Knowing your customer and growing your business

Northern Ireland Tourism Toolkit
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Context</td>
<td>6-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your Customer</td>
<td>18-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Your Business</td>
<td>54-93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

This document provides you with information and ideas about how your business can position itself to benefit from growth of tourism in Northern Ireland including visitors from within the island of Ireland and from abroad. It should help you understand your customers and you should be able to use this knowledge to fine tune various elements of your business to target them effectively.

The toolkit is intended as a reference manual providing you with information about specific areas of the tourism industry with a particular emphasis on marketing. Its aim is to help you make good decisions about where and how you promote your business. It is laid out in four sections:

1. Context

This section provides you with an overview of the tourism industry in Northern Ireland and how trends in the purchasing habits of customers and changes in their expectations are affecting tourism.

2. Your Customers

This section is intended to help you better understand the different markets that are available to you; the types of customers that are likely to choose Northern Ireland as a holiday destination, and what they are looking for in their visit.

3. Your Business

This section is intended to help you analyse the strengths and weaknesses of your business in terms of what potential customers expect when searching for, paying for, and experiencing a holiday.

4. Networks & Support

This section provides you with information about the support networks that are available to you and how the industry can work together to maximise the region's potential as a tourism destination.
Who is this toolkit aimed at?

The guide has been written to assist businesses in the development and marketing of their tourism products and in gaining a wider understanding of how the tourism industry in Northern Ireland is growing.

In particular it provides information about the markets and segments that are the best prospect for businesses seeking to target new customers.

It is a useful resource for all practitioners in the Northern Ireland tourism industry, but is most relevant to small and medium sized private sector businesses.

NITB has conducted and collated research into Northern Ireland's tourism industry and this publication attempts to distil the results into practical advice and information for business owners. For those seeking primary research, statistics and analysis of tourism trends information is available and regularly updated on nitb.com.
Tourism in Northern Ireland is a growing industry. For both new and established tourism businesses the key to growth in this sector is knowledge. To be successful businesses must understand the markets they are targeting, the customers they are hoping to attract and their own strengths and weaknesses.
The vision for tourism to 2020 highlights the potential to grow tourism’s contribution to the local economy to £1 billion by 2020. Additional targets include increasing visitor numbers to 4.5 million and creating an additional 10,000 jobs.

In order for Northern Ireland to meet these ambitious targets we need a competitive advantage that separates us from other destinations. A sense of place is the characteristic that most distinguishes one destination from another. Northern Ireland’s most precious assets are its unique identity and cultural character. These are the ingredients that make it distinctive, authentic, and memorable. We have a stunning natural package of coasts, beaches, and mountains combined with a unique history. This is matched by ‘uniqueness in scale’ that enables the visitor to connect with many offerings within a short timeframe. It’s a small country and we can use this to our advantage by offering experiences that one day explore local character in depth and the next take in big international stories such as Titanic. However, woven through all these experiences should be the essential character of the place – warm, friendly, spirited and usually taken with a twist of wry humour!
The number of visitors to NI is on the rise

- 3 million
- 3.5 million
- 4 million
- 4.5 million
- 5 million

2011 2012 2013 2020 target
What are our visitors saying about us?

NITB undertakes regular research to understand what visitors make of every aspect of their Northern Ireland experience - everything from trip planning to eating out - through their eyes. Overall the opinions are positive, in fact 94% of visitors rate their Northern Ireland experience in positive terms and 95% would recommend it to their friends or relatives. However the challenge is that only 65% would revisit Northern Ireland based on their experience and just 47% compare Northern Ireland favourably to other short break destinations. So, we’re doing well but we need to keep improving to create an offering that is unique and appealing enough to tempt holidaymakers away from other destinations and encourage them to return.

Accommodation can be seen as the heart of the visitor experience and positive encounters with staff and service can make or break a trip.

It is positive then that visitors rate the people aspect of Northern Ireland accommodation very highly, with “friendly and informative staff” and “efficient customer service” consistently the two top performing factors.

Value for money also plays an important role (especially where domestic and ROI visitors are concerned) which represents an opportunity for accommodation providers to find simple but effective ways of adding perceived value to their offering (see Your Business chapter for further information).
Eating out

Food and drink is a vital part of the tourism experience and offers Northern Ireland an opportunity to promote its culture and be unique and memorable.

It’s the people element of the food and drink experience on which Northern Ireland rates most highly, with visitors commenting favourably on the friendly and efficient service.

Research tells us that visitors prefer fresh, seasonal, locally sourced produce on menus and that they are interested in where the food on their plate comes from. However, statements such as “lack of locally sourced ingredients”, “poor value for money” and “not enough information on places to eat and drink” are regularly quoted by visitors.

Things to see & do

It is vital for a tourism destination to have a wide variety of things to see and do to encourage visitors to stay longer, spend more, and give them more reason to return.

Typically the most popular pursuits by visitors to Northern Ireland are: visiting a pub, visiting a historic property, and hiking / walking.

The storytelling aspect of Northern Ireland’s visitor attractions ranks highly with visitors commenting on staff, tours and attractions that tell interesting stories about the local history of the places they visit.

Room for improvement, however, has been identified in terms of value for money, things to do in the evenings and things to do on Sundays.
As an international audience becomes ever more familiar with the concept of Northern Ireland as a distinctive and attractive destination, now is an excellent time for your business to extend its marketing reach and to explore ways in which you can attract and retain a new customer base. To do this successfully you must understand the changing behaviours of consumers and how they are driven by technology.

**Trend 1**
Consumers continue to book more and more components of their itinerary online. With their travel options now virtually unlimited most consumers no longer want an off-the-shelf package and are happy to build separate and independent tourism products into a bespoke and personal holiday (although travel agents and tour operators are still seen as a risk mitigator, particularly in long haul markets).

**Trend 2**
Consumers are increasingly booking components of their itinerary using their mobile devices on-the-go and often while already in the destination. This means that lead times are shorter, flexibility is greater and consumers can be open to more influence whilst in-destination.

**Trend 3**
Consumers have access to unlimited amounts of information and have become more perceptive about the world. They are arriving at destinations with a wealth of previously sourced information about what to see and what to do. This means that they are increasingly looking more from their trip and want to be surprised by hidden gems and find authentic places only the locals know about.

**Trend 4**
Consumers are increasingly influenced by what their peers are doing and saying on social media. Driven by ‘FOMO’ (Fear of Missing Out) or bragging rights, visitors increasingly want once-in-a-lifetime experiences that they can share on social media.

**Trend 5**
Based on their experience with technological innovations such as mobile phones and tablets, consumers have become used to the idea of fast, efficient service with minimal effort on their part. It must be easy for them to choose their destination, to make their travel and accommodation arrangements, to decide what to see and do, and to find their way around.
What does this mean for NI tourism?

We need to be distinctive.

These technology-driven trends have fundamentally changed consumer expectations. Visitors now want to engage with destinations in a unique and personal way. Rather than just visiting a series of standalone facilities, visitors need to be introduced to the places and the people of Northern Ireland in ways that encourage them to be an active participant rather than a passive observer. This demands a much more hands on approach to ensure that customers are happy, satisfied and ultimately surprised by the quality of their experience.

It has therefore never been more important to stand out in the marketplace. In order to successfully connect with visitors, we must think differently about how we develop and present Northern Ireland’s physical attributes and the individual products and experiences on offer in a destination.

Northern Ireland is fortunate to have plenty of tourism goods and services. To create tourism experiences we must take a look at the goods and services that have traditionally been part of our industry and redesign them to allow opportunities for visitors to learn about our region and enjoy it in a new way. Ideas for experiences can be stimulated by nature, heritage, art, sport or whatever a local region has in its cultural locker.

This will require the tourism industry to work much more closely together to offer the visitor an end to end holistic experience that meets the needs of each segment. This concept is known as ‘experiential tourism’.

Experience based tourism is about joining up what Northern Ireland has to offer in a more imaginative way.

Northern Ireland has a set of five core experience themes. They resonate and appeal to our best prospect visitors and have the potential to give us competitive advantage. Four themes are strong and distinct and one, Naturally NI, underpins and intertwines with the others by adding a truly authentic dimension through local food & drink, local people and stories, and local craft.

The themes enable us to bring different elements of our tourism offering together so that rather than simply promoting and developing standalone attractions we are inviting people to come and explore their interests across a range of complementary tourism experiences which best give Northern Ireland a competitive edge.

The design and delivery of these tourism experiences will clearly be anchored within a destination, i.e. the place where the tourist will go to discover “Coasts and Lakes” e.g. cruising the lakes of Fermanagh or driving the Causeway Coast. It is important that a critical mass of similar experiences is available within a single destination.

The descriptions overleaf give you an idea of how NITB is presenting the themes to the marketplace. They make reference to our key tourist attractors while emphasising the personality of Northern Ireland and the memorable experience that it provides for the individual.
Legends are born of inspiration, created by courage and remembered forever.

Experience history coming alive in Northern Ireland. From the art and architecture of the early church to the engineering achievements of the Industrial Revolution you will come face to face with 1500 years of unique heritage in ways that are guaranteed to engage, intrigue and often astound. Built primarily around the stories of the Titanic, St. Patrick and the Walled City of Derry~Londonderry, the Living Legends tourism theme incorporates a huge variety of experiences for young and old. Not only is Northern Ireland a land of saints and scholars it is also a land of seafaring, sieges, spirituality and sociability. We share our stories with our guests in ways that they will never forget.

**Key attractors**

**Titanic**

Experience Titanic Belfast our award-winning, immersive and interactive visitor experience where the great ship’s history is brought to life as never before. It is surrounded by many other ways to explore Titanic’s heritage in the Titanic Quarter.

**The Walled City of Derry~Londonderry**

The remarkable walled city of Derry~Londonderry is a treasure trove of history. Its 400 year old walls, filled with stories, artefacts and legends, form a living museum. Throw in the Guildhall, the Peace Bridge and the Tower Museum and we have a historical paradise for the visitor to explore at leisure.

**St. Patrick’s Trail**

The history of one of the world’s most famous saints is brought to life through buildings, landscape and interpretive centres. Explore the ancient Christian heritage sites of Bangor Abbey, Saul and Struell Wells as well as Down Cathedral, the cathedrals of Armagh, and the St. Patrick’s Centre at the heart of Downpatrick, the county town of Down that bears his name.

**Other attractors include:**

Coasts and Lakes

Expanses of open water strike a chord deep in human experience – life, beauty, possibilities...

Explore the myriad coasts and waterways of Northern Ireland. From the tranquil idyll of the Fermanagh Lakelands to the crashing waves of the Causeway Coast, you can experience every type of activity that being close to water has to offer. Built around four key locations, the Coasts and Lakes tourism theme incorporates opportunities for all ages to dive in, climb on board, cast a line or just sit back and admire. Not only is Northern Ireland a land of living legends, it is a land of loughs, long waves, leisurely cruises and long, languorous coastlines. We have water in abundance and as many ways for you to enjoy it.

Key attractors

Causeway Coastal Route

The world famous Giant’s Causeway and its new award-winning interpretive centre is not only one of our most popular visitor attractions, it is a World Heritage Site and is surrounded by scenic and historical gems such as Dunluce Castle, Mussenden Temple, Carrick-a-Rede and Bushmills Distillery.

Mourne Coastal Route

Not only does the Mourne Coastal Route take you through winding roads of the spectacular Mourne Mountains, it also guides you through the charming coastal villages of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Annalong and lets you pause to have your breath taken away at the Silent Valley.

Fermanagh Lakelands

As if the network of beautiful lakes and islands surrounding the town of Enniskillen weren’t enough to captivate you, they also lead you to explore ancient Christian and pagan sites as well as the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark and the stunning estates of Florencecourt and Castle Coole.

Strangford Lough

Strangford Lough is renowned for its flora and fauna but it also brings you on winding journeys through the drumlins of County Down where you can discover the ruins of the ancient monastery of Nendrum, the great houses of Castle Ward and Mount Stewart and the wildlife centre at Castle Espie.

Other attractors include:

Water-based activities, hub towns, seaside towns and villages, coastal resorts, beaches, trails & paths and coastal events.
Fresh air, unspoilt landscape and great facilities – what more could you want?
Revel in Northern Ireland’s rich mix of mountains, lakes, sea, forests, hills and valleys. Explore the great outdoors in a way that suits you, be it a leisurely walk along the coast, a tree top adventure trail, a paddle in the Irish Sea, a mountain bike trail or the ascent of a rugged cliff face. There are a huge variety of opportunities for you to try something new, raise your level of expertise or simply enjoy the countryside. What makes our outdoor activities distinctive is their seamless integration into a picture book landscape in a beautiful region that combines a love of the outdoors with superb hospitality and a great sense of humour.

Key attractors

Golf
To say that Northern Ireland is now synonymous with great golf is an understatement. The recent exploits of McDowell, Clarke and the golfing legend that is Rory McIlroy have set the region apart as a place that lives and breathes great golf. Golfers from all over the world are discovering world class courses such as Royal County Down, Royal Portrush and Royal Belfast.

Mountain Biking/Cycling
Northern Ireland is fast becoming a haven for cyclists of all denominations. Miles of country roads and the Kingfisher Trail appeal to road cyclists while the trails at Rostrevor, Davagh Forest, and Blessingbourne offer challenges to all levels of mountain bikers.

Walking
With its unspoilt landscapes and well managed and accessible walking trails Northern Ireland is perfect for anyone seeking to lose themselves in nature. No matter where you are in this small region you are only a short journey away from superb walking environments such as the Mournes, the Sperrins, the Causeway Coast and the newly renovated Gobbins Cliff Path.

Other attractors include:
All sorts of adventure sports including climbing in the Mournes, canoeing in Strangford, surfing, paddle boarding and diving on the Causeway Coast. You can do nearly anything you want including hovercrafting, mountain boarding, zorbing and off-road driving. The list goes on.
Creative Vibe

There is an atmosphere abroad that makes Northern Ireland a great place for the independent of spirit.

Northern Ireland has a growing reputation as a tourist destination for those seeking an experience that is truly different and authentic. Its two main cities are places that have a unique creative spirit. Whether you are seeking music, art, literature, theatre or nightlife Belfast and Derry~Londonderry will keep your cultural energy flowing. It is a country that has brought the world Seamus Heaney, Liam Neeson, Brian Friel, C.S. Lewis, Van Morrison and many other internationally renowned names. In Northern Ireland you can find out what made them tick – the landscape, the humour, the stories, the dialect, the tunes, the pubs, the towns, the shores, the whole package that makes this country a wonderful place to visit.

Key attractors

Belfast

Belfast is building a reputation as a city with a creative edge. Its cast may star the flagship cultural centres of the MAC, the Grand Opera House, the Lyric and the Ulster Museum but it also has a supporting cast of festivals, venues, pubs and clubs that bring the best of local and international music, art and theatre to an appreciative audience.

Derry~Londonderry

Alongside its historical charms, visitors to Derry~Londonderry will discover a city famous for its culture, its nightlife and its reluctance to stop the party. Beside the cultural gems of the Millennium Forum, Cultúrlann, Nerve Centre, and Verbal Arts Centre is a labyrinth of pubs, clubs, cafes, restaurants, venues and galleries that keep the cultural heart of the great city beating.

