

# Case Study: Leicester Marriott

Leicester Shire  
Promotions

How Leicester Shire Promotions provided support, guidance and facilitation to ensure the successful and smooth opening of the major new Leicester Marriott Hotel in May 2006



The Leicester Marriott forms a stunning gateway into the vibrant and diverse city of Leicester. The hotel brings together the best in contemporary facilities with the Marriott's hallmark attention to detail and tirelessly strive for excellence. The 227 room, five storey hotel was the first to open in the city in 14 years and has been estimated to have brought a total investment of over £22 million to the city.

#### Historical perspective to new investment

Plans to develop a hotel on the site of Grove Park were in development as far back as 1997, initially with Swallow Hotels. When the hotel chain was taken over by the Marriott Group, the plans continued until the footings were in place in 2001. The events of 9/11 stalled work on the hotel until early 2005 when the work was reinstated. The £22 million hotel was completed in May 2006.

Leicester Shire Promotions started its engagement with the Marriott in March 2005. During this initial contact, key members of staff from the Leicester Shire Promotions' tourism team met with the hotel's senior management and marketing teams to offer help and guidance to ensure the successful and smooth positioning of the hotel into the destination.

#### Meeting the right people at the right time

It was important for the Leicester Marriott to engage with key industry organisations in Leicestershire to earn political support and backing for its arrival. Leicester Shire Promotions provided valuable guidance and facilitation to this effect.

"Leicester Shire Promotions was extremely helpful in putting us in contact with the real movers and shakers of the tourism industry in Leicester," explains Shaun Dalton, Sales and Marketing Director at the Leicester Marriott. "We were given information about forthcoming networking events and presentations; we were fully briefed on the political dimensions of the tourism industry in the city, and were introduced to many influential industry and political individuals. The organisation's help with networking during this initial stage of development was a huge relief, not least because many of us had never worked in the area and so did not have comprehensive list of contacts.

"One memorable example of Leicester Shire Promotions' invaluable assistance during the initial stages of our engagement with the tourism industry was during the Sports Tourism Conference at the Walkers Stadium in 2005. The event was attended by key local tourism influencers including council officers, members from the East Midlands Development Agency and staff from the key local attractors - many of whom we had never met before. My colleagues and I were introduced to nearly everyone in the room and it was ensured that we sat next to prominent industry influencers, many of whom have now become close associates."





## Keeping it local

The Marriott Leicester hotel now employs over 100 full-time and around 30 part-time staff, many of which are located in the Leicester and Leicestershire area. Leicester Shire Promotions helped with the initial recruitment processes, facilitating the links between the Marriott and local recruitment agencies, training providers and further education establishments, etc.

In addition, Leicester Shire Promotions' endeavour to encourage tourism businesses to utilise local food producers and suppliers led the Leicester Marriott to localise much of its food and beverage procurement. The bar, restaurant and catering for conferences are now serviced by local suppliers and stockists, where possible.

Shaun Dalton says: "In line with our policy of local social responsibility, we were very keen to localise as much of our buying as possible. Leicester Shire Promotions introduced us to many local food and drink suppliers including Stephen Hallam, Managing Director of Dickinson & Morris, a division of Samworth Brothers, which owns of Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe in Melton. We now have a flourishing business relationship with Stephen, who arranges most of our supplies for the bar and restaurant, and products for our hampers which we often offer as competition prizes."

## Working with local tourist attractions has provided a hub of opportunities

The Leicester Marriott works closely with many of Leicester and Leicestershire's key tourist attractions to promote the hotel and its facilities to visitors who may be looking to stay overnight. This has included the hotel getting involved with the short break campaigns arranged and managed by Leicester Shire Promotions.

Shaun Dalton continues: "Since our opening, we have enjoyed a mid-week 86 per cent occupancy rate and an 80-90 per cent Saturday night occupancy rate. But it's clear to see that people do not come here just to visit the hotel. A large proportion of our guests stay with us as a result of visiting one of the many attractions Leicestershire has to offer.

"We were very keen to get involved with the short break campaigns arranged by Leicester Shire Promotions - such as the Must See 3, Taste of Asia and Gourmet Trail short breaks. The short break campaigns have enabled us to align ourselves with the top tourist attractors of Leicestershire and to really take advantage of the high level of business opportunities available.

"We have developed close working relationships with other key local attractors - including Mallory Park, Donington Park and Bruntingthorpe Aerodrome, all of which, in some way or another, were facilitated or initiated by Leicester Shire Promotions."

## Looking to the future

"Our engagement with Leicester Shire Promotions has proven invaluable, right from the embryonic period of our hotel, through to the present day. We look forward to continuing this excellent relationship to help drive more visitors into the hotel, as well as the wider city and county," concludes Shaun Dalton.

For further information on Leicester Shire Promotions and tourism development in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, please call 0116 225 4000 or email [tourism.services@l-p-l.com](mailto:tourism.services@l-p-l.com)

