Series 3

Culture & Creative Vibe

A practical guide to experiential tourism in Northern Ireland

nitb.com
ni2012 has changed global perceptions and created a legacy for tourism in Northern Ireland. But where do we go from here? What is the next step in our journey? Best practice points towards experiential tourism. By focusing on our strengths and natural assets, we can create truly authentic experiences and unlock stories to surprise and delight visitors. We believe in this approach and its ability to create opportunities to drive increased revenue in tourism. This publication has been designed to deliver the ideas and inspiration that can help us all to continue bringing to life the experiences we offer to our visitors. Collaboration will be the key to success – we are all unique but together we can deliver more rounded, more exciting and more inspiring experiences that visitors will spread the word about and return for more. The future success of the industry is in our hands.

Alan Clarke
Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Tourist Board

The Intelligent Perspective Series

- Intelligent Perspective overview report
  This report provides a deeper understanding of Experiential Tourism and how to do it in Northern Ireland (NI).

- The Intelligent Perspective Series
  Five practical guides covering five themes - to help you to grow your business through making use of our best assets. These guides will help you to better understand who our visitors are, what they are looking for and how to give them more of what they want.

1. Coasts and Lakes
2. Unique Outdoors
3. Culture & Creative Vibe
4. Living Legends
5. Naturally NI

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In this fast-moving consumer marketplace we know that our tourism industry must adapt and develop to keep up with growing competition. Across the world, everyone is ‘doing tourism’ and the demands from consumers is ever rising and changing. The more you know about your customers, the better you can look after them, the more satisfied they will be, the more they will recommend you and the more money they are likely to spend with you. It really is just that simple.

Traditionally many tourism destinations and NI too, have developed and marketed tourism as a series of products and services – a hotel room, a beach, a museum, a beautiful landscape, and so on. But we know that to truly engage with our visitors today we must shift our thinking and connect with them on a deeper, more emotional, more personal level. Visitors want to feel something from the places they visit, they want to be touched by the stories of the people and actively participate in culture and community. They want to have genuine interactions on a personal level and everyone in the tourism industry must open their hearts to be able to do this. We are no longer merely selling visitors a ‘product’ – we are selling them experiences of our country and we, its people, are an essential part of this product.

We need to now be more in the business of ‘giving memories and connections’ to visitors to take home.

This is a great opportunity for NI to really rise up and grow our tourism industry. We have everything we need – wonderful landscapes, a unique and distinctive culture, friendly and genuine people, and a depth of stories, heritage and legends that other destinations can only dream of.

Our time is now. This series of guides has been developed to help show you how to do it.

What are the benefits of this approach?

• You can develop a deeper understanding of who is likely to be attracted and what else you can offer them to grow your business
• It is a way to work more closely with other providers and to grow the market share for everyone
• It can encourage you to become better at what you do and to be more appreciated for your commitment and passion
• Opportunities to learn from other businesses success
• Opportunities for you to become more profitable and for NI to become a stronger tourism destination in the future
• It will encourage a greater spread of visitors into the rural areas of NI

The Intelligent Perspective Series has been developed to inspire and help everyone to start to offer our visitors better joined-up experiences, as this is what they are now looking for. Our own experiential tourism journey was kicked off with the launch of the ‘Creating Experiences Toolkit’ in March 2013 and this series of guides is the next step along that road.

There are six guides in the series and they are designed to be a practical resource, full of tips, insights and sharing others’ experiences to support and learn from. There are five themed reports which show you how to do it and one ‘Overview Report’ that can tell you why. However, these individual reports don’t sit on their own. To be effective, you will need to refer to all of them and mix the ideas from each, according to your particular business, geographic location and type of visitor you attract.

Many others have embarked down this path before us and so there is best practice out there and experience that we can learn from. We hope that you enjoy the opportunities that this approach will give you and also make good use of the insights and information within these resources.
The global tourism industry has seen a distinct move away from Mass Tourism, which sold generic packages with low levels of personal involvement. Now, people want bespoke offerings that tap into their hearts and minds, giving them once-in-a-lifetime experiences that are just right for them. They care deeply how they will spend their precious time away and they want to find an experience that closely matches their needs. Moreover, with such a powerful looking and booking tool as the internet and travel review sites, potential visitors are armed with all the tools to design a tailored trip that reflects their aspirations and expectations. This is why we must shift our focus away from marketing standalone products into creating and marketing experiences. This is Experiential Tourism.

What does Experiential Tourism mean for NI?
NI is comparatively, a very small country and so it is to be expected that we have fewer signature standalone experiences to rely on for our tourism attractors. But NI is literally brimming with smaller experiences that when ‘clustered’ together can pack a punch all on their own – if we choose to look at how we deliver tourism in a different way. It’s all about collaborating, not competing with each other.

What is Experiential Tourism?
Belfast Bred Food Tour
A walking tour to discover the culinary history of the city
For a walking tour with a difference in Belfast – there is Belfast Bred Food Tour – part theatre, part dining experience and part culinary history from the Kabosh Theatre Company. The tour is led by ‘Barney’ who is a fictional character, allegedly a chef from RMS Titanic, who is on the hunt for the finest ingredients to recreate the ship’s launch menu. Working with a range of Belfast’s restaurants and knowledgeable chefs, the tour moves from one location to the next recounting tales of Edwardian Belfast whilst at the same time introducing the visitor to the world class food and drink available today.

This tour is a great example of how to link the themes to provide a fascinating experience to visitors. Within this alone there are themes of Coasts & Lakes (locally sourced seafood), Living Legends (the Edwardian food producers such as Cantrell & Cochrane and ginger ale), Culture & Creative Vibe (the food and drink dining experience of Belfast), Naturally NI (the authentic NI ingredients to make our famous signature dishes).

It is this unique and authentic theme that makes this tour so successful, coupled with the highly successful partnership and collaborations with other participating businesses.

www.kabosh.net

So what is our CHECKLIST for creating an experience?

✔ It must be globally unique
Visitors are looking for offerings that can only be found in the location they’re visiting, or a focus on things that are distinctly NI.

✔ It must be authentically local
Genuine local experiences are often the ones that provide the stand-out quality that people remember. Visitors want something they can’t experience elsewhere.

✔ It must be interactive
Visitors don’t want to just see things. They want to learn something new that evokes emotions; feel a sense of belonging and feel alive.

✔ It must be aligned to the needs of our visitors
When making decisions, visitor needs come first and we can work back from that knowledge. This begins with a good understanding of the visitor segments.
Spotlight on this theme – Culture & Creative Vibe

Coasts & Lakes
Turning our coast & waterways into unique global destination experiences.

Living Legends
Making our history, legend & stories alive and interactive.

Unique Outdoors
Becoming a distinct outdoor recreation & adventure playground.

Naturally NI
Experiencing local culture through nature.

Creating ‘joined-up’ experiences for visitors

There is no one theme that will on its own appeal to one particular visitor type. Visitors want to pick and mix their experiences across all themes according to their needs. It is this individual selection that will create memorable and unique tourism experiences for every visitor.

The focus of this report is to help businesses that are influenced in some way by the Creative Vibe theme (through proximity or otherwise) to improve their offering and ultimately to get more visitors through the door. Individual businesses will be able to use this guide to learn how to become more experience-led in nature.

We need to become:
➤ more authentic
➤ more engaging
➤ more personalised

We don’t necessarily need a big signature experience as the only way to attract our visitors. For NI, the real opportunity lies in developing a critical mass of experience-led businesses across all the themes that can link together and cross sell.

