft heritage and a desire to innovate within tradition through structured training</li> <li>• Professional independence — leveraging academic training to launch her own projects or company</li> <li>• Recognition for blending traditional craft expertise with modern commercialization skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pride in their work and desire to share their process with genuinely interested visitors</li> <li>• Recognition as cultural ambassadors when visitors engage deeply</li> <li>• Desire for practical support to sustain their crafts</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviors &amp; Traits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed multi-year academic curriculum with entrance exams in drawing, math, physics, chemistry, and French</li> <li>• Studied English, French, art, economics, marketing, and cultural project planning</li> <li>• Received hands-on craft instruction within the Academy</li> <li>• Specialized in a specific craft (e.g., leather) prior to entering the program and developed it professionally</li> <li>• Pursued professional paths post-graduation, including working in administration or launching artisan businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn through apprenticeship — watching elders and practicing</li> <li>• Operate independently or in small shops, often regionally situated</li> <li>• Rely on word of mouth and visitor encounters rather than digital platforms</li> <li>• Gender divide: Men use horizontal looms in workshop settings. Women use vertical looms and work from home</li> <li>• Rural vs Urban divide: Rural crafts: rugs, wood work, weaving, buttons) Urban crafts: copper slippers, embroidery.</li> </ul>
<b>Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for launching and sustaining independent artisan businesses post-graduation</li> <li>• Access to platforms and tools for commercialization, including digital marketplaces</li> <li>• Recognition and visibility to differentiate academically trained artisans from traditional ones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for basic digital literacy to sell products online</li> <li>• Logistics help to bring products from countryside to markets</li> <li>• Steady streams of visitors/customers who show genuine interest</li> <li>• Organizations teaching literacy, money management and craft skills include: Teaching coops (university educated women), apprenticeships, technical schools, CMQFA school for youth</li> </ul>
<b>Pain points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult transition from training to market reality despite strong academic preparation</li> <li>• Limited infrastructure for market access, especially online</li> <li>• Cultural and operational divide between academically trained artisans and traditional artisans</li> <li>• Only one University program in design in Morocco</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illiteracy and lack of marketing knowledge prevent access to e-commerce and broader markets</li> <li>• Regional disparities in resources and support</li> <li>• Limited institutional scaffolding for sustainability</li> <li>• Cost of shipping direct-to-consumer is an impediment to artisans wanting to sell goods on Instagram.</li> </ul>

# Four artisan profiles represent a spectrum of those working in Morocco. Each have varying access to paths for professional viability.

Artisan pathways leading to professional viability in Morocco

- **Design education & hands-on practice:** hand skills, craft heritage, design problem solving
- **Craft mastery and design innovation:** differentiation
- **Marketing skills:** Increase access to customers & expanded networks
- **Business & accounting skills:** profitability, path to viable livelihood

	 <b>Traditional Artisans</b>	 <b>University-Educated Artisans</b>	 <b>Transitional Artisans</b> (verify)	 <b>International Artisans</b> (verify)
<b>Education</b>	Apprenticeship and familial learning Varying levels of mastery, + Masters	Formal academic program, digital marketing, some business	Combination of formal education and familial learning, production, business	Formal academic program, production, marketing, business
<b>Commercial skills</b>	Minimal; reliant on direct sales	Marketing, language, economics	Promotes their work, sustains an ongoing business with repeatable clients	Product design, production at scale, cross-channel, international marketing
<b>Goals</b>	Sustain their inherited craft, attract visitors/customers	Professional independence, structured practice, innovation	Professional independence, sustain their inherited craft, structured practice, innovation	Scaling high quality craft & innovation as an international business
<b>Pain points</b>	Illiteracy, lack of digital access, isolation	Need to launch & sustain a businesses post-graduation	Maintaining a balance between doing the work, promoting it, and growing business	Difficult to find & adapt traditional artisans to execute modern designs
<b>Market positioning</b>	Embedded in local guild systems and word of mouth	Differentiates on academic credentials Straddles teaching and practice, or may start a business	Differentiates on their mastery of craft and design innovation	Differentiates on traditional design as a point of departure for design innovation

