



## **Extend your reach ~ understanding the domestic and international tourism industry**

Jonathan Mountford, Managing Director – made

**Introduced and chaired** by Chris Denton, AMA board member and consultant

After graduating in Theatre Studies from the University of Surrey, Jonathan held the posts of Publicity Assistant at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and Box Office Finance Clerk at the National Exhibition Centre before moving on to the Birmingham Hippodrome to take up the position of Direct Marketing Officer. In 1994, he joined the recently-formed marketing agency aka (Adam Kenwright Associates), followed by a stretch as the Press Officer at the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith. After a further spell at advertising agency HARDSELL, he was appointed the youngest-ever Marketing Manager at West End ticketing agency Applause, leaving to join the full service agency McCABES. After six years at McCABES he was invited to join Dewynters to create a Tourism Marketing Division. Dewynters offer innovative media, marketing, sales and creative solutions for the global entertainment industry. Jonathan sits on the British Tourism Industry Group and Americas Interest Group at VisitBritain (VisitBritain is a non-departmental Public Body funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport).

### **Jonathan Mountford, made**

The purpose of this seminar is focusing on cultural tourism and about attracting tourists to your destination, your visitor attraction, theatre, dance or musical. I'm going to look at several areas in which you can engage with the incoming visitor market in the UK. I've got some examples of what our clients have done with us in the past and will also cover some of the trends in tourism. Just touching on trends and where people are coming from to visit the UK, the buzz word at the moment in terms of tourism is 'BRIC market' which stands for Brazil, Russia, India and China. These are economies which are booming with a lot of people are coming into the UK from those markets with an interest and curiosity in all things British, especially on the back of the Queen's Jubilee and the Olympics last year. The number one market into the UK is now France which last

year overtook the USA and is closely followed by Germany. We're seeing a decreasing Japanese market, by about 4% in the last year or so, with the reason for that being that Japanese traditionally came to the UK as their first or second overseas holiday but what they tend to do now is go closer to home and into China where there are a lot of beach resorts and they're doing shorter journeys. Another market which is improving is the Australian market which has brought in a million visitors in the past year or so.

### **SO, THE QUESTION IS; WHAT MAKES AN UNFORGETTABLE HOLIDAY?**

Jonathan played this video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tK3H6ayK5DQ>

This was a short video produced by ETOA (European Tour Operator Association) who are meant to promote across Europe but as you can see there's a lot of the UK in that video and one of the motivating factors for people going on holiday is culture. Culture is in the top three reasons people go on holiday, there's also shopping and beach resorts play an important part.

### **CULTURAL TOURISM BRINGS OUR NATION TO LIFE!**

Cultural tourism is; '*Visits to enjoy visual and performing arts, museum, galleries, heritage attractions, public art and architecture, festivals, films and other cultural events.*' (VisitBritain)

These visitors come into the UK to '*enjoy exhibitions and performances, to sample local food and learn about local customs, to enjoy the atmosphere of a place and to learn something. They enjoy experiences that fire their imagination or offer a chance to connect with the past*'. Arts and culture underpin what it means to be British, how we see ourselves and how the world sees us. Our culture is our hallmark, and it makes Britain distinctive in a globalised world.

Arts and culture make up 0.4% of GDP, a significant return on the less than 0.1% of government spending invested in the sector. The arts and culture sector provides 0.45% of total UK employment and 0.48% of total employment in England alone. £856 million per year spent by tourists can be attributed directly to arts and culture.

VisitBritain is the tourist board for the whole of the country including Northern Ireland then that is broken down into; VisitScotland, VisitEngland, VisitWales and the Irish Tourist Board and within those you have the regional tourist boards which I guess some of you are already engaged with. Arts Council England and national tourist board VisitEngland have announced a new partnership aimed at boosting cultural tourism. The three-year arrangement will see the two organisations collaborating on a portfolio of projects as well as sharing research findings and seeking to improve skills in both sectors. A pot of £3 million will be made available from ACE Lottery funding in June, and is intended to directly encourage local culture and tourism initiatives.

The aim is to draw in potential visitors and audiences to the benefit of the sector, local communities and critically, to help grow the economy. This new partnership will help local organisations give both tourism and cultural sectors a boost.

