



Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

A TOURISM TOOLKIT FOR IRELAND'S **BUILT HERITAGE**

How to Develop & Promote Heritage Attractions for Visitors







CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
1. IRELAND'S BUILT HERITAGE – OVERVIEW	4
2. THE CORE TARGET HOLIDAYMAKER	6
3. IRELAND'S BUILT HERITAGE – WHAT SETS IT APART?	11
4. ENHANCE YOUR ON-SITE EXPERIENCE	14
5. PROMOTE YOUR SITE MORE EFFECTIVELY	22
6. USEFUL RESOURCES	34
EXERCISES	

Introduction

Welcome to the Fáilte Ireland toolkit for Ireland's built heritage.

Designed as a resource for people who own, manage and work at Ireland's heritage sites, this toolkit aims to help you grow your visitor numbers by enhancing how you tell your story on-site and promoting your site more effectively.

The toolkit is one of a range of supports available from Fáilte Ireland, all of which aim to make our built heritage a stronger driver of tourism to Ireland. It is the culmination of work commenced in 2011. We hope you find it useful in your continuing efforts to develop your business and attract new customers.



WHY THIS TOOLKIT?

...well regarded ...

Ireland's built heritage is well regarded, both internationally and at home. It is an important motivator in attracting visitors to Ireland and consistently yields high satisfaction scores among the visitors who experience it.

...the experience in Ireland is truly differentiated and compelling...

Customers tell us that, when delivered properly, the combination of location and experience in Ireland is truly distinctive and genuinely compelling.

...need for coherence and consistency...

Yet, we know that our built heritage has more to offer than is currently realised or appreciated. Although well regarded, there is a fuzzy, intangible image of built heritage in Ireland and we face a challenge in many people's inability to name specific sites. While our range of sites is broad and varied, we lack some consistency, both in the presentation of the on-site experience and in how heritage sites are promoted.

...half of sites have no marketing plan ...

...20% would like help with developing a marketing plan...

Research carried out by Fáilte Ireland in 2011 showed that over half of all heritage sites had no marketing plan. In addition, 40% of survey respondents said they lacked marketing knowledge and 20% said they'd like help with developing their marketing plan.

...more visitors a priority...

The research also showed that attracting more visitors was the number one priority for half of Ireland's heritage sites.

This toolkit aims to address some of these challenges by providing a resource for people who work in the sector to:

• **ENHANCE YOUR ON-SITE EXPERIENCE**

• **PROMOTE YOUR SITE MORE EFFECTIVELY**

There are six parts to the toolkit as well as a series of exercises and templates. To give you some ideas of how other sites deliver their on-site visitor experience, examples of Irish and international heritage sites that are particularly good at telling their story are also included.

WHO IS THE TOOLKIT FOR?

For many in the sector, tourism development or promotion may be outside of your immediate area of experience or expertise. Yet, to sustain your site, you need to attract and satisfy visitors. To do this effectively you must (1) deliver a fantastic on-site experience and (2) possess marketing know-how.

If you own, manage or work in built heritage and feel you would like some support in delivering an engaging experience to grow your visitor numbers and revenue, this toolkit is for you.



Section 1

IRELAND'S BUILT HERITAGE — OVERVIEW

What is built heritage?

For the purpose of this document, built heritage is defined as any tourist site or attraction open to visitors which is man-made rather than naturally occurring. It includes stately homes, historic houses, historic towns, pre-Christian/Celtic/medieval sites, interpretative and heritage centres, museums, art galleries and gardens.

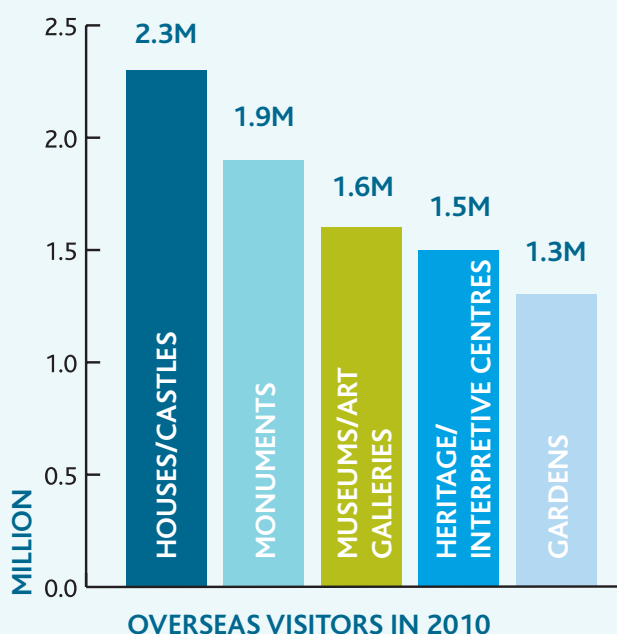
In this area, there is no doubt that Ireland has a lot of 'product'. As well as many different types of sites, our built heritage is diverse in terms of size, location and ownership. It ranges from large, commercial, urban-based institutions to small rural museums or heritage centres managed by volunteers from the local community.



OVERSEAS VISITS TO IRELAND'S BUILT HERITAGE

Between them, Great Britain (GB), the United States (US), Germany and France account for over 70% of all holiday visits to Ireland. Looking at overseas visitors to Ireland's built heritage, we see that the GB market accounts for 27% of visits, with 22% from the US. Within Europe, Germany accounts for 9%, France for 7% and Italy for 6%. Together, these five markets account for over 70% of the overseas tourists who engage with built heritage.

These visitors are broken down by heritage activity as follows:



Note: there is considerable overlap between activities, with visitors participating in several during their trip.

HOW OVERSEAS HOLIDAYMAKERS RATE OUR BUILT HERITAGE

- After Irish people and scenery, culture and history are the third most important motivator amongst overseas holidaymakers in choosing Ireland as a holiday destination.
- 83% of overseas holidaymakers say that our interesting history and culture is very important when choosing Ireland for a holiday.
- At the end of their holiday here, 89% express satisfaction with the history and culture experiences they have had.

THE DOMESTIC MARKET

Irish people holidaying at home like to engage with our built heritage too. Each year, they make almost 1 million visits to houses and castles, 900,000 visits to national parks, 800,000 visits to heritage and interpretative centres and 800,000 visits to gardens.

NEXT STEPS . . .

Now that we've set the scene in terms of the importance of Ireland's built heritage sector, let's take a look at the core target holidaymaker, the type of person most likely to be motivated by and to engage with your heritage site.

Section 2

THE CORE TARGET HOLIDAY MAKER

What's in section 2?

For every business, knowing and understanding your core target market is critical. Whether you're promoting visits to an early burial site or visits to an award-winning garden, the clearer your picture of your target customer, the more successful you'll be in attracting more such customers and in meeting their expectations on-site. It's critical to get this understanding right before embarking on any type of development or promotion.



HOW DID THIS WORK COME ABOUT?

In 2011, Fáilte Ireland brought together a group of stake-holders from the sector to explore how best to position Ireland's built heritage as a driver of tourism. As part of this process, consumer research was carried out in key overseas and domestic markets, as well as site visits to some Irish heritage sites, and desk research of good practice at overseas heritage sites. The findings from this research, coupled with Fáilte Ireland's and the industry's knowledge, led to the focus on a core target holidaymaker (as outlined below), and agreement on what it is about our built heritage that sets it apart in people's minds – its image, its identity, its positioning. Being clear about this positioning will allow you to develop and promote your site in line with it, in a focused and coherent way.

SO, WHO IS THE CORE TARGET HOLIDAYMAKER?

From research carried out as part of this project, the holidaymaker that it is felt has the best potential for Ireland's Built Heritage is:

A 39 year old Cultural Explorer from Great Britain, United States, Germany, France or Ireland. A person for whom experiencing a destination's most interesting sights and culture is a key driver of where to go on holiday.

On page 8 you will find a graphic profiling this holidaymaker further.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

Suppose most of your existing customers are from a slightly older or a slightly younger age profile, what does this mean for your site? If you get a lot of visitors from GB or the US, they're likely to be over 45 while many of your current European visitors are likely to be under 35.

What the new awareness means is that as well as continuing to appeal to your current target market, if you want to grow your number of visitors, then the 39 year old Cultural Explorer is the target you should focus on.