Other attractors include:

Theatre, street entertainment, music, film, distinctive/award winning pubs and restaurants, cafe culture, tours, shopping, art galleries, public realm, nightlife, hallmark events and festivals.
2. Your Customer

Meet the needs of your target market

Quality, memorable visitor experiences are a shared outcome between the visitor and the provider. The visitor invests their personal time and money while the provider gains an understanding of the visitor’s interests and provides what is required to facilitate the opportunity for a memorable experience. The best experiences connect a region’s physical assets with the emotional interactions that travellers want to experience.

To remain relevant in this new reality it is essential to focus on the visitor experience. Those who deliver memorable customer experiences consistently create superior value and competitive advantages. To do this successfully you must understand your customers and their needs.
Who are your customers?

To assist businesses in being specific about their target customers, market research segments the customer base into groups, each with a distinct identity. The people within each group share common interests and characteristics and form a broad target at which a business can aim its marketing efforts. Often these are built around obvious features such as age, family structure or lifestyle but they can also contain quite detailed information about the types of experience that each segment finds appealing.

Why should I make use of segmentation?

The use of segmentation can assist businesses in making sure that they make the most of what they can offer and don’t dilute the quality of their product by trying to be all things to all people. Sometimes it can be difficult to serve the needs and motivations of different groups effectively. For instance, couples in pursuit of some precious time together may not want to share their space with young children. Similarly older couples seeking a bit of peace and quiet have quite different expectations to a group of young people hoping to experience some local nightlife. Moreover, once a business has made a decision about the motivations of its target audiences it can then focus on delivering some of the added extras that will appeal to them.

Which market segments are particularly important for Northern Ireland?

Research has been undertaken to identify the segments that are most open to visiting Northern Ireland and which also have the most potential for growth. NITB has developed segmentation profiles for visitors to Northern Ireland from the island of Ireland and Tourism Ireland has developed segmentation profiles for visitors from Great Britain and beyond. When using these different visitor profiles it is important to understand that they don’t represent an individual person but rather a typical visitor type. Equally there are visitor types that fall outside of these segments (e.g. special interest/enthusiasts).

The map graphic overleaf displays the key segments that have been identified. Once you have decided which market segments your business is trying to attract you need to ensure that all your publicity and advertising is focused on communicating with them and that you are meeting their needs and satisfying their expectations.
2. Your Customer
## Tourism Toolkit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total no. Outbound Trips (000s) *</th>
<th>No. of trips to island of Ireland (000s) **</th>
<th>No. of trips to Northern Ireland (000s) **</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total overseas</td>
<td>Circa 1,000,000</td>
<td>7,430</td>
<td>1,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>3,317</td>
<td>2,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>56,538</td>
<td>3,641</td>
<td>1,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROI</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td>7,031</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>60,723</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>76,666</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>25,450</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>32,276</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relates to all trips not just holidays
Key Markets & Segments

NI & ROI

**Time Together**
- Romance, cool nightlife, gentle walking, shopping, relaxation, good quality food and drink, natural scenery, contemporary cultural experiences, landmarks.

**Mature Cosmopolitans**
- Curiosity, authenticity, insight, exploration, eating out, natural beauty, relaxation, good quality food and drink, scenic drives, theatre experience, authentic pub experience.

**Family Fun**
- Fun, quality time, safe, child orientated attractions and entertainment, memories, value for money offers, family accommodation, café, activities.

**Young and Lively (ROI only)**
- Entertainment, cool nightlife, the ‘wow’ factor, city experience, contemporary culture and music festivals, events, the local scene, street animation.

Great Britain, Germany, France, North America

**Social Energisers**
- Lively pubs, good food, talking to locals, festivals, entertainment, street art, comedy, the cool places to eat and shop, fun visitor attractions.

**Culturally Curious**
- Megalithic or early Christian sites, castles, gardens, museums, art galleries, good food and wine especially local specialties, unique local festivals and events.

**Great Escapers**
- Breath-taking landscapes, remote and exciting places, fun evening in an authentic pub, gentle exploration – walking, cycling, boating.
NI Market

Overview
Northern Ireland short break takers can continue to be a profitable market for the tourism industry. Typically a third of short breaks booked by Northern Ireland residents are ‘staycations’. In 2013, Northern Ireland residents took 2 million domestic overnight trips, approximately half of which were for holiday/leisure purposes and a further quarter for visiting friends and relatives. The day trip market is also an important consideration with 7.5 million day trips taken by Northern Ireland residents in 2013.

Motivations
Convenience and value for money are the most important considerations in choosing to holiday at home with two thirds of customers spending more time looking for special offers than they used to. Having made the decision to stay in Northern Ireland customers are likely to seek out natural beauty and find somewhere they can spend time as a couple or a family. Nearly 50% of trips within Northern Ireland are to spend time with family and 25% of people want to relax and get away from it all.

“Ins 2013, NI residents took 2 million overnight trips within NI, 1.6 million overnight trips in ROI, 1.1 million overnight trips in GB and 958,000 trips abroad.”
ROI Market

Overview
Short breaks are popular amongst Republic of Ireland residents and there remains huge potential to attract more to Northern Ireland. There is a growing recognition in the Republic of Ireland that Northern Ireland is growing and changing – a region with a distinctive character and real and genuine people. Currently, however, Northern Ireland accounts for only 5% of all short breaks taken by Republic of Ireland residents so, although there are similarities between the customer from Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, the perception of the desirability of Northern Ireland as a destination is currently very different.

There are 10 million short breaks per year taken by Republic of Ireland residents and less than half a million of these are taken in Northern Ireland with obvious scope for growth despite the economic climate.

Motivations
Motivations for taking a short break from Republic of Ireland are similar to those from Northern Ireland with people seeking an escape from daily pressures and somewhere to spend time with family or as a couple. Value for money and good offers are key considerations for Republic of Ireland short break takers.

Where else do ROI customers want to go?
- Staycations in Republic of Ireland
- Short breaks in Great Britain
- European city breaks

Why might they go elsewhere?
- Access to other (cheaper) destinations by air
- Concerns about safety and security
- Hassle of converting to sterling
- Ease of flying elsewhere

“Value for money and good offers are key considerations for ROI short break takers.”
What are they looking for?

The ‘Time Together’ market segment represents couples seeking romantic feel good breaks where they can spend quality time together to celebrate a special occasion or escape daily pressures. They may enjoy a taste of local culture or cool nightlife and some natural beauty but are less interested in attractions and activities. The key draw is a romantic experience with an emphasis on relaxation. They stay in high quality hotels, look for good food and are tempted by special offers and deals especially on daily deal sites such as Living Social or Groupon.

How do we reach them?

The Time Together segment will expect to use digital channels to find out more about what you are offering and your location. You will need to have an excellent website. The more information you can give them about their experience with you the more confidence they will have in your product. If you have up to date digital communications including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and can point to good reviews and feedback from happy customers you will increase that sense of confidence. If you can provide access to a good value deal, all the better.

Tone

Warm, confident, friendly and welcoming. Emphasise romance, seclusion, relaxation and the high quality of your offering. You need to communicate that your product is the perfect one for couples seeking time away from the stresses of daily life.

Visuals

The design and visuals that you use should communicate a sense of elegance, quality and confidence. The look and feel should not be too busy and should focus on scenic locations and a serene friendly atmosphere.

Information

Identify the features local to you that might appeal to this segment. These might be gentle walks, good pubs and restaurants and scenic spots or tourist attractions that add value to the visit. Demonstrate that your product is part of an easily accessible group of activities and facilities. Let customers know that you will make things easy for them – helping them get to places and giving them a safe and stress-free break.

While they are with you, you can help them to find...

- Special places and memorable moments to share.
- Recommended restaurants that serve food of local provenance.
- A more personal service for your guests in a pub or a shop.
- Hidden gems that are not known to everyone – the walks, views and things to do that only the locals know about.
At a glance

Key Words:
Romance, cool nightlife, gentle walking, shopping, relaxation

Focus:
Good quality food and drink, natural scenery, contemporary cultural experiences, landmarks
What are they looking for?

The ‘Mature Cosmopolitans’ market segment represents frequent break takers seeking relaxation and, importantly, a little indulgence. The segment is very similar to ‘Time Together’ but customers are slightly older, more likely to travel in groups and more likely to take in the sights of the places they visit. They stay in the best hotels and enjoy fine dining, relaxing in the hotel and at nearby scenic locations, exploring local attractions and socialising with the people with whom they have come on holiday. Although they expect quality they are interested in deals which they source through both traditional and digital media channels.

How do we reach them?

Typically the Mature Cosmopolitan segment will not use digital channels quite as much as some other groups and you will need to ensure that they have also access to printed material in order to find out more about what you are offering. They may find your product through print advertising and then use your URL to find you online. However, once they get to your website they will expect to have all their questions answered or be able to call or email to make direct contact. Establishing a conversation with the customer at this stage may be crucial in getting a booking.

Tone

Welcoming, sophisticated and knowledgeable. Emphasise the high quality of your product and opportunities for a little indulgence.

Visuals

The design and visuals that you use should communicate a sense of luxury and comfort. Emphasise enjoyment, relaxation and an atmosphere of good humour and sociability.

Information

You need to communicate that your product is the perfect one for more mature couples or groups seeking a relaxing time where they can enjoy excellent food and drink and take in some scenic locations or unique authentic experiences that are interesting but not too physically challenging. Identify the things to do and see locally that might appeal to this segment. These might include good heritage attractions, nearby villages with good pubs and restaurants and other tourist attractions that add value to the visit. Add some extra information that gives your customer insight into these attractions and makes them feel that they will have a bit of inside knowledge. Let customers know that you will make things easy for them – helping them get to places and giving them a safe and stress-free break.

While they are with you, you can help them to...

- Feel that they are receiving the best possible service and getting to experience the very best of what there is to do, see, eat and drink in your area.
- Experience the stories, history and personality of the places they visit and people they meet. Understand your area and give them to opportunities to find out more if they want.
- Feel at home by getting to know them, finding out their interests and recommending particular local attractions.
At a glance

Key Words: Curiosity, authenticity, insight, exploration, eating out, natural beauty

Focus: Relaxation, good quality food and drink, scenic drives, theatre experience, authentic pub experience, good value, key attractions
Family Fun Market Segment (NI & ROI)

What are they looking for?
The ‘Family Fun’ market segment represents family units for whom the happiness and amusement of their children is a priority. The parents know that if their children are content and occupied they will also be able to have a relaxing time. Their choices about accommodation and food are price sensitive and they want access to plenty of attractions with safety and friendliness being important. Family friendly accommodation is a must and they may ask for multiple occupancy rooms or adjoining doors.

How do we reach them?
The Family Fun segment use digital channels to research and book holidays. They may show their children various websites to enthuse them about where they are going and even encourage the children to assist in making the decision. You will need to ensure that your website looks attractive to children and makes them want to visit. Parents will want to be reassured about the liveliness, safety and value of the products they are paying for. Happy children will mean a good holiday for them so feel free to suggest itineraries and provide information such as prices, menus etc. Social media may be important in giving parents added insight into your product and additional confidence about its suitability.

Tone
Lively, energetic and friendly. Emphasise the value and quality of your product and opportunities for children to be engaged and enthused in a safe environment where they can expend their energies and satisfy their curiosity.

Visuals
The design and visuals that you use should communicate a sense of fun and vibrancy. Emphasise energy, enjoyment, interaction and excitement.

Information
You need to communicate that your product is the perfect one for families seeking a fun time where children will be fully entertained but that there is also ample opportunity for parents to relax and enjoy their holiday. Identify the things to do and see locally that might appeal to families. This might include good parks, beaches and outdoor facilities as well as facilities that parents can turn to when the weather is poor such as attractions, cinemas or swimming pools. Events and festivals will also appeal to families and you should make them aware of good value places to eat and drink that you can personally recommend as being suitable for families. Be sure to know the ages of their kids before they arrive to help you make the best recommendations.

While they are with you, you can help them with...
- Making their children the priority by providing them with as much information as you can about the venues that welcome children and in which families will feel at home.
- Finding restaurants and pubs that are child friendly.
- Local knowledge that will help their kids have a great time.
- Accessing information about doctors, chemists etc.
- Making recommendations for things to do on a rainy day.
At a glance

Key Words:
Fun, quality time, safe, child orientated attractions and entertainment, memories

Focus:
Value for money offers, family accommodation, café, activities
What are they looking for?

The ‘Young and Lively’ market segment represents those seeking experiences that are fun and feature a variety of things to do including eating and drinking, shopping, activities and events. They are attracted to urban environments looking for pubs, clubs and music. Price is an important consideration as well as easy access to attractions. In terms of accommodation they often favour budget hotels and somewhere near to where everything is going on.

How do we reach them?

The Young and Lively segment use digital channels to research and book holidays. They may organise breaks around specific events and concerts but will want to find activities and experiences to engage them before and after the main event. The website that advertises your product needs to give a sense of all the things that customers might do. They are likely to be avid users of Facebook and Twitter so full engagement on social media platforms is a must.

Tone

Informal, friendly and energetic. Emphasise the ability of your product to deliver an experience filled with unique opportunities for young people to enjoy themselves through daytime activities and great nightlife.

Visuals

The design and visuals that you use should communicate a sense of energy and enjoyment as well as being in tune with contemporary attitudes and style.

Information

You need to communicate that your product will provide customers with a unique and memorable break that will bring them into contact with the coolest and liveliest areas in their chosen destination. Identify the things to do and see locally that will appeal to young people in search of a great time. This will include the trendiest bars and restaurants and the quarters in cities that have clusters of cafes, galleries, shops and bars together. It may also include information about events, festivals, street theatre, music venues and nightclubs. They will seek good value in terms of accommodation but want plenty of activities and attractions nearby. They are happiest in an urban environment and although they will seek out experiences that are edgy and sometimes raucous they will still want to feel secure and content that they can get to and from venues easily.

While they are with you, you can help them by...

- Ensuring that the flow of fun is uninterrupted and goes smoothly.
- Having a reliable taxi firm to lift and lay them.
- Keeping them right about opening and closing times of attractions so they aren’t disappointed.
- Knowing about quirky places to visit and adventurous activities to try out.
At a glance

Key Words:
Entertainment, energy, social, urban, cool nightlife, the ‘wow’ factor

Focus:
City experience, contemporary culture and music festivals, events, the local scene, street animation
Overview

People living in Great Britain form the most important market for tourism in the island of Ireland and there is room for further growth. It is a different proposition than other overseas markets because of its proximity and the fact that awareness of Northern Ireland is greater. Air connectivity is also good, meaning that 92% of these visitors to Northern Ireland came direct in 2013. In 2013 Great Britain residents took 2.1 million overnight trips in Northern Ireland which compares to 4.7 million overnight trips in Republic of Ireland. The average stay for a British holidaymaker on the island of Ireland is for 3 to 5 nights with longer holidays taken in July and August. British visitors are more likely to visit one destination at a time and they spend the highest proportion of their budget on food and drink.

Motivations

Ease of access is seen as a particular advantage to travelling here from Britain with short air trips and the ability to bring the car. Language and currency add to the simplicity of a holiday in Northern Ireland for British visitors who tend to come primarily for relaxation and are less likely to engage in historical or cultural activities than tourists from other parts of Europe or North America. Connections with local people are often cited as being important to British visitors who seek an authentic experience that goes beyond the average tourism itinerary.

