

Partnership, Short Breaks & Innovation
 A roadmap for Visit Peak District & Derbyshire Tourist Board's Marketing Activities in 2010 and beyond.



Back in April, just a week or so after my appointment, I was interviewed by the Buxton Advertiser. The newspaper wanted to know what sort of a year it was going to be, what was our key message to the tourism businesses who would read this article? Well, I said, It's going to be a critical "make or break" year for tourism in the Peak District & Derbyshire.... I suppose I was thinking about the DMP just as much as the industry as a whole.

I spoke of the need to be greater than the sum of our parts... to be creative, enthusiastic, passionate and focussed in everything we do. We need to work in the "here and now" to exploit every opportunity that comes our way, whilst developing new strategies and campaigns to deliver more in the medium & long

term.

There's stiff competition out there, I said. Overseas travel may be in temporary decline, but some honey-pot UK destinations are gearing up to spend millions to capitalise on the staycation opportunity.

I think that if I was giving that interview again today, I would say pretty much the same thing – because one "fairly good" season does not mean that the future is any more certain than it was nine months ago – in fact, as our tourism partners in the public sector already know, there are hard financial decisions to be made.... Tourism funding is under threat. At a time when we need to do more, we are faced with the very real prospect of having less money to work with.

I'm rather looking forward to that campaign... Because, the more challenged we become, the more creative, inspirational, passionate and "joined up" we will be

Let's a look at what we have changed so far, what changes we're making today, and what we're proposing for the future.

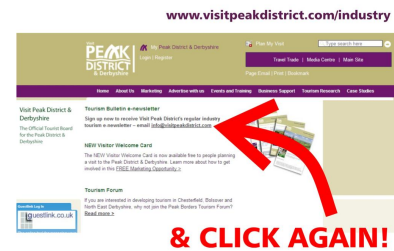
You'll find a copy of this speech on your industry website from tomorrow morning, along with details of how you get involved in the campaigns and promotions underway. Go to www.visitpeakdistrict.com/industry and click on the marketing tab at the top of the page. Whilst you're there – if you don't already receive our monthly industry newsletter, PLEASE sign up there and then.....

Industry e-newsletter is the best way to keep up to speed with opportunities, and if you ensure that your spam filters are set to allow this important communication - you will always be kept informed.

If you only do one thing tomorrow as a result of what you've seen or heard today – make sure it's to subscribe to our industry newsletter and encourage others to do the same.

The keen-eyed amongst you will have noticed that we now refer to ourselves at the Official Tourist Board where we're communicating externally. This definition brings a clarity and authority to our message and negotiations when we're talking to the press, consumers or potential sponsors.

It's not meant to suggest that we're moving away from being a DMP, it's merely a means of re-positioning our role in the eyes of those target markets.



Becoming the voice for tourism in our area is an important part of our marketing strategy, it adds impact to our campaigns, makes your investment in us travel further, drives business to our website,

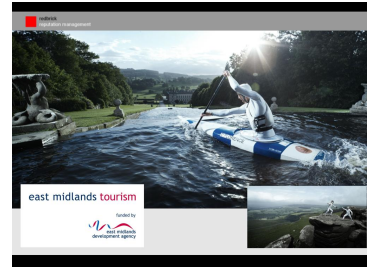
and provides us with new tools to spotlight our partners & sponsors across a broad range of regional, national and international media channels.

Janette Sykes heads up our PR programme, and many of you have come to know her this year. It's now unusual to experience a week without a TV camera being pointed in our direction, or a radio interview appearing in the diary.

It was last month when I was doing my seventh BBC interview of the week in a 2 minute address to the residents of the Scilly Isles that I finally realised how far we'd come in such a short space of time.

Talk a wander over to our exhibition stand here today and browse through some of our recent PR coverage yourself. You'll find cuttings from broadsheets like the Times, top regional newspapers, glossy magazines and international publications on view.

Our PR machine is also co-piloted by the team at East Midland's Tourism and the region's appointed agency, Redbrick, who play an impressive role in generating pro-active leads and coverage – including a wonderful story tied into the Olympic Games which is currently doing a lap of honour!



Increasingly our own stakeholders, partners and providers are supplying ideas for stories, and we would like to encourage more of that. A tip off from Derby City's tourism team last month resulted in thousands of pounds worth of TV coverage across the Midlands.

In the last six weeks – with the BBC's help - we've reminded Yorkshire about Castleton and the Hope Valley, Birmingham and the rest of the East Midlands about Matlock..... and Manchester and Merseyside will be hearing about this conference on their regional news programme at around 6.15pm tonight.

Some people have questioned our decision to feature press stories in our own regional papers and news stations – but we see it as a key part of our emerging plan to disperse visitors across Derbyshire and the Peak District. With 22 million visitors a year in this part of the region alone, we recognise that many read the local papers and tune in for weather and traffic information.

