

present myself as the point of contact for all things brand generally. As you will find that people will unintentionally use the wrong font and the wrong colour, someone will need to keep a close hold on the brand that you've spent a huge amount of money and time developing. I get everything together every 6-12 months to look at consistency to ensure as long a life cycle as possible because we don't intend to re-brand in five years: indeed you shouldn't re-brand too often as this can be harmful to the core audience.

## More than Ticketing

*Alison Byard, Cheltenham Festivals and Kathryn Swain, Historic Royal Palaces*

This presentation looked at integrating ticketing systems into the overall marketing operation and using ticketing systems to sell more tickets, and to sell them more effectively.

### **Cheltenham Festivals**

Cheltenham Arts Festivals incorporates a portfolio of different festivals including Jazz, Science, Music and Literature Festivals, with some 130,000 attendances annually. But Cheltenham Borough Council also runs a programme of events in two venues with a further 80,000 attendances per year. Cheltenham has a national and international reputation as a festival town and has been described in the *Times* as the 'world capital of festivals'. One day in five is a festival in Cheltenham (if you include the cricket festival and the horse racing) and we have become one of the town's main tourist attractions. We don't have a castle or a cathedral so the Festivals have plugged that gap.

Cheltenham Arts Festivals benefits from a strong history steeped in quality and tradition (the Music Festival was the first post-war Festival) but the Festivals constantly evolve, with strong contemporary and cutting edge programming and we were the first-ever arts organisation to host a Science Festival (the Science of Love, Champagne and Chocolate).

My brief was to integrate marketing and sales activity across the Division, with no increase in budget allocation (quelle surprise!) and to create and deliver a marketing strategy. There were a number of critical success factors to consider, many of which were based around shared resources such as databases, the website, and budgets, all of which were geared around direct spend.

The Festivals had been using Databox since 1996 but hadn't really been making the most of reports or marketing information – there was loads of fantastic data about our customers trapped and begging to get out! There was no tie-in with other databases in the organisation and no way to deliver online booking.

To start with, it was crucial to find out what we knew about our customers already, much of which could be unlocked through the box office. Once you have decided what you want to achieve, you should always look at the intelligence you can get from your existing systems (this includes the box office staff who are the only people in your venue who have regular contact with customers). We then needed to use our ticketing systems to inform the best ways to communicate with customers: just because you mail a customer to death and they don't respond doesn't mean that you automatically remove them from the mailing list, but that you need to try and find a more effective way to communicate with them that they will respond to.

We had a number of non-active or low-frequency booking customers for both jazz and music festivals and we wanted them to book more. Evaluating booking behaviour through Databox reports indicated that the biggest barrier for low-frequency bookers is risk – they're not going to come to something they've never heard of no matter how many superlatives and quotes from the media you put on the flyer! So, we brainstormed ideas and came up with the idea

of a CD sampler. BUT they're not cheap, so we needed to test whether this really was a good solution.

So, we created a mailing list in Databox (everyone on this list had received a programme brochure). We randomly segmented this mailing list into three and mailed one-third with the CD and a letter; one-third with a letter and did nothing at all with the final third (the control group). When we evaluated the results we found that those who had received the CD and letter were four times more likely to book than the control group (and that those who received only the letter were slightly more likely to book than the control group). The customers that received the CD also booked more – the customers who were, on average, attending one or two events, attended three or four. So, we were able to find a way to communicate with customers in a way that moved them to buy more tickets – hurrah! We got the CD sponsored and were able to demonstrate to the sponsor that it did work and really made a contribution to our audience development work.

I mentioned earlier that we also needed to deliver a fully integrated e-marketing system that integrates online booking. This was a much bigger objective and has taken a lot of time to get right. Planning is crucial: spend lots of time at the piece of paper stage and don't just jump in with the technology.

Our first problem was how many websites we should have. We currently have two – the Cheltenham Arts Festivals site was redesigned for the second time in April/May 2000, two months prior to my arrival with the Festivals team; the Cheltenham Borough Council site is managed by a separate team within the Council and is not at all geared up for events or something over which the festivals have any control.

