

**ARTS AUDIENCES: BUILD YOUR AUDIENCES 2011**

# **CULTURAL TOURISM: A HOW-TO GUIDE**

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**Arts Audiences: Build Your Audience scheme**

This guide has been published as part of the Arts Audiences: Build your Audience scheme 2011, which focused on cultural tourism by providing the services of marketing consultant Annette Nugent to two arts organisations for particular cultural tourism audience development initiatives. This guide complements that work by providing information on the tourism sector and practical approaches for including visitors in your audience development strategies.

**Arts Audiences** is a partnership initiative of the **Arts Council** and **Temple Bar Cultural Trust**; further information about these organisations and this scheme is available at [www.ArtsAudiences.ie](http://www.ArtsAudiences.ie)

## INTRODUCTION

### ABOUT CULTURAL TOURISM

Cultural tourism, as the name suggests, is the point at which culture and tourism converge. The definition of cultural tourism is extremely broad and embraces the full range of experiences on offer to visitors that serve to distinguish one destination from another – experiences that are defined by the lifestyle, heritage, landscape, arts, traditions and customs of that destination, and not least by interaction with its people. The World Tourist Organisation claims that Cultural Tourism represents between 35 and 40% of all tourism worldwide, and that it is growing at 15% per annum – three times the rate of growth of general tourism.

Culture and heritage is a key driver for Irish tourism, contributing an estimated €2 billion to the Irish economy, with research showing that cultural visitors spend almost twice as much as city-break visitors. Furthermore, overseas visitors experience high levels of satisfaction with what Ireland has to offer. Almost four out of every five overseas visitor cites “interesting history/culture” as a motivation for choosing Ireland for a holiday, making it a viable area for growth in visitor numbers and revenue\*.

Research shows that Ireland’s culture and historical heritage is a distinguishing advantage for overseas holidaymakers in choosing to holiday here, particularly for North American visitors. However, when asked to rate their interest in different aspects of Ireland’s sights and culture - including Historic, Christian, Celtic, Natural and Traditional and Contemporary culture - Natural Ireland outshone the other aspects measured in terms of the level of interest generated, followed by Traditional Culture and Historic Ireland. Contemporary Culture - incorporating performing and visual arts, film, literature, architecture, etc. - appeared to have the least appeal with two in five interested to some extent, but one in four uninterested\*.

A survey of international visitors to CNCI sites (national cultural institutions) echoes this positive connection between visitors and culture: very high levels of satisfaction were reported by visitors, who are also more likely to be highly educated, to stay longer and spend more\*\*. This survey also found that only 51% of visits to a cultural institution were planned before arriving in Ireland, which means half of all decisions to visit a cultural institution were taken while on holidays here. This is particularly good news for cultural organisations that do not have the resources to engage in advance international promotion but wish to attract visitors to their event/venue.

Theatre Forum’s annual audience benchmarking survey 2011 provides more information on overseas visitors’ engagement with culture, finding that, on average, 23% of visitors to participant organisation websites came from overseas. This international engagement is more pronounced in the case of festivals, with 34% of website traffic originating overseas.\*\*\*

This research also found the top countries of origin were the UK (311,787 website visits in 2010) and the USA (305,077 visits)\*, which is unsurprising given the common language. However, given that UK visitors to Ireland outnumber US visitors by three to one, and even taking into account that many website visits do not have a holiday/trip motivation, this indicates that Americans are more likely as a nationality to seek out cultural event information and activity.

**These and other research findings indicate that a motivated and inclined subset of visitors to Ireland are interesting in knowing about and experiencing Ireland’s contemporary and ‘living’ culture.** Over the following pages, this guide looks at how those of us working with contemporary culture - performing and visual arts, film, literature, architecture, etc - might engage with the Irish visitor market in a relevant and targeted way to bring those visitors to our venues and events in larger numbers.

\* Fáilte Ireland Visitor Attitudes Survey 2010

\*\* Fáilte Ireland survey of international visitors to CNCI sites 2009

\*\*\* Theatre Forum: Audiences for the Performing Arts in Ireland 2010

## ABOUT IRELAND'S VISITOR MARKET

### OVERVIEW

There is a wealth of information available about visitors to Ireland, much of which is produced by Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland and freely available on their websites. A short list of useful information resources and reports is listed at the end of this guide, but the following paragraphs will give you a sense of the Irish tourist market in 2010:

In 2010, a total of 5.8 million trips were taken in Ireland by overseas visitors, of which 2.7 million came from Great Britain, almost 2 million from mainland Europe and 853,000 from North America. 3.4 million were pure holidaymakers (as opposed to travelling on business, or to visit friends/family)\*.