Competition

Northern Ireland’s main competition in the Great Britain short break market are comparable destinations within Great Britain and Republic of Ireland, and also cities such as Amsterdam for city breaks. Scotland is seen as best for scenery and exploration, Devon and Cornwall for families, and the Lake District for peace and quiet. The challenge is to make British holidaymakers aware of the benefits of choosing a break in Northern Ireland over the competition. This will require tourism businesses to emphasise the region’s strengths especially convenience, uniqueness, warmth of welcome and the big tourist attractions of the Giant’s Causeway and Titanic Belfast.

Growing the GB market

Northern Ireland needs to appeal to the key Great Britain market segments (defined in detail on pages 36 - 41) with relevant and targeted tourism propositions that are tailored to the interests, needs and motivations of the Great Britain visitor and which give them a fresh perspective on Northern Ireland, value for money and reasons to remember and talk about their trip. This can be done successfully by building tourism offerings around ‘must see and must do’ hero experiences, a process that will require collaboration across the industry and the development of offers that the Great Britain consumer can choose and buy easily.

Research has identified three ‘best prospect’ segments for Northern Ireland from the Great Britain market – Social Energisers, Culturally Curious and Great Escapers, which are described overleaf.

“British tourists account for approximately one third of holidaymakers to the island of Ireland and over a third of all tourism revenue with over 1 million British holidaymakers arriving each year.”
Top destinations for the GB traveller:
1. Spain
2. France
3. USA
4. Greece
5. Italy
6. Portugal
7. Turkey
8. Netherlands
9. Island of Ireland
10. Belgium

What accommodation do they use?
Hotels 33%
Friends and relatives 26%
Rented 13%
Guesthouses/B&Bs 9%

How do they travel?
80% get here by plane
20% hire a car when here
20% bring a car

Have they visited before?
Yes 59%

Will they return?
Yes 76%

Note: Statistics relate to GB visitors to the island of Ireland.
Social Energisers
GB Market Segment

What are they looking for?

“Social Energisers” are visitors who want action-packed days as well as fun-filled nights, and who holiday in groups and couples. They are often friends or colleagues seeking a cool, exciting trip somewhere new and different. They like having a laugh and sharing adventurous new experiences but it is good if they don’t have to travel too far to locations or plan too much to get there.

How do we reach them?

The Social Energisers segment habitually uses digital channels to research and book holidays. They will want to find activities and experiences that engage them and their friends fully and feel that they are always in the loop about what is going on. The website that advertises your product needs to give a sense of all the things that customers might do. They are likely to be avid users of social media so full engagement on digital platforms is a must.

Tone

Immediate, lively and informal. Emphasise the range of experiences near your location.

Visuals

The design and visuals that you use should communicate a sense of energy and enjoyment as well as being in tune with contemporary attitudes and style.

Information

You should communicate that your product will provide the customer with a holiday that is jam-packed with things to do and that getting to and from these activities will be simple. Focus on music, pubs, restaurants and nightlife for the evening, and unusual, energetic and fun activities for the daytime – things that friends might enjoy doing together such as zorbing, boating, mountain biking etc. Identify examples of activities and include a fair amount of detail about the types of group activities that are available. Keep up to date with the programme of events and music at local bars and flag up any festivals or events that might appeal to this segment. Customers should feel that by buying in to your product they will automatically be in the loop with the main events that are taking place in the region.
Might want to experience...
Lively pubs, good food, talking to locals
Festivals, entertainment, street art, comedy
The cool places to eat and shop
Fun visitor attractions with a wow factor

Likely to pay more for...
Something out of the ordinary
Holidays offered by well-known brands
Great atmosphere and good cocktails

Digital travel touch points include:
Guardian Travel
Culture Trip
In the Know Traveller
Mr & Mrs Smith
Lastminute.com
Timeout London

Key statistics
Average age of 27
38% single adult or adult only households

At a glance
Key Words:
Excitement, energy, fun and laughter, adventure, spontaneous, social, the ‘wow’ factor
Focus:
Entertainment, festivals, contemporary culture and music, clubbing, water sports, the pub experience, shopping, sightseeing
Culturally Curious

GB Market Segment

What are they looking for?
The 'Culturally Curious' market segment represents typically older people (45+) who want to broaden their minds and expand their experience by exploring new landscape, history and culture. They are interested in seeing all that a place has to offer and they want their experience to be authentic. They are independent, active and keen to see and do things that are out of the ordinary and they won’t mind having to make a little extra effort to reap the rewards.

How do we reach them?
The Culturally Curious segment uses a variety of channels to research and book holidays. They may use social media but are not heavy sharers.

Tone
Knowledgeable, direct and positive. Emphasise the quantity and quality of things to do near you that have an interesting angle in terms of culture, heritage and history.

Visuals
The design and visuals that you use should communicate a sense of quality and authenticity. Keep them clear, simple and stylish.

Information
You should communicate that your product provides opportunities to explore the region’s attractions in depth and to find the unusual, the authentic and the unexpected on their holiday. Focus on countryside, historic sites and unique opportunities to get off the beaten track. Identify examples of key attractions that your customers might want to explore and demonstrate how their days can be built around these attractions incorporating walks, food and drink and visits to attractions. Include plenty of information on your marketing material that relates directly to the cultural assets of your region and specifically how you will enable your customers to explore and understand the culture in detail.
Might want to experience...
Megalithic or early Christian sites
Castles, gardens, museums, art galleries
Good food and wine especially local specialities
Unique local festivals and events

Likely to pay extra for...
Something out of the ordinary
Superior service
A human guide with real insight
Environmentally friendly features

Digital travel touch points include:
Guardian Travel
Culture Trip
In the Know Traveller
British Travel Blog
Mr & Mrs Smith
Lastminute.com
Timeout London

Key statistics
Average age of 60
38% couples or retired couples

At a glance
Key Words:
Curiosity, authenticity, insight, independence, immersion in culture, off the beaten track, exploration

Focus:
Broadening the mind, active sightseeing, historical buildings and attractions, World Heritage sites, events, artisan food and local specialities
Great Escapers
GB Market Segment

What are they looking for?

Visitors that we call ‘Great Escapers’ are those seeking breaks that allow them to become immersed in beautiful natural environments where they can escape the stress of their daily lives and reconnect with their partners and/or young children. They are likely to be in their thirties looking for experiences that send them home completely revitalised. They want their holiday to be relaxed and easy but need some ‘wow’ moments to emphasise the special nature of their holiday together.

How do we reach them?

The Great Escapers segment uses a variety of channels to research and book holidays. They rely heavily on the internet but engage less with social media than younger audiences.

Tone

Inspiring, energetic and informed. Emphasise the opportunities to explore landscapes easily and be rewarded by beauty or exhilarated by remoteness.

Visuals

The design and visuals that you use should communicate a sense of authenticity and unique beauty. Keep them simple but inspiring.

Information

Focus on natural attractions with a sense of history and unique qualities that will make the visitor feel awestruck. You should communicate that your product will provide the customer with a holiday that provides easy ways to get to wonderful places and be rewarded afterwards with good food and drink.
Might want to experience...
Breath-taking landscapes
Remote and exciting places
Gentle exploration – walking, cycling, boating

Likely to pay more for...
Superior service
Things that reduce hassle
Something out of the ordinary

Digital travel touch points include:
Lastminute.com
BBC Travel
Travel Zoo
Secret Escape
Guardian Travel
Thejournal.co.uk
The Sunday Times

Key statistics
Average age of 37
40% are couples, 20% are young families

At a glance
Key Words:
Slow travel, relaxation, rebalancing, getting away from it all, connecting with loved ones

Focus:
Breath-taking landscapes, ancient sites, remote places, landmarks, restaurants offering fresh, local food, authentic pubs, ease of getting away
As well as Great Britain, the rest of Europe offers a significant opportunity for Northern Ireland tourism businesses, in particular visitors from France and Germany. Key segments for these countries are the same as those identified for Great Britain, Culturally Curious, Great Escapers and Social Energisers - with broadly similar characteristics (see pages 36-41) and some region-specific nuances.

However, the market opportunity for these regions is markedly different to Great Britain as there is limited direct access to Northern Ireland for those coming from mainland Europe. Many European visitors will have limited air access to Northern Ireland meaning that they will only arrive in Northern Ireland as part of their tour of the island of Ireland. This must be taken into account when considering how to target these regions.

The responsibility for putting the island of Ireland on the destination wish list of visitors from Europe lies with Tourism Ireland so you should familiarise yourself with how Tourism Ireland is selling the island of Ireland in the marketplace and consider the best way to position your product (see pages 105-107 for further information).
2. Your Customer
Overview

France is a country with a population of 65 million who have a generous holiday entitlement and spend around £25 billion on outbound trips taking on average four holidays per year. France is the fourth most important source market for the island of Ireland providing 425,000 visitors in 2013 and £170m of revenue. However, only around 10% of these visitors come to Northern Ireland.

The French tourism market offers a good opportunity for growth in Northern Ireland. However, we need to ensure that we are matching the requirements and expectations of French visitors who may not associate Northern Ireland with a similar cultural profile to that of the Republic of Ireland.

Motivations

The Irish countryside is a massive draw for French tourists especially the more remote coastal regions such as the Causeway Coastal Route. They also enjoy experiencing Irish music, food and drink. Over 85% of visitors said that they had listened to music in a pub, tasted Guinness and visited a coastal town.

- 75% of French holidaymakers arrive between April and August with August being the most popular month for French people to take holidays. However, nearly 40% come in April, May and June.
- 80% of French holidaymakers use the internet to book all or part of their holiday but they like the information to be in French.
- French people take an average of 4 holidays per year, 37% of which are abroad.
- 44% of French holidaymakers travel as a couple, with guesthouses and B&Bs their preferred accommodation type.
Specific nuances for French market segments

Social Energisers
Likely to build partying into part of their holiday
More interested in beauty and nature
Less inclined to engage in physical activities

Culturally Curious
Like to discover hidden gems, things only the locals know about
Tend to favour rural destinations
More motivated by breathtaking beauty and landscapes

Great Escapers
Like physical activity but also relaxation
Desire good food and wine
Overview

Germany is the second most important outbound tourism market in the world. The island of Ireland gets 1% of this market with over 400,000 German people visiting the island of Ireland every year. It is the third most important source market for the island of Ireland and German visitors stay on average 10 nights with a wide geographical spread. However, only around 10% of these visitors come to Northern Ireland. Germany is the largest market for overseas anglers accounting for 15% of all overseas angling visits in the island of Ireland.

Motivations

Over 75% of German holidaymakers come to explore the sights and culture of the island of Ireland and many German tourists enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling and fishing. Over 50% use a car when they are here and, although they spend the largest proportion of their budget on bed and board they use hotels, self-catering, B&Bs and guesthouses in equal measure. They enjoy unspoilt natural scenery and book well in advance.
Over 75% of German holidaymakers come to explore the sights and culture of the island of Ireland and many German tourists enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling and fishing.

Over 50% use a car when they are here and, although they spend the largest proportion of their budget on bed and board they use hotels, self-catering, B&Bs and guesthouses in equal measure. They enjoy unspoilt natural scenery and book well in advance.

Nature is a bigger influence for Germans than for other European countries when deciding on a holiday. This means that having excellent green credentials is something that might appeal to your German customers.

70% of German holidaymakers arrive between April and August with May, June and July being the most popular months.

75% of German holidaymakers use the internet to book all or part of their holiday and they like the information to be in German although many speak English.

68% of the German market has expressed an interest in visiting the island of Ireland in the future.

**Specific nuances for German market segments**

**Culturally Curious**
- Value peace and quiet
- Strong coastal focus
- Slightly more likely to pursue outdoor activities

**Great Escapers**
- Focus on nature and rural settings

**Social Energisers**
- Slightly more active experiences with less focus on partying
- Enjoy soft outdoor activities such as cycling and walking

Over 75% of German holidaymakers come to explore the sights and culture of the island of Ireland and many German tourists enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling and fishing.
North American Market

The USA is the second most important tourism market for the island of Ireland and, together with Canada, 165,000 visitors arrived in Northern Ireland in 2013. Visitors from the U.S. and Canada often include a trip to Northern Ireland as part of a wider European tour and include Northern Ireland as part of an overall trip to the island of Ireland. They form an excellent target market for Northern Ireland as they speak English and are easy to promote to due to their high usage of digital channels. Northern Ireland welcomes a higher proportion of Canadian visitors in comparison to other markets. Typically a third of Canadians visit Northern Ireland when holidaying on the island of Ireland. As the island of Ireland is a long-haul destination, North American visitors are likely to use tour operators when they plan their travel.

Motivations

Cultural and ancestral links are a key motivator for visits to Northern Ireland from people living in North America. 36 million Americans claim Irish ancestry and there are 25 million people of Northern Irish descent in North America. While here they are very keen to visit historical and cultural sites and their use of hotels is higher than the other main markets.

- Over 65% of US holidaymakers stay in a hotel during their visit and hotels account for over half of all US holidaymaker bed nights.
- 50% of US holidaymakers hire a car while here.
- Over 70% of US holidaymakers use the internet to book all or part of their holiday.
- Over 50% of Canadian visitors are over 45.
- A third of Canadian holidaymakers – and approximately 1 in 7 US holidaymakers – come to NI whilst visiting the island of Ireland.
• Visitors stay for on average 8 nights on the island of Ireland.
• Often it is their first visit and they are keen to tour the island.
• 60% of visitors are over 35.
• They are high spenders.
• Golf is often a key draw for many North American visitors.

Specific nuances for North American market segments

Social Energisers
More likely to actively explore the places they visit to get a real sense of its culture
More attracted by ‘wow factor’ / once-in-a-lifetime experiences
More interested in historic / world famous sites of interest

Culturally Curious
More inclined to try experiences that are new for them including local food & drink
More likely to use their holiday to indulge in a little extravagance
Getting good weather is less important

Great Escapers
More inclined to have planned itineraries with less room for spontaneity
Slightly more motivated by seeing world famous sites and places
Australia

Despite the distances that have to be travelled Australians are an appealing market as they speak English and 75% use the internet to book at least part of their holiday directly. They may visit Northern Ireland as part of a European tour and often come to Northern Ireland to see friends and relatives.

Around 150,000 Australian tourists visit the island of Ireland each year staying on average 9-12 nights. Typically a third visit Northern Ireland which is proportionally higher than other markets.

The majority of Australian visitors are either under 35 or over 55 with over 60% travelling either as a couple or as part of a family trip.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries

(Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates)

There are two types of customer from GCC countries – GCC nationals and English speaking expats. In the region of 500,000 visitors come from GCC countries to Europe each year mostly for leisure (82%) but also for business (18%).

There are important cultural issues to attend to for GCC nationals such as provision of halal food, privacy, and non-promotion of alcohol, but there are also opportunities to attract tourists with culture and heritage and luxury hotel breaks.

The expat market is easier to target due to the absence of a language barrier and an existing awareness of Northern Ireland.
India

15 million Indian residents engage in outbound travel each year with 50% of these being for leisure purposes. The UK is the fifth most popular destination for Indian travellers and the top European destination.

There is a growing number of Indian visitors to the island of Ireland with over 20,000 tourists in 2012 with the vast majority of visitors aged 25-55.