We need to align our efforts by joining up our products and turn them into experiences so they make more sense to a visitor. In short, we need to view our current offering from THEIR perspective. Then we can join up experiences for them around particular themes that we know they would like.

Very often these sorts of experiences are right under our nose – it seems so obvious we don’t know why we didn’t think of it before!

Signature Assets:
Examples include The Belfast & Derry~Londonderry City Experience

Supporting Assets:
Examples include theatre, street entertainment, music, film, distinctive/award-winning pubs and restaurants, café culture, tours, shopping, art galleries, City Quarters, public realm, nightlife, hallmark events, festivals, unique shopping experiences

Culture & Creative Vibe
Promoting contemporary & vibrant NI experiences.

Spotlight on this theme – Culture & Creative Vibe

Shopping
Theatre
Street entertainment
Music
Award winning Pubs
Festivals
Film
Restaurants
Belfast City Experience
Café culture
City Quarters
Tours
Public Realm
Art galleries
Derry~Londonderry City Experience
Nightlife
Events
Why is our Creative Vibe so important?

NI has a rich culture that visitors find very appealing and are keen to explore and find out more. Our ‘Creative Vibe’ theme is slightly different to the other themes (e.g. Unique Outdoors) in that much of it is intangible – that is, it is less about physical products and services, and more about the buzz and atmosphere that can be found and how your business can help to create it as well as benefit from it.

The primary focus of Creative Vibe is the cities of Belfast and Derry~Londonderry, their cultural and heritage offering and their evening economy. Belfast’s buzz is more urban and edgy, whereas the strength and appeal of Derry~Londonderry is more its physical heritage, rich culture and vibrant history.

The secondary focus is the vast array of events and festivals that are held across the length and breadth of Northern Ireland.

Wherever your business is situated, there will be a Creative Vibe to tap in to.

The bits we’re getting right...

Our Creative Vibe is central to our tourism offering, from the famous Northern Irish welcome to our traditional music and to our fantastic theatre scene.

Consider the following key areas of NI’s cultural offering and how they relate to your business:

Top 5 strengths – and how to tap into them!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creative Vibe USPs</th>
<th>How to tap into this strength</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Music</strong> is a key attractor in both Belfast and Derry~Londonderry. There is a strong demand from domestic visitors for music events and festivals. 41% of domestic tourists attended a concert while on holiday here and 18% attended a music festival. This is a large audience of people to tap in to.</td>
<td>Do you know your local venues and what they offer? Make sure you are aware of their ‘What’s On’ calendar so that you can tell your visitors. Promote listings for big international acts on your website. Don’t forget the small acts in local venues – often visitors want a genuine, local experience. Could you collaborate with local pubs, musicians and venues to create joint offers or even an festival or event?</td>
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<td><strong>2. Screen tourism</strong> is on the rise, boosted by the success of ‘Game of Thrones’, with reports that the series has generated £65million in direct spending in the region. Successful TV series such as this have a lasting and enduring impact. Several other high profile films and TV series have also been filmed recently in NI, such as The Fall, Blandings and Philomena.</td>
<td>Prominently feature nearby filming locations in your marketing materials - this could be a real draw for many potential visitors. Explore ways to tap into the growth of screen tourism. Could you offer a themed menu for example? Could you create an screen tourism experience by collaborating with others? For example, could you link up with a local tour guide to offer ‘on location’ tours?</td>
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<td><strong>3. Derry~Londonderry’s intact walls</strong> are a rarity in the UK and Ireland. Walking tours along the historic walls are a key and unique product. Its lighting strategy serves to illuminate and showcase the walls as well as improve safety and boost the evening product.</td>
<td>Offer suggestions for evening walks, vantage points and cafes that will take advantage of this unique experience. Even if your business isn't based in Derry~Londonderry, it will still have appeal to visitors as a day trip, especially overseas visitors for whom the travel distance is not an issue.</td>
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<td><strong>4. NI events and festivals</strong> are a unique and authentic NI experience that covers the whole country and draws lots of visitors. For example, the longstanding City of Derry Jazz and Big Band Festival attracts over 25,000 visitors every year.</td>
<td>Tell visitors about key events prior to visiting – that way they may extend their visit to take in some of the atmosphere. Could you team up with a local festival to either offer services or to be, for example, an affiliate accommodation provider? Could you partner with arts organisations to add a new dimension to an existing event?</td>
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<td><strong>5. Literary tourism</strong>. C.S. Lewis, Seamus Heaney, Marie Jones and Brian Friel are all from NI and offer tourism opportunities which allow visitors to walk in their footsteps and explore areas that inspired and enchanted them.</td>
<td>Could you provide information (and even a library of sample books) from traditional and contemporary authors to inspire your visitors? Could you work with local tour guides to develop a literary experience in your area?</td>
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</table>
Below is a sample of some of the Creative Vibe events in Northern Ireland. How many of these are you aware of? How can you link in with to grow your business?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Where</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Out to Lunch Festival</td>
<td>• Arts, Culture, Music, Comedy</td>
<td>Belfast</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival Other Voices</td>
<td>• Music</td>
<td>Belfast Derry-Londonderry</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Belfast Children’s Festival St Patrick’s Festival</td>
<td>• Arts, Music, Culture</td>
<td>Province-wide Armagh</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival City of Derry Jazz and Big Band Festival</td>
<td>• Arts, Culture, Music, Comedy</td>
<td>Belfast Derry-Londonderry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Open House Festival Belfast Book Festival</td>
<td>• Music, Literature, Culture</td>
<td>Bangor Belfast</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dalriada Festival Blues on The Bay International John Hewitt Summer School</td>
<td>• Music, Food, Sports, Culture, Music</td>
<td>Glenarm Castle Warrenpoint Armagh</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hilden Beer &amp; Music Festival August Craft Month Féile an Phobail Stendhal Festival of Art Heart of the Glens Festival Belsonic &amp; Tennents Vital festivals Happy Days International Beckett Festival</td>
<td>• Food, Music, Arts, Crafts, Arts, Culture, Comedy, Music, Music, Arts, Culture, Sports, Music, Arts, Literature, Music</td>
<td>Hilden Province-wide Belfast Limavady Cushendall Belfast Enniskillen</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Hillsborough Oyster Festival Culture Night Hans Sloane Chocolate &amp; Fine Food Festival Bluegrass Festival Aspects Literary Festival The Big Tickle</td>
<td>• Food, Music, Arts, Culture, Music, Food, Music, Music, Literature, Comedy</td>
<td>Hillsborough Belfast Derry &amp; Others Killyleagh Omagh Bangor Derry-Londonderry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Belfast Restaurant Week Festival of Light Banks of the Foyle Hallowe’en Carnival Belfast Festival at Queens</td>
<td>• Food, Culture, Arts, Nature, Arts, Culture, Arts, Talks, Culture, Music</td>
<td>Belfast Mount Stewart Derry-Londonderry Belfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Belfast Music Week William Kennedy Piping Festival Atlantic Sessions C.S. Lewis Festival Foyle Film Festival</td>
<td>• Music, Music, Culture, Music, Literature, Film</td>
<td>Belfast Armagh Portrush Belfast Derry-Londonderry</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

See the events section on discovernorthernireland.com for more listings.
The bigger picture

Creative Vibe is a key element of NI’s offering to visitors. For instance, according to NITB’s Consumer Barometer 2013, enjoying entertaining events and festivals was cited amongst the top drivers for taking a short break. Music is integral to this, as our traditional music is such a key part of culture, and a core part of our vital pub culture.