I've brought some examples of how we work with VisitBritain – some of you might have seen the campaign linked into the Olympics which is a four-year campaign and we've had a variety of West End Theatre clients and our arts clients involved in this campaign. It is very similar to some of the initiatives that Arts Council England and VisitEngland are going to bring into place to promote culture across the globe.

[Jonathan handed out brochures and print]

We had a brochure which was door-dropped to the majority of houses, not all, within the UK last year promoting West End theatre. Part of this campaign was match-funded by commercial organisations and we've been able to work with people like British Airways and Hilton Hotels. We've done a lot of branding within hotels and with British Airways – we branded all the luggage tags in all the airports in the UK and across North America and Europe. The advantage for clients to get involved in these campaigns is that for every £1 they put in it is match-funded by the government.

Travel and tourism is set to become the world's largest industry. The UK's tourism industry is worth £52 billion a year and it is forecast to grow by 4% per annum over the next decade, making it one of the fastest-growing sectors in the UK. It provides jobs for 1.75 million people in the UK, some 7% of the UK workforce and 200,000 businesses competing to attract domestic and overseas visitors.

## **WHAT IS TOURISM?**

*The temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside places where they normally live and work, and their activities during their stay at these destinations*

Burkat and Medlik: Tourism, Past, Present and Future.

It is easy to refer to 'tourists' as if they were an anonymous mass of people, but of course there are many different types of tourist. Each group, or segment, has different needs and motivations. Tourists may be international visitors from another country or a family who have just travelled a couple of hours to see their relatives and go out together. The latter are often referred to as VFR – visit(or)s to friends and relatives, especially from the Commonwealth Nations on the back of the Jubilee last year. As I mentioned earlier we've seen an increase in visitors from Australia, Canada and India. They do not always book accommodation but are often a good market for attractions. It

is when 'Auntie Nellie and the Gang' come to stay that many families visit attractions, travelling in a sizeable group, staying longer and spending more than they usually would at attractions. 'Tourists' are usually taken to be people who are temporarily staying at least one night in an area while 'visitors' is a more umbrella term, meaning tourists, excursionists and locals on a day out. Before beginning to plan or undertake any marketing activities it is important to be clear about target markets, which will vary for every tourism business.

## **THE TRAVEL TRADE**

The travel trade is a cost-effective way to reach and engage with tourists however, promotions should not be targeted solely at the travel trade as many visitors travel independently. It can be difficult to influence independent visitors directly, so working with the travel trade is often an easier way of developing visitor and guest numbers.

Nonetheless there are several important advantages to working with the travel trade and understanding the various components will make it easier to target. You don't have to be a big musical such as *Mamma Mia!* to engage with the travel trade as they are also looking for niche products and free products and they will feature you in their brochures as they are looking to offer consumers ideas on what to do. If you are a paid-for attraction the travel trade will be looking for commissions, they can also help you to gain pre-booked visits which can form a good core business, along with 'off-peak visits'. Especially in the business and corporate entertainment part of the travel trade they will pay extra for additional services such as behind-the-scenes tours and special talks – anything that's of any added value.

## **THE TRAVEL TRADE COMPRISES ...**

- Travel agents,
- tour operators,
- handling agents, incoming tour operators and ground handlers,
- coach operators,
- group travel organisers,
- short break operators,
- incentive houses,
- corporate hospitality organisers and conference organisers.

## **TRAVEL AGENTS**

Travel agents are normally the first point of contact for the consumer when planning a holiday.

Travel agents play a very important role in certain key markets across the world. For example in Japan and North America travel agents are still really important, more so than planning a holiday online as people want to have that face-to-face interaction. Travel agents sell holidays to the public, acting as retail distributors for tour operators and carriers. They make their living through commission payments and overrides. As the names implies, business travel agents specialise in flight and accommodation bookings for business travelers. Reservation and booking agents are similar to travel agents but usually specialise in one aspect such as accommodation bookings. Although they are a part of the travel trade, there is little point in targeting travel agents directly, as most of them simply make bookings from tour operators' brochures.