They come in group tours or self-drive and the Giant’s Causeway and Titanic Belfast feature on the top 5 attractions on the island. Flexibility in pricing is important as India is a very price sensitive market.

South Africa

Over 600,000 South Africans visit Europe each year with the top destination being the UK with 40% travelling for leisure and 40% travelling for business reasons and staying on average 7-10 days.

The most responsive target market is likely to be English speaking South Africans aged over 45 who will seek excellent service and good value.

The Giant’s Causeway and Titanic Belfast feature high on the list of visitor attractions and the lack of a language barrier makes it easier to share information and retain an ongoing relationship.

Sports tourism is another potential market and there are also many South Africans with ancestral links to the island of Ireland.

China

Numbers of Chinese outbound tourists are growing rapidly and are expected to surpass the 100 million per year mark by the end of 2015; a statistic that has tourism destinations around the globe increasing their marketing efforts in China. Chinese visitors to the island of Ireland are also experiencing growth, with up to 40,000 arriving in 2013.

The target market for Northern Ireland is made up of the more affluent Chinese nationals aged between 25 and 55. They come for the city vibe, scenery, history and culture, and friendly people and; they see the Giant’s Causeway and Titanic Belfast as being in the top 3 attractions on the island of Ireland. World Heritage Sites in general are a key attractor for Chinese visitors, thus maximising links to the Giant’s Causeway is seen as advantageous.

“**The Giant’s Causeway and Titanic Belfast are key attractors for emerging markets.”**
### Segmentation Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer Segments</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>What they are looking for</th>
<th>Which communication channels are best</th>
<th>Key to securing more of their business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Together</td>
<td>NI &amp; ROI</td>
<td>Interested in romantic breaks and spending quality time as a couple.</td>
<td>Local terrestrial TV &amp; Radio channels, Local National papers, web and deal sites such as Groupon.</td>
<td>Make them aware of idyllic relaxing retreats and romantic getaways offering inclusive packages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Fun</td>
<td>NI &amp; ROI</td>
<td>Interested in breaks that will keep their children amused whilst giving them an opportunity to relax.</td>
<td>Local Radio, TV and Newspapers and mobile devices as well as social channels such as Facebook and You Tube.</td>
<td>Spell out how their children’s time can be occupied, offering competitive rates and good quality family packages. (Reassure them of the safety of their children – ROI only).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature Cosmopolitans</td>
<td>NI &amp; ROI</td>
<td>Aspire to travel more and have the time and money to do so, but are looking for good deals.</td>
<td>Local TV, Sports Channels, Local National papers and Radio. Less digitally connected than other segments.</td>
<td>Make them aware, largely through non-digital media, of high quality accommodation breaks in romantic settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young &amp; Lively</td>
<td>ROI only</td>
<td>Interested in urban breaks often taken with friends.</td>
<td>TV, Music Radio stations, Web, digital and social.</td>
<td>Persuade them that their time will be packed with lots of exciting nightlife and good daytime shopping in a safe urban environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Segments</td>
<td>Market</td>
<td>What they are looking for</td>
<td>Which communication channels are best</td>
<td>Key to securing more of their business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Energisers</td>
<td>GB, FR, Ger N. America</td>
<td>Action-packed days as well as fun-filled nights.</td>
<td>High social media users, video on demand, news online, cinema and outdoor.</td>
<td>Let them know about a combined focus of ‘extraordinary days’ and ‘happening nights’, ensuring they can access both within a short time period and with the minimum of hassle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Curious</td>
<td>GB, FR, Ger N. America</td>
<td>Want to discover culture for themselves.</td>
<td>Medium to heavy viewers of TV which drives some online search. Newspapers and radio and cinema, important.</td>
<td>Focus on creating a uniting narrative which clusters together a number of experiences that bring history and culture to life and are within easy reach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Escapers</td>
<td>GB, FR, Ger N. America</td>
<td>Want to immerse themselves in nature and get away from it all.</td>
<td>TV, newspapers, radio, outdoor. Internet and social media are all important.</td>
<td>Ease of getting here and getting around is paramount. Let them know about NI’s outstanding natural locations, focusing on geographical hubs which cluster together a range of integrated outdoor activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Your Business

Make the most of your business toolkit to effectively target your customers

Once you have decided which markets and segments represent the best-fit opportunity for you, the next step is to fine tune the various components of your business to work in harmony to best reach your target customers.
Know your business

Defining your unique selling proposition

Before you start to think about how you can successfully reach your customers, you need to identify what makes your business different. Why should your customers choose your offering over your competitors? In other words, what is your unique selling proposition (USP)?

Pinpointing your USP often requires some soul searching and creativity. To succeed, you need an in-depth knowledge of your own business performance as well as an understanding of the wider business environment you operate in. Without this knowledge, you will waste your valuable time, money and resources chasing opportunities that don't suit your business and/or will not improve your bottom line.

In analysing your own business, you need to be able to use your internal systems to answer questions such as:

- Which of my products / services are performing best?
- What is my average spend per customer?
- Which markets / segments are generating most revenue for my business?
- What proportion of my customer base is repeat business?
- During which times of the year does my business perform best / worst?

When considering the environment you are operating in, you will need to have a general awareness of changing trends in the tourism industry and how they influence your business and your customers. For example, how would a significant change in currency exchange rates impact on your regular customer base? Or how would a change in legislation open up new opportunities or, conversely, limit your tourism product? Some of this awareness can be attained very easily through keeping up to date with current affairs, trade press or e-newsletters. However, for the more detailed analyses, NITB undertakes regular research to monitor and evaluate visitor trends and industry trends, some of which is outlined in the context section of this report. Further research is available on nitb.com.
What makes my business stand out?

Making use of a SWOT analysis is a simple but effective way of organising your thoughts to help pinpoint your USP. Before you start, take time to consider the following factors:

Think about the strengths and weaknesses of your key competitors to establish where there is room for innovation or growth. What do you do better than your competitors? What do they do better than you?

Put yourself in your customer’s shoes. Step back from your business and carefully scrutinise what your customers really want. What would make them return again and again to your business and ignore your competition? The answer might be quality, convenience, reliability or customer service. Remember, price is rarely the only reason people buy.

Remember to consider the opportunities that lie at your doorstep. What can you utilise in your surrounding area to add depth to your product offering? Does your business share a story with an iconic attraction? Is it located in an area of natural beauty? Is there an annual music event that you could tie in with?
SWOT Analysis - example

A coastal B&B in County Down is seeking to attract more short break visitors from ROI:

**Strengths**

- Beautiful location
- Excellent local knowledge
- House has real character & history
- Mournes easily accessible

**Weaknesses**

- Lack of knowledge about how to use the internet and social media for marketing
- Not enough existing networks with other tourism providers

**Opportunities**

- The development of the Mourne Coastal route
- New activity providers are emerging that will encourage more visitors to the area
- Lots of quality restaurants and things to do in local area

**Threats**

- The unpredictable weather can be off-putting
- Cheap city breaks in Europe are an attractive proposition
- Lots of similar B&Bs in surrounding area

**Areas for Development**

Having considered areas for potential standout, the B&B owner decides to explore how to develop links with activity providers in the local area and also resolves to start making better use of social and digital channels.
The remainder of this section offers guidance on maximising your business toolkit to deliver your unique selling proposition to your target audience.

**Product innovation**
How can I enhance my product to give my customers what they want?

**Targeted marketing**
Which routes to market can I make use of to ensure my target customers know about me?

**Pricing for profit**
How do I price my product to ensure profitability?

**Excellent customer service**
What are the best ways to ensure that my staff provide a high quality service?
Your tourism business is a unique part of Northern Ireland’s tourism offering. How visitors feel about Northern Ireland as a whole will reflect all the individual experiences they had during their trip, no matter how big or small. The more customer-centric businesses are the more successful the Northern Ireland tourism experience (and your business) will be.

Creating experiences

On pages 12-13 we discussed how consumer behaviour has changed and how it has been largely driven by fast-moving technological advancements. Over the past decade these changing behaviours have had a distinct impact on global tourism. Traditionally tourism destinations developed a series of products and services – a hotel room, a beach, a beautiful landscape – which were packaged up and sold to customers in a generic way. Tourists no longer do things this way. They want bespoke offerings that provide them with once-in-a-lifetime experiences that closely match their needs. They want to be engaged on a personal level and feel something from the places they visit, be touched by the stories of the people and actively participate in culture and community. Reflecting on their experience, visitors will want to say that they got a real sense of what Northern Ireland is all about; they will want to have had ‘wow factor’ moments that they can brag about to their friends on social media; and they will want to feel that they have discovered ‘hidden gems’, the sorts of things that aren’t listed in the guidebook.

Different customers will want different things from more active to more passive experiences – but the principles for your business remain the same...

1. **Get the basics right** – To satisfy customers’ basic needs your core business foundation should be a quality product, excellent value, good customer service and a connectedness with your surrounding area.

2. **Innovate your tourism product** – to go one step further and exceed their expectations, you need to enhance your tourism product to be more authentic, engaging, personalised and have the ability to create special memories. Innovation doesn’t always need high levels of investment. Sometimes doing the simple things well can make a big impact.

“A tourism product is what you buy; a tourism experience is what you remember.”

Canadian Tourism Commission
3. Your Business

Innovation through collaboration

Although it is possible to enhance your tourism product in isolation, you should also consider ways in which you could collaborate with other complementary tourism businesses to create visitor experiences that deliver more than the sum of their parts. To identify opportunities for collaboration, first consider your destination area and then Northern Ireland’s key themes.

Working with others in your destination area

When identifying businesses to work with in your destination area it might be the case that you consider those businesses with a natural fit (e.g. restaurateurs and producers in a fishing port working together to create a seafood experience); but equally it might also be the case that the only linkage between you and potential collaborators is that you are located in the same destination (e.g. a rural hotel that works with a nearby activity provider to offer guests more to do during their stay).

The first step in identifying collaborative opportunities for your business is having a good knowledge of what’s on your doorstep:

• What is the key selling point(s) of your local area? Can you tie in with them?
• Which businesses seem to attract most visitors?
• What types of experience are other businesses offering? Have you sampled them?
• Do you share any local heritage / stories with other businesses in your destination area?

NI’s key tourism destination areas

- Belfast City & Greater Belfast
- Strangford Lough
- Mourne
- Lough Neagh & its Waterways
- Fermanagh Lakelands
- Tyrone & Sperrins
- Derry-Londonderry
- Causeway Coast & Glens
- Armagh

Consider the various types of tourism businesses on pages 96–97 and relate these to your local area. Can you identify any gaps or opportunities?

Working across NI’s key themes

Pages 12–17 highlights the opportunity in developing experiences aligned to Northern Ireland’s key strengths to provide visitors with a more unique and memorable short break / holiday. You can use the key themes to identify opportunities for collaboration in two main ways:

1. Maximising linkages with key attractors – do you share a story with any of the key attractors that fall under each theme such as the Titanic story? Or are you located on / close to any of the key attractors e.g. Causeway Coastal Route? Building these linkages into your product offering and collaborating with other businesses who share the same connection are great ways to exploit these strengths and boost your appeal.

2. Creating your own clustered experiences under each theme – do you share a common thread with other businesses that when clustered together could create an exceptional visitor experience? For example, could you collaborate with other businesses to create a themed itinerary or trail based around any of the attractors that sit underneath each theme (e.g. maritime history, traditional music or literature)? The businesses that share these connections may well be located in your destination area or, if your experience is compelling enough for visitors to travel, could be in other parts of Northern Ireland.

For ideas, inspiration and best practice on creating experiences, download the Creating Experiences Toolkit and the six themed practical guides on nitb.com/experience

Working with other businesses – whether they be linked with your own businesses through proximity or theme – is further explored overleaf.
Working with others

Forging mutually beneficial business relationships

Why should I work with others?

Working with others is an important way to maximise yield. In reality, tourism providers attempting to drive consumer appeal exclusively through their individual offering are less likely to attract as many tourists as they would by working together with other operators. Presenting or developing experiences holistically enables them to offer a more diverse and compelling experience.

Benefits include:

- Visitors stay longer due to range of experiences on offer.
- Visitors spend more = increased business revenue.
- Visitors are more aware of what the region has to offer.
- Increased profile for your business and region.
- Opportunities to learn from each other and access useful knowledge and insights.
- Easier for the travel trade to sell.
- Increased media opportunities.
- Competition for business is with other regions rather than between products.

In what ways can I work with others?

There are two main ways to work with other businesses. The first involves creating a package with another operator to sell at an inclusive price e.g. a hotel room with a concert ticket. The packages are then often sold directly to the customer or also can be sold indirectly through inbound tour operators or other bonded operators such as coach operators. Packages like these are regulated by the Package Travel Directive, which means that the costs and complexities involved in complying make it a prohibitive option for many tourism businesses.

The solution for many smaller businesses is product ‘bundling’ or ‘clustering’. This involves combining complementary products to provide an enhanced offering as well as a more complete and compelling experience for your customers. The difference from packaging is that the products are promoted together but are sold separately. There are simple and complex forms of bundling, which are illustrated in more detail overleaf.

However, it is also important for you to be fully aware of the point when a bundle becomes a package, the legalities of which are discussed on page 67.
Adding value to your offer through free options

Simple bundling

Making recommendations for complementary businesses in your area

Discounting

Joint ticketing (if under 24 hours and does not include overnight accommodation)

Complex bundling

Creation of an experience through joint promotion

Creating a package to sell indirectly

Packaging

Creating a package to sell directly

• Informal arrangement
• Lower cost
• Lower revenue generation
• Need to be aware of when regulations come into effect

• More formal structure
• Higher cost
• Higher potential for revenue growth
• Need detailed consideration of regulations
Bundling

What is bundling?

Quite simply bundling (also known as clustering) is all about bringing together complementary products through cross-selling and up-selling to form compelling and unique Northern Ireland experiences. The products are generally sold separately but are presented holistically. This principle is vital to satisfy the demand of our segments but also brings benefits to individual tourism providers and to tourism destinations.

Ways to bundle

Simple methods

1. Adding value to your offer through free options

One of the simplest ways to add value to your product is to make the most of things that are freely available in your surrounding area and natural environment. By presenting your business in a way that allows customers to get the most out of your area’s reputation for hill walking, heritage, seafood or some other attribute, you will improve the appeal and authenticity of your offering.

Be aware that if you are offering value-added extras to customers to help them get the most out of your business setting – for example, fishing tackle, orienteering kits or laundry facilities – that these will need to be made available to all of your customers to avoid entering into packaging territory (given that exclusivity implies that a package has been created).

Example of connecting with your surrounding area

By creating a connectedness with the Mourne’s reputation for hiking, this B&B is offering more than just a bed for the night - it is presenting itself to prospective visitors as a more compelling and authentic experience.
2. Making recommendations for complementary businesses in your area

When considering booking with you, many of your potential customers will be unfamiliar with what there is to see and do in your destination area. Simply recommending the best attractions, activities and places can not only boost the chances of more customers deciding to visit your destination, but those that actually do visit will get more out of their trip and will be more likely to return and/or spread the word. To see the power of recommendations in action, visit nitb.com/experience to see how a group of outdoor activity providers, accommodation providers and restaurants created an informal business network based around the Unique Outdoors theme to help customers get more out of the Portrush area and vice versa.