The vast majority arrived by air (92%), and four-fifths travelled independently (not as part of a package holiday). 37% are aged 25-44yrs, 43% are over 45yrs old and the vast majority are ABC1 (83%). They are generally couples (42%), but also travel as part of an adult group (22%), alone (21%), or as a family (15%)\*.

The Internet is mentioned by 48% of visitors as a factor in selecting Ireland and is now used by over two in every three (68%) in actually planning their holiday. Guide books continue to play an important role in destination choice, mentioned by 28% overall and particularly North American visitors (31%). Guidebooks are second to the Internet in terms of planning the holiday, mentioned by 50% of all visitors and a more substantial 63% of North Americans. One in every two Mainland European visitors (51%) uses guidebooks for planning their trip. Irish Tourist Board literature maintains a steady performance as a motivator (13%), and as a planning aid (23%)\*\*.

While the main focus of the Irish tourism industry is to encourage visits to Ireland from overseas, domestic tourism is also a major market sector with 8 million trips taken by Irish residents in 2010\*. The west coast, particularly the southwest, is the primary destination for the domestic holiday market with travel predominantly from the more populated east coast towards the western seaboard for holidays. Around half of domestic holidaymakers plan and book their break within two weeks of departure and the phone and internet are the most popular ways to book a holiday.\*\*\*

### SEASONALITY

While visitors come to Ireland throughout the calendar year, almost half of all 2010 overseas visitors (43%) arrived between June and September, which is very much "high season". Visits are spread quite evenly throughout the rest of the year - 23% coming in October-December, 16% in January-March and the remaining 13% in April/May\* - with urban centres attracting the most even spread of visitors outside of high season. For domestic visitors, July-September continue to be the peak months for holidays, particularly longer breaks.\*\*\*

\*Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Facts 2010 – Preliminary version 6.0

\*\* Fáilte Ireland Visitor Attitudes Survey 2010

\*\*\* Fáilte Ireland Domestic Tourism 2009 report

## GETTING STARTED

As an arts organisation/ festival organiser/ arts venue, it is worth contemplating seriously before investing significant resources into attracting the cultural visitor market. Most arts organisations don't engage much with tourism, so it does require an effort – and a long-term effort at that – to develop a relationship with the tourism sector and to imbed your venue/event in the national tourism arena. With this in mind, you should think about your foray into the visitor market in audience development terms, and whether this particular potential audience is an important enough segment for you to invest the required time, energy and resources.

### IS IT WORTH IT?

According to Fáilte Ireland's survey of overseas travelers 2009, just 7% of overseas visitors said they are looking for "contemporary culture" as part of their holiday. This doesn't sound like much, BUT 7% of 2.9million overseas holidaymakers is 205,000 people - which is almost twice the number of Irish adults who say they go to contemporary dance once a year or more often\*!

In addition, research that same year found that 40% of Irish residents attended festivals in 2009. While music festivals dominated the type of festivals attended, particularly rock/pop/dance music festivals), there was still substantial domestic attendance at arts festivals (34%), trad music/dance festivals (22%), theatre festivals (8%) and family/children festivals (8%)\*\*.

These kinds of statistics would intimate that the cultural visitor market, both international and domestic, is certainly a large enough segment to raise the interest of anyone programming contemporary cultural events. Fáilte Ireland has a substantial network of regional offices, all with visitor information specific to their area and most with a dedicated Client Services Officer who can help you with more detailed information on cultural visitors to your area.

### AM I IN THE RIGHT PLACE?

It goes without saying that it will be easier to attract visitors to your event if it takes place in a developed visitor destination, if it is easy for people to get there (good transport links) and if there are places for them to stay, eat and visit when your event is happening. Proximity to amenities such as beaches, mountains, galleries, museums, nightlife, restaurants, sports activities/fixtures was mentioned by visitors as the reason for choosing a holiday destination.\*\*\* It is possible to get people to travel to remote places with few facilities – the Burning Man Festival has made a virtue of it – but your path will be a lot easier if you and your event are based on known visitor routes.

### AM I ON AT THE RIGHT TIME?

The time of year that your event takes place will be a major factor in determining its attraction to the visitor market (See paragraph on Seasonality on page 4). As a general rule of thumb, you will have more success in attracting visitors to your event when your area is in its busiest holiday season, particularly if you are outside the major urban areas. However, there are quieter times of year when visitors are looking for something to do and your event has the opportunity to gain a higher profile and visitor attendance than might be expected: recent examples include Temple Bar Trad Festival (January) and the Dublin New Year's Eve celebrations.

