

Marketing and Research Advisory Panel Meeting - 31st October 2006

Attendees:

Louise Potter (joint chair), David Bourque, Greg Walker, Martin Emery and Gill Chapman (Visit Peak District & Derbyshire), John Concannon (Severn Trent), Paul Armstrong (Visit Peak District & Derbyshire management team), Helen Hopwood (Denby Pottery), Matthew Trembath (Heights of Abraham), Samantha Chidlow (National Trust).

Apologies:

Steve Lemottee (joint chair), Cara Marchant (Crich Tramway Village), Sir Richard Fitzherbert (Tissington Hall), Una Mullan (East Midlands Tourism), Simon Seligman (Chatsworth), Sue Prince (Peak District Farm Holidays), Stella Birks (Royal Crown Derby), Roger Lloyd (American Adventure)

Subject: Advisory panel launch and e-marketing

1. Introduction and Terms of Reference

- Thanks were expressed to all businesses and organisations who had given up time to attend the meeting. Those that could not attend will be asked to feedback their comments via e-mail or telephone. The meeting was thought to be beneficial for all parties with future venues to be rotated around the members' businesses.
- As this was the first meeting, the emphasis was placed on setting up the systems and processes of the advisory panel. The Terms of Reference (see below) were agreed and included a clear advocacy role for members of the panel to cascade as many of the marketing messages through to industry as possible.
- The introductory presentation outlining the Visit Peak District & Derbyshire (VPD&D) marketing plan for 2006/7 showed how the majority of the £571,000 budget is currently weighted towards traditional marketing communications. The focus of the meeting was to discuss how the emphasis could shift away from traditional to e-marketing.

2. E-Marketing Experiences

- Most businesses had focused on refreshing their current websites as a platform before starting e-marketing in earnest. E-mailshots of high quality events seemed to have performed best. Competitions offering short breaks worked well for data capture of further e-mail contacts. Ensuring websites are set up for hand-held devices such as mobiles and personal digital assistants (PDAs) was a useful lesson learned.
- Timing of e-mailshots was seen to be critical. Events had short lead times (sometimes as little as 24 hours) for booking tickets, as opposed to self catering accommodation lead times, which lasted up to six months. Serviced accommodation lead times were much shorter (often current week to fill rooms). E-mailshots could also be used to revitalise bookings in quiet times for attractions, eg, May and June.

3. E-Marketing Plans 2008-10

- Need to ensure future plans link with pace of cultural change of businesses and customers alike.
- The fragmented nature of our local tourism industry means that there needs to be clear focus on new marketing opportunities, ie, don't provide large menu of choices

- VPDD can present marketing plan options early next year for members to comment on ahead of further funding bids

4. Season Update

Some attractions had record breaking months in Q1 2006, particularly around the Easter period. This was due in part to investment in high quality interpretation, facilities and new events. Some attractions felt a sharp decrease in May-July in part due to weather extremes.

5. VPDD Launch Conference

Businesses suggested VPD&D could address the following marketing issues at the conference:

- Ask the audience about their preferences between traditional advertising in the Peak District & Derbyshire Visitor Guide and the website
- Explain the implementation of 'Attract & Disperse', giving examples
- A decision needs to be made about whether branding guidelines and use of the VPD&D brand mark could be rolled out to all businesses for use in their marketing communications. In return for the use of this, online branding could feature links through to www.visitpeakdistrict.com
- Explain the benefit of less duplication and how businesses no longer need to place ads in multiple visitor guides
- Explain how VPD&D is in a transitional period and will consider all marketing channels to start with, rationalising as feedback is gathered
- SMEs may feel alienated by possible increases in advertising costs and possible charging for further more targeted opportunities