3. Discounting

A slightly more formal but still reasonably simple way of enhancing your product offering is to negotiate a discounted rate for your customers with a complementary activity, attraction or restaurant. That way, the customer gains a price advantage compared with buying each product separately. As with the value-added options, it is important to note that the discount must be made available to all customers, otherwise you would need to comply with packaging regulations. Be aware that normal business practice should be applied when working with another business. It is advisable to be aware of Trading Standards regulations and seek advice from your solicitor before signing a contract. Consider how the two examples below are presented to the customer.

**Packaging example**

Behind the scenes, for example, the two businesses might have an agreement whereby City Centre Hotel retains £69 for each booking and Young’s Steakhouse gets £30. In this example these businesses would need to comply with Package Travel Regulations.

**Discounting example**

Behind the scenes, for example, the two businesses see the offer as mutually beneficial due to increased sales potential. The businesses would have sought professional advice and may not have to comply with the Package Travel Regulations.
More complex methods

1. Joint ticketing (if under 24 hours and does not include overnight accommodation)

This method is not applicable for accommodation providers given that inclusive pricing including overnight accommodation automatically falls under the Package Travel Directive. However, if you are a visitor attraction, activity provider or restaurateur, joint ticketing may be a viable option for you providing that the package lasts under 24 hours (packages over 24 hours are regulated by the Package Travel Directive).

Given the time restraint, choosing a partner that is conveniently located to your business is a key consideration as customers are not likely to buy the offer if it means them having to travel long distances.

Therefore, having a sound knowledge of the tourism offering in your destination area is a prerequisite to choosing the business(es) that you have potential synergies with. Again, it is important to remember that normal business practice should be applied and it is advisable to be aware of Trading Standards regulations and seek advice from your solicitor before signing a contract.

2. Creation of an experience through joint promotion

This method is probably the most complex and costly solution but is also the one that arguably offers most potential for revenue growth. It involves a group of complementary businesses marketing and promoting a joined-up experience to its customers but selling it separately. This method normally works best when the businesses are geographically linked in some way (e.g. along a driving route or based within walking distance) and also share a common theme or story (e.g. mountain biking or a linkage with a famous person in history).

Joint ticketing example

Joint ticketing example (more than 24 hours)

Discover the literary history of Belfast in a weekend

Day 1
- Take a walking tour of literary landmarks with expert guides
- Enjoy a visit to a 200 year old Library
- Visit the CS Lewis Reading room at Queen’s University
- See a play at the Lyric Theatre including a backstage tour
- Stay overnight at one of Belfast’s finest hotels

Day 2
- Enjoy a poetry writing class and have a go at penning your own ode to Belfast
- Print your poem on a traditional letterpress
- Visit one of Belfast’s best bookshops
- Enjoy a special poetry reading evening in a local restaurant

Joint ticketing example (less than 24 hours)

Discover the literary history of Belfast in a day

- Take a walking tour of literary landmarks with expert guides
- Enjoy a visit to the famous Linenhall Library
- Have a go at writing your own poem about the city
- See a play at the Lyric Theatre including a backstage tour

The example above lasts over 24 hours and does include overnight accommodation, meaning that the Package Travel Regulations may apply.

The example above lasts under 24 hours and does not include overnight accommodation, meaning that the Package Travel Regulations may not apply.
Consider the case study below:

**Case Study: The Poacher's Way**

The Poacher's Way promotes 25 regional operators in New South Wales who offer a diverse range of boutique food, wine, accommodation and attractions. The collaboration came together in 2000 and started as a way to promote the smaller owner-operated businesses in the region. The businesses have grouped together a range of experiences under the name 'Poachers Way' acknowledging that the customer doesn't just want to come to a wine region: they want a variety of things to see and do. The group has been very selective about who can participate in promotions, and has ensured only quality products are promoted in accordance with certain criteria that participants must meet. Originally the collaborative arrangement was informal. The trail has since obtained funding and has created a formal association, coordinated by a committee of seven. The committee meets monthly and the whole membership meets at least quarterly. A Marketing Manager and an Administrator have recently been appointed. The group has a long-term strategy in place and has developed a successful sales portal where the experience is promoted but the individual components are sold separately.

By combining their efforts, these businesses have created the 'Poachers Way', a unique tourism product that is promoted to visitors for their collective benefit. Under UK regulations, you should be aware that selling any one of these tourism products or services at an inclusive price would result in the creation of a package. If you are interested in replicating this method, it is advisable that products are strictly sold separately and that you make it clear on the website that your customer can purchase just one product, or indeed purchase them elsewhere.

Another great example of this method in action are the businesses on the Lisburn Road in Belfast. Famed as the ‘Golden Mile’ of boutique shopping in Belfast, a number of businesses along the stretch of road have formed together to develop thelisburnroad.com website which promotes their joint offering, provides visitor information and houses details on special offers and discounts.

### 6 Steps to building bundles & packages

1. **What segments am I targeting?**
2. **What do they want to do?**
3. **What is there nearby that I can suggest for my customers to do?**
4. **How can I best work with those tourism providers?**
5. **How can I make this link efficient, unique and suited to the needs of the segment?**
6. **What is the best way to bring this opportunity to the customer?**
Packaging

Be aware of the rules and regulations

What is a package?
The marketing, sale and performance of package holidays sold or offered for sale in the United Kingdom are regulated by The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. The Regulations apply to anyone who organises packages whether they are for profit or not, and whether they are for business or club purposes.

Under the current directive, a package is defined as a prearranged combination of at least two of the following elements: transport, accommodation or other significant tourist services...

• which are sold or offered for sale at an inclusive price;
• and when the excursion lasts for more than 24 hours;
• or includes overnight accommodation.

I’m still interested in creating a package. What do the regulations say I have to comply with?
The regulations require three main areas of compliance:

1. The first requires organisers and retailers to provide security for the protection of pre-payments and for the repatriation of consumers in the event of insolvency. There are three approved methods of providing security: bonding with one of seven approved bodies (e.g. ABTA); taking out an insurance policy for each individual’s repayment; or appointing a trustee to hold all monies paid over.

2. The second refers to what information must be given to the consumer and when. This includes what needs to go in the brochure (if one is provided) and what should be included in the contract with the consumer.

3. The third area relates to the organiser and/or retailer being liable for the performance of the contract. Although it is not a requirement of the regulations, you may wish to consider taking out indemnity insurance to cover yourself in the event of a claim made against you.

If you do want to pursue packaging and need further assistance, it is advised that you contact a UK travel association such as ABTA to determine the costs and practical implications of bonding for your business.

It is also important to keep up-to-date with changes in the law affecting package travel. In July 2014, European Commission published proposals for a revised Directive on ‘Package Holidays and Assisted Travel Arrangements’. It is envisaged that the UK government will implement this revised Directive by 2017/18 but it remains to be seen exactly how it does this.
3. Your Business

How do you add value for your customers?

- Do you have the basics right? Good quality, excellent value, good customer service and a connectedness with your surrounding area?
- How can you build on the basics to provide more authentic, engaging and personalised experiences for your customers?

How can you work with other businesses to enhance your product offering?

- Do you have an in-depth knowledge of the tourism offering in your local area?
- Are there other tourism products that would complement or strengthen your offering?
- Have you considered the various ways in which you could offer your customers a bundled experience by working with other businesses?
- How would the visitor benefit?
- How would you promote your bundled offering?
- Would you need a formal or informal business arrangement?

Are you aware of your legal responsibilities?

- Are you aware of the point when a bundle becomes a package?
- Do you know who to seek advice from if you are interested in creating a package to sell at an inclusive price?
- Have you consulted with a solicitor before making a formal business arrangement?
Targeted marketing
Where and how to promote your tourism business

To drive sales effectively you need to understand where your potential customers search for information and be visible in those channels.

There are two main channels

**Direct channels**
Primarily online via your website but also through e-mail, social media, phone calls and walk-in business.

**Indirect Channels**
Through online travel agencies (OTAs), inbound tour operators, travel agents, group organisers and other travel websites such as discovernorthernireland.com or ireland.com.

This section offers guidance on how to get the most out of both direct and indirect channels to reach your target customers.

The holiday shopping journey

Depending on who your customers are and where they are travelling from will influence how they look for and book their holidays. The internet and digital channels have revolutionised the travel distribution system to the extent that 60% of hotel bookings are now done digitally. Not only that but almost 9 in 10 travel purchases are influenced by digital channels (websites, social media, peer reviews and smartphone or tablet apps) even if the final purchase is not made online.

The internet is now a fundamental sales channel for any tourism business. To fully utilise it, you will need to ensure that you understand your role across all stages of the holiday shopping journey and how you use your sales channels (particularly digital channels) to reach your customers.

All consumers go through five stages when planning and purchasing their holiday. It is vital that your experience is marketing effectively throughout. Many businesses make the mistake of seeing marketing as something that happens before a customer books but not after. In reality the marketing process never ends, you should be conscious of how your experience is presented to the customer at all times.
The travel cycle

1. Dreaming
2. Planning
3. Booking
4. Experiencing
5. Sharing
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Dreaming</strong></th>
<th><strong>Planning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aim</strong></td>
<td>To trigger the interest of customers and spark curiosity about what Northern Ireland has to offer.</td>
<td>To provide opportunities for customers to explore the potential of Northern Ireland as the destination for their holiday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How can customers be influenced?</strong></td>
<td>By wide reaching advertising campaigns that are designed to catch the attention of potential visitors. To a large degree this activity is carried out on behalf of the tourism industry by NITB (on the island of Ireland), Tourism Ireland (in overseas markets) and other marketing organisations such as Visit Belfast and Visit Derry.</td>
<td>Through having easy access to a broad range of material that showcases Northern Ireland. Most customers will expect to find this material online although published articles, PR and advertising can also be effective. Again, this is largely the responsibility of NITB, Tourism Ireland and other marketing organisations whose destination websites are an important resource for potential visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your role</strong></td>
<td>However small, your own digital presence can have a surprisingly wide reach and can also influence customers at the dreaming stage.</td>
<td>To spread the word about Northern Ireland as far as possible through traditional advertising and PR as well as the digital opportunities outlined below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your digital checklist</strong></td>
<td>An excellent website that is accessible across all devices. Tag your website with search friendly terms relevant to your target customer. List your business on Google Places. Have an active presence on social media. Be part of the NI tourism community online through listings on visitor portals such as discovernorthernireland.com and ireland.com Translate content into the language of your target customers if relevant.</td>
<td>Implement blog functionality to create content that is relevant and interesting. Communicate what your region has to offer through language and imagery. Personalise your content through local insight and opinion. Create photo albums that showcase your region. Share your content with tourism trade and industry partners. Create sample itineraries to show how much there is to enjoy. Experiment with video content using 60-90 second videos showcasing your product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booking</td>
<td>Experiencing</td>
<td>Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To assist the customer in validating purchase opportunities against their holiday requirements and encourage people to see your business as the answer.</td>
<td>To ensure that visitors to Northern Ireland have exceptional experiences at all stages after they book their holiday.</td>
<td>To turn visitors to Northern Ireland into advocates who actively recommend it as a tourism destination to their social network, both online and offline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers’ final purchase decision can be influenced by a wide range of factors including price, value, convenience, ease of booking and past experience as well as peer influence through reviews and word of mouth recommendations.</td>
<td>Good quality communication in the lead up to their visit and excellent customer service when they are here will encourage return visits and word of mouth recommendations for Northern Ireland as a whole and for your business.</td>
<td>Encouraging the spread of word of mouth and personal recommendations is a highly effective way to promote your business. The more customers you satisfy and the more you encourage them to share their positive experiences; the more people will know about your business, your area and ultimately Northern Ireland as a tourism destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help turn lookers into bookers by developing your own offer-led promotions and sales strategy across all key channels, particularly digital.</td>
<td>To put the visitor at the centre of your business through developing a quality experience and delivering it with passion.</td>
<td>To encourage your customers to return and to share good reviews and memories of their visit on social media and by word of mouth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure your website is easy to navigate and easy to book.</td>
<td>Post relevant news on website and social media – e.g. events, festivals, exhibition in your local area.</td>
<td>Encourage your customers to share their experience online and direct them to specific channels such as Facebook or TripAdvisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote special offers across all channels.</td>
<td>Capture your customers’ email address and other key data through traditional methods – guestbooks, postcards, business cards, surveys etc.</td>
<td>Prompt your audience to use relevant hashtags when sharing photos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilise paid search ads to communicate your offer.</td>
<td>Promote your online presence at available off-line touch points – posters, brochures, clothing etc.</td>
<td>Incentivise sharing through competitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use retargeting advertising to push a final sale.</td>
<td>Respond to customer questions via your website and social media accounts.</td>
<td>Capture photos of guests enjoying their holiday (with permission).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor review sites and respond to questions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Post / share pictures of celebrities that may happen to visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List prices in the currency of your target customers as well as Sterling.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Keep in touch with visitors through social media and direct channels to encourage them to return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure you have a good system for dealing with e-mail enquiries.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your website should persuade prospective customers that your product fits the bill. Your website should be:

**Technically efficient**
- Make sure your website is accessible across all platforms – PC, smartphone, and tablet.
- Make sure it functions smoothly and that the consumer does not get frustrated.
- Link to other websites where relevant.

**Inspiring and outward looking**
- Don’t just sell your own product, sell the location and all the assets of your region.
- Show that you are thinking of the customer by including links to essential information (e.g. weather, transport, special events).
- Encourage visitors to your website to connect to you through e-mail and build a relationship.
- Get people’s buy-in and build an audience for news and offers through a database of contacts.

**Sales orientated**
Make sure that you are utilising all the opportunities afforded by NITB and other campaigns (see pages 104-105).
- Consumers are motivated by good value online deals so ensure you present a variety of value offerings.
- Maintain a positive TripAdvisor rating and highlight some of this feedback on your website.
- Provide prices in Euro for the Republic of Ireland market and other European customers.
- Make booking easy allowing for deposits and payment in full.
- Have a policy for refunds and dealing with complaints.
Social media

Social media includes digital channels that are highly interactive enabling rapid responses to information, fluid conversations and the instant publishing of video and pictures. To function efficiently in this world what your business needs is awareness and adaptability.

You need to be aware of the main social media channels.

Facebook

While your business’s Facebook page cannot give the amount of detail and communicate the same messages as your website it can provide a vehicle to interact with your customers and showcase the personality of your business.

Twitter

Twitter provides a channel that can add value to your customers past, present and future by keeping them up to date instantly with developments in your business and also in your location.

YouTube

Video is an excellent way of giving potential customers an insight into what they can expect. Handled correctly it can be a valuable addition to your marketing arsenal.

Digital Advertising

Digital channels are an extremely cost effective way of testing how the market might respond to your tourism product.

The most fundamental aspect to digital marketing is developing the best possible website for your business.

When you have created an excellent website that portrays your product in the best possible light for your intended audience, the three most accessible digital channels are:

1. Google ads

Google ads allow you to create and run ads for your business. They are displayed along with search results when someone searches Google using one of your keywords (e.g. hotels in Fermanagh). That way, you’ll be advertising to an audience that is already interested in your business and you only pay when people actually click your ad (known as Pay Per Click (PPC)).