*\*Data copyright ROI TGI Kantar Media UK Ltd. 2011*

*\*\*Source: Red C for Fáilte Ireland based on a survey of 1,002 Irish adults*

*\*\*\* Fáilte Ireland Domestic Tourism 2009 report*

## WHO ARE THE TOURISTS IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD?

It's very important to find out as much as you can about the visitor profile to your area. The visitor market is not homogenous, and your area might have a visitor profile quite different to the general holidaymaker - and there may be a particular "match" between them and your cultural offering. For example, urban and short-break visitors tend to be younger (25-45 years) and to travel as couples or in groups, and certain areas have attractions for niche activities (surfing in the North-West, for example). Your regional Fáilte Ireland office should be your first port of call to get a sense of who is attracted to your area, particularly in relation to their cultural interests.

There is a wealth of information about visitors on the Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland websites (see list at the end of this document). However, try not to drown in statistics: seek out information that is vital and useful – if you find it's just interesting reading, step away from the research...

## ARE THEY MY KIND OF PEOPLE?

If you have information on the kind of people that your event/venue already attracts, be sure to compare and contrast with the type of visitor that comes to your area. If there are demographic and attitudinal similarities, it will be easier to attract "more of the same" audiences from among the visitors coming to your area.

Don't forget to also consider the tourist already coming through your door: if possible, look to your own data to get a picture of your existing non-local market, which might tell you something about where development opportunities lie.

## WHAT DO THEY WANT TO SEE?

What elements of your programme would a visitor find appealing?

Traditional culture is a bigger "want" for overseas visitors than contemporary culture, but are you willing to programme something traditional to specifically attract the visitor market? Visitors also state that they want a more participative experience (workshops etc) – can you, or do you want to, facilitate that?

It may be that you believe one aspect of your annual programme would appeal to visitors. You could then focus on promoting that event/season to the visitor market rather than your entire offering. To allow you to promote effectively to the visitor market, your event/offering should, ideally, have some or all of the following attributes:

- A long run or a regular slot (Last Friday of every month, for example)
- A start date at least three months away
- An Irish flavour
- Capacity (no point offering it to visitors, who often book last minute, when you know it will sell out among your regular attenders)
- Takes place during high tourist season or during other holidays/bank holidays

## WHAT DO I WANT TO ACHIEVE?

An important element in any audience development project is to set objectives, and it is no different in trying to attract visitors to your event. You should clearly set down specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific objectives to identify targets and to have a benchmark against which to review the outcomes of the project.

The investment of time, energy and resources that you put into attracting visitors should be on a par with your desired outcomes: such as having a particular percentage of your audience come from non-local sources, or a specific increase in the size of the audience.

## YOU AND THE TOURIST

Once you've decided that the visitor market is an appropriate audience segment for your event to pursue, you must now think about how to reach them – or rather, how to help them find you.

### BE OUT EARLY

Decision-making lead-in time is possibly the most fundamental disconnect between the arts and the tourism sectors: lead-in time for holidaymakers' decision-making about destination is generally done further in advance than many Irish arts organisations / events can programme.

This can be overcome by arts organisations ensuring they have at least general information about their event in the public domain as early as possible: in the case of festivals, it should be possible to announce festival dates at least six months in advance.

But don't lose heart if this timeline is not possible for you: as noted earlier, **only 51% of visits to cultural institutions were planned before arriving in Ireland**, which means half of all international visitors made their decision to attend during their holiday. This means arts organisations/events still have ample opportunity to viably promote cultural events to visitors already in the country/region: the key is to ensure information about your event is placed firmly in the visitor's path while they are here.

### BE ONLINE

More and more people are researching, planning and booking holidays online these days, bypassing the traditional route of travel agent/tour operator organised holidays. It is VITAL to have your **website** fully up to date as far in advance as possible. It is most people's first point of reference about you, so it must be

- Up to date
- Easy to find
- Easy to navigate

Of course, people may not know your name and your website address, so **search engine optimisation** is key. Ensure your website includes a "Visit" section with information on your local area, and that keywords that people might use to search for your area are included on your site, in page descriptions, meta tags and so on.

**Referrals** are also a key source of website traffic – ask your audience to post positive comments about your organisation/event on Facebook/ Twitter/ TripAdvisor, and ensure that you are listed on visitor-facing websites, particularly the discoverireland.ie website, on hotel and visitor attraction websites, and regional visitor websites.

