

Case study

Google Street View photography

Royal Shakespeare Company

Amy Rushby, Digital Marketing Officer



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Background

Re-opened in November 2010, the Royal Shakespeare and Swan Theatres in Stratford-upon-Avon are open all year round to the public, not only for performances, but also for visitors to eat in the restaurant, take a guided tour, visit the Tower, Shop, Café or free exhibitions

By using Google Street View photography we wanted to create an easy to use online tour that can introduce audiences to our spaces.

Objectives

- To offer our audiences the opportunity to navigate around our main spaces
- To be the first UK theatre to use Google Street View photography inside our buildings
- To enhance our existing Google Listing
- To have an easy to use online tour that can be embedded into our own website

Target audience

- New potential visitors to the RSC
- Current audiences
- Online audiences
- Restaurant bookers and potential bookers
- Visitors to Stratford-upon-Avon

Process

The RSC was directly approached by a Google accredited photographer to be the first UK theatre to include Google Street View photography of the inside of our buildings and auditoria on our existing Google listings. Users can navigate around the building, in the same way you can navigate a Google Map using the Street View function.



The process involved a pre-visit, and then a 3-hour session in the building taking the images. The photographer put together the final Street View tour and uploaded to our existing listings. We have since embedded the Google Street View tours on the RSC website.

Outcomes

Being the first UK theatre to do this has prompted a positive reaction within the sector and with our audiences.

In the long term, we hope that it gives new audiences and tourists to Stratford, a good idea of what to expect when they visit the RSC. It also allows those people who can't get to Stratford the opportunity to explore our theatres and spaces online. Since completing this project we are also investigating other ways in which we can use interactive photography on our website and social media platforms.

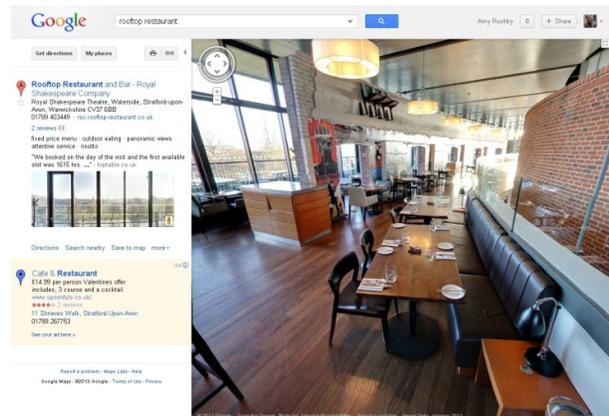
Key points for effective practice

- Commission a photographer who can work quickly and effectively in your spaces without intruding too much on customers and staff in the building
- Make sure that you are photographing the building at its best – no deliveries, work on stages, have good set on the stage, not too busy, etc.
- Keep Front of House and technical staff aware of what you are doing. Front of House were a great help, whether it was propping doors open, keeping customers out of shot, or explaining to customers what was going on
- Commit to ensuring your Google Listing is always up to date and relevant to customers
- Make the most of your Google Street View photography by embedding it in relevant parts of your website

Conclusion

This was a reasonably simple digital project to work on, the most challenging aspect was identifying a suitable time to capture a producing theatre at its best.

The resulting product is fantastic, and didn't break budgets to produce. It's not only a useful to our audiences (especially those new visitors), but also for our Commercial Hires department who can use the photography to show potential clients the spaces available for functions and conferences.



Links

- Google Street View (RSC listing): <http://bit.ly/VJwRdK>
- Google Street View (Rooftop Restaurant listing): <http://bit.ly/YG7X9K>
- Embedded on RSC website: <http://www.rsc.org.uk/visit-us/rst/rst-virtual-tour.aspx>