Tips for better PPC:

• Look at what your direct (including similar businesses in your area) and indirect (including online travel agencies) competitors are doing/saying in their search ads.
• Identify your differentiating characteristics and include it in the ad copy – can you compete on things like value, luxury, authenticity, location, service?
• Always include a price point – consumers will be tempted to click on good deals.
• Check your ad metrics - Google Analytics is an extremely useful and effective way to measure the success of your ad. Let it get a few impressions and then test your success.

2. Facebook & Twitter ads

Along with setting up profiles on Twitter and Facebook, businesses can use ads on both networks to selectively target demographics groupings to match their marketing strategies. You can choose your target audience by location, age and interest and build a community around your business. There are various ad types available to suit your needs and budget. Quite often, ads containing images work well for tourism businesses and create a better sense of engagement.

As with all online advertising, Facebook and Twitter advertising is measurable and allows you to set, monitor and control your daily spend via a Pay Per Click model. Clicks can cost as little as 10p meaning that daily budgets as little as £10 can help drive traffic to your website.
3. Online display advertising

Ads containing text, logos, images and rich media that appear next to content on web pages. As with Facebook and Twitter advertising, display advertising allows businesses to target their audience by demographic and behaviour targeting. Online display advertising can be more expensive than other forms of digital advertising and you can expect to pay upwards of £10 for every 1,000 page views on high-traffic sites (e.g. the websites of daily newspapers). Buying blind on an ad network can be more cost effective at delivering your target audience, although you will have less control on which websites your ads are displayed. You can track the performance of your campaign daily to measure metrics such as page views, clicks and conversions to calculate your return on investment.

| NI & ROI consumers who have used Facebook/Twitter in the last week |
|------------------|------------------|
| Facebook | Twitter |
| 15–24 | 16% | 30% |
| 25–34 | 64% | 14% |
| 35–44 | 52% | 11% |
| 45–54 | 29% | 4% |
| 55–64 | 22% | 3% |
| 65+ | 11% | 1% |

NI & ROI consumers who have used Facebook/Twitter in the last week

TGI (2014)

Daily deal sites

Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland consumers, in particular, are influenced by good hotel deals and regularly purchase these on daily deals sites such as Groupon or Living Social. Typically customers buy a discount voucher directly from the deals site. The deals site keeps the revenue from unclaimed vouchers and splits revenue from claimed vouchers 50:50.

Benefits

- Deals sites grant access to wide market coverage for your products/services.
- Deals sites will attract new customers to your business, to whom you can encourage loyalty.
- Customers often spend more than the discounted amount through upselling.

Potential problems

- Loyalty is sometimes with the deal website and not with the brand offering the product/service.
- Poor experiences can cause reputational damage – lack of supply, bigger than anticipated demand, difficulties in arranging appointments/bookings.
- Ensure that you can still make money on whatever discount you agree.

Direct Marketing

For tourism businesses, direct marketing involves keeping in touch with your existing customer base to boost customer retention and repeat visits. You need to have processes in place to capture your customers’ preferred contact details and other key information (e.g. age, gender, location) to help you target your communications. An up-to-date and accurate customer database is at the heart of any good direct marketing plan.

Direct marketing methods include direct mailouts, email marketing and SMS marketing – often email is seen as the most cost-effective and least obtrusive method. Be aware that under the Data Protection Act you need prior permission to contact customers and it is your responsibility to check that direct marketing activities are within the law.

Your direct marketing campaigns can be measured and evaluated to help you see which target group was most responsive. Normally offer-led campaigns with a clear call to action deliver the best return on investment.

Your past customers are the best source of future business so getting this correct can lead to revenue growth.
Press and radio advertising are amongst the most affordable offline ways to promote your business on the island of Ireland. Note that for all of these options that advertising in Republic of Ireland is generally more expensive than Northern Ireland – but that is where there is most potential for growth.

Despite the phenomenal growth of digital marketing, print advertising is still an effective and affordable way to reach your target market in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Some market segments (particularly Mature Cosmopolitans and older demographics) find print less intrusive than digital advertising. Print readers can also represent a more attentive audience as people often actively search for deals or coupons in their regional / local newspaper title.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING PRINT MEDIA:

• Check the circulations of various press titles on abc.org.uk. The higher the circulation, the wider reach of your ad. However, the titles with the highest circulation are also likely to be the most expensive to advertise in – which is why Republic of Ireland national papers are more expensive than their Northern Ireland equivalents. This is also why advertising in a local press title is a much more viable option for many small businesses.

• Ask for the audience breakdown of the press title you are considering advertising in. Some titles perform better for certain target audiences than others.

• Consider where your ad will be placed in the paper to ensure that people will see it. Typically an early right hand page (e.g. page 3, 5 or 7) is the most sought after placement.

• Consider the habits and preferences of your target audiences. Would an ad in the sports pages, puzzle pages or TV guide be an effective choice?

• Ad space can be bought in all shapes and sizes. Generally the bigger the space, the more expensive it is. Similarly, colour ads will be more expensive than black & white.

• Classified ads are often a cost-effective option in the Irish Times and the Irish Independent, and are often a place where Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland consumers look for good short break deals.

• Consider the cost of designing your ad. Many press titles will offer a design service for an additional cost.

Radio advertising is usually cheaper than other mass media and can be targeted to reach consumers within a specific regional area as well as at a national level. Radio advertising is a good frequency builder and, when done properly, your target audience will have multiple opportunities to hear your ad.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING RADIO SPOTS:

• Radio works well as a call to action. Use it to promote special offers / events and ensure you include contact details for consumers to follow up if interested.

• Consider when your target audience will most likely be listening to the radio. Most radio stations will offer a Total Audience Plan consisting of equal distribution of your ad across all major dayparts. Tailoring this package to target specific times of the day (e.g. morning) will help to target specific audiences. Radio listenership is often highest during the daily commute, which is why spots during this time are most expensive.

• Ask for the audience profile of the station(s) you are considering. Some stations will be better at targeting specific market segments than others (e.g. stations like Cool FM and Spin have a younger demographic profile).

• Regional stations often represent a low-entry level option for many budding advertisers. Competitions and interviews also offer good value for money and can often be negotiated as part of a package.

• Production costs for radio are lower than other mass media. Many stations will be able to offer production at an additional cost.

• Consider the length and frequency of your campaign. As a minimum, a radio campaign might seek to deliver 28 spots per week over a two-week period – this would offer your target audience an average of three opportunities to hear your ad.
Public Relations

Public Relations is all about building relationships to promote and enhance the reputation of your business. It includes digital techniques such as maintaining a social media presence and having a website with blog functionality as well as offline techniques such as attending trade shows and hosting media visits / familiarisation trips. Traditionally the main PR technique, however, involves press releases including those you can send to NITB and Tourism Ireland as well those you can send directly to the media. Considering that journalists are inundated with potential stories on a daily basis, making yours stand out from the crowd is crucial. Follow the tips on this page to write a great press release that will make your business look professional, accessible and attractive to writers looking for stories.

TOP TIPS FOR WRITING A PRESS RELEASE:

• **Plan your message.**
  Take a moment to think. What do you want your PR to do? Enhance your reputation locally? Be seen by your customers? Generate leads or sales?

• **Understand where your customers are.**
  What media are they reading, listening to? What social media do they use? Aim your PR stories for the media your customers will see, not necessarily what you will see.

• **Make it easy for journalists.**
  Good story, good headline, good photo. Write a good headline to get the journalist’s attention. And the first paragraph needs 5 things: Who, What, When, Where, Why? If you read your press release and think “So what?” then you don’t have a story.

• **Make your story newsworthy.**
  Your story will only stand a chance of being included if it is timely, interesting and impartial. If your press release is too sales-focussed or self-promoting, it will not be seen as newsworthy.

• **Include quotes wherever possible.**
  Including a good quote can give a human element to the press release as well as being a source of information in its own right.

• **Promote Northern Ireland.**
  Your press release should always highlight the range of things to see and do in your surrounding area. Remember to sell Northern Ireland first, then your surrounding area and then your business.

• **Provide contact details and links to further information.**
  Don’t forget to include an email address and phone number on the release should journalists want to follow up with you for further information. Remove as much hassle as possible for journalists – providing relevant links to your business website can keep their interest piqued.
Choosing your words and pictures carefully

All promotion uses a combination of language and imagery. Today’s audiences are hugely sensitive to imagery and language so take time to ensure that you have the right elements.

Using Images

Does the image feel authentic and is it a true reflection of the experience?
Do photos show people engaged in something?
Do the images reflect your best assets?
Do you have permission to use it?
Is it the correct resolution?

Using Language

Do your descriptions reflect your unique selling proposition?
Is the tone of your text warm, friendly and relaxed?
Is your language focused on how the visitor will feel?
Is your language accurate, brief and lively without being exaggerated?
Do you issue a “call to action” – the thing you want the customer to do?

Did it work?

After each marketing exercise go back to your marketing goals and look at them again. Ask yourself: did this work and did my business grow? Marketing that does not grow your business and make you money is not great marketing – no matter how good the campaign looked or felt.

In order to measure the success of an advertising campaign and determine if promotional costs are well spent, it is important to consider some means of gathering customer information and feedback. This can be achieved using simple survey techniques, which can often be incorporated in the advertisement itself.

Examples include providing an outlet for potential customers to phone or write for further information; or offering a discount or incentive to purchase a product, valid upon presentation of the advertisement. These processes enable you to determine:

- where a customer heard about the product;
- customer characteristics including their wants and needs;
- customer contact details that can be retained on database for future direct mail campaigns and surveys;
- customer perceptions of the advertisement and product and subsequent experience with the product;
- and customer suggestions to improve product appeal.
Using indirect channels

Online Travel Agents

Online Travel Agents (OTAs) sell travel products to customers online by connecting suppliers (including hotels, airlines, car hire companies and visitor attractions) for the customer.

The main focus of most OTA websites is hotels and they are now selling 60% of rooms on the island of Ireland.

OTAs can be very effective for independent accommodation providers who do not have the resources to target international travellers on their own. They provide an efficient means of reaching new customers.

Working with OTAs can also produce an increase in direct bookings as many customers, having seen a hotel on an OTA website, then go directly to the hotel’s own website to check out prices and get more detail first hand. At this stage they might choose to book directly and you need to make sure that your site successfully manages to convert ‘lookers’ into ‘bookers’.

If you want to use an OTA however, do your research. What is the volume of searches and bookings in your area? Can you see case studies of success? What are the promotional opportunities? Are your competitors on their site?

Well known OTAs include Expedia, Booking.com, HostelWorld, Orbitz, Travelocity, Priceline, GoIreland and Irelandhotels.

Site comparators are sites which potential visitors use as part of their research and include Trivago, Tripadvisor, Hipmunk and Kayak. As well as price comparison they provide search functions, maps, photos, ratings and availability. In 2013 60% of holidaymakers compared prices before buying.

Before doing business with an OTA make sure that your contractual arrangements are clear and review the small print in detail. The OTA will require a commission and there may be conditions about the offers you use on your own site. OTA commission rates vary hugely from 2% - 30% so make sure your pricing reflects this.

Note: OTAs are not just for hotels. Expedia and Lastminute.com also feature attractions and transport providers.

Inbound Tour Operators

An inbound tour operator (ITO), also known as a ground operator is a business that brings the components of accommodation, tours, transport and meals together to create a fully inclusive itinerary and coordinates the reservation, confirmation and payment of travel arrangements on behalf of clients.

If you are hoping to work with an ITO you need to research who the ITO works with in the distribution system and which markets they target to ensure your product is the correct fit.

Larger ITOs have product departments that identify and select the products and suppliers they want to sell. These departments can offer advice on suitable markets for your product and suggestions about product development and packaging.

Where do you find ITOs?

NITB runs Meet the Buyer events which are invaluable opportunities to engage with ITOs. You can also see tourismireland.com for a full list of overseas tour operators programming the Island of Ireland. The Incoming Tour Operators Association (ITOA) is the representative association of tour operators on the island of Ireland. Members design programmes and itineraries for tour groups, individual holidaymakers and business travellers. ITOA operates two workshops for tourism businesses each March offering the chance to sell your product to the members of ITOA – see itoa-ireland.com for further details.
Essentials

Compile a sales kit (in PDF format) with information about your product including descriptions, maps, images, times, distances, accessibility information, your insurance details and all your contact details.

Provide rates that allow for ITO commissions and include concise terms and conditions. Be prepared to provide rates up to 18 months in advance.

Provide ITOs with prompt (same day) turnarounds on enquiries, quotations and bookings and action complaints promptly.

Provide updated product information, training and familiarisation opportunities for key ITO staff.

Making the most of promotional opportunities

Pages 104-109 of this toolkit gives you information on how to make the most of NITB’s and Tourism Ireland’s promotional activity.
Checklist

**Is your website as good as it could be?**
- Is it easy for customers to book on your website?
- Do you drive traffic to your website using search engine optimisation and/or digital advertising channels?

**Do you use indirect channels to maximise your reach?**
- Have you considered working with inbound tour operators or online travel agencies?
- Is your rate consistent across all your distribution channels so that your pricing structure is transparent?
- Have you set targets for all of your distribution channels?

**Who are you trying to communicate with?**
- Consider the differences in communicating with each of the market segments in the ‘Your Customer’ section.
- How can you use images and language to best target your key market(s)?

**What do you want to say?**
- The main opportunity for tourism businesses is to influence consumers at the planning and booking stages of the holiday shopping journey. Include a price point or special offer in your communications to turn lookers into bookers.
- Ensure that you also communicate your unique selling proposition.

**Are you making the most of the promotional opportunities available to you?**
- Do you have an active presence on all key social media networks (including TripAdvisor)?
- Have you tested low-entry level promotional opportunities?
- Are you aware of the promotional opportunities available via NITB and Tourism Ireland?
- Have you considered taking part in NITB’s Quality Grading Scheme? Star ratings can be a great promotional tool.

**Do you measure your return on investment?**
- Do you make use of free software such as Google Analytics to measure traffic to your website?
- Do you actively collect customer data?
Pricing for profit

Establishing competitive and consistent rack and retail rates

Once you have decided on a target market and developed a product that meets a specific need within that target market, it is now time to think about the price of your product. There are a number of factors that affect the final selling price of your product offering. The most important of these include:

• How much are people willing to pay for your product?
• How much is it worth to them?
• How much does your product or service cost you to deliver?
• How much profit you want to make from the product?
• How many other people are involved in the supply chain? For example, you might sell your product to someone else who, in turn, sells it on to a customer. Each person in the chain will have costs and will want to make some profit.

To ensure consumers buy your product and distributors promote it, the price must be consistent, accurate and competitive. It is vital to understand the individual elements that make up the total price, and their impact on your product.

Key pricing elements

Operating costs
Operating costs include both fixed costs (rent, buildings, machinery, insurances etc.) and variable costs (wages, electricity, cleaning, maintenance, repairs, materials, stationery, linen, food, petrol, bank fees, marketing and travel).

Distribution costs (commissions)
Each level of the distribution network receives a different rate of commission, so it is important to research your distribution partners and understand where they fit in the distribution network.

Additional pricing elements

Competition
Find out what your competitors are charging. This will help you determine the maximum rate at which your product can be sold.

Demand
Make sure you understand market demands and their impact on rate, and think about how you can add value to your product to increase sales without affecting your profit.