**Online advertising** is a relatively inexpensive and effective way to drive new traffic to your website and your offering: Arts Audience has published a very informative report on how Galway Arts Festival's comprehensive Google Adwords campaign targeted at tickets sales, both from Ireland and abroad, which is available to read on the Arts Audience website.

**Mobile internet:** as smartphone ownership increases and wifi availability becomes more widespread, more and more people are accessing information on their phones while on holidays. This trend is only set to increase, so consider making your information available through these channels by creating an app or a mobile version of your website. At the very least you should have a robust social media presence: Facebook and Twitter receive substantial traffic via smartphones and actively encourage location-based posting.

These are just the tip of the online marketing iceberg. For more guidance on digital marketing, check out **Digital Arts Marketing Training**, a suite of online training materials created by Arts Audiences and tailored for the needs of Irish arts organisations. You can find out more at <http://artsaudiences.ie/marketingtraining>.

## BE AVAILABLE

To bring in those visitors that are already in your area but looking for something to do, having something on when those visitors approach your event/venue is vital. This is a challenge for venues in particular. For the visitor, consistent, **regular programming** is ideal: an event on the same night each week/month, or the same time daily in a long run.

**Ticket availability** is another issue for visitors: they find out a show is on in your venue they want to see... but they can't book tickets on your website, the phones are not answering and the door is shut. While your programme may take place at inconsistent times, do at least:

- Open your doors at consistent times
- Answer your phones at consistent times
- Open your box office at consistent times.

Fáilte Ireland has contracted with Ticketsolve Ltd. for a web-based ticketing solution, offering visitors access to ticket sales for any approved tour, activity or event. This new system affords companies the opportunity to sell their product and services throughout the national TIO network and directly via the Discover Ireland website: find out if it's possible to allocate tickets for your visitor-friendly event through this network for an additional visitor-friendly ticket outlet.

## YOU AND THE TOURISM SECTOR

Holidaymakers are much less likely to read local/national newspapers or listen to radio, so many of the traditional channels used by you to reach your audiences won't reach holidaymakers. That is why working with the tourism sector is vital if you are to successfully catch the attention of the visitors coming to your area. Following is a substantial list of ways in which you can work with tourism providers and tourism bodies, locally and nationally, to ensure your event is at the tourism table, from low-cost local involvement to fully imbedding your event in the national tourism sector.

### START LOCAL

#### Local infrastructure

Place flyers/posters in hotels, b+bs, local cafes and restaurants. Ask if you leave flyers in hotel lobbies – but also in hotel rooms, under the coffee bill, even in the local taxis. You can return the favour by having links to local tourism facilities on your website (and in your venue if you have one).

#### Tourism Information Offices

There is an extensive network of Tourist Information Offices around the country, some seasonal, but many open on a year-round basis and the first port of call for many visitors. You should call in and say hello once a month, drop in flyers/brochures and, if possible, provide tickets for TIO staff to sell to visitors.

#### Familiarisation trips

Familiarisation trips involve inviting the local tourism trade to your venue/event. Talk to your local Fáilte Ireland office to get a list of hoteliers/trade in your area. If you're a venue, organise a glass of wine and a tour on a quiet night, ideally early in the week which is better for those working in the tourism sector. Add them to your Opening Night list. If you're a festival, invite all local tourism trade to your Festival launch.

#### Tickets for frontline staff

Offer last minute unsold seats to TIO staff and hotel receptionists – they don't earn much, they'd love a night out, and they'll remember your venue/event when next offering suggestions to a guest.

#### Group ticket deals

Talk to your local hotels about any large groups they have coming in, and offer them a special rate to your visitor-friendly event. Don't forget conference venues and organisers – they're often looking for night entertainment for their conference attendees.

#### Local events: get involved

Knit yourself and your event/venue into the fabric of the town by being an active participant in local events: Tidy Towns, Chamber of Commerce, and local anniversaries and celebrations.

#### Consider co-operative marketing

Visitors want a mix of experiences and attractions on their holidays, so consider approaching appropriate local businesses about jointly promoting an event: e.g. talk to the local surf school if you've got a season of surfing films coming up: perhaps you could both sell a package of a film ticket and a surf lesson! Speak to your local hotel to create a night's stay, evening meal and event ticket offer, and so on.

## GROW WITH YOUR AREA

### Tourism Content System (TCS)

The discoverireland.ie and discoverireland.com sites received 13 million visitors in 2009.

By sending your event information and images to Fáilte Ireland - via [webmaster@failteireland.ie](mailto:webmaster@failteireland.ie) - your information will appear on these sites. Information on more than 15,000 Irish tourism businesses is held in the system, including details of Irish accommodation, activities, attractions and events. The database is also geo-coded and map enabled, and includes details of thousands of Irish locations, cities, towns and villages. The information you provide may also be used by Tourism Ireland for their very active social media presence, so be sure to provide as much relevant information as possible.