In 2012, domestic tourists spent an estimated £13 million on entertainment while overseas visitors spend an estimated £21 million, bringing a total of £34 million into the economy.

Events and festivals in particular have a large impact for local businesses, especially accommodation providers. According to Mintel, 64% of NI visitors and 53% of ROI visitors spent at least one night in accommodation during the last festival or event they visited. Events and festivals offer an opportunity for us to showcase other elements of what we have to offer to encourage those visitors to come back.

SWOT analysis for Culture & Creative Vibe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A wide range of music, from traditional to contemporary is an integral part of the pub and festival scene.</td>
<td>• Issues surrounding wider event scheduling in NI.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Screen tourism and its growing popularity in NI.</td>
<td>• Lack of quality and timely information available on things to do and places to go, including on the internet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Growing accolades and reputation for hosting world class events e.g. in 2013, Derry~Londonderry is the inaugural UK City of Culture. Its legacy will be a massive boost for tourism.</td>
<td>• According to Mintel (January 2012) Some 60% of NI and 72% of ROI consumers feel that tickets for festivals and events are too expensive.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Regional events/festivals are growing in stature e.g. the Beckett Festival in County Fermanagh.</td>
<td>• Food and drink at festivals and events is often also seen as being expensive.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Food, drink and retail can be incorporated within Creative Vibe (e.g. St Georges Market in Belfast, Austin’s which is the world’s oldest independent department store in Derry~Londonderry).</td>
<td>• Limited uptake of social media platforms by tourism businesses – lost opportunities for cross-promotion and brand building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Creative industries in NI are a diverse, vibrant, growing sector that have the capability of enhancing the visitor experience and creating a spending opportunity.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Maritime history in Belfast and Derry<del>Londonderry. There are plans for a new maritime museum at Ebrington Square in Derry</del>Londonderry.</td>
<td>• Competitors, such as Edinburgh and Glasgow who have a very well developed ‘creative vibe’ product and have an established reputation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Annual initiatives such as Culture Night are growing in popularity and provide the perfect platform to showcase a range of cultural activity and boost the shoulder season.</td>
<td>• Lack of cohesive approach and joined-up working between tourism businesses and event and festival organisers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social media is key in Creative Vibe as this is how the target markets can best be reached.</td>
<td>• Lack of awareness amongst businesses of the target markets - and sometimes a poor product knowledge - which can lead to a low level of new product innovation through better collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NI is a reasonably undiscovered destination for many markets.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. Glasgow UNESCO City of Music

Glasgow has a legendary music scene that stretches across the whole spectrum from country and classical to hip-hop, techno and indie. Its venues are equally varied and the city hosts an average 130 music events each week, more than any other Scottish city.

The city’s reputation as ‘Europe’s Secret Capital of Music’ (Time Magazine) was officially recognised in 2008 when Glasgow joined the Creative Cities Network as a UNESCO City of Music, teaming up with other international cities including Seville and Bogota who want to share experiences, ideas and best practice in music.

Joining the Creative Cities Network cemented Glasgow’s position as a centre of musical creativity and activity and acknowledged the city’s experience in hosting musical festivals and events such as the world-renowned Celtic Connections, Glasgow’s annual folk, roots and world music festival.

A comprehensive website, www.glasgowcityofmusic.com, brings information from all the organisations active in Glasgow’s music scene together in one place, so that anyone who wants to know about music in Glasgow can find information about festivals and events, musicians, gigs, orchestras and tutors – all at the click of a button.

3. Making the most of musical heritage

Liverpool’s music scene is world renowned. Think of Liverpool and you think of The Beatles - it is this musical experience that’s captured the imaginations of visitors worldwide.

Arrive at John Lennon Airport and make your way to The Hard Days Night Hotel in Liverpool centre, the world’s only Beatles hotel. Its restaurant, Blake’s, named after the celebrated Sergeant Pepper album cover, adds to the experience and welcomes visitors with a ‘Paul McCartney blue cocktail’.

The hotel is set in the vibrant Cavern Quarter which encircles Mathew Street, where visitors can immerse themselves in music and explore the Wall of Fame, the world renowned Cavern Pub, the Cavern Walks designer shopping centre and a host of other shops, bars and restaurants which all make the most of their musical heritage.

A trip to the Albert Dock is a must and not only hosts the famous Tate Gallery, but is also the home of the Beatles Museum where visitors can hop on a tour and tribute to the Fab Four and trace the footsteps of the famous quartet.

In August, visitors from around the world descend on Liverpool during International Beatles Week. Live gigs, exhibitions, memorabilia sales, guest speakers, video shows, sightseeing tours and a convention all make this festival a success. Kevin McManus of Liverpool Vision says: “In 2008 Liverpool was European Capital of Culture which really put us back on the map. The knock-on effect of music tourism in Liverpool has been huge.”

www.visitliverpool.com
There are some key visitor types or segments that we need to focus our attention on in NI as these are the types of visitor who are best matched to what we have to offer. There are three main profiles for GB visitors, four for ROI and three for NI. For more information on the target segments look at the Creating Experiences Toolkit and the Intelligent Perspective Series — Overview report, which you can download at www.nitb.com/experience.

The segments that most are attracted to this theme, Creative Vibe, are Social Energisers and Culturally Curious from GB; Mature Cosmopolitan from NI and ROI; Young and Lively from ROI. These names have been given to the different visitor types to help us to understand their main attributes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>What they like</th>
<th>Examples of how you could attract them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Curious</td>
<td>GB</td>
<td>• Authenticity • Insight • Independence • Immersion in culture • Off the beaten track</td>
<td>• Carry brochures for local historic and cultural spots of interest. • Offer itinerary suggestions to encompass a range of sights. • Tell visitors about ‘hidden gems’ so they feel they’ve seen something unique. • Can you stock produce/gifts from local suppliers? • Can you have a list of upcoming cultural events on your website? Update this regularly and keep previous guests in the loop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Energisers</td>
<td>GB</td>
<td>• Staying in a nice hotel for the weekend • Usually with friends • Love the buzz of the city • Love music and comedy and trying out new cafes, restaurants, pubs and clubs • Love to tie in an adventure sport experience if nearby</td>
<td>• These visitors will gather information of special offers and deals through social media – can you promote your offers this way? • Can you organise fun itineraries and make it easy for them? They are only here for one or two nights. • What adventure sport is nearby that you could link to? • These visitors need relevant information and fast. Being not open on a Sunday isn’t an option! • Get prepared so they can be spontaneous!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature Cosmopolitans</td>
<td>NI ROI</td>
<td>• Relaxation • Good quality food &amp; drink • Scenic drives • Going to the theatre • Authentic Irish pubs • Good deals • The big local attractions</td>
<td>• Give first-hand recommendations for places to try authentic NI dishes. • Provide information on drives that will take in the best cultural spots. • What can you offer to add value, without compromising price? A welcome drink? Complimentary toiletries? • Do you have ‘what’s on’ information on your website, or can you link to it? • Printed marketing materials are the preferred holiday planning tool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young and Lively</td>
<td>ROI</td>
<td>• Variety of entertainment • Cafe culture • High profile attractions • Cool nightlife • The ‘Wow’ factor • Bragging rights</td>
<td>• Think of the language you use in marketing - it needs to sell the cool factor. • If you have a website (which is important for this market), link to a range of cultural activities. • Have up-to-date info available about local nightlife and gigs. • Offer prices in Sterling and Euros for ease of conversion. • If your business is near a city, promote your proximity to the nightlife. • If it’s more remote from the nightlife, establish links with transport providers.</td>
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Visitors

When using these different visitor profiles – it is important to understand that they don't represent an individual person or personality but rather a typical ‘visitor type’ which we call a ‘segment’. It is a useful guide for us when thinking about the sorts of products and services we can offer and which types of people might be attracted to them. Once we know this – we can be better informed about who best to market to.