Seasonality
Decide how the fluctuations in business between high and low seasons will affect your pricing model.

Establishing your rates

Net rate

\[
\text{Net Rate} = \text{Operating Costs} + \text{Your Profit Margin}
\]

The net rate is calculated by adding together all the fixed and variable costs of operating your business and the profit margin that you wish to make per sale. The net rate is the absolute minimum you could sell your product for and still make a profit.
Rack rate

You use your rack rate when dealing directly with customers. This includes your webpage and any promotional material that is targeting the customer directly. The rack rate is the amount the customer pays and should be consistent across the entire distribution network.

Distribution Costs

Distribution costs are the commissions that you pay a third party to sell your product on your behalf. Commissions should not be considered a discount because they are a cost of doing business. You should treat the commission as your cost for employing a sales team to help you reach your target markets.

Industry standards for commissions paid from the retail rate for traditional distributors vary depending on individual contract details but the table below provides an indication.

The most effective channels for individual tourism businesses are often through ITOs, OTAs and to the consumer direct. Working within these channels are further discussed in the Targeted Marketing section of this toolkit on pages 70–83.

When handling booking enquiries, it is important to confirm who you are dealing with so that you quote the correct price.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sales method</th>
<th>Typical commission level</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inbound tour operator (ITO)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>ITOs are the link between NI’s tourism products and the overseas travel distributors that buy them, including wholesalers direct sellers, travel agents, meeting planners and event planners. Typically a net rate providing a 30% margin is agreed with an ITO and is paid to you once a sale is made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online travel agent (OTA)</td>
<td>20–30%</td>
<td>OTAs specialise in online distribution and have no intermediaries – they deal directly with the consumer and the tourism product. Typically a net rate providing a 20% margin is agreed with an OTA and is paid to you once a sale is made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail travel agent</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Retailers are travel agents who provide customers with an accessible place to book or enquire about travel products. These agents usually provide a shopfront office for customers in shopping centres and local town centres. A travel agent retains the commission once the booking is confirmed and pays you the balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct to customer</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>The customer pays you your retail rate – however the retail rate should be the same as that provided to your distribution partners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Competitive pricing

Discounted prices

Discounts are often applied in the off season and can also be useful in gaining immediate business on websites such as lastminute.com.

Usually, because they can be quickly matched by competitors, discounted prices do not differentiate a product from the competition so be careful not to devalue your business by regularly discounting.

Value-adding

Value-adding is adding features to your product that enhance the perceived value. In comparison to discounting, value-adding can create a competitive edge and attract a greater market share. It can also help to prevent business fluctuations for products subject to regular peaks and troughs.

Examples of product value-adding are:

- a purchase incentive, such as champagne on arrival or complimentary parking
- bundling your products with others in the region to offer an experience (see pages 62–69)
Pricing tips

- Do you have a totally consistent rate schedule?
- Ensure you show any seasonal variations in product and clearly identify the rates and dates for each season.
- Don’t have too many rate periods as it is confusing and makes your product more difficult to sell for distributors.
- Keep a record of who you have distributed rates to, so you can update them.
- Make sure validity dates and booking conditions are stated on rate schedules.
- Conditions might include child rates and ages, cancellation charges, amendment charges, free of charge (FOC) policy, minimum night stays, days of operation etc.
- Guarantee your rates for the period 1 April to 31 March and have rates available up to 18 months in advance.
- Ensure commissions for all distributors are factored into the retail rate.
- Be sure of different pricing levels for different distributors and quote accordingly.
3. Your Business Checklist

What are current market forces dictating?
- Review the prices of business in direct competition with you
- Analyse market factors influencing consumer demand (e.g. interest rates, seasonality)

What is your true cost of sales?
- Calculate your operating costs (both fixed and variable) and your distribution costs

What are your key historic indicators?
- Analyse your sales history – work out indicators such as average spend per customer, average room rate and occupancy levels. Are there trends evident?
- What are your future sales targets? Does your pricing structures need changed to meet these targets?
Tourism Toolkit

Excellent customer service

Ensure you look after your customers

With a well-designed tourism product in place, now is the time to create attitudes within you, your staff and your associates that will ensure success in the pursuit of excellence. Recognise that your guests are individuals with their own specific needs and also make sure that your staff present themselves as individuals too, ready to share expert knowledge and ideas.

This section is comprised of tips in four areas of service that will help you deliver world-class experiences. Try to see these as an indication of the types of attitudes and actions that will help achieve excellence, not a definitive list. As you develop your products they will all have different contexts for high quality delivery and as the provider you will quickly get to know what these are.

Demand high standards

If you truly love what you do, surround yourself with a team of motivated, skilled people who share your passion.

Work with the best. Set challenges that will push everyone to their limits. And create something exceptional.

Only recommend the best. Be a visitor at home. Gain first-hand experience of everything that your area has to offer and recommend only the things that made a lasting impression.

Learn from others. Experience first-hand how they engage with visitors. Benchmark, set goals and strive to constantly raise your game.

Engage experts. Your suppliers are experts in their respective fields. Ask them for ideas on how you can offer your visitors even greater levels of excellence.

Put yourself on the map with some original thinking. Look at what other attractions are doing. Take inspiration from them. Always try to add an authentic Northern Irish twist and then tell your story to the world.

You have to be in it to win it. Believe in yourself and enter for relevant awards. If you are lucky enough to win, make sure everyone knows it!
Pay attention to every detail

• Paying attention to details should be done with a light touch and sincerity. It is up to you to judge what to do and when and this will vary according to the personality of each visitor.

• Check-in can be a chore. Make it a pleasure. Offer refreshments and make sure your staff know how to meet and greet guests the way you would.

• Remembering someone from a previous visit speaks volumes about how you value your guests.

• Arrange easy airport pickups and make parking arrangements for visitors with limited mobility.

• Develop menus for visitors with allergies or those looking for a healthy-eating option.

• Create a mailing list to keep in touch with visitors throughout the year. Send a handwritten Christmas card, birthday or anniversary greeting.

• Make friends with the best restaurant in town to ensure that your visitor always gets the best table and befriend a reliable, visitor-inspired taxi driver.

Motivate and empower your team

• You can’t be everywhere so it is vital that you are surrounded with people you can trust to deliver the experience in the same way you would.

• Set them standards. Ensure your team has adequate time to prepare, train and practice delivering their part in the total experience journey.

• Empower your staff to deal with every situation. Develop an ideas culture. Reward staff for generating and sharing visitor inspired concepts.

• Value your staff. Celebrate their ideas and show how they have made the business better for you, for them, and for visitors. This will keep your team motivated and your visitors inspired.

• Define staff roles. Ensure your team is satisfied, committed and rewarded.

• Meet regularly with your team to generate ideas and keep everyone informed with developments in your business and in Northern Ireland tourism in general.

• Transform your staff into tourism experts – encourage staff to share visitors’ insights, complaints, queries and suggestions.
Communicate constantly

- More often than not the cause of problems in any situation involving people is lack of communication. To avoid this you must develop a culture of open, friendly communication between you and your customers.
- Ask visitors in advance what they are most looking forward to seeing in Northern Ireland.
- Spend time with them if you can. Share your love of Northern Ireland over a brief chat at breakfast or a nightcap.
- Speak to your guests and encourage them to share their holiday highlights.
- Be brave and ask them how you could improve things. Ask what you could do to make them want to return every year.
- Give people a reason to choose you. Start a database and send regular updates to your existing customers. Ask them back - tell them what’s on, what’s new and why they just have to visit.
- Create a customer survey and invite visitors to provide you with feedback.

WorldHost Training

With Northern Ireland hosting high profile events putting us in the global spotlight there is a unique opportunity for businesses in tourism, hospitality, leisure and transport to showcase the best of Northern Ireland and to build repeat business by providing a warm welcome and impeccable customer service to our visitors.

To help businesses gain a competitive edge NITB, the sector skills council - People 1st, and the Department for Employment and Learning are working in close partnership to provide WorldHost customer service training in Northern Ireland.

Over one million customer-facing staff globally have been trained on WorldHost customer service programmes. WorldHost was first developed in Canada to train 40,000 volunteers and front-line tourism staff for the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010. The programme has since been successfully launched in the UK by People 1st, supported by VisitEngland, and was used to train 200,000 customer-facing staff at the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and other world-class events, including the 2014 Ryder Cup, the Commonwealth Games, and the 2015 Rugby World Cup.

The WorldHost programme is modern and energetic offering a comprehensive training toolkit and topical DVD and CD case study scenarios. It can be used across a wide variety of industries where the quality of customer service is key to the success of business.

For more information visit worldhostni.com or contact NITB’s Industry Development team.
What structure do you have in place to promote service excellence?

Have you considered WorldHost training?

Have you considered taking part in NITB’s Quality Grading Scheme to help see your business through the eyes of your customers?
The following pages give you an opportunity to reflect on your level of knowledge in each of the areas examined in this section. Working through the questions below (honestly) might help you establish one or two priority actions that will increase the effectiveness of your business in each area.

What steps will you take to improve your product offering and business systems?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product Innovation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well differentiated is your business from your competitors both locally, nationally and internationally?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Not very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How customer focussed do you think your product is?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Not very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much added value do you think you provide for your customers?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>A little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate your knowledge of local tourism providers?</td>
<td>Non existent</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have you worked with others already?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Very little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How confident would you be of approaching another business with a collaborative concept?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Not very</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Pricing for profit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How competitive are your prices compared to similar products locally?</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>Cheaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Much more expensive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A little more expensive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cheaper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How detailed are your sales targets for the forthcoming season?</td>
<td>Non existent</td>
<td>Very detailed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A bit vague</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not very detailed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quite detailed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very detailed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How accurately have you calculated your fixed and variable costs?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Extremely targeted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not very</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Targeted marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate your use of digital channels, especially social media?</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Could be better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well thought out and carefully designed is your promotional material?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Extremely well designed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not very</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent is your product targeted at a specific audience?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Extremely well targeted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not very</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate your website?</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Could be better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have you used Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) or digital advertising?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Continually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very little</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At regular intervals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continually</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate your knowledge of OTAs and ITOs?</td>
<td>Non existent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Excellent customer service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How motivated are your staff?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Extremely motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not very</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate the standard of service supplied by your business?</td>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good are your processes for gathering and responding to customer feedback?</td>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Over the past few years we have invested in our tourism infrastructure to ensure that we have high profile attractions that will both inspire visitors to come and help satisfy them once they are here. By providing excellent well-promoted tourism products that make the most of our assets we can make Northern Ireland into an attractive and profitable holiday destination for our best prospect segments.

One statistic that demonstrates the vital importance of tourism to the Northern Ireland economy is that in 2013 it supported 43,000 jobs. Tourism incorporates a wide variety of commercial activity and its growth will have a positive impact on many businesses. To achieve growth these businesses must work successfully together and understand the relationship that they have with each other.

Some businesses will belong to more than one category. A B&B might offer an evening meal and a tour of the local area, or a hotel might be a popular venue for music. From the visitor’s point of view the more integrated these areas are the more enjoyable and hassle free their visit is likely to be. Therefore the more each individual business understands its relationship with other providers the easier it will be to create seamless tourism experiences that generate positive feedback, excellent word of mouth reviews and repeat visits.
Tourism businesses can be categorised in the following way:

**Accommodation**
- Hostels, Bunk Houses and Campus
- Self-Catering
- Hotels
- B&Bs, Guesthouses and Guest Accommodation
- Caravan & Camping

**Entertainment**
- Festivals & Events
- Music venues
- Theatres
- Cinemas

**Food & drink**
- Restaurants
- Pubs
- Cafés

**Facilities**
- Heritage & Attractions
- Arts & Cultural centres
- Parks & trails
The tourism industry network

National network

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)

DETI is responsible for the implementation of Northern Ireland Executive tourism policy and programmes. The Northern Ireland Executive is responsible for maximising tourism’s net economic contribution to the Northern Ireland economy.

detini.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB)

NITB is responsible for the development of tourism and the marketing of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination to domestic tourists, from within Northern Ireland, and to visitors from the Republic of Ireland. NITB works closely with other tourism bodies to help develop the visitor economy and to market Northern Ireland to incoming visitors. See pages 104–109 for more information on how NITB can support your business.

nitb.com

Tourism Ireland

Tourism Ireland is responsible for marketing the island of Ireland overseas as a holiday destination. Tourism Ireland employs 154 people in key source markets, such as Great Britain, USA and Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Austria, Switzerland and Australia. They also have offices on the island of Ireland, in Coleraine and Dublin – and have extended their reach to include emerging tourist markets, such as China, India, South Africa, New Zealand, Asia and the Middle East.

tourismireland.com

Invest Northern Ireland

Invest NI is the business development agency for Northern Ireland. It aims to grow the local economy by supporting new and existing businesses to compete internationally, and by attracting new investment to Northern Ireland. Invest NI can offer advice on how private sector funding, bank finance and equity funding can be used to meet your financial requirements.

To avail of support you will need to be able to demonstrate that your business has a clearly defined strategy for growth or product repositioning through tourism, and that it seeks to establish a competitive advantage through the creation or development of a quality product delivered to international standards.

Contact the Invest NI tourism team on 028 9069 8509 or tourism@investni.com.

investni.com
nibusinessinfo.co.uk/tourism
Industry associations / representative bodies

Accommodation

Northern Ireland Hotels Federation (NIHF)

The NIHF is a not-for-profit limited company representing the hotel and guesthouse sectors in Northern Ireland. Its main roles are identifying and reviewing issues affecting the hospitality industry and lobbying on the economic and employment opportunities of tourism.

nihf.co.uk

Northern Ireland Bed and Breakfast Partnership (NIBBP)

NIBBP’s vision is to actively represent and further the business interests of the Bed and Breakfast and Guesthouse industry in Northern Ireland. The partnership provides members with an open forum for sharing of knowledge and giving informed, single voice representation of the Northern Ireland Bed and Breakfast sector at all levels of Government on matters relating to the ability of members to operate effectively.

