

## Great Britain

### Collaboration with Tourism Ireland UK and actions for Irish Trade to maximise on current GB business

#### Summary of GB Holidaymakers:

As our closest neighbour, Great Britain continues to be incredibly important for tourism to Ireland. According to recent *Great Britain Market Strategy Review 2019 - 2025*, GB has the potential to grow holidaymaker revenue by 25% to the island of Ireland by 2022. This is 33% in Northern Ireland and 24% in Republic of Ireland.

#### The GB market is vital to the Irish tourism economy... some Facts and Figures:

- In 2017, there were 1.6 million holidaymakers from GB to island of Ireland, spending €538m/£468m.
- 42% of GB holidaymakers visit between October and March. GB is not weather dependent market.
- GB holidaymakers venture outside of main tourism hubs or hotspots, supporting regional growth and season extension by visiting lesser known locations and visiting year-round (high season and low season).
- GB: Number of weekly Flights: 826, Weekly Seat Capacity: 122,065 (2017 – 2018)
- The GB is currently strong but is experiencing a time of considerable uncertainty with Brexit looming.

#### What the GB holidaymaker is seeking and how do they behave when booking or visiting Ireland:

- 4.5 million Culturally Curious and 3.3 million Social Energisers in GB remain the best prospect segments.
- 92% of GB holidaymakers are independent travellers. Trip Advisor, OTAs, online ratings, website important.
- 65% of holidays are short breaks of up to 5 nights. 66% travel with their partner or small adult group.
- 57% (Ireland)/53% (Northern Ireland) are on a repeat trip to the island of Ireland.
- *Lifetime Value* of GB holidaymakers is invaluable. Repeat holidaymakers are a lot less expensive to grow business from an “established customer” than seeking a “new” customer.

#### GB Holidaymaker Nuances:

Easy – Different but not difficult, Soft Adventure (Golfing, Walking, Cycling, Boat Trips), Urban OR Rural Settings, World Class Quality, Unique Authentic Experiences, Interaction with Friendly Irish People, Relaxing and Welcoming Vibe.

The following "Roadmap to Success" is an outline of what Tourism Ireland and Industry collaboration plan to work towards:

## 1. Identify and build ongoing relationships with GB Holidaymakers:

- Repeat GB holidaymakers are a valuable visitor to be nurtured and welcomed back.
- Maximise on their "lifetime value" to Ireland.
- Communication of a consistent message of "Next time you come, you will.... "

### How will Tourism Ireland and Industry Collaboration achieve this?

#### a) Supporting the Irish Trade:

- Enhance industry development programmes by providing new insights on generating revenue from GB.
- Develop CRM initiatives to support trade in building GB relationships and repeat customers.
- Work with Irish Trade to identify and target previous holidaymakers with offers and ideas.
- Continue to work with UK tour operators who excel in building relationships with repeat holiday makers and continue to deliver joint marketing activity.

#### b) Communicating with GB holidaymaker:

- Integrate TI insights into marketing campaigns, tailoring messages to first time and repeat visitors.
- Build a digital communications strategy to support lifetime value of GB holidaymaker
- Develop a joined up digital prospect management approach using emerging capabilities to strengthen the actions of all three tourism agencies.
- Monitor trends and insights in the GB market, both for holidays to the island of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

#### c) Focus on island of Ireland Competitiveness:

- Communication value for money and world class experiences on island of Ireland.
- Communicate that £Sterling is the currency used in Northern Ireland.
- Develop a programme of revenue mgt initiatives to enable Irish trade to offer even better value to GB.

## 2. Tailor Communications specifically to GB holidaymakers' needs:

- Create packages around Culturally Curious and Social Energisers.
- Clear opportunity to encourage off-season city breaks for first-time visitors.
- Repeat visitors open to visiting the regions, stay longer and enjoying adventure-based holidaying. (e.g. Golf)
- Importance of being top-of-mind is crucial to maintaining a competitive position.
- Maximise on the Destination Experience Brands through all marketing collateral: IAE, WAW, etc.
- Key motivators and triggers for booking trips to Ireland that **Irish trade** can focus on include: "*Snippets*" – Compelling visual ideas or experiences in video or picture form, *Ease of Access* –Irish trade must highlight this in their marketing efforts, ease of access to GB market. (Within under 2-hour reach of nearest airport), *Authentic Living Experience* – GB holidaymakers yearn for a "real" experience, not something "put on" for tourists, being a close neighbour. *Irish trade* through their individual sales and marketing must demonstrate their ability to deliver on all of these areas in order to grow GB market.