We wanted the internet to achieve a number of things for us:

- Provide customers with enhanced services helping them to find events which suit and extend their tastes;
- Improve data capture;
- Offer full online booking (which has the added benefit of reducing the strain on the box office telephone system);
- Develop as a portal to both the festivals and wider entertainment programme, attracting and retaining customers on the site both during and outside event times.

We also wanted to achieve this on a low budget – precisely £0. So, we persuaded a local new media company to help us develop a case for support we could use to either secure sponsorship or a grant from the Council. Our key strategy was to try and create innovative content that was not being done anywhere else, particularly among our fellow arts organisations. This involved a lot of research and a lot of time, but it was worth it in the end!

When thinking about finding a new media company to deliver the project you might want to consider the following:

- Companies in the New Media Age Top 100;
- Recommendation from other arts organisations;
- Do use a specialist if you can – full-service marketing agencies do not generally have the technical expertise;
- BUT do beware creative credentials as well – some of the best new media companies started out life as broadcast production companies, but many came from a technical background.

The following criteria can be useful when making a decision about who to work with:

- Do they demonstrate understanding of the brief?;
- Presentation of proposal;
- Attention to detail;

- Vision for the project;
- Strategy;
- Visual response;
- Does creative look good?
- Is their portfolio good?
- Technical response;
- Do they have a credible Content Management System offering?
- Do they have a track record in delivering projects on this CMS platform for our type of business?
- Have they tackled the Databox/online database integration issue?
- Project management;
- Have they outlined a project plan?
- Have they nominated a project manager and does this person look credible?
- Accessibility;
- Have they got a track record in delivering accessible sites?
- Usability;
- Have they offered any kind of solution?

In terms of linking up with tickets.com, we worked together with them from the outset of the project. We looked for ways we could customise the ticket buying interface to enhance the customer experience and for ways we could drive traffic to the site through offline as well as online promotion.

The site is not yet live, but in terms of the following are key issues to consider:

- Registration is crucial to data capture and e-marketing so has to be attractive without putting off those customers who don't want to register (if they buy tickets we get them anyway!);
- We wanted the site to act as an extra resource to support activity within the organisation – for example media room and online press accreditation should make life a lot easier for the Press Office;
- We wanted to take the best of the web to help audience development – so Amazon-style recommendations for other events;
- Additional features such as 'my diary' (based on an e-commerce wish list) to assist with e-mail marketing;
- Use other marketing tools to drive traffic to the web – e.g. offline to online – features, which are completed on the web and save in print costs.

In terms of what happens once the site is live, we will:

- Use web metrics to monitor and evaluate site traffic;
- Locate the most-used areas of the site and thus which features are most useful/popular with customers;
- Explore membership and value ladders,

All in all, we feel that we are on the road to ticketing Utopia, with full integration of all our databases – customer and sponsorship particularly but also education and media – which will help us to find out not only how, when and why we communicate with customers but enable us to find the best and most effective methods, timings and content with which to target them.

## Historic Royal Palaces

Historic Royal Palaces incorporates: Hampton Court Palace, Kew Palace, the Tower of London, the Banqueting House and Kensington Palace. The Tower of London, Hampton Court and Kensington Palace all cross-sell across the sites for general admissions, retail items, season tickets, maze, tours, events, music festivals and ice rinks using ProVenueMax.

The majority of tickets sold are at the gate, although Historic Royal Palaces have been selling online since 2002. There is also a call centre and 30 per cent of tickets purchased are via third party Trade Partners including:

- Agencies – See and Ticketmaster;
- Online – 365.com and Lastminute.com;
- Tour Operators and Concierges;
- London Underground.

Historic Royal Palaces have also just ventured into cross selling with the London Eye.

To give some background to the organisation, the palaces are:

- Each rich in character
- Each symbolic of Britain
- All have world significance
- Each have witnessed many of the defining moments of our nation and collectively they explain much of our nation's story

In order to keep the story alive:

- We give the palaces continuing life;
- We welcome people;
- We stage events;
- We entertain;
- We engage, enchant and put on a good show.