So, if you currently have a strong appeal among French tourists you could target slightly older (35+) French tourists to grow your overall numbers. If you currently appeal to US visitors mostly, you could consider growing your customer base by targeting slightly younger (<45) US tourists. By looking a little bit outside of those you currently appeal to, you can broaden your appeal to a wider audience: In particular, you can aim for the ideal target audience of 39 year olds, for whom engaging with a destination's culture and heritage is a key driver of where they decide to holiday.

DOES THIS APPLY TO ALL MARKETS?

Broadly speaking, yes. Within GB, the US, Germany, France, Italy, Ireland and other markets, the 39 year old is the primary focus for additional visitors, but there will be some slight differences between markets. For example, the 39 year old from Cork might be more likely to holiday with family, while the 39 year old from Cologne might be more likely to holiday as part of a couple.



WHAT ABOUT GROUPS?

Coach tours, school tours and other special interest groups are still hugely important for many heritage sites and all the learnings in sections 4 and 5 can be applied to the groups market too.

THE ADVICE IS:

- Read and use the toolkit to examine and enhance how you tell the story at your site and how you promote your site to customers.
- Then consider the fact that all of the research and international expertise points to the fact that the 39 year old Cultural Explorer target customer has considerable potential to grow your business.

How close a match is there between what your site delivers and what the 39 year old Cultural Explorer wants from a heritage experience while on holiday? The closer the match, the more likely your site will appeal to them. When there is a good fit between what they want and what you deliver, ultimately you'll be able to expand your customer base to include a key growth customer.

The toolkit presents lots of ideas – take on board those that are most suited to your site and, with lots of hard work and a little luck, you'll see the returns by way of more visitors and increased visitor revenue.

Understanding our target holiday-maker





'I WANT TO FEEL LIKE AN EXPLORER AGAIN...'

What the consumer says:

"I want the feeling of exploring something new yet being connected to the past or present."

British holidaymaker

"Castles can be exciting. From a time no longer with us. Exciting to explore. People who lived in them usually lived in a world beyond that of normal people. It was nobility and the rich. It is interesting to explore how they lived."

US holidaymaker

"Holidays allow me to discover new things. I prefer to experience new things rather than just relaxing."

German holidaymaker

"Some people talk to you about their own discoveries, and that makes you want to go."

French holidaymaker

At the heart of our target consumers' desires is their wish they want to feel like an explorer again.

How does your heritage site satisfy that wish?

Could this be enhanced?

They want to enhance their life stories, to feel part of something greater, to get close to the real local culture and to feel energised through authentic and surprising experiences.

They want to feel like an explorer again.

Exploration is integral to their holiday motivation. They are people who might have backpacked in their younger years, and who have always liked to get off the beaten track.

Our built heritage sites are 'fast-tracks' to exploration.

NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHERE THE POTENTIAL IS, WHAT'S NEXT?

It's really important to put the target customer at the heart of every decision you make; from how you deliver your on-site experience to how you promote your site. Tap in to the feeling and holiday mood that attracts them and avoid what turns them away...

The target customer loves:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| • Seeking | • Real Experiences |
| • Discovering | • Real People |
| • Understanding | • Surprise |
| • Connecting | • Passion |
| • Being Involved | • Imagination |
| • Being Included | • Doing |

The target customer hates:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| • Fake | • Lack of Care |
| • The 'Show' | • Lazy Presentation |
| • Crowds | • Being an observer with no opportunity for participation |
| • Lack of Passion | |
| • Boredom | |

See section 4 for ideas on how to enhance your on-site experience and section 5 for ideas on how to promote your site more effectively.

SUMMING IT UP...

By really understanding the target customer who represents the best potential for growth, we aim to achieve two things: We can motivate them to change what they currently **think** and what they currently **do**. We can move them :

► **From thinking:** "Ireland is a beautiful holiday destination with lots of nice scenery and friendly people."

To thinking: *"Ireland is a country full of rich heritage, which would be great to explore."*

► **From doing:** "When in Ireland, I might visit a castle on a rainy day or if I come across it."

To doing: *"I am going to book a holiday in Ireland this year because I want to experience the great heritage experiences first-hand."*

NEXT STEPS...

Now that you have a picture of the core target holidaymaker, let's move on to explore and understand the image and identity of Ireland's built heritage. What is it that sets it apart in people's hearts and minds? Knowing and understanding this will underpin everything you do at your site.



Section 3

IRELAND'S BUILT HERITAGE – WHAT SETS IT APART?

What's in section 3?

You now have a clear picture of the core target holidaymaker who represents the best potential for growing visitor numbers. But will they want to visit? What is it about Ireland's heritage that will attract them? What sets us apart from other destinations? What is our image, our identity? Section 3 gives the answers to these important questions.

WHAT UNDERPINS THIS NEW DEFINITION OF OUR IMAGE, OUR IDENTITY?

By knowing and understanding the image or position you want to occupy in the hearts and minds of your target market, you can deliver a fantastic, memorable on-site experience. You can also target and attract more visitors.

We've defined our core target holidaymaker, we understand their likes and dislikes, we have identified their holiday needs and expectations. So, what is it that makes us unique? What is it about Ireland's built heritage that will motivate these people to visit Ireland and engage with our heritage sites?

Feedback from tourists gives a clear picture of the strengths of Ireland's built heritage offering:

1. **Built heritage attractions stimulate people's imaginations** in a way that everyday life (and the rest of their holiday) doesn't.
2. **Built heritage attractions enable them to feel new emotions**, which although not always pleasant, feel more intense and real.
3. Holidaymakers are attracted to built heritage sites that have a level of **significance** in their eyes.
4. Holidaymakers respond to the human story that **connects the past to the present**.

By knowing what we are really good at, we have a solid foundation to build on. By being able to define and agree what's currently at the heart of our heritage offering we can build on it into the future.

So, what feeling do we want to be at the heart of Ireland's built heritage - what will appeal to our identified core target customer, helping them to 'feel like an explorer again' and delivering a fantastic built heritage experience?

WHOLE-HEARTED ENLIVENMENT

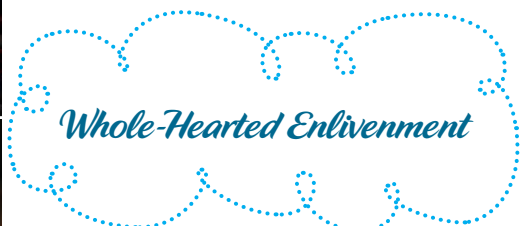
when we bring stories alive for people!

What does this mean for your site?

Getting to the heart of the story behind your site and communicating it to your guests with real heart.

People feel 'enlivened' and invigorated by Ireland's built heritage story and the people and places that bring it alive. What can you do to make things more interesting, more appealing, more cheerful and animated? When visitors witness stories of power and love, conquest and compassion, oppression and liberation, daring and adventure, it affects their own thoughts and emotions. By interpreting real stories of real people from our past for real people of today, you deliver on this promise of whole-hearted enlivenment.

That's the essence, the 'who we are', of Ireland's built heritage: It's the perfect pitch because it combines the spirit associated with Irish people and stories with the life sensibilities of the 39 year old Cultural Explorer.



HOW DOES THIS TIE IN WITH OUR TARGET CUSTOMER AND THEIR NEEDS?

There's a close match . . .

Whole-hearted enlivenment

Ireland's built heritage is all about bringing people and places alive in a way that's full of heart.

We bring stories alive for people, whether it's how we write them in our literature or through great animation.

We do this in a way that's sometimes surprising but always done with heart.

Our knowledge is real and expert, but you don't need to be a historian to feel the connection with the people and the places that have shaped Ireland.

The feeling of whole-hearted enlivenment from Ireland's built heritage will transform people's preconception of Ireland.

The target customer loves:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Seeking | • Real Experiences |
| • Discovering | • Real People |
| • Understanding | • Surprise |
| • Connecting | • Passion |
| • Being Involved | • Imagination |
| • Being Included | • Doing |

SUMMING IT UP...

This spirit of 'Whole-hearted enlivenment' should act as a guiding light for everything your heritage site says and does.

Everything in your visitor experience should be both whole-hearted in its execution, and aim to create an enlivening experience for your visitors.

In this way, we will build a more compelling and cohesive experience for people; and so make built heritage a bigger reason to choose Ireland for a holiday or break.

NEXT STEPS...

Now that you have a clear picture of your target market and you understand what we want at the core of our built heritage experiences, let's use this knowledge to enhance how you tell your story and how you deliver your on-site experience.

