

## First North Wales Events

### Campaign Brief

#### Introduction

The First North Wales Events campaign is the first of a series of regional marketing campaigns that seek to address both cultural and environmental sustainability without losing sight of the profit imperative. In this respect, train operating companies and event organisers represent ideal partners. Train operators' desire on the one hand to profit by offering a better alternative to the car and to explore new growth markets in travel offered by tourism, combined with the increasing need of cultural event organisers to attract audiences from further afield to help increase multiplier spend in local communities, presses all the right buttons.

#### Who benefits?

At first it may appear that only the lead partners stand to benefit from the campaign but that is far from the case. Railways are simply a means to an end and events are only the sizzle not the sausage. Hospitality providers are the ones that will benefit most from the marketing efforts of the lead partners, which will put them on the map and deliver a flow of enquiries.

It's a win-win proposition for all concerned, not least of all for local communities that benefit from visitor spending both during and after the 'event'. There are opportunities too for annualising some of this spend through follow-up product sales and marketing of indigenous food and craft products encountered by visitors during their stay.

#### Evidence of market demand

A number of recent papers on events marketing indicate a growing demand, with cultural events of particular interest to an ageing population with disposable income that no longer wishes to take part in strenuous activities. Additionally, events bring to life otherwise static attractions – particularly where they may be interpretive of their venue – making them more visitable. Travel by rail also represents an attractive proposition, where the journeys along scenic lines can form part of the total visit experience. Carefully 'packaged', they can provide a relaxed alternative to travel by car for both families and older couples. 6.5% of visits to the North Wales region were made by train in 1996/7, representing a one and a half percentage point increase over 1994 figures. Rail travellers are also more inclined to use serviced accommodation, thus providing a higher multiplier in spending terms and facilitating packaging with events.

#### Implementation

The project will use events marketing to compete with other destinations and to trigger long holiday, short break, and day visit decisions in favour of the North Wales region. It will concentrate on traditional catchment areas, which are shared by other destinations such as Cumbria and the Lake District, but will mobilise more effectively the marketing distribution channels of First North Western, the train operating company that serves both the North Wales and the North West regions.

By working with First North Western, Gwyliau Cymru/Festivals of Wales, and selected hospitality providers, the project aspires to integrate the use of public transport with the promotion of the region's culture, historic and archaeological heritage.

#### Target markets

Prime target markets for the campaign will be early-retired couples and older age groups in general where research has demonstrated a greater interest in activities of a more cultural and educational nature. Other markets, however, will not be overlooked where many events offer a low-cost alternative to families holidaying or day visiting on tight budgets.

#### Strategic marketing objectives for the tourism industry

The campaign is reliant on partnership, has clear targets, is innovative, and addresses environmental sustainability and the use of alternative forms of transport to the car. It will create and safeguard jobs, spread the attraction of North Wales across the shoulder seasons and will help further development of the UK domestic visitor market.

In particular it will assist the industry in achieving four key principles:-

## *Sustainability*

Commercial sustainability will be achieved in the longer term through increased ticket sales and the sale of loosely-packaged holiday and associated products to consumers. Environmental sustainability will be addressed through the promotion of alternative means of travel to the car. Cultural sustainability will be addressed through packaging cultural events and by applying the Sense of Place toolkit.

## *Quality*

All product promoted will be quality-branded and, in the case of visitor accommodation and attractions, will be accredited by the Wales Tourist Board.

## *Competitiveness*

Railway journeys to and within the North Wales region are unique in their attractiveness, offer a competitive alternative to railway journeys to Cumbria and greater choice of travel within region.

## **Hard business targets**

- a) Increase in visitor traffic on the North Wales Coast and Conwy Valley railways.
- b) Increase in bedspace occupancy by visitors coming to North Wales by train.
- c) Number of staying visitors influenced by the campaign to visit the North Wales region.
- d) Number of visitors influenced by the campaign to use public transport to visit North Wales by train and/or to travel around the North Wales region during their visit.
- e) Number of bednight sales in the North Wales region influenced by the campaign.
- f) Number of day visits to the North Wales region influenced by the campaign.
- g) Amount of visitor expenditure in the North Wales region influenced by the campaign.
- h) Influence of the campaign on the number of jobs generated/safeguarded in the North Wales region.

## **Softer Targets**

- a) Overall increase in the percentage of visitors coming to North Wales by train.
- b) Increase in the frequency of short break decision-making in favour of the North Wales region.

## **Year 1 targets**

- a) Baseline figures and targets for train passengers and station footfall on the North Wales main line and branch lines will be provided by First North Western from quarterly customer satisfaction monitoring surveys and annual station usage surveys.
- b) Methodology for determining baseline figures and establishing targets will be provided by North Wales Tourism.
- c) 100,000 staying visitors
- d) 95,000 public transport users
- e) 650,000 bednight sales
- f) 14,000 day visits
- g) £12m expenditure
- h) 800 jobs

## **Evaluation of targets**

Targets will be evaluated using the surveys referred to under a) and b) above, annually by reference to figures produced using the STEAM model, and primary research methodology introduced by Rachel Papworth using incentivised surveys in promotional literature, and competitions.

## **Further information**

Further information on the First North Wales Events and Sustainable Transport for Tourism Wales campaigns is available from This Week® Wales by emailing [media@thisweek.co.uk](mailto:media@thisweek.co.uk). The information falls under the following headings:

1. Infrastructure.
2. Tourism Travel Clusters.
3. Transport Corridor Marketing.
4. National Transport Network.
5. Marketing Product.