The organisation believes in four things

- Guardianship. We exist for tomorrow, not just yesterday. It is as important to give each of these palaces a future as valuable as their past.
- Discovery. We want people to make their own meanings. We explain the bigger picture – we tell the stories – and then trust people to create their own journey and make their own discoveries.
- Showmanship. We do everything with panache. Palaces have always been places of spectacle, beauty, majesty and pageantry and we are proud to continue that tradition.
- Independence. We have a unique task and we do it our way. We challenge convention. We are an independent charity and we are changing attitudes.

In common with other large visitor attractions, ticketing and the way people get into our properties is often not a priority. Often, the first thing you are faced with is a queue or not particularly welcoming kiosks or portacabins, which create an immediate barrier between staff and the visitor. There are usually not enough sales points and, if there are, they are not always staffed. This creates a feeling of apprehension for the customer. This can continue through to the point of entrance – it is often not clear which entrance you need to

use and you may have to queue again for ticket and/or security checks. Once inside, you may have to queue again e.g. to see the Crown Jewels.

The Tower Environments Scheme (the re-landscaping of Tower Hill), should have given us the ideal opportunity to get this right, with improved ticketing facilities and signage; queue management; holding areas for groups and ticket offices which were welcoming, visitor friendly and did not mean cramming staff into tiny boxes. Unfortunately the vision for the scheme was to improve the vista and not to improve operationally. A lesson to be learnt by anyone considering a similar project – consider, consult and listen to operational needs, particularly if they relate to getting the paying customer through the door!

This has presented us with a number of challenges, which we are overcoming.

Unfortunately, the expectation of visiting an attraction is that you will have to queue at some stage. This is certainly true of the Tower of London. In the past, the attitude in certain departments, particularly at the Tower of London, has been that queues are a good sign because it shows we are popular. However, the fact is that people do not enjoy queuing - they want time enjoying their visit, and the less time they spend queuing, the more time and inclination they will have to spend in retail and catering outlets. I am sure no-one would say that waiting thirty minutes to buy a ticket or to get in to an exhibition enhanced their day!

Realistically, we have to accept that at peak times we will always have some degree of queuing – but we are doing something about them:

- Welcome: we can use the opportunity to talk to and entertain people – we are looking at ways of bringing the ‘inside out’ – start tours or debates outside the paying areas which will draw people in and start the experience as soon as they arrive;
- Inform: having people on hand to answer questions and ensure if people have promotional vouchers that they have them ready and completed in advance or hand out Orientation leaflets – this will cut back on the transaction time once they actually reach the ticket office;
- Direct the queue: often people gravitate to the same kiosk when others are free or join the wrong queue;
- Manage the whole area and respond if more staff are needed.

And there are other things that we are doing to make improvements. We have introduced self-service ticket kiosks and prepaid ticket collection has been available since 2004. From September 2005 we will have multi-lingual self-service kiosks available at the Tower of London and Hampton Court. This will provide four kiosks at the Tower of London and one at Hampton Court, offering the customer more flexibility and the opportunity to purchase tickets 24/7.

We also use portable ticket machines from Directional Data. This gives us the flexibility to sell from anywhere, particularly useful at Hampton Court for the Maze and remote outposts. It means we can take the tickets to the people and also use for queue busting. We hope to work with tickets.com to have a wireless option linked to our ProVenueMax server by 2007 and we are also working with Directional Data on a self-service timed ticketing option for the Jewel House – people will be able to print out a ticket giving them a time they can fast track to see the Crown Jewels.

We are installing access control at three of our palaces – later this year at the Tower of London, at Hampton Court by Autumn 2006 and Kensington Palace by 2007. This will be a huge step forward for the Historic Royal Palaces with the following advantages:

- Maximum control over entry;
- Speed (faster entry);
- Security (invalidated tickets);
- Tracking (people counters);
- Scanning of promotional coupons & vouchers: we receive a huge number of

promotional coupons and Agency Vouchers all of which, currently, have to be exchanged for tickets, which doesn't help the visitor or the staff. On the lead-up to installing Access Control, we want to work with our third party agencies so that we can have a universal bar code on all their vouchers, which can be read and accounted for at the point of entry. We want to take this a stage further by allowing them to interface with our booking system and issue their vouchers directly from our system, which will put us in control of the whole solution.