Section 4

ENHANCE YOUR ON-SITE EXPERIENCE

What's in section 4?

This section will help you bring 'whole-hearted enlivenment' to life in how you tell your story on-site in a way that's meaningful and compelling for both staff and visitors.

Remember that the 39 year old Cultural Explorer is not necessarily a heritage expert . . . they are people who want to get closer to Ireland by understanding it and by getting a feeling for our people and our culture. **They want to feel like an explorer again, and this is your promise to them.** Do you deliver this promise to every visitor to your site? Do you do it in a way that feels enlivening, that's always full of heart?

By bringing alive the explorer in your visitors, you bring alive your on-site experience in a way that's true to your site and true to your values.



3 STEPS TO MAKING WHOLE-HEARTED ENLIVENMENT A REALITY AT YOUR SITE

Your stories are the key to creating and delivering an exceptional on-site customer experience. The following pages present some suggestions that could help you sharpen or polish how you bring alive the explorer in your visitors, and how you deliver the essence of our built heritage – that whole-hearted enlivenment that sets us apart. The exercises supplied will help you implement these suggestions into your on-site experience. The three steps are:

1. *Find your Story!*

2. *Tell your Story!*

3. *Live your Story!*



1. FIND YOUR STORY – IDENTIFYING THE MOST COMPELLING HUMAN STORIES FOR YOUR SITE

Are you realising the full potential of the story of your site? Start by reassessing the story you can and should tell. You know the historical facts – they're the basis of the significance of the site – and you need to communicate them. But you also need to find the human story behind the facts. Remember that your customer wants to feel like an explorer again. They want to feel the whole-hearted enlivenment of Ireland's built heritage at your site.

Some inspiration...

Ellis Island

www.ellisland.org

Ellis Island tells the story of Annie Moore, the first immigrant to land on Ellis Island. It uses passenger records and tracks genealogy to help people not only follow the stories they have brought to life but also to find their own story.

"It's an incredible place that easily transports you back in time to an era when immigrants were coming to the United States for a better life."

Dublinia

www.dublinia.ie

Visitors to Dublinia not only learn about Viking Dublin but also about the protests of the late 1970s.

Haunted London App

www.hauntedlondonapp.co.uk

This iPhone app brings people on a guided tour of London's haunted heritage sites, telling ghost stories and spooky facts as visitors seek out their adventure.

1&2

SEE EXERCISES 1 AND 2 for some suggestions for how to put yourself in your customer's shoes, and to find your story.

2. TELL YOUR STORY – CREATING AN EXPERIENCE THAT BRINGS PEOPLE THROUGH YOUR STORY

Your job is to bring alive the story of your site so that it brings alive the explorer in the people who visit you. Good stories capture people's attention and help them imagine what it's like to be the person in the story. Always memorable, good stories have three parts:

1. The beginning

First impressions, grabbing attention

2. The middle

The meat of the story, getting to know the characters in the story

3. The end

How did the story end for people? What is the significance of the story? What thoughts and feelings do your visitors have when they leave?

Some inspiration...

Dublinia

www.dublinia.ie

Visitors begin their story of Viking Dublin with a replica of a Viking ship inside the entrance, setting the scene for what is about to follow during the visit.

Tower of London

www.hrp.org.uk/TowerofLondon

Visitors are treated to live re-enactments from actors while waiting in the queue, building the sense of fun and anticipation.

Glasnevin Cemetery

www.glasnevintrust.ie

Glasnevin Cemetery considers itself "as guardian to the stories of these ordinary and extraordinary people who have shaped the Ireland we live in today." It uses monuments and artefacts to bring alive the stories of people buried in the graveyard.

Anne Frank House

www.annefrank.org

As visitors leave the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, they are invited to join a movement to support anti-racist campaigns around the world. They are also invited to join in an online campaign to demonstrate what Anne Frank means to them.

Finding and telling your story with whole-hearted enlivenment!





HINTS AND TIPS

Finding and telling your story with whole-hearted enlivenment.

Finding and telling your story is not difficult, but there are a few important things to think about.

- Your visitors have limited time and interest so think about what you would tell them in ten seconds. Keep it simple – their attention is likely to wander.
- Your story should answer the 'so what?' question – as in "So what? Why should I be interested?"
- Visitors will remember what they think about and talk about. The things that will get them talking are the same things that make a good story.
- Look out particularly for; personal stories with interesting characters; dramatic events; battles, escapes and adventures; situations that relate to their own lives.
- Your story should be as specific as possible. It should be clearly and distinctly about your site.
- Avoid too much detail. Visitors remember messages more than factual information. They are much more likely to remember that this is the window from which the imprisoned princess looked for her prince than they are to remember the name of that prince, princess or (especially) the date!

3

SEE EXERCISE 3 for help in preparing how you tell your story.

3. LIVE YOUR STORY – YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE BRINGING ALIVE WHOLE-HEARTED ENLIVENMENT

To live your story with whole-hearted enlivenment, you and your people need to show passion, a sense of exploration, and the ambition to exceed customer expectations.

Passion

Staff can make or break the on-site experience. You cannot deliver 'whole-hearted enlivenment' if you and your team are not passionate about Ireland's built heritage and your part of it. This is important for all your people, not just those who deal face-to-face with the customer. Consistency in delivery is vital – the customer experience should not depend on what staff member is working on Tuesday, or whether a particular staff member prefers cataloguing the collection to dealing with customers. The people you hire should be passionate about wanting to help others and passionate about your story. Find ways to let this passion show. Recognise and reward staff behaviours that create great customer experiences.

Sense of Exploration

Do you do everything you can to make your visitor feel like an explorer? Do you explore new possibilities with visitors? Do you seek their feedback for how to make your built heritage better? (See page 19 for ideas on customer research). Your team should have an explorer mindset – always thinking about new ways to bring alive the explorer in visitors. Curiosity is a key trait.

Ambition

You want people to leave your site feeling different and better than when they arrived. Don't be satisfied unless this happens. Strive for the best possible experience. Try something new... it just might work. If it doesn't, learn and try again.

Some inspiration...

Hohenschoenhausen Prison, Berlin

<http://en.stiftung-hsh.de/>

The museum uses former inmates as tour guides, who show a real passion for the place and impart real stories.

Trip Advisor Visitor to Kilmainham Gaol

www.heritageireland.ie/en/Dublin/KilmainhamGaol

"Best thing about our trip to Dublin. Utterly fascinating, chilling and very sad all at the same time. Our guide was engaging and knowledgeable and it was so interesting to learn more about the history of the Easter Rising and the fate of the leaders of the rebellion. Completely essential if you visit Dublin."

Arigna Mining Experience, Co Leitrim

www.arignaminingexperience.ie

During the underground tour, visitors experience what it was like to work in some of the narrowest coal seams in the western world. The tour brings visitors to the coal face, where the methods used to extract coal are demonstrated. Lighting and sound effects add to the authenticity of the underground experience.

HINTS AND TIPS

When planning a holiday, recommendations from friends and colleagues are hugely influential. Don't underestimate the power of word of mouth. If visitors enjoy your site, they'll tell others.