# Consider Culture Vulture's role in this context

**Key insight:** Artisanship in Morocco is in a state of flux.

## 1. Traditional artisans are on the verge of extinction in Morocco.

- **Artisan educational systems are bifurcated: traditional vs. formally trained** e.g. *guild system & technical schools vs. university design programs (one in Morocco).*
- **Limited access to customers to sell goods and learn about needs.** *Heavy reliance on medina shop keepers who do the selling and keep 95% of profits, making artisanship unviable as a living.*
- **Alternative models for selling goods** include *Artisan-led coops and experiential tourism, that bring customers to artisans.*
- **Youth don't see a future in the trade,** *are declining apprenticeships with Masters – a staple of guild system education.*

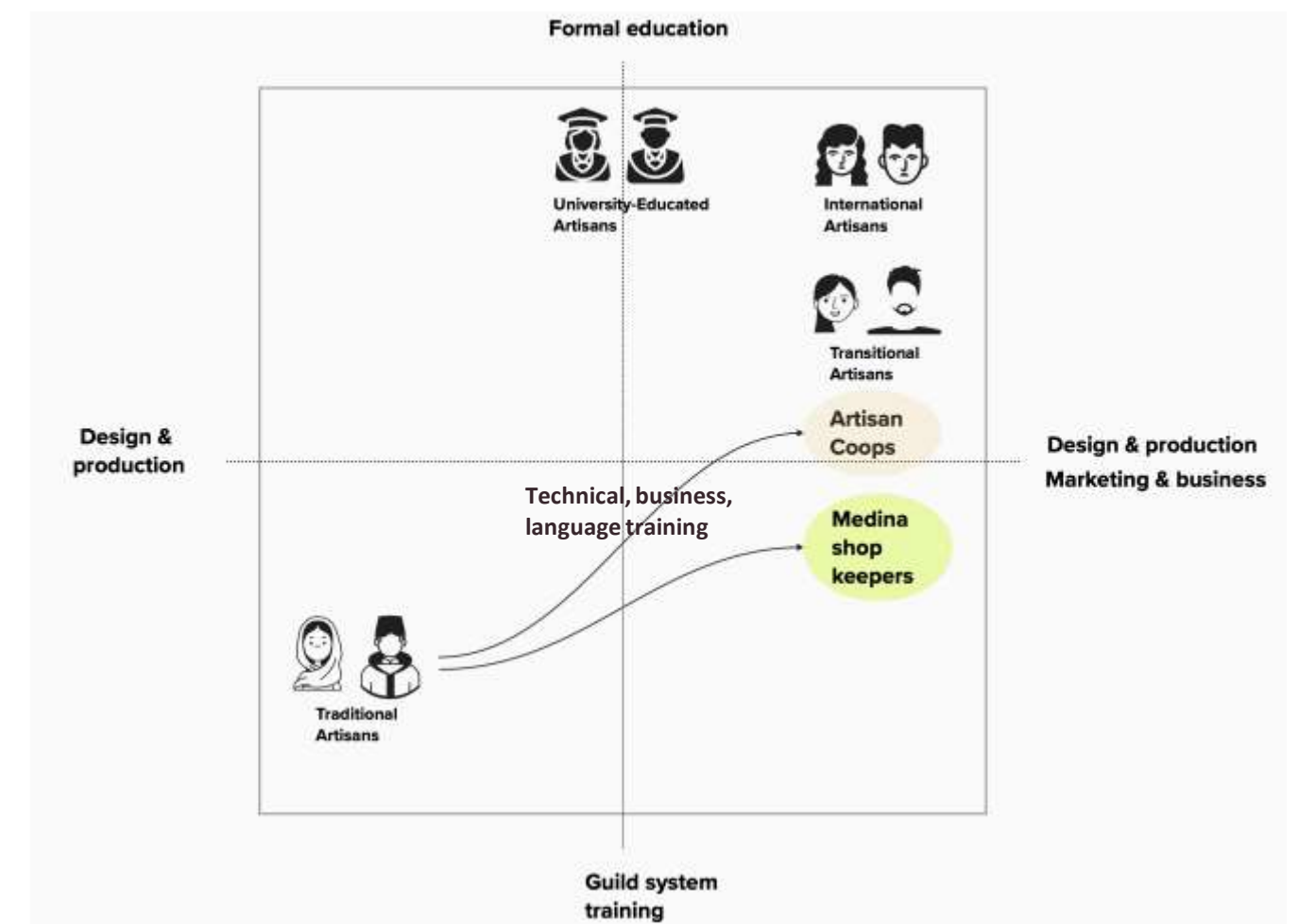
## 2. Government initiatives are aggressively ramping up tourism but in ways that seem less geared to lifting-up traditional artisans rather than commoditizing their work for mass market consumption.

