

Case Study: Stay Play Explore

Most successful family short break campaign in the region

The hugely successful Stay Play Explore campaign run by Leicester Shire Promotions has seen a tenfold increase in ticket sales since it was launched in 2006. Families from all over the country have been attracted to the campaign's value-for-money and high quality offer: a visit to three Leicestershire attractions of world-class standing and an overnight stay in a four star hotel (for a family of four) for just £99.

In the last financial year, 2,388 tickets were sold and there were 5,646 overnight hotels stays – a 184 per cent increase from the previous year. This performance represents the most successful period in the campaign's history.

The success of the campaign clearly lies in the product itself - the high quality participating attractions and hotels, an extremely competitive price, and highly targeted and strategic marketing activity. Effective enterprise between Leicester Shire Promotions and the participating partners has also been intrinsic to the success of what has become the most successful family short break in the East Midlands and a pioneering model of success for similar campaigns across the country.

Strong and focused team of partners

- National Space Centre
- Conkers
- Twycross Zoo
- Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre and Country Park
- Snibston
- Marriott Hotel, Leicester
- Holiday Inn, Leicester
- Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel

In June 2009, Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre and Country Park – one of the most popular historical attractions in the country - became the latest addition to the campaign.

Ernie White, Cabinet Member for Better Places at Leicestershire County Council said: "Bosworth Battlefield is delighted to be joining Stay Play Explore as it provides superb value, both for local families wanting to explore Leicestershire's top tourist attractions, and also families looking to spend a fun-packed and affordable family weekend away in Leicestershire."



Conkers



Snibston Discovery Park

Achieving the campaign's objectives

Stay Play Explore aims to increase the number of overnight visitors into the destination, as well as visitors to the participating attractions.

These objectives are being achieved through a range of highly targeted marketing activity including online promotions with enjoyengland.com and lastminute.com, competitions, leaflet production and distribution, niche national advertising, e-direct mail and a proactive public relations campaign. Activity has largely moved away from print advertising to targeted online promotions, which has seen a significant upturn in bookings, database growth and webhits.

Targeting key audiences

The target demographic remains focused on socially conscious ABC1 families who are attracted to short breaks that offer learning experiences for children. In addition to this, the more general family market is also being targeted by promoting the 'value-for-money' element of the campaign with a more price-led focus.

Building on comprehensive market research, the Stay Play Explore campaign focuses specifically on the M1 corridor; in the south around the north London M25/M40 area and in the north around Sheffield/Leeds/Bradford.

Partners share in success of campaign

The partners involved are sharing in the success and high profile of the Stay Play Explore campaign. Wayne Topley, General Manager of Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, said: "We have had great results from the Stay Play Explore package in 2009. Leicester Shire Promotions has done a great job in pulling together a real value offer that is easy to buy and market, bringing together great hotels and superb entertainment in Leicestershire for the family market. We are also now seeing a large amount of repeat custom which is the true test of the quality of the short break."

Jo Dempster, Director of Sales and Marketing Leicester Marriott Hotel, added: "Stay Play Explore is the most successful leisure campaign that we've been involved with since the hotel opened in Leicester. It's great that the hotels and attractions have brought together their passion, determination and expertise in a cohesive partnership - superbly supported and co-ordinated by Leicester Shire Promotions - which has successfully focused on developing the city and county as a family-friendly visitor destination."