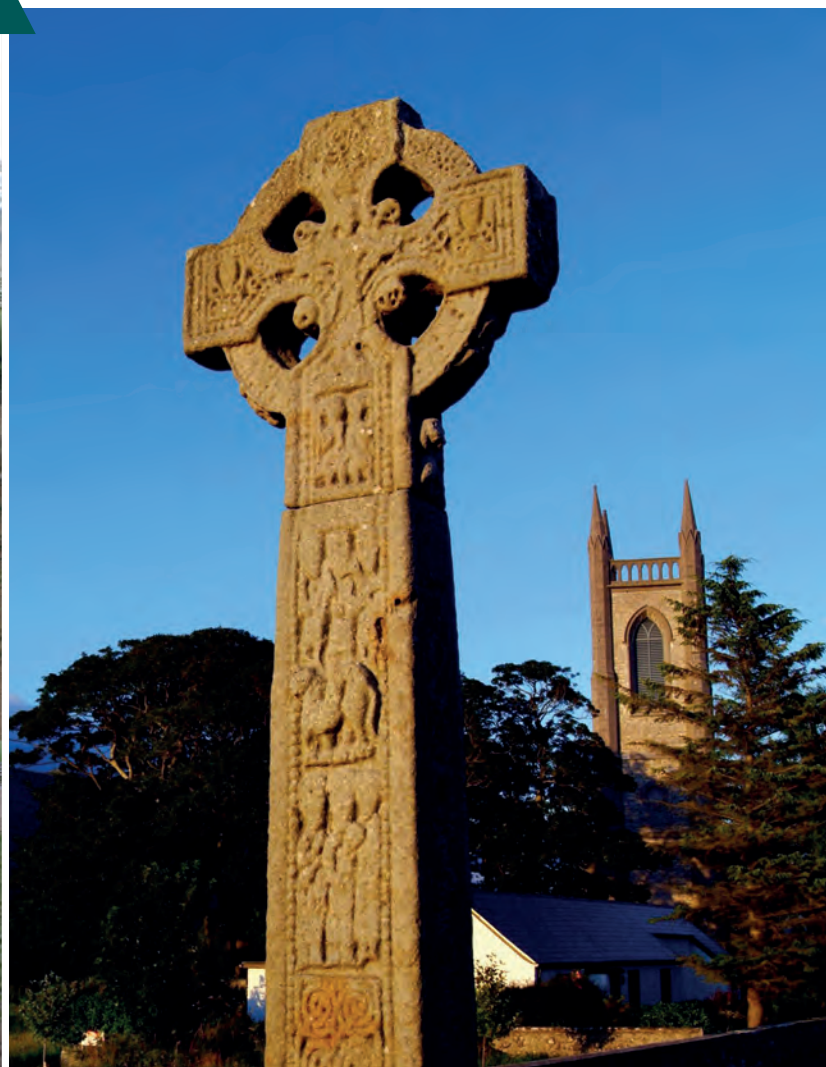
There are lots of ways they can do this: chatting with work colleagues, talking over dinner with friends or family, forwarding your email newsletter to others, 'liking' you on Facebook and posting a review on Trip Advisor or other review sites/online forums.

Tell your best story with passion and you'll generate that whole-hearted enlivenment that's at the core of your site's success.

This will be the perfect recipe for positive word of mouth promotion.

4

SEE EXERCISE 4 for help in shaping how you and your team live your story.



GETTING FEEDBACK FROM YOUR CUSTOMERS

Engaging with customers is central to how you and your staff live your story. Remember the core target market for growth: The 39 year old target customer who wants to feel like an explorer again. Build on this insight by conducting research directly with your customers at your site. Acting on customer feedback is a great way to continuously improve the visitor experience.

How?

If coach parties are part of your audience, talk to the group organiser or tour operator – they'll give you accurate feedback about how well your site meets their needs and how it could be improved. The same applies to schools where local teachers will be able to give you feedback and suggestions.

For individual visitors, there are a number of ways to capture feedback:

1. Customer comment card/questionnaire.
2. Staff engaging with customers and asking them questions.
3. Online – if people have given you their email address for you to contact them after their visit, email an online survey a few days after their visit. There are lots of online survey packages available including www.surveymonkey.com, www.kwiksurvey.com, www.questionpro.com.
4. Focus groups where 8-10 customers participate in a facilitated group discussion.
5. The 'comments' column in your visitors book.

Whatever way you gather feedback, be sure to organise regular staff meetings/feedback sessions where customer knowledge, comments and ideas are shared and discussed.

What type of questions to ask?

Think about what information you'd like to have and plan your questions carefully. The Fáilte Ireland guide 'Sharing our Stories' which looks at using interpretation to develop visitor experiences at heritage sites, includes further detail on this. Please refer to pages 14 and 15 of that document for some suggestions of the type of questions you could ask your visitors.

SUMMING IT UP . . .

10 tips to bring whole-hearted enlivenment to your story

1. **Although your story is at the heart of your site you need to think about the complete on-site experience. Visitors are not going to learn unless they feel welcome, relaxed and comfortable.**
2. **Use a range of communication methods – this will keep all your visitors interested for longer.**
3. **Be interested in your visitors – watch them, talk to them, listen to them. Most important of all, respond to what they tell you.**
4. **Have a simple and interesting story and reinforce it wherever possible.**
5. **Give people something to do, not just something to read. Linking the message to the experience increases learning and enjoyment.**
6. **Make your story relevant and accessible. Be personal – use characters and people in your story. Engage your visitors by drawing them into conversations and encouraging them to use their senses and imagination to explore the site.**
7. **Be brief. Leaflets, panels, audio tours, guided walks and audio-visual presentations are often too long. Give people a clear introduction and summary, with options for finding out more.**
8. **Involve people and encourage group interaction. Ask your visitors questions, use their experiences and encourage them to think for themselves. Don't just give answers.**
9. **Use real things and specific examples – not abstract explanations.**
10. **Don't be too solemn or serious.**



HINTS AND TIPS

Be your own mystery shopper

Walk through your site as your customer would. Be as open as possible to what you experience. See how it feels to stand in a queue for 10 minutes; see how engaged you are by reading panels of factual information; imagine how it feels if you ask a member of staff a question and they don't know the answer. Or worse, they know the answer but don't deliver it with the interest or enthusiasm one expects from 'whole-hearted enlivenment'.

When acting as your own customer, things will probably look different to how they are when you wear your 'owner/manager' hat. By seeing things from where the customer stands, you can identify what you're good at, but also where you need to make improvements.

Your story should create discovery, surprise and intrigue.

Your story should make people feel like explorers.

Having experienced your site as your visitor would, you're in a better position to decide what story to tell and how to make better and more creative use of information material, audio-visual displays, animation, signage, props, people/guides etc.

Shadow your visitor

Another way to test how your site delivers on the ground is to 'shadow' or accompany your customer on their tour of your site. If your site runs guided tours, join in as part of a group. Observe your visitors as they engage with your site; where do they stop? Where do they just walk past? How long do they spend at each exhibit? Engage them in conversation – what are they saying about your site?

You may not always like what you hear but you should view customer feedback as a gift – it's your customer's way of saying that they'll probably recommend you to others if you make the changes they suggest. Don't take negative feedback personally – act on it to improve how you tell your story.

The importance of word of mouth

Every year Fáilte Ireland asks overseas tourists what influenced their decision on where to holiday and how they planned their trip. Word of mouth continues to come out as one of the main sources of influence and information.

The huge growth in online communities (and remember, being online and using social media is important to the 39 year old Cultural Explorer), has led to a whole new term, 'word of mouse', where review sites, social media sites and discussion boards play increasingly important roles in influencing how tourists make decisions on where to holiday and how they plan and purchase their holiday.

It may be a cliché, but when a customer has a good experience, they will come back again themselves or they will tell others about it. When you deliver an exceptional visitor experience, you practically guarantee repeat and referral visits. Satisfied customers are like your sales people – they will willingly recommend you to their friends and their family.

Of course the same is true if they have a poor experience, but for now we'll focus on delivering the promise of bringing alive the explorer in your visitor and doing it in a whole-hearted, enlivening way!





NEXT STEPS . . .

You've painted a picture of the core target holidaymaker – the type of person who is most likely to grow your visitor numbers; you understand that whole-hearted enlivenment needs to underpin and guide everything your site says and does; you know the feeling that you want to create in people's hearts and minds; you've examined how you deliver the experience at your site and identified what you need to do to enhance it. Now you're ready to move on to section 5; becoming more effective at promoting your site to customers in order to attract more visitors and grow visitor revenue.

EXERCISES

Do you bring alive the explorer in your customer? Do you deliver your story in a whole-hearted and enlivening way? Complete exercises 1-4 at the end of the toolkit to find out. If there are gaps between what you currently do and what you should or would like to do, draw up a list of the changes required to enhance both your story and how you tell it.

Think too about where your story is reflected; in exhibits, signage, videos, animations, guides, people and interactive elements. Are all of these as effective as they could be? What improvements do you need to make? Resources probably won't allow you to make all the changes you'd like at once, so allocate priorities and timings for any improvements. Put in place a programme for ongoing, continuous improvements to keep abreast of what your customer needs and wants.

HINTS AND TIPS

Research indicates that what people do around their visit to heritage sites, such as shopping, dining or people-watching, is increasing in importance. Indeed, it's the glue that binds the trip together for many people.

Does your site maximise its potential in this regard? Do you incorporate the whole-hearted enlivenment that you bring to telling your story into your café or retail experience? Growing revenue is a priority for many Irish heritage sites and there are usually opportunities to generate additional revenue around these areas of your site.