## 3. An influx of foreign designers in the up-and-coming Industrial district of Sidi Ghanem are using Moroccan artisans to execute their designs.

## 4. A rising Moroccan middle class is slowly changing attitudes about the value of craft tradition, countering entrenched attitudes from French colonization.

Consider educating travelers on what's happening more broadly about the state of artisanship in Morocco while connecting them in meaningful ways with artisans across the spectrum.

Territories occupied by 4 artisan profiles

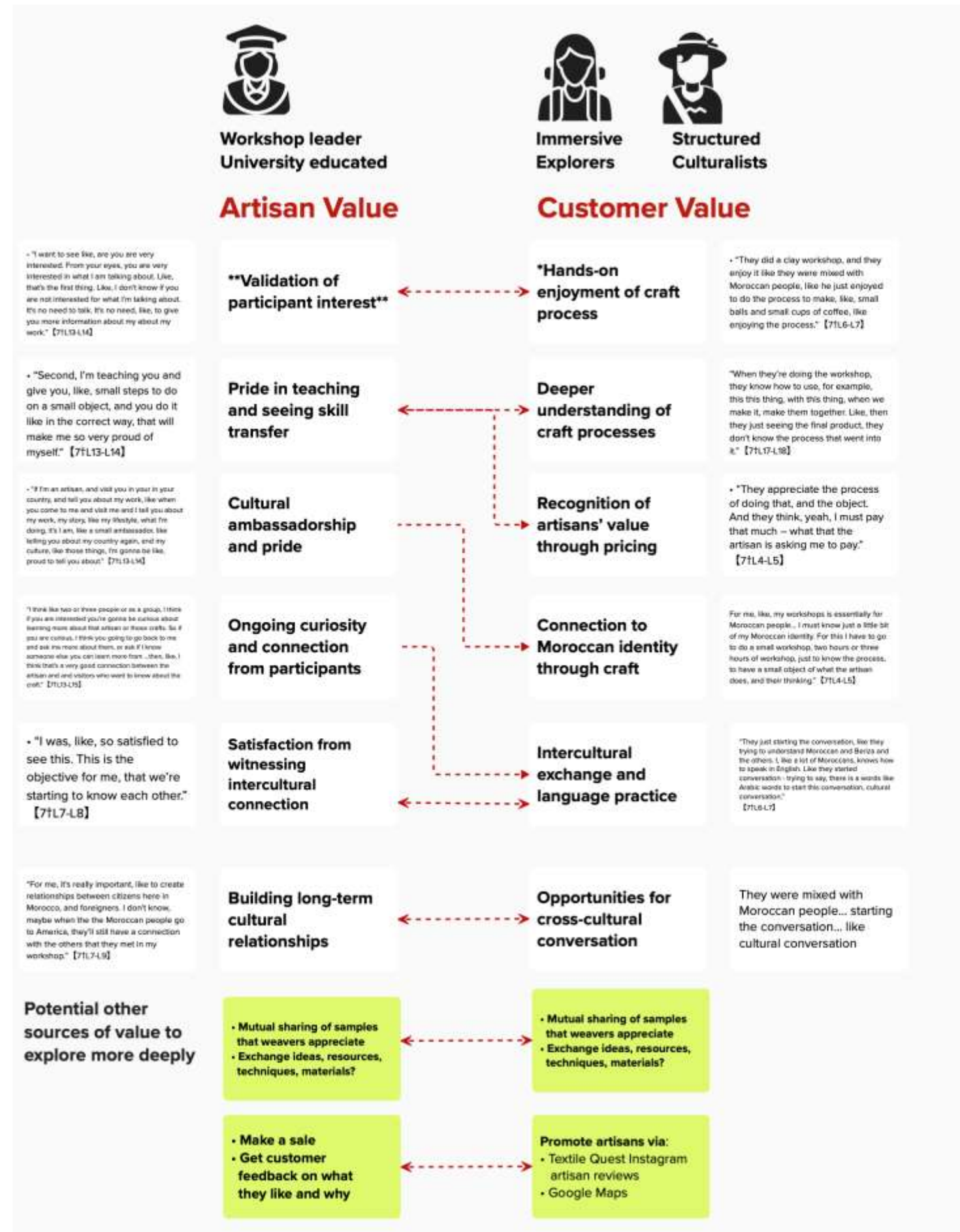


# A Reciprocity-Oriented Experience Model revealed how value is exchanged between Artisans & Travelers.

A deeper understanding of what artisans and travelers desire in an exchange provides a basis for designing and facilitating tour activities that will create more meaningful and memorable exchanges.

An artisan-led workshop with travelers in Morocco, surfaced types of value and how these were reciprocated in the exchange. Additional sources of value exchange were also observed during tour activities for Textile Quest.

Source:  
Roqaya Elfari Expert interview, Chat GPT 5.0



# The Textile Quest Experience Iteration Cycle enables learning from artisans and travelers into more meaningful value exchanges between them.

*The framework below describes a participatory approach for how Culture Vultures can more deeply understand what makes for meaningful value exchanges between artisans and travelers and iterate how tour activities are designed and facilitated.*

1

## Set up the Interview(s)

- Interview people associated with local communities, coops, associations in the language of the interview participants
- Interview people at different levels of the organization to get different perspectives (artisans, coop administrators, leaders)

2