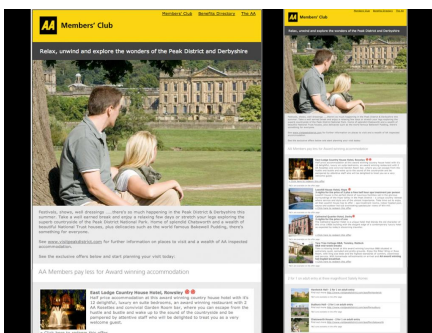


We also want to ensure that our partners and residents know what is going on. Cab drivers, hotel porters, shop staff... meters and greeters across the region need to be part of our marketing workforce if we are to crank our marketing up to optimum levels.

Affinity marketing and commercial sponsorship has also blossomed this year, with companies like the AA, East Midlands Trains, Buxton Water, The YHA, the Camping and Caravanning Club, Yeoman's outdoor clothing, Polaris and many others bringing much needed financial support and extra impact to our campaign activities.

In the current and future economic climate such partnerships are essential to our organisation, like our PR work, they expand our reach into market places that we just couldn't afford to tackle singlehanded. By piggy-backing onto partner marketing campaigns we are ensuring that your investment in our activities goes as far as it possibly can.

Affinity partners help us to level the playing field, and deliver huge exposure for our brand, destination and product. We began talking seriously to the Automobile Association in the Spring of this year. Their sophisticated marketing operations targeted many of the people we wanted to talk to, and their recognition of the appeal of the Peak District and Derbyshire to their membership was encouraging from the outset.



A promotional eblast sent to over 200,000 AA members featured a selection of our tourism providers, generating a 28% opening rate, and thousands of click-throughs to our web site and individual DMS records.

At the AA's international conference we were introduced to other members of the ARC AA consortium across the world

and had a face to face opportunity to present our destination and its product assets to promotional controllers for the ARC "Show your card" programme.

And now ten of our leading attractions have provided exclusive offers to that consortium – pushing our brand into an international market place and providing the individual country representatives with the opportunity to feature Peak District & Derbyshire product around the globe.

The statistics are mind blowing: Germany has over 16 million members, The Netherlands almost 4 million, Austria has 1.8 million, and Switzerland 1.4. ARC Offers can be picked up across America, France and other countries – not forgetting there are more than 5 million members here in the UK.

It's early days in this relationship, but what a relationship! And what was the cost to our providers? Our time, our energy, a couple of train tickets to Basingstoke, and the discounted offers that make initiatives like this work.

Buxton Water have seen the potential for association with the Peak District, and put their money where their water comes from. Not only have they provided a much needed cash injection into our work, but they have recognised the unique value of Buxton and the Peak District - and plan to roll out a series of promotions and campaigns that will see their brand champion our destination. As the first is a series of **Conference Exclusive Announcements** due in this final ten minutes of my presentation today, we are delighted to announce that Visit Peak District & Derbyshire will be featured alongside Buxton Water in every train station WHSmiths in the Country next Spring.

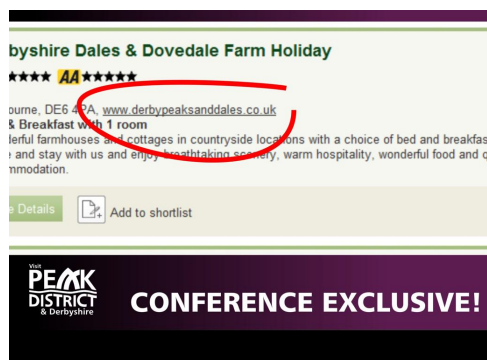


A new website, created by Buxton Water, will spearhead a high profile media campaign that brings national journalists to the area, and features many of our product providers in competitions throughout the media. Best of all – Buxton Water has a budget for these prizes – so make a mental note to ensure that you catch up with Liz Mackenzie after this speech! (16 minutes to this point)

Let's move on to a few more of those **exclusive announcements**. It's time to talk about our website.

This time last year our website underwent something of a transformation. New imagery, new functionality, maps, content and usability were considerably upgraded....there is quite a lot that our website now does very well.

The purpose of our website is to ensure that the Peak District & Derbyshire brand is delivered with inspiring clarity, but we also want to be sure that the tourism providers who advertise on our site receive the best promotion we can offer – and a great deal of that is to do with the way in which their DMS records are accessed by the public.



That's why – from this morning – we have changed the way in which our **accommodation** advertisers are presented on the system. (Other providers will have this feature added in the next few weeks).

Many of you will be familiar with this browse feature - it returns basic information and requires you to drill down into the DMS system to obtain further details. But today we've replaced this feature with a new interface that gives the web visitor access to more information at an earlier level.