Travel agents book the accommodation, flights and any add-ons – most importantly for our sector are the 'add-ons' where we get them to buy museum tickets, theatre tickets, restaurant visits etc. There's a variety of different ways of engaging with travel agents and two brief case studies come from English National Opera (ENO) and Kew Gardens. We've done a lot of work over the last six months or so with ENO at the Coliseum in London. The brief was to increase both their individual bookings from overseas and also increase their domestic bookings. We've also done a lot of work with Kew Gardens. Two projects that are quite similar in terms of who we are trying to engage with but here we worked with the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) which is probably one of the biggest brands within tourism. With ABTA Agents we got them to sell opera and also Kew Gardens to their clients by including it as a package. We set up special 'tour operator' rates where we gave travel agents a discount which enabled them to actually mark up the cost of the ticket and to package it with hotels and accommodation. With the ENO campaign we led with the operas that we thought would be the most popular and not too challenging for certain markets and with Kew Gardens we focused on the heritage and history around the Victorian building. They've got lots of beautiful images and so we've used a lot of those and much of what we do is very image led. It's important to go into travel agents' offices, to talk to them and educate them about what your product is and give them as much information as possible. All UK travel agencies will receive the ABTA magazine which like other travel industry magazines is slightly old fashioned in the way that it works. They are all looking for content and stories and include things on exhibitions and destinations, and again, they're not looking to run stories only on blockbuster exhibitions or big musicals. We engage with ABTA by advertising in their magazines.

So, travel agencies are still very important for people booking their holidays but since 1995 we have seen a decrease in travel agencies, especially in the UK, while at the same time we've also see a rise in consolidators or online travel agencies – e.g. Expedia, Travelocity, Orbitz and Travel Zoo. These are the websites where people are going to book their holidays and removing

that face-to-face, personal interaction. We've also seen that younger people are booking through these online channels rather than going into a travel agency and also in what were traditionally niche areas, for example the Lesbian and Gay market, they've become more 'mainstream' by being featured in the advertising of these online travel agencies. This promotional video from Expedia highlights that: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThzdsnXeE28>

## TOUR OPERATORS

Travel agencies and tour operators play an important role in getting tourists to experience culture. A tour operator is basically where the travel agency buy their product from. Tour operators package the individual components of a holiday or tour, negotiating inclusive fares for travel, accommodation, transfers, sightseeing, etc. Most of them still produce high-copy brochures (Jonathan held up an example from Holiday House, a Canadian tour operator) and in here, what we do for our clients is to set up a theatre and arts programme. We have included advertising for four West End Shows along with a variety of dynamic pricing. Here, I should again like to say that tour operators aren't just looking for big musicals or blockbuster exhibitions – they're also looking for content. This brochure is from Japan and a variety of products are highlighted including things such as the Royal Albert Hall festivals, there's a small cake museum and some pieces on shopping. All of these tour operators are constantly looking for content for these brochures to make them look exciting and one thing that the arts have is a lot of visual images they can use.

One way of engaging with tour operators is to work with UKinbound who are the British Incoming Tour Operators' Association. They are always looking for information to add to their newsletters about cultural activity and not just about major cities like London or Edinburgh but for information about the whole of the UK, especially for the more mature market who might be looking for activities outside of the bigger cities. Tour operators, on average, produce these brochures twice a year and have huge circulations such as this one here which has a circulation of 15 million across Japan and can be picked up in most travel agencies.

The British Incoming Tour Operators' Association (called UKinbound) lists around 125 full members in its *Handbook and Membership List*, which costs around £37 from:

**UKinbound**

3rd Floor  
388 The Strand  
London WC2R 0LT  
United Kingdom  
T: +44 (0)20 7395 7500  
F: +44 (0)20 7240 6618  
E: [info@ukinbound.org](mailto:info@ukinbound.org)

There are also short break operators such as Super Break who are based in York who within this brochure have included information about things that you can go and do yourself as well as information on the theme parks and larger attractions.