Remember that when people are on holiday, they don't always buy things they need - they buy things they want. Be sure to present an attractive selection of merchandise in your gift shop and deliver a really good experience in your café – both these areas should complement the story you are telling at your site. You should see the impact on satisfaction levels and on your takings.

Section 5

PROMOTE YOUR SITE MORE EFFECTIVELY

What's in section 5?

Section 5 looks at two key areas:

1. Your **marketing messages** - how you describe yourself to potential customers
2. How to **promote your site more effectively** by developing and implementing a **marketing action plan** for your site



WHERE ARE WE NOW?

YOU KNOW

the core target market that represents the best potential to grow visitor numbers; the 39 year old who wants to feel like an explorer again.

YOU KNOW

where you want to 'fit' in your customer's hearts and minds - Ireland's built heritage is about whole-hearted enlivenment – bringing people and places alive in a way that's always full of heart.

YOU'VE DRAWN UP

*a list of actions to assist you in **finding, telling & living your story on-site**. This will help deliver the 'explorer' experience for your visitors in a way that's enlivening, fun and engaging.*

NOW WE'LL LOOK AT DEVELOPING...

...**your marketing messages**; how you describe yourself to potential customers, and developing a **marketing action plan** for your site. The spirit of whole-hearted enlivenment should act as a guiding light for everything your site says and does, including your marketing. When you achieve this, people will be motivated to include your site in their holiday itinerary.

Ultimately, you want to grow visitor numbers and revenue.

If your current visitors are mostly older couples or younger couples, groups or school tours, or a mix of these, you need to maintain your relevance and appeal to them. But to grow, you must broaden your customer base to include the 39 year old Cultural Explorer who wants authentic experiences, likes to get off the beaten track and sees Ireland as a country full of rich heritage which would be great to explore.

By the end of section 5, you'll ...

1. *Be able to prepare marketing messages for use on your website, in print material, in sales pitches and so on.*
2. *Know how to capitalise on and communicate the significance of your site.*
3. *Be able to identify and promote the benefit of a visit to your site.*
4. *Have pointers on the most effective type of language and imagery to use in your promotion.*
5. *Have an overview of a selection of promotional or marketing tools.*

The exercises will then bring it all together into two action plans: one for how you deliver your on-site experience and another for how you market your site.

1. DEFINING YOUR MARKETING MESSAGES

1.1 Choose marketing messages to bring alive the explorer in people

When you know what parts of your story are most likely to bring alive the explorer in people, your marketing and promotion will be more effective.

- You've experienced your site as your customer experiences it. Now, identify when the experience you offer is most likely to make people feel like an explorer. Do you highlight these areas in your communications?
- **'Doing not viewing'** – people want to participate not just watch. If you create opportunities for people to participate they will experience exploration.
- **'Curious'** – exploration is all about finding what's around the corner. You want to stimulate intrigue and curiosity, so don't tell them everything in advance of their visit. Whet their appetite in your promotion and then deliver the full experience on-site.



Marketing messages should be delivered in the context of whole-hearted enlivenment, both for your site and for Ireland's built heritage generally. Consistency in your message across all media, from advertising to your website to press releases, is critical. When you have clarity and consistency in your messages, language and imagery, you'll be more effective at promoting your site.

1.2 Connect the significance of your site with people's interests

People are more likely to visit attractions that have a level of significance and importance in their eyes. Do you highlight the significant stories of your site in your marketing messages?

The past – Talk about what happened at your site and how it has shaped the present e.g. Tower of London, Kilmainham Gaol, Edinburgh Castle, Newgrange.

The present – the setting for a famous movie/novel, featured in the news or a marker of social change in the area, e.g. Rosslyn Chapel, Ollie Hayes' pub in Moneygall.

The surroundings – a beautiful landscape adds to the significance, giving people an additional emotional connection, e.g. Dún Aonghasa, Glendalough.

Some inspiration . . .

Significance can be created/built up, e.g. Bunratty Medieval Banquets, Wicklow Jail's Haunted Experience, Ingenious Walking Tours, the Little Museum of Dublin etc.

REMEMBER . . .

'Whole-hearted enlivenment' should act as a guiding light for everything your heritage site says and does.

Everything in your visitor experience should be true in some way to whole-hearted enlivenment.

5-8

SEE EXERCISES 5-8 for help to develop your marketing messages in line with this.

1.3 Sell a benefit not a claim!

You are not selling built heritage! You're selling the **benefit** that built heritage delivers to people, how it makes them feel. This benefit is: **"We will bring alive the explorer in you. Always!"** By communicating the benefit, rather than a claim about the site, you can tap into a deeper need and promise a more enduring, personal reward.

1.4 Be in tune – how you use language and imagery

What type of language and imagery works best to bring alive the explorer in your target consumer, the 39 year old Cultural Explorer?

Certain language works better to communicate exploration and adventure...



MORE LIKELY to promise exploration:

Culture

Authentic

Ancient Christian

Celtic

Myths/Legends/Stories

Storytelling

Vibrant/Living

Do

Explore

Discover

LESS LIKELY to promise exploration:

History

Factual

Christian/Catholic

Old

Facts

Details

Dead

See

Watch

Tell



HINTS AND TIPS

When communicating with overseas tourists, remember that they have limited knowledge about your site or your location.

Sell Ireland first

Then sell your destination

Then your heritage site

1.5 Choose the right imagery

People should get a feeling of whole-hearted enlivenment from the imagery you use. If a picture paints a thousand words, think about how powerful a video clip can be. Good photos and video clips will communicate with your customer in any language, and no translation costs!

The images you use should be:

- **About people**
- **Involve 'doing'**
- **'Past vs Present' – the Then and Now**
- **Engaging**
- **Exploratory**
- **Intriguing**
- **Vibrant/colourful**
- **Fun**

Pictures & videos paint a thousand words in any language!



9

SEE EXERCISE 9 for more help with this.

NOW THAT YOU'VE REFINED YOUR MARKETING MESSAGES, YOU'RE READY TO MOVE ON TO DEVELOPING YOUR MARKETING ACTION PLAN.

THE NEXT FEW PAGES PRESENT A SELECTION OF THE TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO PROMOTE YOUR SITE TO POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS IN IRELAND AND IN OVERSEAS MARKETS.

2. PROMOTING YOUR SITE MORE EFFECTIVELY

Everything your site says or does, from your visitor experience to your marketing and promotion, should be true to the spirit of whole-hearted enlivenment. Over the following pages we'll look at a selection of promotional/marketing actions including:

- Trade and consumer shows
- Packaging and bundling
- Familiarisation trips for local tourism businesses
- Online marketing
- Email newsletters and direct mail
- Discoverireland.ie and the Tourism Content System
- Advertising
- Publicity and PR
- Familiarisation trips for overseas travel trade
- Print (brochures etc)

Note: the list above is not exhaustive. See www.failteireland.ie for additional resources and advice.

2.1 Trade and consumer shows

Trade shows are great for pitching to tour operators. If you're attending a trade show, remember the three steps:

1. **The preparation before the show**
2. **Your attendance at the show**
3. **The follow-up you do afterwards**

Don't ignore the follow-up – it's often the most important step!

Remember that overseas tour operators who promote and sell Ireland's built heritage also sell other destinations. When making your sales pitch use the insights from this toolkit to your advantage. Make sure to emphasize your ability to deliver whole-hearted enlivenment and sell the benefit of bringing alive the explorer in people.

For more information on making the most of your attendance at trade and consumer promotions see <http://www.failteireland.ie/Develop-Your-Business.aspx> and www.promotionsireland.ie

2.2 Packaging and bundling

People have three basic needs when planning a holiday:



For our target holiday-maker, **feeling like an explorer again** is probably as important as these basic needs. To achieve this, they need your story and your on-site experience to be compelling, experiential and delivered with passion.

Customers tell us they want more 'packaged' forms of cultural experiences. Bundling and promoting your heritage site with complementary tourism businesses can be very effective. Attractive bundles or offers can be:

- **Locally based** – your site working with local built heritage products, local accommodation providers, complementary activity providers etc.
- **Thematic** – for example, a 'Christian Ireland' theme including Clonmacnoise, the National Museum, elements of the National Art Gallery's collection, lectures about the Book of Kells etc.