## Conduct interview(s) using [the Guide](#)

- Follow the sample Interview Guide format. Adapt the questions as needed for your topic
- Conduct 1:1 interviews in-person whenever possible
- Let participants know what to expect during the interview
- Establish trust – ask about levels of comfort with note taking and recording

3

## Document top insights after an interview

- Directly after EACH interview, the interviewer documents the top 5-10 insights about value that you took away. Include an example or supporting quote if possible

4

## Team review & synthesis

- Interviewer, reviews the top insights with the team: Jess, the Program leader and Facilitator. Team discussion, Q&A.
- Once all interviews are completed, the team synthesizes the top value insights to use for generating ideas

5

## Ideation + Tour activity iteration

- The team ideates on how the tour activity could provide more value to artisans and travelers - based on the final set of value insights,
- Rework the design of the tour activity to incorporate the ideas. Consider how the activity should be facilitated and whether travelers and artisans need to bring anything to it.

6

## Run the new activity during the tour, observe what works & iterate

This iterative cycle consists of:

- Facilitator tries the new activity design in the tour
- Program leader & Facilitator observe what works
- They gather & document feedback from the activity participants and the team at the end of the activity.
- Use the observations & feedback to decide what changes to make the next time the activity is run.



# Key Findings | Textile Quest Tour Experience

# Textile Quest Roadmap 2026 | What to stop, start, continue

Culture Vulture Team work session in Sefrou analyzed Textile Quest Tour participant feedback and research resulting in 2026 Roadmap identifying what to stop, start and continue in the tour experience before, during and after the trip.