## **COACH OPERATORS**

We also do a lot of work with coach operators. These range from huge operators such as Wallace Arnold who publish their own brochure of coaching holidays, to small driver-owner or family-run companies whose business is mainly private hire contracts from group organisers and local societies. Coach operators used to be considered the poor relations of the travel trade, generating low-value visits from large groups of aged people, dawdling crocodile fashion to the tea shop. Group sizes seem to have decreased in recent years to around 30 people but with increasingly affluent passengers. There's a variety of different ways to engage with coach operators – one way is to contact the Coach Tourism Council who regulate coach travel within the UK. There aren't many coach operators in the UK, only about 650 of them, but some have huge fleets of coaches and move consumers across the UK. Their demographic are customers who tend to be slightly older apart from National Express and Megabus who engage very heavily with the student market as well. We've done some work with National Express and festivals but it does traditionally seem to be older people who go on coach holidays. There's a variety of different publications that coach operators read and to advertise in these magazines is very low cost – pages can be bought for between £200 to £500 but they will also run editorial – to find some of these titles; Google 'coach and tourism publications'. The coach tourism industry has a Yearbook that is broken down into geographical areas and in there we promote our clients. Get in contact with all these types of publications, send them information, build up your own in-house press list. Over the last ten years or so we've built up a press list by meeting and talking to people, going to travel and consumer exhibitions such as The Best of Britain and Ireland and Excursions, the North West Show. To engage further with the coach market we produce a coach guide twice a year which goes out to all of the coach tour operators. Within here it has a variety of information about our clients – it's all about engaging with these people, sending them posters and brochures etc. and keeping them up to date.

## **SHORT-BREAK OPERATORS**

Another group to engage with would be the short break operators – these may be hotel chains who publish their own short-break brochures to sell empty hotel rooms at weekends. There are also several major operators who include accommodation of one to four nights, optional transport

and sightseeing excursions. This is a growth market, albeit a competitive one and short break operators are continually looking for new destinations and activities to package.

The majority of these operators work with regional newspapers and run short breaks to the major cities such as London, Birmingham, Manchester etc. One campaign example that we did for the *Mousetrap* included short-break packages running in a variety of newspapers. Engaging this market if you've got an exhibition or a theatre show or a concert has a very good return on investment (ROI) as people read the advertisement and end up booking their whole package through their local newspaper. There are only about four or five big companies working in this market segment. Omega are one of the biggest and as well as the theatre cycle they also sell a lot of exhibitions and attractions, things like the flower show and festivals as well.



## INCENTIVE AGENTS AND CORPORATE HOSPITALITY

This market has declined around 10% since the recession hit but there are still big companies out there that will engage with the cultural sector. Travel can be used as a motivator for staff or clients. Incentive agents typically look for extraordinary experiences, events and itineraries which are not accessible to the general public and which makes the trip more special. Corporate hospitality works in a similar way, often using an event like a day trip to the races as a basic component, and adding on extras such as entrance to a special enclosure, gourmet lunch and souvenir programme.

This market sector is global, especially in the BRIC markets that I mentioned before, clients from Brazil, Russia and China. This is the most lucrative way of engaging tourism in the sector, to offer them something personal and completely different.

## GROUP TRAVEL ORGANISERS

There are approximately 6,000 independent and active group-travel organisers in the UK. The majority of 'group travelers', over 41%, are aged over 60 year's old and this is broken down into the following sectors:

- Group outings on a voluntary basis: Women's Institute, Townswomen's Guild and Fellowship Clubs

- Social clubs such as staff social clubs or 'day-out' clubs
- Retirement associations such as Probus and company retirement clubs
- Special-interest groups such as arts clubs and universities of the third age – you can go onto VisitBritain's website and find lists of all different clubs and associations
- John Lewis / Waitrose subsidise their Partners' outings to things such as the opera, ballet, museums and galleries

Lists of these organisations can be obtained from list brokers, or they can be targeted through publications such as *Group Travel Organiser* magazine, *Group Travel World*, *Pass* magazine which goes out to all the WI and Rotary clubs. This magazine does 'reader nights' where people can go to experience a theatre show or an exhibition first hand with the objective of getting them to take their group along to it.

### **MAMMA MIA! BLACKPOOL CASE STUDY**

We've been working the *MAMMA MIA!* which is coming to Blackpool and I just wanted to focus briefly on something that's outside of London. *MAMMA MIA!* is the ultimate feel-good musical. Set on a Greek island paradise, a story of love, friendship and identity is cleverly told through the timeless songs of ABBA. Blackpool is to host this West End Show for ten weeks next summer (2014) and it is incredibly important that we engage the tourist market.