Can you recognise your own types of visitors? Do they fall into a couple or more of these categories?

It is also important to understand that no one visits for just one thing. Even if visitors arrive especially to see Titanic Belfast or Giant’s Causeway for example – they still eat, sleep, interact with locals and do a myriad of different activities that gives them this experience. It is for this reason that we need to understand the different characteristics of visitors and then match these to our five themes.

Quick Taster

Chris, Neil and John from Manchester (SOCIAL ENERGISERS) have come to Belfast for the weekend – they have heard about the edgy music scene in Belfast and with cheap flights from Edinburgh, they thought they would check it out. They stay in a city centre 4 star hotel but only use it as a base. The information in the hotel isn’t relevant to them so a bit despondent, they head to the pub, The John Hewiit, to discuss what they are going to do and get their bearings. They meet someone here who tells them about the Segway tours at Titanic quarter (COASTS AND LAKES/LIVING LEGENDS) and they have a great laugh trying this out. Someone else they meet tells them about some good traditional pubs with live music to go to in the evening and that is the first day sorted (CREATIVE VIBE). The next day they get tickets to see some comedy at the Empire Music Hall in the evening (CREATIVE VIBE) and decide to get out in the fresh air for the day before drinking again and head to SkyTrek in Colin Glen Forest Park (UNIQUE OUTDOORS) which someone recommended. Although it is random and spontaneous they find things to do from the people they meet along the way but often find they miss some really good things to see and do in the cities they visit for lack of any information. With such a short time in the city they usually don’t have time to find information for themselves.

A quick taster of how easy it is to mix the five themes to create an experience for different types of visitors.

Of course people will make these sorts of connections themselves if they have enough information to do so. But as a business, there is so much that you can do to encourage and inspire visitors to create great experiential itineraries. It is good for them and good for your business. There are, of course, many different mixes people might choose – but if you are aware of what visitors tend to go for, you can have a look around for other businesses in your area to see who you could work with to offer more – by collaborating with others and offering a joined-up experience.
How to attract more visitors with our Creative Vibe

Tourism markets may be ever changing but the principles remain the same. A strong quality product, excellent value, good customer service, thoughtful hospitality and a connectedness with other businesses within a destination are the core foundation for any tourism business today.

To encourage people to enjoy a more integrated experience in NI rather than just an individual product, we need to shift our thinking to how we see our business in the context of NI, who we are in competition with and who we should collaborate with. We know that we have a big opportunity to attract many more visitors from both ROI and GB and so we must start first to think NI; then the county or area; then locality; and then finally your own business.

Your competition is then primarily other destinations like Scotland, not a neighbouring business in your own locality who might better be a collaborator.

This is where ‘clustering’ comes into its own – small businesses with particular types of customers in common can come together to provide a richer and more joined up experience for visitors.

How to create experiences using our creative vibe

‘Clustering’ - How your business can offer an experience for NI

So how does clustering work in practice, and how does it really have an impact? Consider this diagram: Look at how a visitor makes a decision to finally end up at your business. Then look at all the different ways you could collaborate with others to get noticed, much earlier and further up that buying process. You can do this by collaborating with others using the visitor’s profile type as the link between you.

Did You Know?

NI’s impressive theatres are an attraction in themselves! Belfast’s Grand Opera House was extended in 2006 to include a smaller performance area, a bar and a restaurant. Enniskillen is home to the Ardhowen Theatre, a 290-seat facility for theatre and music, also boasts a rehearsal studio, two bars and an award-winning restaurant; and the Playhouse in Derry-Londonderry was reopened after refurbishment in 2009 and has gone on to win awards for its impressive architecture.
Out to Lunch Festival
Q&A with Sean Kelly, Festival Director

What makes your event / festival a unique and authentic experience?
Out to Lunch is the only festival in the world, that we are aware of, based around a lunchtime arts programme. It occurred to us that there were a lot of people with an interest in the arts who lived or worked in the city centre yet found it difficult, because of family and other commitments, to come to shows in the evening. We believed that if we combined a high quality yet accessible show with a tasty, locally sourced lunch and fixed it at an affordable price we could create a new and attractive arts experience. We presented the first Out to Lunch festival in January 2006 and have subsequently added weekend and evening shows to meet the demand.

Describe your ideal visitor / Who are your main target markets?
Although originally conceived for local residents and workers, the appeal of the festival has grown to the extent we are now attracting visitors from all over the UK and beyond. The arts calendar throughout the UK tends to be weak during January and so culture seekers are visiting the city for weekend breaks specifically attracted by our programme. Weekends are now our busiest times by far with our audiences being a very broad cultural mix.

Tell us about your key partners.
We rely on a variety of partners to make the festival work, including our key stakeholders, the Arts Council, Belfast City Council, the Department for Social Development and NITB. Our venue partner, the Black Box benefits from having full houses, twice a day during January and we work with local restaurants such as Mourne Seafood to supply our lunches. We work with the Ramada Encore and Premier Inn among others to accommodate our artists and guests and of course, other bars, restaurants and taxi firms get an uplift from the increased activity in the area.

Why is collaboration key to your event / festival?
The festival operates on a modest budget and requires cooperation and mutually beneficial relationships to make the books balance. Often our suppliers will offer their services at close to cost because they are keen to have their resources being used at a time of the year when they would otherwise be lying dormant. This way everyone gains.

What are your main sales channels? How do you use social media as a marketing tool?
Traditionally our main marketing tool has been our printed programme but there is stronger emphasis more recently on digital marketing. We have moved quite a lot of our marketing spend over from print advertising to digital advertising and this is paying rich dividends for modest outlays and reaching audiences we could never have imagined.

How do you use customer feedback to improve your event / festival?
After every festival we ask our audience to fill in an online survey (using a festival prize as an incentive.) The response has been incredible and overwhelmingly positive. We do respond to constructive criticisms however and have changed a number of features of the festival as a direct response to audience feedback. We have even taken programming ideas for music and theatre from suggestions offered in surveys.

Do you have any tips for other tourism businesses who want to develop a “Creative Vibe” experience?
Just because it hasn’t been done before, doesn’t mean it won’t work! In a very formulaic festival market, people will respond to new and innovative ideas if they are strong enough.

www.cqaf.com
Tourism in NI, like any other destination is affected by a wide range of factors ranging from national economics, consumer confidence, lifestyle trends to technology developments, and changing demographics with a new generation of visitors. So how do you keep up to date and be proactive in changing your business to react to them? In the past, it would be safe to say that we have relied heavily on our local market for tourism and so these world trends affected us less. However that is definitely in the past now and we are moving on. For our tourism industry to grow and survive we must be able to welcome many more different types of visitors from many more places and be sure that we are aware of what they are looking for from us and most importantly – be able to offer it.