**Time frames:**

- Immediate: Next 2 weeks (end December 2025)
- Mid-term: Jan to mid through April (TQ Tour) (Ramadam kicks offer)
- Long term: May through mid- November
- Future planning

Before trip					During trip					After trip	
What to stop					What to stop					What to stop	
Immediate	Mid-term	Long term	Future		Immediate	Mid-term	Long term	Future		Immediate	Mid-term
<p><b>Assessing tour accommodations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check hotel to see what a twin room means &amp; check comfort of beds</li> <li>• Accommodations: Orient visitors as to what to expect in a twin room (traditional houses are family)</li> </ul>					<p><b>Program leaders and staff role clarifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program leaders should not extend their role with clients after the program, e.g. drive and pick up guests associated with clients after the tour the day after the trip. Local with clients is OK.</li> <li>• Clarify who is not to be shared with the staff except the Program Leader. Clarify the days that program is the driver take and during the day.</li> <li>• Clarify job protocol of business between Program leader, guides and other support team and a delegation line you're contributing to the group individual during each year out.</li> </ul>					<p>Continued As group supported Textile Quest visitors</p>	
<p><b>Website tour description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website &amp; brochures update communicate the tour is for couples and non smokers.</li> <li>• Communicate the physical demands of the trip more explicitly (e.g. miles, weather, altitude, terrain, etc. some items)</li> </ul>					<p><b>Tour Programming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local resources that let visitors see where used to come from after the tour and company (Sophie was booked in to next April)</li> <li>• Program leader: Focus on themes throughout the tour. Facilitated shared about the tour's past experiences with historical background.</li> </ul>					<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Immediate Some to be continued Target main marketing Goals</p>	
What to start					What to start					What to start	
Immediate	Mid-term	Long term	Future		Immediate	Mid-term	Long term	Future		Immediate	Mid-term

Source  
Textile Quest Tour participant Feedback Analysis

# 4 Guiding Principles for culturally immersive, authentic tour experiences

*A validated set of internal principles extracted from traveler interviews, artisan interviews, direct tour participation, and facilitated synthesis workshops. These principles specify how reciprocity, immersion, learning, and sustainability are operationalized at the activity and itinerary level.*

## 4 Guiding Principles

### 1. Facilitate Cultural immersion & Learning

- Position the Tour as an Experiential Learning Journey
- Embed Reflection and Meaning-Making into the Tour Structure (e.g. expert lecturers, artisan-guided textile museum visits)

### 2. Educate travelers about cultural respect and heritage preservation

- Educate travelers about how to engage and navigate local culture
- Expose travelers to the range of Artisan profiles, their traditional and modern pathways in the profession and how they navigate them

### 3. Accommodate the differences in traveler profiles in tour design.

- Balance tour structure and autonomy: Keep travelers oriented while enabling independent exploration as part of tour design

### 4. Learn from travelers and artisans on an ongoing basis to iterate and adapt tour experiences and foster reciprocity

- Conduct structured, research-driven iteration cycles using evidence-based feedback from travelers and artisans to evolve the tour agenda and reciprocal activities.

# Culture Vulture differentiation & innovation

Culture Vulture's approach to sustainable tourism aligns with industry standards and translates them into actionable experience design heuristics.

While global frameworks (UN Tourism, GSTC, sustainable / regenerative tourism discourse) provide benchmarks for tour experiences, Culture Vultures' principles translate these into actionable experience design heuristics.

This positions Culture Vultures not only as aligned with industry standards but as a methodological innovator in cultural immersion design.

External frameworks define what ethical and sustainable /regenerative tourism should achieve. [Culture Vultures' experiential IP](#) defines how to design, deliver, and evolve those outcomes in practice.

## Sources

Chat GPT 5.0 analysis of industry frameworks from UN Tourism, Global Sustainable Tourism Council, and Regenerative tourism industry Frameworks were compared with the frameworks developed in this report for alignment and differentiation.

# Extending into Regenerative Tourism

Increasing levels of value exchange become more possible as Travelers spend more time in a culture. Time is a significant factor in transitioning from sustainable tourism to regenerative tourism which tends to be centered more around initiatives.