Before deciding which partners to work with, check that whole-hearted enlivenment underpins how they deliver the experience at their site. Remember your target holidaymaker's likes; seeking, connecting, real experience, real people, imagination and doing. Remember too what they dislike; fake, crowds, lack of care, lazy presentation and so on.

Only partner with other businesses who deliver the promise; bringing alive the explorer in people in a fun interesting and animated way.

Some points to remember when developing bundles or offers

1. Authentic, experiential offerings with a 'learn-to' experience work well.
2. Upload your offers to www.tourismireland.com/industryopportunities which will then be used for promotion on www.discoverireland.com.
3. Promote your offer prominently on your website's home page and on the home page of the partners you've developed the offer with.
4. Use good quality imagery. Ensure that the people in your photos represent your target holidaymaker.
5. Use the right language; 'explore' rather than 'watch', 'do' rather than 'see' etc.
6. Social media and PR can be good for promoting bundles and special offers.
7. Answer customer enquiry emails within 24 hours. Answer all their questions. Include contact details in your email signature.

See www.failteireland.ie/Market-Your-Business-With-Failte-Ireland for hints and tips on developing and promoting bundles and offers.

2.3 Familiarisation trips for local tourism businesses – some tips...

When was the last time you invited local tourism providers to experience your site? It's not enough that they know your opening hours! When they experience your on-site experience as both engaging and authentic, they'll deliver business to you by recommending your site to their customers and developing packages that include your site.

1. At the start of each season, invite local tourism businesses to visit and experience your site.

2. Contact the Senior Travel Adviser at your nearest tourist information office and let them know that staff are welcome to experience your site.

3. Ensure that your details are correct on www.discoverireland.ie as tourist office staff use this website extensively.

4. Many tourist offices have display areas to showcase local products to visitors. Are you using this to your advantage?

5. Tourist information offices have an e-ticketing system where you can upload and sell tickets to your site and showcase it to the entire tourist office network. Contact your local Fáilte Ireland office or your local Fáilte Ireland Client Services Manager for more details. Contact details can be found at the end of this toolkit.



HINTS AND TIPS

Guidebooks are influential in many overseas markets, particularly the US and Germany. Are you featured in the main guidebooks? See the Fáilte Ireland Sales Connect Toolkit (at www.failteireland.ie) for listings of the most popular guidebooks. Send information to the editor/publisher for consideration in their next edition. Invite the editor or researcher to visit you when they're next in Ireland.



2.4 Online marketing

In domestic and international markets, almost all of your potential customers are online. Are you maximising the opportunities? If a potential customer looks at your website does it express whole-hearted enlivenment and promise to bring alive the explorer in them? What marketing messages are you using? Do you communicate a sense of fun, authenticity and stories of real people?

Your website is your shop window – does it whet people's appetite to look for more information or does it put them off?

How does your website rate against the following pointers?

1. As more people use mobile devices, your website should also be **mobile enabled** (i.e. open and work properly on a mobile device as well as a PC).
2. The **language** on your website should communicate the benefit and significance of a visit to your site.
3. Your **home page** is the most important. It should answer people's main questions and encourage them to spend time on your website.
4. Targeting international tourists? Remember to **internationalise your website** i.e. some pages in Italian if you're targeting the Italian market e.g. [www.\[yoursitename\].ie/it](http://www.[yoursitename].ie/it). Don't rely on Google Translate – get text translated by a native speaker. Give your prices in Sterling and Dollars for GB and US markets. Display your phone number with international dialling codes. Don't use brackets so that the number is also smartphone-friendly i.e. +353 1 123 4567. If your staff speak foreign languages, mention it.
5. Good quality **photos and videos** will tell your story without any language barrier.
6. Make it **easy for customers to find you online**. Reciprocal links with complementary websites and search engine optimisation will help.
7. Add your site to Google Maps. www.google.com/places

Need additional information or resources? Fáilte Ireland's website offers a range of supports. See www.failteireland.ie/Market-Your-Business-With-Failte-Ireland/Expand-Your-Marketing-Toolkit

HINTS AND TIPS

Your website

Remember that your 39 year old target customer (and most of your other customers too) gets lots of holiday information online. They also like social media.

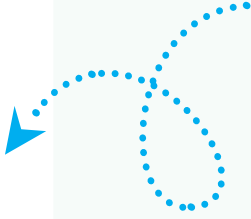
Your website is your most important online tool but don't forget Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and Trip Advisor. Use a light, conversational style on social media – hard-sell messages won't work. Photo-sharing sites such as Flickr and video-sharing sites like YouTube are great for giving a flavour of your on-site experience.

Trip Advisor

Sign up as the owner/manager of your site on Trip Advisor. You'll receive email notification of new reviews, can add photos and descriptions, and engage with people who write a review.

Always respond to negative reviews even if the person is unreasonable in their criticism. Doing so shows other readers that you value your reputation, that you're not afraid to say sorry when something goes wrong and that you're doing something to fix whatever problem they highlighted.

Customers generally believe what other customers have said or written about you, so remember the basics; if you deliver a truly superb customer experience by transporting people back in time and evoking real life as it was then, word of mouth and word of mouse will do a lot of free promotion for your site.



Remember your target customer gets lots of holiday information online and also likes social media.

2.5 Email newsletter and direct mail

An email newsletter can be a great, low-cost way of communicating with current or past customers. Cultural Explorers like being online and they like social media. If your site has delivered an authentic experience that gets them close to the real local culture, an email newsletter can encourage people to visit again or to recommend you to friends and family.

Some tips ...

1. **Segment** your databases by market (Ireland/GB/US/France etc) and by customer type (couples/families/groups etc).
2. **Tailor** your newsletter to match people's specific interests. A 'one size fits all' approach will not be as effective as one that matches your message to the customer's interest.
3. When collecting customer details, **respect** privacy and anti-spamming laws. See www.dataprotection.ie for your obligations.
4. **Offer** a free email newsletter on your website's home page.
5. Include a '**forward to a friend**' button to encourage sharing of information.

2.6 Discover Ireland websites and the Tourism Content System (TCS)

Holidaymakers do a lot of holiday research online. The Fáilte Ireland Tourism Content System (TCS) is used for www.discoverireland.ie and www.discoverireland.com, reaching domestic and international consumer audiences.

What messages do you communicate in your listing? Remember the importance of 'doing no viewing', 'stimulating intrigue and curiosity', the significance of the story of your site, and how people will feel after they have visited ... Now, armed with a better insight into the type of communication messages that will deliver whole-hearted enlivenment, take a look at your listing on www.discoverireland.ie and see how it rates...

10 tips for your free TCS listing:

1. **Your entry should feature:** A description of your site, photographs, contact details, link to your website etc. You can also feature brochures, video or audio.
2. **Make it easy to read:** Keep sentences simple and short and use paragraphs to break up text. Read your text out loud to make sure it flows well.
3. **Give the basics up front:** Always include the name of your site, your location and how close you are to the nearest town in your brief description.
4. **Promote your experience:** Paint a picture of what customers will get when they visit. How will they feel after visiting your site?
5. **Write in the third person:** It gives the impression that the text is presenting facts rather than personal opinions.
6. **Keep it up-to-date:** Review your content regularly and make sure that information such as special events, exhibitions etc. are up to date.
7. **Get it right:** Don't forget to check spelling, grammar, punctuation, contact details, website link etc.
8. **Explain how to get there:** Include directions from your nearest town or landmark. Visitors will find the nearest town using a map or satellite navigation, but will need your help to make it right to your front door. Include GPS co-ordinates.
9. **Quality assurance:** Mention any awards you've won.
10. **Links:** Think about where you want the person to land when they click the link to your website – on your home page or on a specific section of your site?

For more information, visit www.failteireland.ie/Market-Your-Business-With-Failte-Ireland

2.7 Advertising

Advertising can be very expensive but also effective. Knowing where your 39 year old target customer searches for holiday information will help determine if and where you should advertise. Overseas advertising in traditional media (newspapers, magazines, radio, TV) is best avoided unless you co-operate with other tourism organisations (e.g. associative bodies, local area marketing groups) and/or Tourism Ireland.

Advertising in the domestic market can be useful, as can advertising in local tourism brochures that are distributed to tourists when they're in your area. Be sure to negotiate on rates and get some editorial too. Advertising in Tourism Ireland's market books (the consumer brochures for people thinking about holidaying in Ireland) can be a useful channel and worth considering, particularly if you partner with other tourism groups and bodies.