### How will Tourism Ireland and Industry Collaboration achieve this?

#### a) Supporting the Irish Trade:

- Deliver Industry Digital Development Programmes for trade to improve digital presence.
- Industry investment to achieve collective communications, putting Ireland top-of-mind.
- Assist trade in “dovetailing” with marketing campaigns being delivered in GB to maximise collective impact.
- Assist trade in “dovetailing” with GB Marketing campaigns.
- Fáilte Ireland and Tourism NI to work with trade to develop GB-specific experiences for TI to promote in GB.
- Encourage trade to provide tactical offers linked to TI campaign activity in GB to ensure “call to action” that triggers bookings.

#### b) Communicating with GB holidaymaker:

- Tailor marketing communications to nuances (listed above)
- Develop short-break itineraries that inspire and inform potential holidaymakers.
- Take a strategic approach to GB publicity and promotions, developing effective publicity content itineraries.
- Develop a plan to encourage advocacy and word of mouth, utilising digital influencers, user generated content and industry generated content.

### 3. Create hub experiences with reasons to venture beyond Dublin and Belfast:

- 65% of GB Holidaymakers take the form of a short break up to 5 nights.
- This short-break needs to be convenient, lots to see and do, relaxing – no agenda.
- First time holidaymakers are more likely to be attracted to Dublin and Belfast. This can be addressed by creating “hub experiences” within the Experience Brands.

### How will Tourism Ireland and Industry Collaboration achieve this?

#### a) Supporting the Irish Trade:

- Agree criteria for identifying and developing destination hubs to suit GB holidaymaker.
- Tourism agencies to work with trade to identify and bring to life “hubs” over times.
- Capitalise on existing and new “clusters”; develop specific itineraries for the hubs to reassure visitor that there is lots to see and do and of interest in the area.

#### b) Promoting the “Hubs” in Great Britain.

- Communicate the “hub” experiences that specifically appeal to GB’s needs and motivations.
- Develop 48-hour itineraries to support promotion of the hubs, providing reassurance of things to do.
- Communicate authentic living culture, alongside ease of access. – Different, but not difficult!
- Target geographical areas in GB with direct access to hubs including regional promotion.

#### c) Identify future hubs:

- Gather learnings and identify potential new hubs that will deliver on the necessary criteria.

#### **4. Further develop appropriate access to and within Island of Ireland:**

- Tourism Ireland to work with Irish industry, air carriers and airports to create conditions that will enable economically sustainable regional schedules to appeal to short break holidays.
- Sea carriers facilitate GB holidaymakers well throughout the year, allowing for longer trips and bringing a car.
- Perception of getting around Ireland without a car can be seen as a challenge. Perception that it is easier to take a day-trip excursion from a city, rather than to stay in a local or rural area. Enhancing local transport and improving communications of these services will help to unlock these destinations. This will take time to address.

#### **How will Tourism Ireland and Industry Collaboration achieve this?**

##### **a) Improving Access to Island of Ireland:**

- Audit regional access options to Ireland and how they align with year-round GB holidaymakers' needs.
- Work with air and sea carriers, airports, and regional product providers to identify opportunities for further demand-led scheduling, aligned to the experience hubs.
- Orientation plan that shows how visitors can get around the island of Ireland will be scoped, and the implementation of the plan will begin.
- Work to achieve full activation and communication of the new Dublin Orientation Plan, which will meet the needs of the GB holidaymaker's movement within Dublin.
- Tourism agencies to develop clear guides to internal access to support visitors and share this with industry.
- Tourism agencies will work with industry and transport partners in hub locations to implement 'final mile' initiatives. Final mile initiatives ensure that holidaymakers can get to their final destination with ease – the challenge for this often comes at the last stage of the journey, i.e. final mile. These initiatives will enhance the visitor experience of travelling around and within hubs, and will be promoted in the GB Market.
- Continue promotion of self-drive/fly-drive and longer-stay holidays in GB.