1

## Sustainable tourism

### Examples from Culture Vulture offerings

- Medina tour 2-3 hours
- 4-day work ceramics shop and stay with a family
- 2-week Textile Quest Tour

2

## \*Regenerative artisan-led travel commonly includes:

- Long-term partnerships with artisan collectives or cooperatives
- Skill-transfer programs (apprenticeships, youth training, master-artisan roles)
- Revenue reinvestment into tools, studios, education, or community infrastructure

\* Additional research required. Potentially focusing on which aspects of Regenerative tourism or initiatives to focus on from the [Framework of Regenerative Travel mapped to Resources:](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/175mbFUIX3_nrz3BxgpgZor_BHHqzF7e/e/dit?usp=sharing&oid=112479927581205087450&rtpof=true&sd=true)  
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/175mbFUIX3\\_nrz3BxgpgZor\\_BHHqzF7e/e/dit?usp=sharing&oid=112479927581205087450&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/175mbFUIX3_nrz3BxgpgZor_BHHqzF7e/e/dit?usp=sharing&oid=112479927581205087450&rtpof=true&sd=true)

## Methodology & Approach



# Research objectives | Solution outcomes

## Research objectives

- Understand travel customer attitudes, motivations and behaviors around travel, and their planning approach and decision criteria.
- Understand Traditional Artisan attitudes, motivations
- Explore what constitutes meaningful value exchange between travelers and artisans.
- Experience & analyze The Textile Quest Tour for structure, content, tour pacing, and traveler feedback.
- Explore potential segues from sustainable tourism to regenerative tourism.

*\* This initiative was based on The Textile Quest Tour as a representative example of all Culture Vulture tour offerings.*

## Solution Outcomes

- **Traveler and Artisan Profiles**  
*Proprietary behavioral and attitudinal profiles (e.g., Immersive Explorers, Structured Culturalists; artisan pathway typologies) that inform differentiated itinerary design and facilitation strategies.*
- **Reciprocity-Oriented Experience Model**  
*A structured model for designing traveler–artisan value exchanges, including activity scaffolding, facilitation protocols, and iterative refinement cycles.*
- **Tour Guiding Principles**  
*A validated set of internal principles extracted from traveler interviews, artisan interviews, direct tour participation, and facilitated synthesis workshops. These principles specify how reciprocity, immersion, learning, and sustainability are operationalized at the activity and itinerary level.*
- **Textile Quest Experience Iteration Cycle**  
*A proprietary design loop (insight capture → synthesis → ideation → prototyping → in-tour testing → refinement) embedded in program operations, enabling continuous experiential innovation.*
- **Textile Quest Roadmap for 2026**  
*A holistic tour evaluation of customer feedback and research identifying what to stop, start and continue by tour stages.*

# Methodology

1



2

Travelers	
Behaviors	Motivations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blend self-guided travel with selective guides (e.g., hire local expert for access, then wander).</li> <li>Slow travel: fewer moves, longer stays; everyday rituals (markets, cafés).</li> <li>Anchor "musts" + serendipity: museums/landmarks + kitchens, ateliers, homes.</li> <li>Road trips for autonomy; small groups/solo when useful.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek cultural depth, surprise, and human or "stumble upon" moments.</li> <li>Personal themes as lenses (crafts, food, lett conservation).</li> <li>Bring stories home (objects linked to maker).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexibility to deviate from fixed agendas.</li> <li>Access to skilled local "connectors" (guides/hosts) who open doors.</li> <li>Everyday immersion (cooking, shopping, neighborhoods).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serendipity plus context (history/art/peopl</li> <li>Meaningful exchanges that humanize plac</li> <li>Thematic pursuits that pull travelers off the</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abbey strongly avoids tours; Terri and Jean hire bespoke guides when solo or for depth.</li> <li>Risk tolerance varies (Terri embraces spontaneity despite safety concerns).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan sometimes opts out despite valuing imr</li> <li>Terri's curiosity pushes into higher-risk situat</li> <li>Abbey rejects packaged depth.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"A lot of it was sort of by the seat of your pants... what's around me." — Jan</li> <li>"Renting a car... stop wherever we want... loose schedule."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"I like to go to places where i'm not familia</li> <li>— Jan</li> <li>"Little special moments end up being the r</li> </ul>

3



## Literature Review

- Textile Quest business plan, marketing analysis 2023, current roadmap
- Tour experience analysis: Textile Quest end-to-end tour activities
- Key trends in culturally immersive tourism and options beyond tourism travel to impact in social responsibility.