An advantage of advertising on Google or Facebook is that it's measurable and you only pay when someone clicks on your website. It is worth noting that internationally, more money is now spent on online advertising than on TV, radio or print advertising!

2.8 Publicity and PR

A good story is at the heart of a good press release and up to 80% of the stories that appear in the media are the result of a successful press release. By finding a compelling story for your on-site experience, you are crafting a story that may be of interest to a journalist. Here are some tips for writing a press release:

1. **Use a short, snappy headline.**
2. **Think of the journalist receiving your release – they're probably getting hundreds every week – will your story stand out?**
3. **Write the release in the style of an inverted pyramid – facts up front with background detail and 'colour' appearing further down.**
4. **Provide a good photo.**
5. **Communicate in a whole-hearted enlivening way – enthusiasm can bring you a long way!**

People love to share what they experienced themselves and fell in love with!

Tourism Ireland, in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, operates an extensive overseas publicity programme. Getting involved can be an easy and inexpensive way to get your heritage site known. Our publicity programme ranges from sending press releases to hosting international journalists when they're visiting Ireland. If you're targeting domestic tourists, check out www.failteireland.ie/Market-Your-Business-With-Failte-Ireland for PR opportunities in the Irish market.

Tourism Ireland's e-zine is distributed to over 8,000 media contacts worldwide. Send details of your interesting story and a good image to industryopportunities@tourismireland.com or through the "Have you a story to tell" link on www.tourismireland.com/industryopportunities. Remember, a good image is about people, involves 'doing', features the past vs present and communicates vibrancy, uniqueness, colour, intrigue and captures the potential for exploration.

2.9 Familiarisation trips for overseas travel trade

You can offer to host visits from overseas tour operators and travel agents. Contact the Promotions Team in Fáilte Ireland, the Cooperative Marketing Team in Tourism Ireland or your local Fáilte Ireland Client Services Manager – contacts for all can be found at the end of this toolkit. Make sure the experience you deliver ticks all the boxes in terms of being engaging, authentic and enlivening. If you deliver whole-hearted enlivenment to a visiting tour operator or travel agent, they could ultimately deliver groups of tourists to your site.



2.10 Print

The rules for print (brochures, leaflets, posters) are broadly similar to those for many other promotional/marketing tools. Keep your marketing messages consistent, use the right type of language and imagery, and sell the benefit of a visit to your site. Good graphic design is a good investment – if you have an amazing on-site experience, be sure that this is communicated in your print material. Before you decide what type of print to produce, think about distribution – how will the brochure/poster/leaflet get into the hands of potential customers? There are 3 main print-related costs; production (design, photography, layout, print), storage and distribution (postage, transport to overseas trade shows etc). Think ahead before you commit your budget.

The above marketing/promotional tools represent a selection of what you can do to promote your site to potential customers. See www.failteireland.ie/Market-Your-Business-With-Failte-Ireland for additional information.

REMEMBER...

'Whole-hearted enlivenment' should act as a guiding light for everything your heritage site says and does.

Everything in your visitor experience should be true in some way to whole-hearted enlivenment.

WE'VE COVERED A LOT SO FAR. WE'VE...

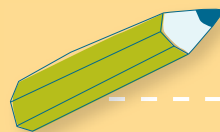
...looked at the importance of built heritage for Irish tourism;

...identified the core target holidaymaker for future growth;

...examined what sets Irish built heritage apart in the hearts and minds of our customers;

...seen what can be done to enhance the on-site experience;

...learned how to develop marketing messages and looked at a variety of marketing/promotional actions.



NEXT STEPS...

Complete the nine exercises. Then you're ready to bring everything together into two action plans; one for enhancing your on-site experience and another for your marketing action plan.

The next part of the Toolkit, section 6, gives information on additional supports for developing your business and details on where to go for further information.

1-9

SEE EXERCISES 1-9 in order to get ready to bring everything together into two action plans!



Section 6

USEFUL RESOURCES

Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland – who does what?

Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland work together in strategic partnership for the development and promotion of the Irish tourism industry. Each agency has a distinct role and remit, and each complements the work of the other to expand Ireland's valuable tourism market.

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, provides strategic and practical support to develop and sustain Ireland as a high quality and competitive tourist destination. It works with tourism interests to support the industry in its efforts to be more competitive and more profitable and to help individual enterprises enhance their performance.

Tourism Ireland is responsible for marketing the island of Ireland as a holiday destination overseas. They devise and implement world-class marketing programmes and provide industry partners with opportunities to market their own products and services working closely with the Tourism Ireland teams in over 20 markets overseas.



The following links were referred to earlier in this toolkit and can provide further information and support:

www.failteireland.ie

www.failteireland.ie/Develop-Your-Business.aspx

www.failteireland.ie/Market-Your-Business-With-Failte-Ireland

<http://www.failteireland.ie/Research-Insights.aspx>

Sharing Our Stories - Using interpretation to improve the visitors' experience at heritage sites.

www.failteireland.ie/Develop-Your-Business/Build-Your-Business

Historic Towns in Ireland - Maximising Your Tourism Potential, Fáilte Ireland.

www.failteireland.ie/Market-Your-Business-With-Failte-Ireland/Expand-Your-Marketing-Toolkit/Attract-Cultural-Tourists

www.tourismireland.com

www.tourismireland.com/industryopportunities

Fáilte Ireland Offices

Dublin

88-95 Amiens Street, Dublin 1.

Tel: 01 884 7700

Email: info@failteireland.ie

Lakelands and East

2nd Floor Fairgreen House, Green Bridge, Mullingar,
Co. Westmeath.

Tel: 044 9344 000

Email: mullingar@failteireland.ie

North West

Aras Redden, Temple Street, Sligo.

Tel: 071 9161201

Email: northwestinfo@failteireland.ie

Shannon

Shannon Development

Town Centre, Shannon, Co. Clare.

Tel: +353 (0)61 361555

Email: info@shannondevelopment.ie

South East

4th Floor Wallace House, Maritana Gate, Canada Street,
Waterford.

Tel: 051 312700

Email: southeastinfo@failteireland.ie

South West

Unit 2 Nesson House, River View Business Park, Bessboro
Road, Blackrock, Cork.

Tel: 021 4233200

Email: corkkerryinfo@failteireland.ie

West

Aras Fáilte, Forster Street, Galway.

Tel: 091 537700

Email: irelandwestinfo@failteireland.ie

Tourism Ireland Dublin

5th Floor, Bishop's Square Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2

Tel : 01 476 3400

EXERCISE 1:

Put yourself in your customer's shoes...

Most of your customers are first-time visitors, with limited or perhaps no knowledge of your site. They're giving up an afternoon of their well-earned holiday to spend with you. Are you putting them first?

Take a few minutes to think about Pierre and Emilie, 39 year old French customers. They're back in Paris having dinner with friends, talking about their trip to Ireland. How would you like them to describe their visit to your site? What descriptions would you like to hear? What emotions would Pierre say your site evoked in him? How glowingly (or otherwise!) would he recommend your site to friends for their upcoming trip to Ireland? To make the decisions that will bring customers to you, you need to think like a customer. Jot down what you'd like to hear Pierre and Emilie say.

What are Pierre and Emilie saying about their afternoon at your site?

Do you need to 'jump the counter' to see your site as your customer sees it? Remember, what seems like a valid reason from your side of the 'counter' can look like an excuse from where the customer is standing.

EXERCISE 2:

Find your stories

Don't do it alone - finding your story is a collective effort. Bring together a group of people – people who work on-site, people from the local community, historians, writers, artists, older people who might have memories of old stories and myths. Work through and discuss these questions and record your answers.

What is the significance of your site to the locality, to Ireland, to Europe?

Why does this site exist? How did it come to be?

How did it change life for people at the time?

Who were the key people? What happened to them? What were they like? Why did they act as they did? Can we tell their story? How did they relate to other historic people, to other historic happenings, to our lives today?

Are there peripheral players (servants, farmers) whose stories could be worth hearing?

Are you making the most of the human story behind your site?

Was there a pivotal moment in the story that you can tell, that would bring the place alive?

How is the story of your site still alive today? What's the legacy?

EXERCISE 3:

Tell your stories

Now, consider your site and ask these questions across the 3 areas of your story; the beginning, the middle and the end.
Tip: It's useful to get input from a wider group – staff, local community, historians, family and friends etc.