## **ACTIONS for Irish Trade to focus on currently to achieve increased GB Business**

The below is an outline of actions recommended to Irish trade to continue to attract year-round GB holidaymakers to Ireland:

### **LEISURE (FIT, Ad hoc Groups, Tour Series):**

- Ensure your business is listed under Fáilte Ireland consumer websites and Destination brand website.
- Seek to be included in TI Ezines both consumer and with Travel Agent Community.
- Sign up for and participate in all appropriate Tourism Ireland Marketing opportunities.
- Register on Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal and watch out for following trade and consumer GB events: *GB & Ireland Inbound (In Ireland), Meitheal (In Ireland) Celtic Connections Glasgow, GB PGA Championship 2018, Royal Highland Show Edinburgh, British Tourism and Travel Show, Explore GB* and more....
- Create a list of UK Niche Tour Operators who specialise in FIT and Small group movements.
- Through online research, compile Target Lists for special interest groups out of the UK – Car Rally groups, Golf, Fishing, Boating, Music, Bridge, Seniors, Art, etc.
- Focus on midweek and offseason offers for special interest groups through Social Media, Direct and OTA. Keep UK Nuances (listed above) in mind when creating packages.
- Make contact with and discuss opportunities with Tourism Ireland GB Representatives regarding their above work in generating great GB business to Ireland.
- Invest in supporting “Taste the Island” Campaign, promoted in 2020 in UK Market.
- Aim to Attend minimum 1 UK sales calls to the leisure and / or MICE buyers annually. Take advantage of inexpensive air fares and short distance to our close neighbour.
- Proactively solicit Fam trip and Site Inspection opportunities from Agent market- UK who regularly travel to Ireland on company organised FAMs exploring new opportunities for their clients in Ireland.
- Leverage your product or service highlights alongside Tourism Ireland activities. (As above)

### **MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Events):**

- Create list of Irish and UK MICE operators who specialise in using Ireland as destination or used in the past.
- Create a list of UK Corporate organisations, ideally with a HQ tie to Ireland and with meeting needs.
- Target Conference Organisers (AIPCO listing)– engage in sales calls and FAM trips.
- Provide sample itineraries around your business, it’s location, offering a “Destination” sell. (Referring to Destination Experience Brands of WAW, IAE, Hidden Heartland’s, Dublin)
- Demonstrate understanding of needs of MICE clients by providing unique activities to suit their specific objectives. Communicate them via PDF and email to your database of MICE contacts.
- Target DMCs with a UK speciality (e.g. Look at SITE listing) to build relationships.
- Use LinkedIn contacts to reach out and connect with UK Buyers or Corporates.
- Target Meet in Ireland to welcome UK Fam trips and Site Inspections
- Attend MICE at Meitheal for UK Buyers (New in 2019), Meet Dublin in London events, maximising new business development.

## **WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA, DIGITAL MARKETING:**

- Increase search engine ranking for UK business and leisure search terms through regular content updating.
- Align digital marketing to your product and your destination. (WAW, IAE, etc)
- Review and optimise the user experience on your website.
- Distribute packages and offerings that will appeal to Destination Experience Brands (IAE, WAW, etc).
- Create landing pages for the UK Market to attract consumers to your website- 92% book direct, not through a tour operator. Highlight what is in your area. Sell your Destination first!
- Execute regular Email marketing campaigns focused on UK guests and on the memorable travel experiences that can be enjoyed at your business or that they have enjoyed in the past. (GDPR Compliant)
- Create engaging UK specific content on Social Media. Leverage video posts to improve reach.

## **OTAs**

The importance of your business presence on OTAs cannot be underestimated when targeting the UK market, with 92% of UK travellers booking online. According to "Statista", a Global Consumer Survey company, the top 4 OTA sites used in UK in 2018 were:

1. Booking.com
2. Expedia
3. Lastminute.com
4. Hotels.com

- As a tourism business, consistently monitor the above sites to ensure your listing is optimised with up to date imagery, information and rates. Proactively content manage your OTA listing to resonate with the UK markets.
- Conduct regular account management calls with top performing OTAs to uncover UK market potential and partnership opportunities.
- Consider membership of niche OTA or online channels aligned to the UK markets such as AA (Automobile Assoc), The Good Hotel Guide, Mr & Mrs. Smyth.
- Leverage geo targeting programmes specifically targeting UK market available through the OTAs, particularly for Low Season business e.g. Expedia TV Advertising offseason.
- Leverage Tourism Ireland Industry Opportunities and Fáilte Ireland initiatives which include partnership promotional campaigns with OTAs, which target the UK market.
- Utilise available reports on OTA extranets to use data to drive decision making. e.g. see where your ranking is in relation to your competitive set, etc.