## Traveler and Artisan Interviews

- 7 Traveler 1:1 interviews: U.S. based travelers that fit Culture Vulture segments.
- 1 Expert artisan interview: Roqaya Elfarhi, (Artisan practitioner and educator within Morocco's academic/university system)
- Artisan and Traveler profiles
- Artisan and Traveler reciprocity analysis

## Textile Quest Tour participation

- Textile Quest Tour: 2 weeks of travel across northern Morocco to meet traditional artisans and Master craftspeople across Tangier, Tetouan, Chefchouen, Quezzane, Fes, Tinjedad, Sefrou, Kelaat M'gouna, Ait Bouguemez Valley and Marrakesch.

# Methodology & Team

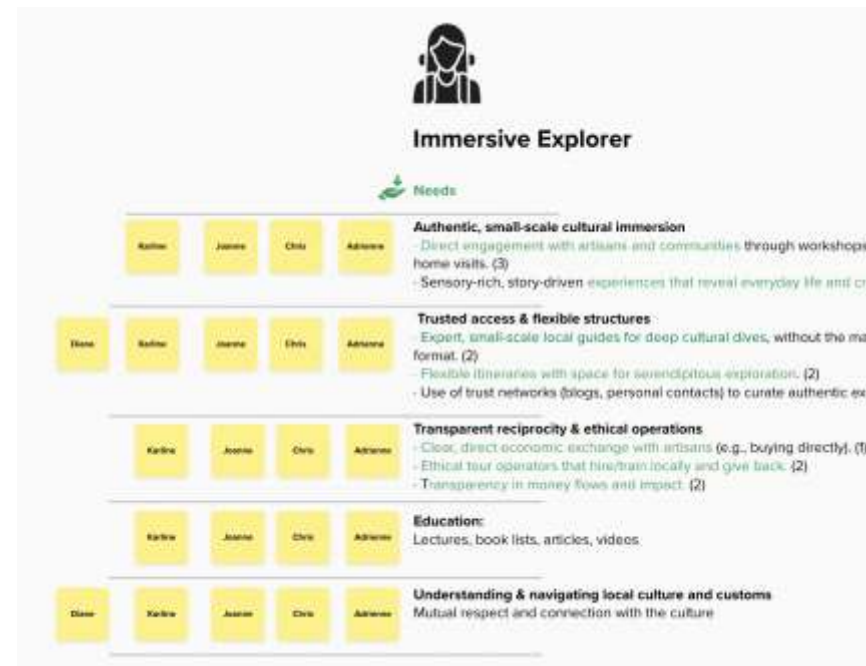
4



## 4 Collaborative work sessions: Sefrou

1. Mapping Textile Quest Tour customers to Customer and Artisan profiles
2. Analysis of customer feedback from the Textile Quest Tour
3. Analysis of the end-to end Textile Tour experience – what to stop, start, continue
4. Textile Quest Roadmap for 2026

5



## Post work session synthesis

- **Tour Experience Principles**  
principals that underpin tour experience design, providing a basis for evolving tour offerings over time
- **Textile Quest Experience Iteration Cycle;**  
gather feedback & test new ideas in tour activities to evolve the experience
- **Tour structure Recommendations**

## Team & Roles

Project Team	Role
Jessica Stephens	Owner/Business Sponsor Culture Vultures
Joanne Mendel	Design Researcher & Strategist MendelWorks
Katie (Prior: USAid in Morocco, comes from development. High Atlas Foundation HAF --social and cultural heritage, ecological regeneration)	Collaborator
Marta Troya	Tour Program Leader
Roqaya Elfarhi	University Design educator, Expert interview

Thank you