### Top trends affecting our markets – and what this means for visitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trend/factor</th>
<th>What this means</th>
<th>What more you can do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitors are value-focussed</td>
<td>• Visitors are more discerning and expectations are rising. They want excellent experiences but aren’t necessarily prepared to pay for them!</td>
<td>• Are you offering incentives for local visitors to reconnect with the cultural offerings in their area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tend to wait to book at the last minute</td>
<td>• Do you offer a range of prices and flexibility to suit a visitor’s needs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• People are taking shorter holidays closer to home</td>
<td>• What’s special about the atmosphere of your business? Do you promote that on your website?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discounts don’t have the highest appeal – people want to feel they have had the best value and it has been personal</td>
<td>• Can you team up with a cultural provider to offer discount tickets/deals for loyal customers?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Late Night Art Tour: late-night promotion to encourage visitors to explore cultural life

First there was late night shopping, now there’s late night art, with a new series of late night public gallery openings across Belfast. This tour encourages visitors and locals to get more involved with the rich culture available in Belfast. With 37% of all world travellers reportedly having an interest in the arts and culture, this type of value added offer is a great attract for visitors. Information about what’s on can be found at BelfastGalleries.com and includes gallery listings, latest news, an interactive map, artist commentaries etc.

www.belfastgalleries.com

### Did You Know?

Dubrovnik, like Derry-Londonderry is a famous walled city and is thought to be among the 10 best Medieval walled cities of the world. Some 750,000 visitors take to the City Walls each year making this one of Croatia’s biggest visitor attractions. Nowadays, the battlements are used as a stage for events in the renowned Dubrovnik Summer Festival, playing host to spectacular theatre, classical music, ballet and opera performances.
## Technological Innovations

### Finding the right ticket with Clicket, Edinburgh

Such is the wonderful array of festivals and events in the City of Edinburgh, it can actually be difficult for visitors to find information on the events that particularly interest them and to plan their visit accordingly.

Now a new website called ‘Clicket’ [www.clicket.co.uk](http://www.clicket.co.uk) aims to take the hassle out of getting into the arts in the city. With cross-agency support from over 35 organisations, this is part of the Edinburgh Portal Project, a series of inter-connected websites and related e-marketing campaigns that provide a comprehensive picture of the arts and culture on offer in central Edinburgh.

As well as comprehensive events listings for the Edinburgh area, the site includes: real time ticketing across multiple venues; an interactive itinerary planner; in depth venue information; interest-specific channels for families and traditional arts; innovative content, from features about what’s coming up, to guides to the city; plus a newsletter featuring forthcoming event highlights.

The Audience Business, the company developing and running the site, say: “Edinburgh is small but mighty; there’s a lot going on here, and it’s not just the festivals. All year round, Edinburgh is buzzing with a mad creative energy that manifests itself in a sometimes overwhelming cultural scene. When we sat down to plan Clicket, our biggest aim was to take the hassle out of getting out of the house and into the arts in Edinburgh. Therefore everything on the site is designed to make it as easy as possible to get out and about and try something new”.

[www.clicket.co.uk](http://www.clicket.co.uk)

### Trend/factor: Technological innovations are reshaping the industry

People are becoming increasingly dependent on their mobile devices. According to the European Travel Commission, 95% of holidaymakers have at least one internet-enabled device and claim they need daily access.

At the same time, technological innovations are helping businesses to save costs, improve their service and enhance their offering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trend/factor</th>
<th>What this means</th>
<th>What more you can do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Technological innovations**     | • Visitors are becoming increasingly savvy about searching things to do whilst on holiday  
• Posting feedback on social networking sites or review sites is easy and can be done in seconds - reaching thousands  
• Visitors are looking for personal, tailored booking experiences                                                                                   | • Are you monitoring and responding to feedback about you on Travel Review sites?  
• Do you offer free Wi-Fi or can you direct a visitor to where it is available close by?  
• How can technology help enhance your service or offering?  
• Do you follow up with visitors afterwards with tailored, personalised offers according to the cultural experiences they’ve loved? |
| **Time for me**                   | In the stressful busy world of today people are increasingly looking for short breaks to have time off to recharge batteries and find time connecting to themselves and close ones.  
• People are increasingly looking to book last minute short breaks  
• They want to invest in themselves and so that can also mean learning something new, having a new experience or just quiet pampering time | • Promote escapism and time to connect with a new culture – always a winner with visitors.  
• What local experiences do you like to do to recharge your batteries? Can you recommend this same experience to visitors?                                                                                     |
### Trend/factor | What this means | What more you can do
--- | --- | ---
**Authenticity**
Visitors are increasingly looking for ‘the real thing’ and want an authentic experience of the places and culture they visit. | • Visitors want to experience everything that NI can offer - interacting with locals, tasting local food, being in the natural environment and absorbing the local stories
• People are more focused on the purpose of the trip and how it will make them feel rather than just on scenery and climate | • People love personal recommendations. Where’s the best buzz in the city? Tell your visitors.
• Can you play music, tell stories or even sing? Do you have a passion for cooking or a good knowledge of local history? Do you know one malt whiskey from another? How can you share what you know with visitors?
• Could you collaborate with other local providers to offer a themed package to jointly promote to visitors? | **Case Studies**

#### 7. Authenticity

**Happy Days International Beckett Festival**
This Festival takes place in Enniskillen annually and is a multi-arts festival to celebrate the work of Samuel Beckett, aimed at a worldwide audience. The event happens over a five day period but through a heavy focus on collaboration and involvement of the local businesses. The festival has brought much wider benefits and buzz to the town and surrounding area that involve everybody and extends far longer that the five days of the event itself.

**Top tips for other businesses from Sean Doran, Festival Founder & Artistic Director**
• The motivation behind the event must be authentic and unique. An audience, even those who don’t know much about the subject, can tell if something is real or fake.
• The event has to originate from a piece of local cultural, political, social, geographical/geological history.

The more linked an event is to a strong local context, the stronger the appeal.
• A good event needs to be ideas-led and rigorous in its focus. Too often even a good idea at the beginning loses its way through over-consultation or committee led projects. A single vision may appear the least democratic but it usually pays the highest dividends.
• It’s important to be ambitious and have stand-out. You have to aim to be Premier Division and benchmark yourself globally in your sector.
• Niche does not mean small. Focussed programming is key. Too often events try to be all things to all people, lose focus and thereby lose message.
• Be quirky, be surprising and most of all take risks. For instance, take inspiration from the local barber who was offering ‘Beckett Barnets’ during the festival.
Did You Know?

Berlin, a city like Belfast with a divided and turbulent past, is now a dynamic, progressive city, with a local art scene that reflects its unique history and colourful present. From painters to performance artists, Berlin is home to some of the most innovative figures on the international stage. This city isn’t limited to a big-name arts scene, but rather is full of little names contributing to the big, creative, picture. It is a city that is young, edgy and pulsing with creativity. What can Belfast learn from Berlin? What tips can we pick up about how the clustering has taken place to lay a solid foundation for its creative future? [www.visitberlin.de](http://www.visitberlin.de)

### Trend/factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provenance &amp; Sustainability</th>
<th>What this means</th>
<th>What more you can do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Visitor awareness of the environmental impact of their holidays is expected to continue to rise. Quality food in particular is a high priority for visitors. People are likely to pay more for freshly cooked locally sourced food with a story attached. | • Business that adopt sustainable practices stand to gain a competitive edge on those who don’t.  
• Visitors will be looking for recommendations and advice about sampling local dishes.  
• People are willing to pay a premium for local provenance in food and other local products. | • Could you find a ‘point of difference’ on ‘being green’ and reward visitors on their sustainable efforts? How about bike rental?  
• Do you make the most of your local produce? Do you know where to source it?  
• Does your staff know enough about local food?  
• Could you make recommendations to visitors about local food and craft events?  
• Make local food and its producers the champions of your offering. |

### Provenance & Sustainability

**Bristol’s Big Green Week**

For nine days in June each year Bristol hosts a unique festival of eco ideas, art and entertainment. There is something in the programme for everyone – family entertainment, inspiring talks, workshops, art, music, poetry, comedy, and film – all in celebration of green and sustainable practices.