1. The Beginning:

When visitors arrive at your site, how can you start to make them feel like an explorer?

How can you create anticipation for what's to come?

What is the arrival, queuing (if applicable), ticket buying experience for your visitors?

Do you have an opportunity to intrigue or surprise them right from the start?

How can you get visitors thinking straight away that they are in for something interesting, significant, whole-hearted, enlivening...?

What is (could be?) their first experience after your reception/ticket office?

How do you open your story? What do you want visitors to feel?

Do you set the story in the context of local, Irish or European history?

Can you make visitors feel like an explorer by making your exhibits and communications more interactive? Can you build in more 'discovering' for visitors?

How do you open your story through exhibits, signage, leaflets, booklets, videos, animations, interactive elements, people...?

2. The Middle - bringing your story alive and awakening the explorer in your visitor:

What is the most powerful human interest story that you can tell?

Can you use the place or exhibits to transport visitors back in time? Can you evoke real life as it was then?

This is your opportunity for actual story telling, for animation, for local people to be involved, for engagement with your visitors as you bring them to the heart of the unique story you have to tell. How best can you do this?

You want visitors to feel the story building. If you introduced a character at the start or posed an intriguing question, then you refer back to this here.

If you're focusing your story on a main character, ask visitors to consider how they would have felt in their situation. If you're telling them about big decisions people in your story made, ask visitors what decisions they would have made in the situation.

3. The End:

What is the significance of the story you have told? What did it change in history? Make this clear.

Are any aspects of today's Ireland or the locality affected by what happened at your site?

Is there a modern day dimension to the story?

How do you end the experience? Does it end well?

Is there still room for surprise and discovery at the end of the visit?

If your experience ends with a gift shop or a café, how do you use the opportunity to build your story? e.g. introduce recipes or ingredients from the story or site in the café's menu.

What is their parting impression?

What will they recall?

What will they talk about as they leave or when they are with friends afterwards?

EXERCISE 4:

Live your stories

Rate yourself and your staff across the three key traits essential to living your stories in an engaging, whole-hearted way. Score between 1 and 5 where 1 is poor and 5 is exceptional.

	Passion	Sense of Exploration	Ambition
YOU			
Staff member 1			
Staff member 2			
Staff member 3			
Staff member 4			
Staff member 5			

Now, think back to Pierre and Emilie’s conversation. How close a match is there between your answers in the above exercises and what you’d like to hear them say about their visit?

On a scale of 1 to 10, where are you in terms of their expectations?
(1: you don’t match expectations at all; 10: you exceed expectations)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Use the action plans on the following pages to set out what you need to do to bridge the gap between how you currently deliver your on-site experience and where you could exceed customer expectations in how you deliver it.

On-Site Development Action Plan

Where are the gaps between the story you'd like your visitors to engage with and the story you currently tell? Where are the gaps between how you live your story now and how you'd like to live your story by delivering whole-hearted enlivenment?

Use the table to set out the priority changes you'll make over the next two years. The measurement column should indicate how you will monitor your progress in completing each action.

[illegible]

Enhance Your On-Site Experience

Summary On-Site Development Action Plan

Summarise below the actions from the previous table, in order to have a snapshot of all on-site changes, when you're undertaking them and the annual budget. The Actions listed below are just indicative examples of the kind of actions you might consider. Edit or amend these according to your own needs.

Actions	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	€
Brainstorming session to find our stories													
Tweak or rewrite our story as necessary													
New photography													
New panels													
Design customer comment card													
Customer service training for all staff													
New signage on approach to site													
Paint and maintenance programme													
New line of merchandise in gift shop													
Revise menus and queuing system in café													
Other ...													
Other ...													

EXERCISE 5:

Define your marketing messages

What promotional messages will bring alive the explorer in visitors?

List three experiences you deliver that will make your visitors feel like explorers again?

1.

2.

3.

How can you communicate exploration through the unique experiences you have on site? Draw up three messages you can use in your communication that will make visitors want to visit you?

1.

2.

3.

EXERCISE 6:

The significance of your site

Remember that visitors are more inclined to visit attractions that have a level of significance and importance in their eyes.

What promotional messages will bring alive the explorer in visitors?

What is important about your heritage site?

1.

2.

3.

How has this impacted how people live today?

1.

2.

3.

How can you build on this significance?

1.

2.

3.

How will you communicate the significance of your site?

1.

2.

3.

EXERCISE 7:

The benefit of visiting your site

You are not selling built heritage! Work out the benefit to the customer of visiting your site.

Remember this is about your effect on visitors, not your site itself. but what it will leave with them.
How will they feel after visiting your site?

Jot down three effects a visit to your site will have on your visitors

1.

2.

3.

How will you communicate these?

1.

2.

3.

EXERCISE 8:

*The language you use
to promote your site*

Check your language against the table on page 25.

[illegible]

EXERCISE 9:

The imagery you use to promote your site

Look at the imagery you currently use on your website, brochures, information packs etc. Are you using the right types of imagery? The more YES answers the better . . .

Is the imagery you use more likely or less likely to promise exploration?

Is your imagery:	YES	NO	Comments
About people			
Involve 'doing'			
Show past v present (the then and now . . .)			
Engaging			
Exploratory			
Intriguing			
Vibrant/colourful			
Fun			

EXERCISE 10:

Marketing action plan

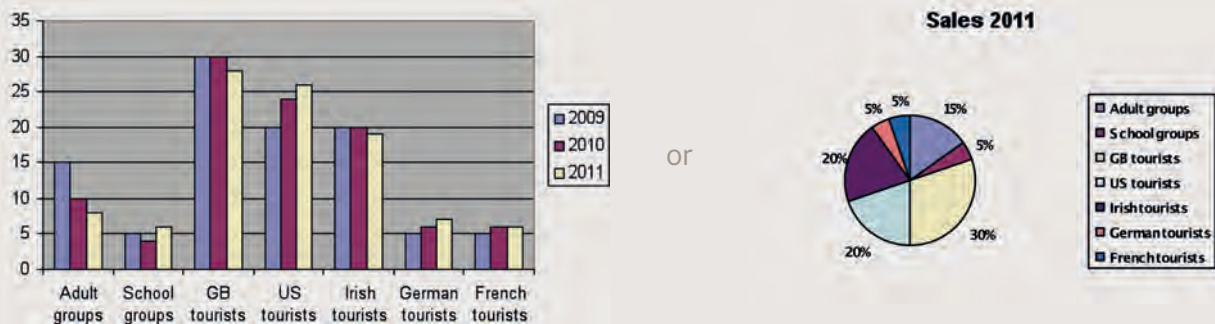
Your marketing action plan is a map to guide you and keep you on the right track. It needs to be flexible to suit your heritage site and your destination, but also to allow for unforeseen changes.

3 steps to developing your marketing action plan

1. Analyse current sales
2. Set sales targets
3. Implement and measure the actions

1. Analyse current sales

Review your sales over the past two–three years and plot your results in a pie chart or bar chart to get an overview of your revenue streams.



2. Set sales targets

Set targets for new business for the year ahead. E.g.

- Increase overall visitor numbers by x%
- Secure X number of new groups per week from the German market
- Grow the number of French tourists by x%
- Increase the average spend per visitors from €x to €y
- Increase the contribution of café sales from x% of the total to y% of the total

Sales targets are vital to know if you are on course, off course or likely to make a little more profit. Measuring and monitoring sales tells you how your business is performing, what works, what doesn't work and where to invest your effort and money in future.

What are the changes you need to make in your marketing messages, how you communicate the significance of your site, how you sell the benefit of a visit to your site, the language and imagery you use.

Use the table to set out your marketing action plan for the next two years. The measurement column should indicate how you will monitor your progress in completing each action.

[illegible]

Promote Your Site More Effectively

Summary Marketing Action Plan

Summarise the actions from the previous pages in the table below to have a snapshot of your annual marketing action plan. The Actions listed below are just indicative examples of the kind of actions you might consider. Edit or amend these according to your own needs.

Actions	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	€
Refine marketing messages													
Develop packages/bundles													
Update website with new marketing messages and other updates													
Advertising													
Print material													
Social media and online review sites													
Trade Shows													
PR													
Familiarisation trip for local tourism businesses													
Fam. trip for overseas tour operators													
Other ...													
Other ...													