- Smart cards (see below);
- Home printing: we really want to encourage and provide the means of people doing this when purchasing online or via the Call Centre. The majority of visitors at the Tower are from overseas and this puts their ticket in their hand as soon as they purchase it rather than awaiting fulfilment or having to collect on arrival. We will also want to extend this to mobile and any other new technology available in the future.

By 2007 we want to start selling smart cards instead of tickets, turning a day visit into long-term loyalty, meaning:

- People can pre-budget their entire visit – including Catering and Retail spend;
- A link will be created between the sites by topping up the card and using it at another palace or for Web purchases;
- Loyalty points can be transferred directly onto the card;
- Ultimately everyone will become a 'Member';
- The visitor journey can be tracked and this will help with visitor flow;
- They can be used to create your own tour – create wireless hotspots and allow people to select their own tour.

In terms of creating tours, we have looked at the emotions we want people to feel at different stages of their visit. There should be pockets of excitement, fear and time for reflection. People are often standing on the site of momentous events but don't realise it. We all have different learning styles and want different interpretive options. We want to move away from pre-determined talks or tours, textual information or reliance on Audio Guides, which can be isolating. One size does not suit or fit all. We want to use Wireless and the Smart cards to allow people to create their own adventure: the idea would be for you to select and download the Servants tour, for example, and then your card will only give you access to those areas the Servants would have had access to and activate audio or visual triggers along the way.

Over the past six months we have been looking at what the Visitor wants, rather than what we want to give them. As part of this we looked at the whole visitor journey and how we can help the visitor begin to explore their story with Historic Royal Palaces. Instead of just telling our history we want our visitors to find a connection with their own history regardless of race or culture and explore their own story. We then looked at what we want our image to be:

- Emotional;
- Involving;
- Connected;
- Escapist;
- Theatrical;
- Informative;
- Sensory;
- Open;
- Personal.

We are in the process of linking all of this in with each stage of the Customer Journey. with the aim of improving and enhancing every stage, including:

- Expectations;
- Planning the visit;
- Journey;
- Arrival point on site;
- Start of the experience on site (start tours and debates outside the paying area);
- Inside experience – all the Zones of Experience;
- Retail and Catering – a part of, not separate from, the experience;
- Leaving – as welcoming as the arrival;
- Long-term relationships building on this via repeat visits – loyalty and giving people a reason to come back, because we present different themes and celebrate relevant and current events, new audiences via music festivals, ice rinks;
- Ongoing relationships via the website particularly for the overseas customer.

We want to continue the Customer Journey into the website and instead of just being another corporate site, use it as a vehicle to excite our visitors in the wider world and help them to explore the story of Monarchy, people and society with us. We will be changing our website over the next twelve months, starting by migrating sections of the existing one onto micro-sites in September 2005. One area I want to develop is an integrated Trade section, which will allow partners to book via our site directly from our inventory – which will have benefits for the visitor, ticketing and finance staff.

We want all staff to be aware that they have their own story to tell and use appropriate Showmanship and panache to interact with the visitor whether they are a Yeoman Warder, member of the Security staff, selling a ticket or office based. We recognise that we all have a part to play in making every visit one to remember. There is no point in moving forward with technology if the people let us down, so we will be rolling out specialised, professional training for staff of all levels – we want to go beyond the normal Customer Care using Choice, Technology and Expertise.

## Changing for the Better

*Alec Coles, Tyne and Wear Museums and Liz Moran, macrobert*

### **Tyne and Wear Museums**

This presentation comes from the Tyne and Wear Museums perspective and, in terms of changing for the better, will suggest that it has to happen completely from within and impact without. Tyne and Wear Museums has changed immensely over the last ten years, but it is on a journey and wouldn't pretend that it has reached the end of its journey, or even that it ever will.

Tyne and Wear Museums run eleven buildings. As such, it is a large organisation – a joint museums service with a variety of public sector clients, including five local authorities, University of Newcastle, DCMS and even the Ministry of Defence, for which Tyne and Wear Museums runs a small museum based on an old regimental museum. It acts very much like an agency and the reason all these clients use us – because they still own the buildings and collections – is because they like what Tyne and Wear Museums does. Some of you will also be aware of the Renaissance in the Regions report and the programme that flowed