It is a fantastic opportunity for the entire city to showcase their green credentials and a perfect focus for collaboration and sponsorship. Moreover, Bristol is the first ever UK city to win the prestigious European Green Capital 2015 award which will give an additional boost to this festival. What is going on in your locality that you could join in with? Demonstrating green and sustainable practices holds a strong appeal to visitors – so collaborating with these sorts of initiatives can bring you increased business benefits.

[www.biggreenweek.com](http://www.biggreenweek.com)

### Did You Know?

The largest annual winter music festival of its kind, Celtic Connections sees well over 2,000 musicians from around the world descending on Glasgow in January/early February to bring the city to life for 18 days of concerts, ceilidhs, talks, art exhibitions, workshops, and free events. Did you also know that the biggest traditional Irish music event in the world, The Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann, was held in Derry-Londonderry for the very first time this year and attracted a record 400,000 visitors?

Can you pick up any tips of how businesses tap into Celtic Connections see how we could use these ideas ourselves?

[www.celticconnections.com](http://www.celticconnections.com)
Using the NI themes to build your business

Research shows that our potential visitors are not likely to come to NI on the strength of a single experience theme. But this is where the relatively small size of NI is to our advantage. We have the opportunity to group several of the themes together in a single visit to offer our visitors a rich and rewarding experience of the best that NI has to offer, matched to the most motivating reasons that a particular visitor has for visiting. For more tips on which segments prefer which of our five themes download ‘Creating Experiences Toolkit’ from www.nitb.com/experience. This publication is packed with great information and tools on how to mix themes and tailor these to visitor segments.

So there is not an exact science to how you start to create experiences around the products you offer, but there are some core principles:

✔ Which types of visitors do you currently attract? You can’t be all things to all people so make sure you just make a note of the segments that book with you the most.

✔ Look at the themes that these segments are attracted to the most. Does your business fall into this theme? Can you recognise it?

✔ Now look at the other themes that your top segments also are attracted to. Can you also offer products and services within this theme too? If not – who could you collaborate with so that you can? Make a list of things that your visitors might like to see or do so that you can make recommendations.

How to offer your visitors a better experience and grow your business at the same time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your business</th>
<th>List the segments you currently attract?</th>
<th>What themes can you offer?</th>
<th>What other themes could you offer?</th>
<th>How?</th>
<th>What do you need to do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4* Hotel in Belfast</td>
<td>Social Energisers</td>
<td>Naturally NI</td>
<td>Provide a value deal with traditional sessions and Irish language and dance providers</td>
<td>Meet providers and exchange knowledge about visitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young and Lively</td>
<td>Creative Vibe</td>
<td>Unique outdoors</td>
<td>Do joint offers with adventure sport providers</td>
<td>Discuss joint promotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiate a preferential rate for guests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXAMPLE - Accommodation provider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic facts - Steve is the General Manager of a city centre 4* hotel in Derry~Londonderry</th>
<th>Create a better experience tailored to this segment and also attract new customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Recognise that Young and Lively and Mature Cosmopolitan segments from both ROI and NI as being their primary visitors.</td>
<td>• Make sure all staff know exactly what is on in the city on a week by week basis and can offer recommendations. Consider World Host training for your staff so that they can reach this level of service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They know that their visitors like to explore the attractions of Derry-Londonderry and presume they will find the info they need to do this.</td>
<td>• Develop a range of local restaurants who you would recommend to visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They provide an information stand but don’t offer any tailored recommendations.</td>
<td>• Know all that there is to do in the area and offer to arrange outings for guests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff have a very poor local knowledge of what is on and don’t see it as their responsibility to make suggestions.</td>
<td>• Provide a checklist to guests before they arrive of things that they might be interested in and offer to help with bookings. Advertise this as an additional value offer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They don’t generally ask where people go after they leave in the morning and don’t think to ask what people thought of their stay or what more they wanted.</td>
<td>• Chart an events calendar for the city against likely occupancy and know when you will need additional promotional ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most people tell them they have had a nice time when they say goodbye.</td>
<td>• Consider joint promotions with other providers and bring their services to your hotel to make it easy for guests (bike hire, tours etc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They know that most people just use them as a base, a bed.</td>
<td>• Perhaps your weekend guests want to do a similar activity – for instance an adventure sport an hour away. Could you organise the trip for everyone and make it easy for them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They often are overcrowded when events are on in the city but don’t proactively plan (or help to influence) the times this will happen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They often have low occupancy rates and need to grow their business - particularly for the shoulder season.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Did You Know?**

The most successful festivals and events have a five year plan and are built with a local community at its heart. It is vital to be true to your roots to be able to get local business buy-in and support.

**Did You Know?**

According to Mintel, 16% of NI and 15% of ROI visitors will extend their trip to stay in a festival or event location after it’s over. What are you doing to make that an even more appealing option? Can you offer a reduced rate for extra nights? Are you telling them about all the other wonderful things they simply must see in your area?
Culture Night Belfast

Culture Night is a one day only extravaganza of free cultural music theatre dance and art taking place at a myriad of venues across NI. In Belfast alone there are over 250 events and performances taking place in over 100 venues. This really is a big night out when literally thousands of people descend on the city to take part at this free event for everyone.

Q & A with Adam Turkington, Belfast Programme Manager

What are the benefits to the artists taking part?
If you want people to buy into something they need to see the benefit. We couldn’t possibly pay all the contributors to the event, so in order to avoid the impression of a hierarchy of events, we don’t pay for any artist fees. This means that non-monetary benefits such as promotion and exposure are very important to us and this focus on what matters to the sector is a big contributor to our event numbers growing year on year.

How do you start a ‘Creative Vibe’?
I think there’s a tendency to copy other cities instead of playing to our own strengths. Culture Night has to be authentically ours. We find that organisations who are young, fresh and ambitious are easier to attract and their enthusiasm sells the benefits of getting involved – everyone has a good time. This is how I think you create a Creative Vibe – grassroots up. If you’re going to sell something internationally, it can’t be an experience that is available elsewhere.

Why is Culture Night so successful?
The spontaneity and broad ownership is vitally important to its success. It is very hard to be all things to all people and just land an event in a city. You have to work it from the inside out to be unique and authentic. We push ourselves to do things a little differently and more creatively – such as playing to the strengths of the venue or the seasonality. You also have to focus on the customer not the event organiser – often people don’t think through the minutiae of all the elements of the event and the customer’s experience to make sure everything is taken care of and the right partnerships and collaborations are in place.

What makes Culture Night unique?
Culture Night is taken from an international model but we’ve tweaked it to make it uniquely Belfast and I think this point is very relevant for the tourism industry. To deliver more authentic and unique experiences – you can’t just copy ideas from elsewhere without putting it through an NI lens.

Is the location important?
Because there is such a high concentration of arts organisations within the Cathedral Quarter everybody goes there so it makes sense to focus in this area. To develop audiences, if I’m trying to promote the arts, I don’t just want to fill it with people who already come to arts events. I want to fill it with people who want to come to a street party, and persuade them into coming to some arts at the same time.

How can Belfast play to its strengths?
We can’t only say to international people ‘come for the opera, come for the museum.’ We are not Amsterdam or Paris. It has to be ‘come for the trad session at tea time and come to the punk rock gig later that night and the street theatre that you can see in between the two’. I think our strength is the grassroots and under the radar stuff that people latch on to.
The Nerve Centre is a unique creative media centre, the leading of its kind in NI. More than 120,000 people a year enjoy the wide-ranging programme of arts events, quirky projects and creative learning opportunities. For visitors, there is a range of exciting exhibitions, music performances and events that really tap in to culturally creative, young audiences.