We've been engaging with the local tourist board, doing grass roots stuff such as engaging with libraries, all of the group bookers and have started to work with the coach and rail companies and airlines that fly into Manchester as the two cities are very close and we've formed a partnership with the airlines. What we've done in terms of our marketing here is we are focusing on things that are quintessentially British; the fact that Blackpool is a famous seaside resort – we've used photography of the Blackpool Tower – and we've also engaged with local media as well as with VisitEngland and their campaigns. We took the cast from London for a promotional performance in front of all of the local hotels and we've engaged with all the tourist attractions such as the Blackpool Tower. We've done a whole load of linking things together, building itineraries, and promoting it globally in Japan and China to get people to book up when they are planning their holidays for next summer. We've also been combining it with other cities as well; London and Edinburgh with some train travel in between.

We have packages in place with all major UK tour operators such as Omega Travel and international packages with wholesales such as Gold Medal. As Blackpool remains a major centre of tourism in England a partnership has been formed with VisitEngland – the government's tourist

board for England. So far our marketing mix is working, as advance sales to both individuals and groups are robust. Maybe your next year's holiday should be a 'stay-cation' to Blackpool?

## TOP TIPS FOR ENGAGING WITH THE TOURIST MARKET

- You don't have to be London or Edinburgh to attract a tourist. Consider your catchment area. Talk to local associations such as the WI, Rotary, U3A – build up databases and send out information.
- Contact the Travel or Features Editors of regional newspapers whose readership is within a couple of hours drive of your product.
- Do simple things like build up an in-house database of both domestic and international contacts.
- Make sure your local Tourist Information Centre or Library has up-to-date print
- Get your message out there using resources such as VisitBritain, VisitEngland, VisitScotland to overseas contacts.
- Make sure that any local websites are researched and kept up to date with information
- There are a variety of guide books that are produced not just for London but for the whole of the UK and even the London ones usually have a couple of pages on what to do outside of London as well
- Engage with your local businesses, local community – link up with your local tourist attractions, local restaurants and think about creating packages
- Attend trade shows or, if you can't afford to attend or take time out of the office, send print to your local tourist board
- Identify your key markets ... if you suddenly see an increase in Chinese visitors invest in having print translated and different languages on your website.
- Research online tourist websites. Use Google!
- Contact your National and Regional Tourist Board for information on international marketing activity organised or coordinated locally in your area.



This is an example of a campaign that ran last year; *Holidays at Home are great* – TV advert 2012: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viCZ4XjTliY>. It is backed up with an online campaign that anyone could take part in and VisitEngland, VisitScotland and VisitWales are constantly doing campaigns like that where you can get involved.

I sit on the steering committee for VisitBritain, the national tourist authority, and we are always looking for information, content, videos, links to YouTube, Jpegs, copy to populate the websites and to update people via their 32 offices in key cities across the UK.

- Keep up to date by registering for VisitBritain News, their bi-weekly e-newsletter.
- Follow them on Twitter, @VisitBritainBiz
- Join them on LinkedIn for daily snippets and insights or discussions.
- Refer to the Country Market and Trade Profiles – these provide in-depth market knowledge including statistics and forecasts, consumer opinions and perceptions and on-territory insights.
- Browse VisitBritain's marketing opportunities
- Submit newsworthy content to *Britain Calling*, their main 'destination' news service for the overseas press.
- The VisitBritain online shops offer a new and effective route-to-market for tourism product suppliers and websites.

## IN CONCLUSION

- Build up websites, build up databases and engage with websites, engage with your regional tourist boards and with all of the guide books, magazines, send out regular press releases
- Cultural tourism is about people and partnerships, good leaders and ace collaborators; without them, it's just another short-lived marketing gimmick.
- It's only in the last couple of years that there's been awareness in the wider cultural sector of just how valuable cultural tourism is.
- Cultural tourism is not and can never be a quick fix. It's not simply a new style of marketing, nor is it a case of saying the same thing but in a different way.
- Cultural tourism is about understanding the collective cultural offer of a destination, matching that offer to the 'wraparound' industries and making sure that it's all packaged in a way that is meaningful to the consumer.

## QUESTIONS

**Delegate:** I work in a regional organisation and presumably the people who are close to me are not tourists and if I try to branch out into other areas, because I'm in a regional theatre that doesn't have any brand recognition, other organisations won't recognise me. How do you bridge that gap of getting people from far away to invest in you?