The new browse feature pulls up a longer descriptive summary, and more significantly, now features a direct link to your own website if you are a gold or silver advertiser. Twenty records will be featured on a single page – twice the number you saw before.

Many of our advertisers have requested this facility, arguing that they have invested in their own web site booking engine or simply that they need to see more traffic sent directly to their own site where they have more detailed information than a DMS record could ever present. We recognise that

whilst the DMS entry is essential content material, it can be restrictive for some. This new feature allows the consumer to decide where to go.

If you already track where your web traffic comes from, it will be interesting to hear if this new feature delivers you more of what you've been asking for.

Search engine optimisation



We've also improved our search engine optimisation, creating new descriptive addresses to all our web pages rather than incomprehensible batches of numbers. Along with key word descriptions and tagged photographs, these changes maximise the chance that we'll be picked up in web searches.

Last month we also began a large Google ad word campaign, buying association with over 400 words returned by the Google search engine to see what that do to our web traffic. The combined impact of these new initiatives was first felt last month, when our unique website visitors reached a new all time record - a 100% increase on the same time last year, and the largest number of unique visitors ever received on our website – and all this during a shoulder period as well.

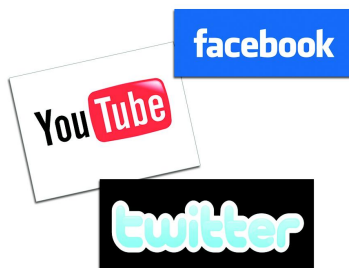
We are committed to driving our website traffic up to over 100,000 unique visitors a month by the end of this financial year, which will be equivalent to around 1.3 million page impressions a month. So when I say there's never been a better time to advertise on our web site – I really do mean it – and there are many other changes still to come:

Three months ago we began a process of reviewing our website with the Marketing & Research Advisory Panel and a select group of industry providers. We've now put in place a further programme of improvements that will bring new interactivity, better mapping, on-line brochures, slicker interfaces and powerful motivational content to our website between now and Easter 2010.

We also recognise that we're not the only effective web marketing solutions out there. So, we're delighted to announce that – as of yesterday - we now offer a brochure ordering service through Peak District Online and Cressbrook websites, giving their web visitors a much requested service that can only be of benefit to us all. The days of competing with these websites and "silo thinking" are gone – and we look forward to making further announcements with our valued e-marketing partners in the near future.



We have been experimenting with video on social network sites this summer and w now have a substantial catalogue of material that we'll be publishing over the next couple of months.



One new addition will be Off Peak TV, a series of viral, online videos that will feature on our new family web pages as well as social networking and video content channels like Yahoo Video, YouTube, Facebook and Tumblr.

We recruit our marketing staff young here at Visit Peak District and Derbyshire as you can see at www.youtube.com/welcomechannel.

I'd like to thank Steve Lemottee of The National Trust for the loan of his charming daughter Emily and our own Chief Executive for bribing his own son, Ben James to appear in the series.

Incidentally, we're looking for more young presenters and ideas for future content, so if you've any budding actors in the family please drop me an email.

It's now time to reveal our marketing priorities for the next 18 months.

With all these relationships, partnerships and tools in place, it's time to broaden the agenda. Our stakeholders, tourism officer partners, industry advisors and provider associations have been pumping ideas and feedback into our organisation throughout the year.

Our "Time to Escape" campaign will remain our number one priority, it's the flagship campaign for the area, and largely consists of our visitor guide, its advertising and distribution. Generating a 44:1 return on investment, this campaign is absolutely crucial to our communication and sales generation activity. When ordering a visitor guide, only 6% of those that received it have already booked. 72% of guide requesters took an overnight break in the area once they had received the guide.

Despite the growing popularity of the internet and on-line booking, the visitor guide is still a very effective tool in delivering overnight stays to our area.

But, looking forward to our next edition..., we have some interesting choices to make. Do we segment our visitor guide into individual publications that target different audiences? Do we split the guide into an accommodation guide and a magazine? Should we sell the guide through WH Smith as well as give it away free?

Our Marketing & Research Panel has set up a working party to look at the options for the future, and you'll be bale to keep up to date with their thinking (and contribute your own thoughts) by subscribing to our industry newsletter.



And now for the next of our exclusive conference announcements. This Christmas will see the launch of a brand new campaign that will run until March 2011 – a thematic Short Breaks initiative designed to deliver new business to our tourism providers when they need it most – during the shoulder periods and off-peak parts of the year. We will invest a minimum of £130,000 in this brand new initiative, funded by East Midlands Tourism, new sponsors, some of our key stakeholders and advertisers.