Q & A with David Lewis, Director of Communications & Digital Content
What makes the Nerve Centre unique?
The Nerve Centre is Northern Ireland’s leading creative media arts centre, an amazing collision of Film, Music, Digital Media and the Visual Arts. We run the Oscar affiliated Foyle Film Festival each November and a year-round cultural cinema programme. As well as being the North West’s premier music venue, we offer music creation, performance and production opportunities to hundreds of young people. Our creative learning centres in Derry~Londonderry and Belfast train teachers in digital creativity and empower thousands of young people to become creative, active learners each year.

Why is the Nerve Centre so successful?
The Nerve Centre puts creativity at the heart of everything it does. We embrace change, new ideas, and opportunities to collaborate with others. And, of course, our team of talented, committed staff.

How important is it to collaborate with local communities and businesses?
It’s vital. Creative collaboration is the best way to make new and exciting things happen. The Nerve Centre has literally hundreds of partnerships and collaborations, from major international partners like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to local community centres to individual digital producers. A good example is our SYNC Music programme, which has been taking music-making workshops into every community in Derry~Londonderry and making a real difference to young people’s lives. As well as working with local community centres and community workers on the ground, the project has involved award-winning jazz pianist Neil Cowley and some of NI’s top festivals including Glasgobur and Culture Tech.

How can Derry-Londonderry play to its strengths?
Derry~Londonderry is a beautiful city, with a rich heritage, a growing digital economy, and a young population that at times doesn’t realise how talented it is. Our year as City of Culture has made a fantastic start telling the world this ‘new story’, but we need to keep it going with more high profile events, investment in infrastructure and jobs, and creative opportunities for our young people which are rooted in local communities.

www.nervecentre.org

City of Culture Legacy
Throughout Derry~Londonderry’s year as the first ever UK City of Culture, the Walled City stepped up and delivered an extensive and enlightening events programme, with the city hosting more than 200 cultural events ranging from theatre, music, dance, visual arts, sport, architecture and film. The feel-good feast of arts and culture graced the entire year, topped off at major high points with key international events.

For example, the Return of Colmcille Pageant, the Fleadh Cheoil, the Walled City Tattoo, the Turner Prize 2013 exhibition and the Lumiere Festival of Light.

The overwhelming success of the UK City of Culture programme has created a lasting legacy and impact that has and will benefit the city’s image, confidence and the economy for years to come.
NI has a long association with music - from traditional music as an integral part of the pub and festival scene to more contemporary. For visitors too, music and in particular traditional holds a strong appeal and is cited as the third most popular reason to visit the country. Our music heritage is further extended with the abundance of home-grown talent – from classical musicians, established songwriters and singers through to internationally successful bands.

It is from this heritage that tourism businesses can benefit by making links for visitors. What music events are happening locally? Do you know the local music acts in your area? Do you know enough about your music heritage? Can you make the links for your own market segments?

**Focus on music tourism**

**Case Studies**

**11. Oh Yeah Music Centre, Belfast**

**Collaboration and innovation**

With music being at the very core of Northern Ireland heritage, The Oh Yeah Music vision was started in 2005 as a charity and social enterprise to provide an affordable rehearsal space and a venue that is available to under 18’s. Behind this vision was the band Snow Patrol as well as other leading NI musicians at the time who saw the need to provide every possible support to keep this music heritage alive and viable. The centre is in a former bonded whiskey warehouse and houses a permanent music exhibition, a café space, a privately run recording studio, a song writing room, various small office units for start-up businesses and areas where workshops, meetings and seminars are held.

Stuart Baillie from Oh Yeah Music centre says: “Cultural tourism is increasingly important to Belfast, and many of the above organisations are aiming to bring visitors in for cultural visits. We’re all trying to change the perception of the city and to raise the prospects for local musicians and entrepreneurs. It’s a collective effort, and everyone had their specialties. The best projects are organic and come from a credible, grass-roots vision. We’re always looking back to our original impulse and making sure that we don’t drift far from there. If we lose our integrity, it’s over. We have around 8,500 followers on Twitter and many of those are passionate supporters. On Facebook we have a good following and we also send out a newsletter each fortnight to a substantial database. We’re quite good at getting the word out to our core users.”

www.ohyeahbelfast.com

**12. Fleadh Cheoil**

**Industry collaboration and a full visitor experience**

The world’s biggest celebration of Irish culture, the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann came to Derry~Londonderry in 2013 with an estimated 400,000 people visiting the city to soak up the lively atmosphere and top class musical performances.

Partnership and collaboration were hailed as critical to the success of the festival with passenger transport providing integrated train, coach and bus services to transport tens of thousands of visitors and competitors to and from the city including additional late night trains. Bars and restaurants supported the event by branding their premises and promoting special offers during the festival with many bars taking advantage of temporary on-street trading licences helping to create a carnival atmosphere.

Odhran Dunne from Derry Visitor & Convention Bureau said “The city has never experienced a festival of this magnitude. We congratulate the local tourism industry and local residents who played such an integral part in the success of the week. They have guaranteed that the visitor experience was of the highest quality and that the reputation of the city has been enhanced globally ensuring many visitors will return again and again.”
Focus on screen tourism

Screen tourism is not a new concept – people have always flocked to the locations that a film or TV series was set. However more recently, tourism destinations have realised there are opportunities to reap for significant economic benefit for businesses who tap into the mindset of these visitors and find ways to offer them more.

The benefits

Films can influence decision making for a short term holiday and can give potential visitors a good insight into certain aspects of the country and culture. As many films are set around a heritage site, the film storyline can give a better meaning and interpretation of that site, and by doing so can significantly increase its appeal to a potential visitor. For a snapshot of the potential impact of screen tourism, consider the table below.

### Types of film tourism

There are four main types of film induced tourism: (adapted from Busby & King, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Opportunities for business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>As part of a larger holiday</td>
<td>Visiting a film location without having previous knowledge about the destination. • Provide information on things to see and do. • Link activities to the film.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Special interest and main holiday purpose</td>
<td>The location and holiday booking is made as a result of the film. • Work with tour operators to link your business to the experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>As strength of the holiday</td>
<td>The beauty of natural landscapes, historical sites and actors serve as points of maximum interest. • Be aware of the historical and fictional stories and be able to include extra value and knowledge through your offers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A place where it is assumed the film was shot</td>
<td>Filming sites are visited even if the film presents a different reality. • Keep the magic of the film alive for visitors where you can.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Skyfall Various locations throughout GB Potential for £12m additional visitor spend

Harry Potter Alnwick Castle, England Visitor numbers up 230%, worth £9m in spend

Alice in Wonderland Antony House, England Visitors quadrupled from 25,000 to 100,000

Four Weddings and a Funeral The Crown Hotel, Amersham, England Fully booked for at least 3 years

(Source: Hudson & Ritchie 2006)
Bushmills Live – Whiskey and Music Festival

When Bushmills Distillery wanted to showcase the brand to appeal to 18-34 year olds at an international level, the answer was rooted in digital/social media and in creating a music event which had a far wider reach than the 400 people who were lucky enough to attend.