**Jonathan:** You could do this by education and sending print leaflets out to museums, galleries, libraries, doing some research and building up your own database, going out and giving presentations and talks to local Rotary clubs and WI's. Work out how far people are going to travel, what their ages are and where you are going to target those people. Also have a think about who your competitors are, what do you have locally that could be seen to be in competition with you. Contact the national tourist boards as they're not just interested in working with the bigger organisations but are also looking for smaller, quirkier, niche things. They are looking for products and information that is new, a bit different, especially when attracting people from outside the UK.

The resources on offer vary from tourist board to tourist board so some of them are more proactive but the majority of tourist boards in the UK have databases and lists that you can use along with advertising opportunities and that's not just on a national level. It depends on funding as well, which council it is and if they're getting support from there. Local tourist boards do tend to have lists, advertising opportunities, produce brochures and have websites as well; VisitManchester, VisitBirmingham – they all have their local websites.

If you are giving anything away to your journalists, capture their contact information and keep in touch with them. They are always looking for information and content, especially the B2B publications.

**Delegate:** Do you know of any trends about where people make those decisions as to what they are going to do? Is it while they are on the plane or at the airport, when they get to the hotel etc.?

**Jonathan:** It depends on the markets and on the individuals' product knowledge. The majority of tourists make up their mind from a guide book or something online to going to a High Street travel agency who will then recommend them something to do. A high percentage book before they get to the UK. Personally, I think that some of the airport advertising isn't as effective because they are worried about going through immigration, getting their bags etc. and they're being bombarded by information at the airport – it's also very expensive. The airline magazines will run editorial features so you could send them editorial content and there are four or five big companies that control those magazines. Traditionally, from the statistics that VisitBritain have collated, people tend to pre-book everything before they get to London but there will also be walk ups – there is a mixture and it depends from market to market. If you go onto VisitBritain's website there's a section on there where you can download market profiles for the majority of countries where people are engaging with UK culture. The market profiles have all the information about how many visitor numbers come in. For example, if you go on there and download the Australian profile it will

tell you how many visitors come, their ages, their demographics, the likelihood of repeat visits and things around if they book online, if they book it at their High Street travel agency etc. I think there are 30 or so market profiles on there. VisitBritain.org is the trade site and VisitBritain.com is the consumer website. They also publish quarterly forecasts and updates. There's another thing that you can subscribe to which is the International Passenger Survey which, if you ever come into an airport, anywhere in the UK or through sea ports, the data from the scans of peoples' passports is collated and if you see anyone with a clipboard there doing a survey they are probably doing the International Passenger Survey and what they are doing is drilling down deeper and asking what people are interested in and what their reasons are for visiting the UK.

**Delegate:** Are you finding with your experience of inbound tourists to the UK that the type of attraction that they are choosing to attend or the event that they are choosing to see is more price dependent? Are they looking for a deal or are they still happy to pay full price?

**Jonathan:** It depends on how they are booking. If a booking is a package they won't let you know how much that has been bought for but for example, at the moment there's a tour operator package with a ticket included for around £40 and the top price for that ticket is £60/£70 so therefore the discount has been incorporated into that overall ticket price and its value will be printed on their admission ticket. If it is all packaged together the consumer won't necessarily know what they've paid for it. What is happening is that the big consolidators are pushing pricing down because they are looking for better deals and looking to make greater commissions. Within the tourism industry at the moment, where traditionally tour operators and travel agents made money on flights and accommodation, going back six years or so they were paid commission, no airline now pays commission so they're looking to push down all of the extra add ons; the theatre tickets or the river boat cruise. It depends by market but consumers are getting more savvy, they can go onto things like TravelZoo, Expedia and find deals themselves so what we are finding in some markets is that travel agents are becoming redundant because people are choosing to do it themselves. Travel agencies, as I said earlier, are still important but in certain markets, especially English-speaking markets where they don't need as much help in terms of putting stuff together we are finding that they will go and 'Google' it. That's why guide books are important because if you have an entry in there, say for the British Museum, they'll 'Google' it and book their tickets in an online outlet.