Contact: James McHenry, NIBBP Chairman
Tel: 028 2177 1308
Email: dieskirt@hotmail.com

Hostelling International NI

Hostelling International Northern Ireland (HINI) is the Youth Hostel Association of Northern Ireland (YHANI), a non-profit organisation founded in 1931. It is one of the founder members of Hostelling International the largest youth organisation in the world, with 4,000 youth hostels in 90 countries, and providing high standard accommodation to suit world travellers. It currently operates five budget youth hostels across Northern Ireland.

hini.org.uk

Activities

Outdoor Recreation NI

Outdoor Recreation NI is an organisation which brings together all groups and bodies, which have an interest in, or involvement in outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland. It is charged with the strategic development, management and promotion of outdoor recreation across Northern Ireland. Outdoor Recreation NI’s vision is to ‘inspire outdoor recreation across Northern Ireland’.

outdoorrecreationni.com

Ireland Golf Tour Operator Association (IGTOA)

IGTOA represents local golf tour operators who promote Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as a golf tourism destination.

igtoa.com
**International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO)**

IAGTO is the global trade organisation for the golf tourism industry. IAGTO’s membership comprises 1,917 accredited golf tour operators, golf resorts, hotels, golf courses, receptive operators, airlines, approved media and business partners in 90 countries including, at its core, 451 specialist golf tour operators in 58 countries.

iagto.com

**Loughs Agency**

The Loughs Agency is a cross-border body, exercising a statutory remit for conservation, protection and development across the Foyle and Carlingford catchments. The agency’s objectives for these river systems and sea areas include development of fisheries and aquaculture, conservation and protection of inland fisheries and sustainable development of marine tourism.

loughs-agency.org

**Waterways Ireland**

Waterways Ireland has responsibility for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of inland navigable waterways principally for recreational purposes.

waterwaysireland.org

---

**Food & Drink**

**Pubs of Ulster**

Pubs of Ulster is the professional body of the retail licensed trade in Northern Ireland, with members drawn from pubs, bars, café-bars, hotels and restaurants. The body aims to protect the integrity and sustainability of the unique social and cultural heritage of the retail licensed trade in Northern Ireland.

pubsofulster.org

**Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Association (NIFDA)**

NIFDA is a voluntary organisation committed to helping Northern Ireland food and beverage companies compete successfully and to represent and promote their interests. It was established to provide services to enhance, promote, inform, educate and develop member business.

nifda.co.uk

**Food NI**

Food NI’s vision is to develop and celebrate excellence in local cuisine and hospitality throughout Northern Ireland. The organisation aims to promote good restaurants, hotels and other eating places as well as quality producers who offer excellent local food, service and authentic and innovative Ulster cuisine.

nigoodfood.com
Other

In Any Event

In Any Event is a not-for-profit independent trade association for the Northern Ireland events industry. The organisation’s role is to act as a strong voice for the local events industry and to champion the interests of everyone who operates within it. That includes event organisers, venues and destinations, service providers, and the local authorities, organisations, associations and agencies that draw on their services.

in-anyevent.co.uk

People 1st

People 1st is the sector skills council for hospitality, passenger transport, travel and tourism. People 1st are working to transform skills in the sector, particularly in the areas of management and leadership, customer service and craft/technical skills. People 1st are committed to ensuring that public funds support the industry to develop only those qualifications and programmes that meet the needs of employers.

people1st.co.uk

Irish Tour Operators Association (ITOA)

ITOA consists of over 30 leading companies that operate incoming travel and tours to the island of Ireland. Our members package and promote various elements of the Irish tourism product for marketing overseas, and provide value-add professional services that require expert knowledge, marketing know-how and excellent project management.

Our members are responsible for handling over 419,000 holiday and business visitors each year, and have relationships with over 4,000 overseas tour operators and others in the incentive, events and conference sectors.

itoa-ireland.com

SkillsActive

The role of SkillsActive is to provide a focus for active leisure, learning and well-being, for employers throughout Northern Ireland who wish to increase the capability and skills of their workforce and industries. SkillsActive provides training and skills development across a number of tourism-related sectors including outdoors, sport and caravanning.

skillsactive.com

Federation of Passenger Transport Northern Ireland (FPTNI)

FPTNI is a membership based organisation that works with various government agencies to deliver an attractive, comprehensive, integrated and improved transport system for Northern Ireland that results in increased usage. Its members work with other transport operators to provide transport solutions for schools, the rural community, tourists and the general public. FPTNI also promotes and raises awareness of coach tourism and coach tour operators.

fptni.org

Northern Ireland Tourist Guide Association (NITGA)

NITGA is the professional guiding body in Northern Ireland and works closely with tour operators, coach operators, the hotel industry and the tourist attractions located within Northern Ireland.

nitga.co.uk
The following regional tourism partnerships and organisations support their members in providing assistance with tourism product development and in marketing local tourism providers at a regional and international level.

**Visit Belfast**

Visit Belfast is a public-private partnership funded and supported by Belfast City Council, NITB and the private sector. It is the official tourism marketing agency for the Belfast city region, dedicated to promoting Belfast as a city break, conference and cruise ship destination. It is also responsible for the operation of three gateway visitor information centres. Visit Belfast represents around 550 tourism businesses and services across the industry including accommodation providers, attractions, conference venues and services, tour operators, transport providers, entertainment venues, restaurants and cafés, pubs and clubs, and event organisers.

It provides an extensive range of marketing platforms for tourism businesses to promote their products and services to travel trade and consumers.

[visit-belfast.com](http://visit-belfast.com)

**Mournes Heritage Trust**

Mournes Heritage Trust’s mission is to sustain and enhance the environment, rural regeneration, cultural heritage and visitor opportunities of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and contribute to the well-being of Mournes’s communities.

[mournelive.com](http://mournelive.com)

**Causeway Coast & Glens**

**Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism Partnership** is responsible for the out of state tourism marketing for the area covered by the local authority areas of Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Larne, Limavady and Moyle.

It manages and contributes to the communication, development and marketing of the region’s tourist image in defined markets with its key products being the natural environment, golf, walking and cycling. The Causeway Coast and Glens Regional Tourism Partnership works in association with the **Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust** which is responsible for natural and sustainable tourism.

[causewaycoastandglens.com](http://causewaycoastandglens.com)

[ccght.org](http://ccght.org)

**Visit Derry**

Visit Derry promotes the city of Derry~Londonderry and its hinterland to the national and international tourist market place as a unique, historic, European city competing in world tourist markets and providing quality visitor services. It offers promotional opportunities and training to its membership organisations.

[visitderry.com](http://visitderry.com)

**Lough Neagh Partnership**

The Lough Neagh Partnership is a non-profit company made up of representatives of bodies interested in the development and protection of Lough Neagh. The Lough Neagh Partnership based in Ballyronan, continues to market and promote the Lough and its waterways as a tourism destination.

[discoverloughneagh.com](http://discoverloughneagh.com)
Fermanagh Lakelands Tourism

Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism is a Regional Tourism Organisation responsible for marketing the lakeland area. It is driven by the local industry in partnership with NITB and Fermanagh District Council.

Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism’s aim is to market the region as Ireland’s premier, quality, natural lakeland destination, whilst highlighting the wide range of tourist activities, attractions and wealth of heritage and culture on offer.

Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism enhances the working partnership between the private and public sector, building on their strengths to promote the lakeland region as the premier tourism destination.

www.fermanaghlakelands.com

Flavour of Tyrone

Flavour of Tyrone is a private sector led initiative, which aims to promote the interests of tourism providers from Tyrone at local, national and international levels and to develop tourism and hospitality throughout the region. The initiative also aims to create a network of links among the tourism providers in Tyrone so that they can encourage the exchange of ideas and work together for the benefit of all involved.

www.flavouroftyrone.com

Local councils

Your local council may have a tourism employee who can provide local tourism knowledge and a list of local contacts. Councils can also provide information on local planning and other issues that may affect your business.

Visitor Information Centres

There are 31 Visitor Information Centres (VICs) throughout Northern Ireland. The VIC network is a highly effective means of influencing visitors by promoting the local area and tourism product offering. The VIC network provides free tourist information, accommodation booking services, ticket sales for events and tours, sales of local crafts and souvenirs, and bureau de change facilities.

See nitb.com/otherfundingbodies for details on tourism funding opportunities.
Industry support

General areas of support

Industry Development Programme

The Industry Development Programme provides practical industry support and skills development to the Northern Ireland tourism industry through a yearly programme of activities including a series of masterclasses, business insight days and roadshows.

Tourism Conference

The Tourism Conference is the flagship conference of the Industry Development Programme. This annual event takes place at the close of each programme and seeks to arm the Northern Ireland tourism sector with tools and insights into trends for the future.

Northern Ireland Tourism Awards

The Northern Ireland Tourism Awards are a celebration of the very best in tourism and hospitality. The awards are free to enter with applications normally opening in January.

For further information on the Industry Development Programme, the Tourism Conference and the Northern Ireland Tourism Awards contact: industry.development@nitb.com

Quality & Standards

NITB provides advice to the tourism industry, enabling businesses through the Voluntary Grading Scheme to view their business through the eyes of their customers as well as undertaking certification scheme for accommodation.

For further information contact: qa@nitb.com

Research & Insights

NITB undertakes a comprehensive range of market research to provide practical insights on areas such as consumer perceptions and attitudes, analysis of emerging trends, and evaluation of industry performance.

For further information contact: insights@nitb.com
NITB marketing opportunities

Campaigns

NITB delivers a range of marketing campaigns throughout the year in the key markets of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. These campaigns are designed to promote Northern Ireland as a short break destination and deliver set targets – specifically around visitor numbers and bed nights. These campaigns are delivered through TV, radio, outdoor, press and digital advertising.

The main opportunity for industry engagement is to respond to the campaigns’ callout to provide accommodation offers to underpin this marketing activity. These offers will be featured on discovernorthernireland.com.

For further information contact: marketing@nitb.com

Familiarisation Trips

NITB hosts significant numbers of national and international media visits (the latter in partnership with Tourism Ireland). There are opportunities to provide services as part of these familiarisation trips through accommodation, tours, activities and meals.

For further information contact: mvu@nitb.com

Discover NorthernIreland.com

Northern Ireland based tourism providers can promote their tourism offering for free on NITB’s consumer website discovernorthernireland.com. The consumer website receives visits from approximately 3.2 million visitors per year seeking information on accommodation, attractions, events and things to see and do in Northern Ireland. In order to promote your tourism business or event on discovernorthernireland.com send a description of your business/event including images, opening times and prices to tidi@nitb.com.

Social / Digital Marketing

You can share information through NITB’s digital marketing presence including Facebook and Twitter. To find out more how you can get involved contact: digital@nitb.com

NITB also has an industry Twitter account, this is a source of latest news, insights, intelligence and events for the Northern Ireland tourism industry. Follow us @nitouristboard

PR

NITB has a Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland Destination PR team. These teams arrange NITB’s public relations activity in the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland markets. You can feed information into the system for inclusion in its press and media updates.

Opportunities in the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland markets include event listings, competition prizes, and press releases.

Throughout the year there are also many sales platforms, trade fairs and exhibitions in both Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland markets at which your product could feature as part of Northern Ireland’s offering.

For further information contact: destinationpr@nitb.com

If you have any specific enquiries about marketing, trade or PR opportunities in the Republic of Ireland market contact the ROI team at: infodublin@nitb.com
Tourism Ireland Marketing Opportunities

Campaigns

Tourism Ireland’s global advertising campaign reaches an estimated audience of some 200 million prospective visitors worldwide targeting various markets including the four key markets of GB, North America, Germany and France.

The Industry Opportunities Website

Tourism Ireland works closely with tourism business throughout the island of Ireland and actively seeks partners to get involved in marketing programmes overseas. The Tourism Ireland Industry Opportunities website tourismireland.com/industryopportunities is a dynamic tool for Northern Ireland tourism industry, providing ‘always on’ access to all of these worldwide promotional opportunities.

On the site you will find a range of no-cost, low-cost and partnership opportunities from across all overseas markets. These opportunities will enable you to gain exposure for your product with key segments in the markets of your choice.

Opportunities are listed under the following headings:

- Advertising
- Trade and Consumer Events
- Direct and e-Marketing
- Social Media
- Publicity

Advertising

The best way to benefit from Tourism Ireland’s extensive advertising campaigns is to submit offers to appear on ireland.com. Offers submitted will be translated into six different languages and will appear on the site linked to similar content. Getting your offers on ireland.com is free of charge and can be done via tourismireland.com/industryopportunities

Tourism Ireland also welcomes proposals for partner led co-operative advertising where subject to certain criteria and agreement, Tourism Ireland will match up to 50% of the total partner investment in the activity. All campaigns must include a Northern Ireland destination message in addition to the partner message.

Trade and Consumer Events

Tourism Ireland organise and take part in more than 75 fairs, workshops and events each year and welcome partners to join in on the stands or on sales missions. Full details can be found on tourismireland.com/industryopportunities

Together with NITB, Tourism Ireland hosts many travel trade familiarisation visits in Northern Ireland each year. These visits give overseas tour operators the opportunity to experience the very best of Northern Ireland and to see for themselves what a great holiday destination it is.
4. Networks & Support
Direct and e-Marketing and Social Media

Ireland.com
The database behind discovernorthernireland.com also powers ireland.com. Tourism Ireland’s international website ireland.com is available in 10 different language versions for over 30 individual markets around the world. In 2013, there were 13.5 million unique web visits to ireland.com. Businesses should keep entries on discovernorthernireland.com up-to-date in order to reach this global audience.

Tourism Ireland speaks directly to over 2 million consumers each month in addition to its extensive social media campaigns. By submitting information and offers on your product you have the opportunity to be included in these ezines and in other consumer communications.

Social media
Tourism Ireland has a strong presence in digital and social media and is now the fourth most popular tourism board in the world on Facebook, with more than 2.25 million fans; the number three tourism board on Twitter; and the number two tourism board on YouTube.

Have you a story to tell?
This feature on the industry opportunities site, tourismireland.com/industryopportunities, offers providers the opportunity to send Tourism Ireland news about products and events, which are shared with all Tourism Ireland overseas colleagues. In turn, it is shared with the travel trade, media contacts and with consumers through social media channels and on ireland.com.

Publicity
Publicity is also a key tool in attracting visitors to Northern Ireland. In 2013 Tourism Ireland generated publicity worth approximately £65 million for Northern Ireland across all overseas markets.

• Press releases and bulletins
Our overseas teams are in regular contact with a database of more than 20,000 media contacts. Information on new products and developments, as well as new angles on existing products, should be forwarded to the publicity team. All information supplied is subject to editorial control.

• Media visits
Itineraries for media visits are organised through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Together we host hundreds of journalists each year.

• Press Receptions
The Tourism Ireland publicity teams host annual press receptions and liaison events in the market. From time to time it may be possible to attend a press reception or event in the market or to include product information in the press pack. Please see tourismireland.com/industryopportunities for more information.

• Competition Prizes
A prize is often a good way of securing editorial coverage and additional value can also often be negotiated.

For further information please contact publicity@tourismireland.com
NITB and Tourism Ireland work together each year on a number of Business to Business fairs, workshops and events including:

**Meet the Buyer Workshop**

Meet the Buyer is the largest travel trade event in the Northern Ireland tourism calendar. It attracts around 120 tour operators from North America, Europe, Britain, Ireland and Australia who are keen to include Northern Ireland in their portfolio of destinations.

**Coach & Group Workshop**

The Coach & Group workshop is a one day event aimed at the Great Britain and Republic of Ireland coach and group market. It attracts around 40 coach and group tour operators from these markets.

**Developing Markets Workshop**

The Developing Markets workshop is held in Northern Ireland every 3 years, with the venue located in the Republic of Ireland for 2 years in between. It attracts around 50 tour operators from China, India, Middle East and South Africa as well as a number of UK Inbound buyers.

**Travel Trade familiarisation trips**

The Business to Business team host a series of travel trade familiarisation trips throughout the year. Working with the Tourism Ireland overseas office to identify key tour operators and travel agents from around the world to can potentially deliver visitors to Northern Ireland.

**Business Tourism International Trade Shows**

The Business to Business team recruit Northern Ireland trade for Business Tourism trade shows worldwide. These shows will be applicable to either all who are involved in Business Tourism and others may be more specific to the conference/meetings sector or the incentive sector.

Great Days Out Fair for Groups (NI) is an annual event held in February each year. It is a group tourism project designed to showcase a variety of days out experiences for group visits in Northern Ireland.

For further information contact: businessstourism@nitb.com