The team knew that the key to the success was in the relationships and partnership they could build and so they went right to the heart of the Northern Irish Music scene through links with a group of music influencers; Iain Archer, Foy Vance, Bradley Quinn and Mark Ashbridge. This group became known as the Bushmills Brothers and it was their enthusiasm, contacts and already massive social networks that was the cornerstone for the event.

With the team in place to develop the event, the next step was to start to build the online community. This was done initially through an app hosted on the Bushmills Facebook page inviting pairs of friends from around the world to enter for the chance of winning a ticket to the event. Following a shortlisting of entrants, a second app was created to encourage friends and family to vote for the entrants. The pair with the most votes won the tickets!

With a large global following there was much more content and assets that the team could then offer to extend the reach and ensure a real and virtual legacy.

The outcome of this event and campaign far outweighed the original objectives. Bushmills Facebook page grew by over 100% in 3 months with over 100,000 comments, shares or unique posts about the event. Twitter followings too grew by 223%. To date the event has generated 280 online articles, and over 250 posts and tweets about Bushmills from the artists that were involved.

Did You Know?

Internet use has risen to such an extent that the traffic generated in just 20 homes by 2015 is likely to be equal to the entire traffic across the world in 1995!
Social media

To make the most of the opportunities with this theme – Creative Vibe – a basic knowledge of social media channels and how they work is a must. For a small amount of input, you can sow the seeds with your messages and watch them be taken up, and shared with a much wider audience – beyond your wildest dreams. By its very nature, social media is collaborative but there are some rules to the game and ‘netiquette’ that it is well worth being aware of to make sure that you choose the right media for your business and one that can really work for you.

It is also worth noting that for this theme particularly, social media channels and word of mouth is key because of the younger generations it attracts. This market already thinks that email is passé; it is within the social media network that the all important buzz is created. So more than any other theme in this series, we must understand how a younger audience communicates, what they want, what they expect and how we can capture their attention – however fleetingly.

This subject is extensive and worth understanding more fully. For more detail and some helpful toolkits to download, go to www.nitb.com/toolkits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media channel</th>
<th>Use it for</th>
<th>Top tips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>• Becoming more visible&lt;br&gt;• Promoting your business&lt;br&gt;• Contacting people directly who are interested in what you offer</td>
<td>• Keep momentum going with your ‘followers’.&lt;br&gt;• Make a list of special promotions and a content ‘plan’ for the year. Link your Facebook page to your website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>• Promote your business&lt;br&gt;• Sharing news and things that are going on&lt;br&gt;• Keeping in touch with past visitors</td>
<td>• Don’t ‘follow’ too many more people than you have ‘followers’.&lt;br&gt;• Be interesting to encourage people to ‘retweet’ your messages.&lt;br&gt;• Don’t overly sell. Be clever about how you do this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram</td>
<td>• Give potential visitors a taster of what you offer through pictures and video&lt;br&gt;• Encourage people to share their memories of being with you – with others</td>
<td>• Be exciting – if there is a fantastic sunset tonight – share it!&lt;br&gt;• Try to engage with followers comments to create a buzz.&lt;br&gt;• Make sure that the business image is what you want to have shared!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>• Manage your online reputation&lt;br&gt;• Promote your business</td>
<td>• Be real, have a personality, be interesting.&lt;br&gt;• Don’t overly sell. Have a point of view and be engaging – whilst at the same time – tell people about what you offer.&lt;br&gt;• Imagine you were talking about yourself to a room of potential friends – the same rules for turning people off applies!</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Don’t be a loner – work with others!

To effectively offer tourism experiences in Northern Ireland we must start to work together. You are not able to do this on your own! So collaboration is key.

But who do you work with? How do you start it?
If you have been used to working on your own and keeping a close eye on neighbouring tourism providers in case they steal your customers – THINK AGAIN! Competition isn’t ‘here’ – it is ‘over there!’ We must start to organise ourselves to reflect the way that visitors make decisions.

### The buying decision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Decision</th>
<th>Customer mindset</th>
<th>Does a business collaborate or compete?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIRST</td>
<td>Will we be able to do what we want to do in NI?</td>
<td>NI tourism businesses collaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECOND</td>
<td>Where in NI can our needs be met (activities, places to visit, places to stay)? REGION</td>
<td>Regional/county tourism providers collaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIRD</td>
<td>We have found a great deal/ offer to stay at X (hotel/B&amp;B etc.) – what can we do nearby? VISITOR EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>Local area tourism providers collaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOURTH</td>
<td>Which restaurant/activity provider shall we choose in X? What else can we do here?</td>
<td>Same providers compete (on value and quality – not on price, because it drives down the market), everyone else collaborates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tips on how to collaborate

✔ Choose other providers who have the same quality and values as you do.

✔ Select and approach those businesses that you know your visitors also visit on their trip. You are then ‘linked’ by the visitors that you share.

✔ Have trust, loyalty and transparency between everyone in your collaboration group.

Working together brings great rewards for everyone – better insights, more bookings, more support and an opportunity to grow and learn.

### Did You Know?

With its stunning locations, studio facilities and financial incentives, NI is fast becoming a sought-after filming location for both film and television productions. In 2007, the region pulled in its first high-profile US studio project, which was then followed by Universal Pictures’ Your Highness and then Dracula at the end of 2013. HBO arrived in 2009 to film a pilot of Game of Thrones and subsequently returned to shoot four series, bringing an estimated £65 million into the NI economy.

From the famous Titanic Studios to the Linen Mill studios in the Bann Valley to a range of locations across NI, we are set to see further investment and more screen tourism opportunities. This is all good news for our visitor numbers as screen tourism is a growing market and can provide big opportunities for businesses to align their business offering with the stories and film characters.
What you can do NOW

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What (\text{you can do NOW})</th>
<th>(\text{Know what is going on})</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get up to date: use events listings to know what is happening in your area. Understand what the appeal is in music and screen tourism. Research the websites of local arts venues, museums, cultural venues and heritage sites to know what is happening so that you can link promotions or at least inform visitors. What event is happening that has a relevance to your business – what can you do to get involved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| \(\text{Know why visitors come to both Belfast and Derry~Londonderry}\) | Know what is special, authentic, unique and different about both these cities. Know why people visit. What special products or packages can you offer that would tie into some of these reasons? How can you help visitors to make the most of all that is on offer? |

| \(\text{How can you learn from others?}\) | Be aware of what others are doing and see what ideas you can incorporate in your own business. Make a list of other destinations or businesses that are similar to you and search out the inspiring, the unique and the different. If the idea appeals to you it will likely appeal to visitors too. |

| \(\text{Understand what visitors are looking for}\) | Understand who come to NI for our Culture, Music, or Arts scene. We are well known for it! Understand what kind of people come and what they are looking for. Find ways to get your business more noticed and chosen by them. Go and find them, don’t wait to be found! |

| \(\text{Get the basics right}\) | Understand trends in tourism and what people are looking for. Is your focus on the visitor or on your own processes? What do they ask you? If your answer is ‘no’, can you try to find ways to always say ‘yes’? And use this request to grow your business? This is what trend spotting is all about. |

| \(\text{Get to grips with social media and new technologies to appeal to a Creative Vibe audience}\) | Do you keep your website up to date? Do you regularly monitor and use social media channels? Are you a buzz maker? Do you share what is going on? To tap into this theme – social media is key. It is all about sharing information, recommendations and what’s on. What do you do to play your part for NI to create the Creative Vibe? |

| \(\text{Collaborate with others}\) | This theme is all about collaboration – between arts venues, culture venues, restaurants, accommodation providers – in fact everyone who offers products and services to visitors. It all links up in their mind so how can you make the links better in yours? |