We've recently started working with the Brazil market and when I was out there doing a feasibility study I was chatting to some people about the *Lion King* and *Mamma Mia!* The travel agent and the tour operators that I was talking to didn't realise that London had musicals in the

same way as New York does and so a lot of education has been done there. When we first went out to Japan about 12 years ago, they thought we all wore bowler hats and carried umbrellas in London. Stuff like that does actually work though, like using the Union Jack, and using things that in this market might now seem naff and old fashioned, by playing on some of those cultural references and British quaintness, does actually work. It's an important point but at times, don't be too clever, don't be too sophisticated because that's actually gone drastically wrong with some tourist board advertising in the past when they've chosen to show a building or something that no one in Japan or China has ever seen in their lives and it leads to confusion and they don't recognise the destination.

We've done a survey working with the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and No. 10 and the perception of this kind of promotion across the world has been successful along with using traditional images and the Union Jack along with the words 'Great Britain' – Imperialistic in some respects but it works to promote the UK around the world and has really delivered in terms of visitor numbers.

**Delegate:** I'm from the Theatre Royal in Plymouth so we have lots of tourists coming down our way and we've started to build relationships with other tourist attractions and organisations in our area to target tourists. I'm wondering how many attractions people go to? Do they pay for their theatre ticket before they get there so they've already chosen that's the one big thing that they're going to go to therefore making it a waste of time to create those connections and share things?

**Jonathan:** Working with other attractions is a good thing to do because a lot of people are looking for itineraries. For example in your area you've got post-cruise people coming in before they go off around the rest of the country and certainly we've worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford on Avon where we've packaged Warwick Castle with Shakespeare's birth place and put it all together for the Chinese market. The only time that it doesn't work is when the pricing becomes too expensive and starts to push above what people would actually spend on doing things. I think that putting together packages, working together with local attractions is a key thing, certainly in London where we've done a lot of that because people want to know what's going on. I think in terms of budget, with Shakespeare's England which is the consortium of Warwick Castle, the Birthplace Trust and the RSC have been able to further their reach because they've all put in a little bit of money each which enables them to do newspaper reader offers, direct mail to coach operators and things like mini destination guides and brochures with the local restaurants, local theatre etc. suddenly you've got a much stronger proposition and a budget that will go a lot further.

**Delegate:** I was wondering if you could give a bit more information about the agencies and what it is they are looking for.

**Jonathan:** They're looking partly for some match funding but not in all cases and it obviously depends on how each individual organisation is funded. For example some of the work that we're doing is with West End theatre shows, touring theatre shows, rock and pop hires which are all commercial companies and they're looking for partners to come on board who will give tactical discounts and promotions such as the 20.12 campaign. They're also looking for people building microsites and looking for content, content discounts and engagement with them. If you go onto the VisitEngland website there's some information on there about how to contact them. It's slightly skewed outside of London as VisitEngland tend to ignore London as London has its own tourist board which acts as the regional tourist board.

**Delegate:** I work at a festival that takes place in Scotland in January but we don't polish the line-up until October so I struggle because I think that's not enough time for people to plan and to get published in the itineraries – is that a common problem?

**Jonathan:** Yes, that is a common problem. In terms of the tour operator brochures, the key period is November which coincides with World Travel Market in London which is the biggest tourism event in the world. That's actually an event that you should go along to. You can register on their website and go along to World Travel Market and look at what the tourist boards and other arts organisations are doing around the rest of the world and Europe. So that's November that the brochures come out and normally last for 18 months or so and normally with a reprint in March which coincides with ITB in Berlin, the second largest trade show and also the Best of Britain and Ireland which is the UK's number one domestic trade show. So those are the two key periods. If you don't get into the itineraries first of all in November then try again in March. With the shift towards more online travel agencies, things can obviously be updated a lot quicker than what they used to be. We struggle on some rock and pop stuff that we work on where we don't know the line up until later. We work on Hard Rock Calling which was in the Olympic Park this year and the line-up for that was announced very late, especially the support acts. With things like that and Lovebox which we also work on we try to get the brand name out there and mention the types of acts that have appeared in previous years to try to get tourists to book because they know it is going to be a certain type of event. We do struggle with that but there are ways around it and trying to get the event brand out there is the important thing. There are a lot of event-based companies that will buy rock and pop festivals and music festivals dotted around Europe and bring people over on coaches and trains. And some of our more traditional newspaper advertising can be done quite