Our campaign will give people reasons to visit and stay in the area, mainly at specific times of the year. Some of the themes will be tied into existing events, like the Peak District & Derbyshire walking festivals that take place in

the spring, others will be brand new product themes. We will thematically alter our web home page on a monthly basis to reflect the selected theme, whilst teasing the upcoming short breaks themes for the next two or three months.

A rolling advertising, promotional, PR and affinity marketing plan will target a broad range of special interest, short break and holiday audiences in the UK, and – through our marketing and PR partnership with East Midlands Tourism – we will also communicate with overseas consumers and the travel trade as well.

Themes and sales will be launched three months before the promotional period, and will offer extra deals and added value to consumers who buy into a two-night or more break in our area.

We'll be inviting some of our largest events, activity providers and attractions to collaborate with us on the short break programme – maximising the opportunities that popular events like the Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair, Bakewell Show, Matlock Bath Illuminations and Christmas at Chatsworth can bring to increase bed night occupancy during shoulder months.

Every month we will have a theme – and most will have rural and city break options – but you're all invited to participate – in much the same way as we created Spookyshire last October. By bringing together these themes, events, activities and attractions, we will be able to deliver effective PR messages, and generate new business for our tourism partners.

I'm now going to take you through our confirmed themes, and scope out some of the others we are working on at present. If you have ideas of your own, then please don't hesitate to put them forward before Christmas – this is an exciting new initiative, and we want everyone to be involved.

Our campaign will start in February with the focus on romantic breaks, four posters, lovers' walks, lovers' gaps, lovers' leaps – we'd love to see you in February.

Go Mad in March – do something you’ve never done before. This is a great theme for activity providers and attractions.

From April until June we’ll be concentrating on walking festivals around the area, but two other themes will also be introduced:

Glorious Gardens, Flower Festivals and Well Dressings will form the basis for one theme, whilst Cycling will be the theme of the other.

Our cycle month will take place in May – and will include charity bike rides, cycle challenges, and a programme of events from the city, the forest, the borders, the peaks and the dales.

During the summer months, we’ll simply support what’s out there, saving our marketing investment to attract more visitors when the next shoulder period arrives.

Our Autumn promotions will kick off with the spectacular Derby Festé, before moving into new themes around shopping, food and drink, autumnal breaks, Spookeshire and festive breaks.

January 2011 will see us launch a programme of detox breaks themed around the “Outdoor Gym”.

Full details of how to participate in these short breaks will be circulated in the next few weeks, and we’re especially keen to hear from tourism providers who would like to feature in the February Romantic Breaks programme very soon. We’ll be launching a further three new campaign priorities in 2010 – created to expand our marketing impact, extend length of stay, stimulate return trips and bring more direct business to our providers.

Our dispersal campaign is designed to engage with more of the visitors who cluster around our honey pot sites and encourage them to explore other parts of the Peak District & Derbyshire.

New literature, an upgrading of the Welcome Card scheme we piloted in the autumn, and broader distribution of the Welcome magazine will form part of this programme.

In a region of the UK that receives so many visitors every year, we want to make sure that they take up our invitation to explore more of what the Peak District & Derbyshire has to offer. That’s why we’ll be introducing new information points and map guides in many high footfall locations both in region and at gateway points next spring.

Our third new campaign revolves around attracting more people by coach and rail.



Next January, at the Excursions group travel show in London, we will be launching a brand new Travel Trade Directory, backed up by an advertising and PR campaign to bring a new focus to our area as a group travel destination. Later in the year, we’ll be back in London at the Best of British and Ireland, alongside our East Midlands Tourism Partners and some of our own industry providers.

Details about our travel trade campaigns, participation at the exhibitions and in our planned programme of familiarisation trips will be published at the end of this month. Once again – signing up to our industry newsletter is the best way to receive early

notification of these opportunities.

Our final new initiative for 2010 revolves around ensuring that our own local residents support the tourism economy in our area.

The Historic Borders area has produced a successful “On Your Doorstep” campaign for the last few years, delivering discounted admissions to local attractions at a time of year when the providers need the business.

Campaigns like this are particularly important, because not only is it a really good idea to ensure that local residents are aware of the tourism products on their doorstep (so they can go on to tell visitors what’s on offer), but also because we should aim to keep as much tourism spend as possible

circulating within Derbyshire and the Peak District if we are to deliver the optimum value that the tourism economy can bring to us all.

Therefore we are taking this excellent initiative forward and expanding it across the area in 2010, so that many more residents and tourism businesses can benefit next year.

So there you have it. A broader agenda, new campaigns to deliver business when and where it's needed, joined up thinking, creativity, commercial focus and destination marketing partnership at the heart of everything we do.

Thank you for your attention this morning. Visit Peak District & Derbyshire look forward to working with each and every one of you to make 2010 a successful year for us all.