quickly, short term, and we've done things in the past where we've worked on concerts in Hyde Park that haven't sold and we had to sell something like 80,000 tickets once by casting the net right out into Europe. ETOA have a list of their members who engage in event travel and also cultural tour operators. Some of the big membership organisations are really worthwhile either joining, if you can afford to as some of them are quite expensive, or certainly engaging with them in some way. A couple of other organisations that are worth working with are the Coast Tourism Council and the Group Travel Organisers Association. To be an associate member of the Group Travel Organisers Association costs around £200-£300 per year and they have an annual convention and all of the big coach operators are members as well as the WI which has an individual branch who are also members. It's especially good for engaging with tourists locally from around your catchment area by getting hold of leader of your local WI or Rotary club, Scouts, Guides and Brownies. For the student market an important organisation is the British Educational Travel Association (BETA) and they do a lot of work with EF students coming to the UK, Falcon Travel and other big student operators across the globe. Membership of BETA for a small arts organisation should be around a few hundred pounds up to about £1,000 for a big theatre. There was recently a big networking event at the House of Lords where they had all the big tour operators and again, they're looking for educational, cultural things for the students to do.

**Delegate:** How important is it to do 'meet and greet' when the groups arrive at your venue, theatre?

**Jonathan:** I think that it is really important – we've just launched *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* and we took all the key group leaders and tour operators out for dinner beforehand, spoke to them about the production and educated them on the availability because it is heavily sold out on certain performances and there the objective is to look at longevity.

If you do have something that's going to be around for a long time but is sold out initially I think that it is really important to get people in at the very beginning and to engage with them and to do backstage tours, meet and greet, private view etc. That also works well with the travel and tourism press as well to get them to do something exclusive.

**Delegate:** With some of the stuff that we're doing it could be more of a 'one off', something that's a bit more 'unknown' – what sort of information do you think we should be offering to help inform them about an essentially, unknown product?

**Jonathan:** I think it's really important to, depending on the markets that you want to engage with, first of all work out where people are going to come from and don't waste resources on targeting

people who would never go to that play, opera, ballet or whatever it might be. Make sure you describe it in terms that people can understand. For example, when we translate sales copy for Japan or for China it will be completely different to the copy that we'd use here – less 'sales-y', fewer adjectives – go back to the bare basics and explain what it is, use as many images as possible and also play on the location and the venue i.e. 'the Royal Albert Hall is a historic building from the time reign of Queen Victoria' and a lot of the theatres and venues are rich in terms of their built heritage. A key motivator for people coming to the UK can be to see the buildings. For example, with the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden we did some work with their backstage tours and one thing there that interests the American market is that at the back of the Queen's Box there is the Queen's toilet and they love that idea. Going back to what I was saying earlier – some things that we might consider to be a bit naff and a bit twee, can be attractive and enjoyed by certain markets.

**Delegate:** So, with a new piece of theatre say, is it better to put the emphasis on promoting our venue rather than the show?

**Jonathan:** It's a bit of both. In the past we've worked with Sadler's Wells and we promoted them as the 'number one place in London to see contemporary dance' and we came up with a strap line which could be translated and work across all different territories. Sometimes as well, if you're going into a yearly guide book or a publication that's only produced once or twice a year, you don't always know what your programming will be. With ENO we've used photography of the Coliseum for example and gone into detail about it being an historic building by Frank Matcham and the type of performance that you can see there. Get good photographs done of your venue including of the outside. One of the biggest challenges we've had with VisitBritain with representing theatre is that whenever we take photographs of auditoria it looks weird with people in them but if you take photos of an empty theatre it then looks as if no one wants to go to see the show – so that's a difficult one to get right!

**Delegate:** Are there any specific organisations for the LGBT community?

**Jonathan:** Yes, there's the Gay and Lesbian Travel Association, for which I am the UK ambassador. It is an organisation based in Fort Lauderdale in the States and they work with tour operators and companies that are interested in targeting the Gay and Lesbian market. We've got members across the UK from travel agencies, tour operators and cultural attractions. They have a monthly newsletter, a convention each year and there are a whole load of organisations that belong to it.