### National events: get involved

Participate in high profile events with a national profile, particularly those events that are accompanied by significant promotional machinery. Being part of such programmes gets people through your doors and raises your profile among the tourism sector. Examples include Culture Night, Open House, and Heritage Week.

### Learn from your locals

Your regional tourism colleagues – Fáilte Ireland staff, local hotel managers, transport providers – can help you get a real sense of the visitor market to your area. By finding out what promotional activity they do, and when, you'll be better informed to invest your scarce resources appropriately.

### Swim with the tide

Find out about the personality and profile of your destination:

- Is your town busy with business travelers during the week but quieter at weekends?
- Is it a destination for weekend breaks?
- Is it known for literature / outdoors activity / food / etc?
- Is it twinned with a town/city in a key market?

Then work with this profile, not against it. Your local/regional tourism sector may already be working on a plan to attract visitors from particular markets, at particular times of year, for particular activities – you may be able to join in and benefit from the 'personality' and facilities already strong in your area. Tourism development is taking a more "destination" focus, so businesses need to work together to create and reinforce a defined sense of place.

## FIT INTO THE BIG PICTURE

### National tourism issues

If you are serious about regularly attracting visitors to your event, you need to be aware of long-term national and international issues and know what direction the national tourism agenda is heading. Current priorities are core markets (UK, US, Germany, France – Italy, Spain and Nordics to a lesser extent) and value for money.

To make sure you're up to date:

- Check out the Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland websites regularly.
- Sign up to get both the Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland ezines for industry information.
- Attend national tourism trade events to hear the latest trends and plans.
- Have a look at [discoverireland.com](http://discoverireland.com) and [discoverireland.ie](http://discoverireland.ie) every once in a while to see how Ireland and your area is being portrayed overseas.

### Major upcoming events

Be aware of major upcoming events – and how your event might be able to feed into them. Recent examples include Dublin Contemporary 2011 and the Dublin Festivals Season, both of which were accompanied by major national and international marketing campaigns that benefitted all those involved, but also other events taking place in Dublin at the same time.

### Think beyond arts and culture

Large-scale public events such as the Volvo Boat Race, Ryder Cup, Tour de France – even Heineken Cup, Rugby World Cup - all have major visitor impacts and present opportunities. London Olympics 2012, the 1913 Lockout Centenary and the 1916 Centenary are all major events coming up which will have visitor and cultural impacts.

As noted earlier, visitors want a mix and variety of experiences while on holiday, so partnering with non-similar organisations in your promotion will yield better results. Rather than, for example, all the art galleries in the area coming together to create a brochure, why not take the lead and approach a hotel, restaurant/café and visitor attraction with a similar sensibility to your event and see if you could come up with a package for the ‘perfect day’ in your town?

### Tour Operators / Travel Agents

The internet has led to a massive increase in self-packaging of holidays, but Tour Operators /Travel agents still arrange tours, and provide advice, for those who don’t do DIY, and for large group events and meetings.

Incoming tour operators are the people who bring bus tour series into the country and would bring regular audiences to visitor-friendly events such as *Riverdance* and “dinner and a show” packages. They work with overseas travel trade: group organisers, special interest operators, corporate and incentive houses, and have influence and contracting power with suppliers (airlines, cruises, hotels, etc).

To be included on a tour operator’s programme, you would need to provide them with a discounted (commissionable) group rate, and they would then block-book capacity from you at least one year in advance.

Going after this kind of business is probably only worth considering if you have a long-running show/event with lots of capacity on a known tourist route. Tour groups can be volatile: numbers change at the last minute and a delay earlier in their schedule might mean that they cancel attending your event at the last minute. However, if you have the capacity, they can be a fantastic source of “top-up” audience, and might make the difference between good and great audience figures.

## CONSIDER A THREE YEAR PLAN

If you believe you have an event with a real visitor market potential, then consider undertaking a three-year plan to “crack” the tourism market. Cultivating a new audience is a long game, so we suggest starting small, learning and adapting as you go:

- Low-cost, high-impact activity in year 1
- Increased targeted investment in year 2
- Consistent investment and return in year 3 and beyond

### YEAR ONE: REACH OUT TO INCIDENTAL CULTURAL TOURISTS

Now that you’ve found out who is coming to your area, from where, when, and how they get here, you can get them to come INTO your venue/event instead of driving or walking by. A number of low-cost actions to reach incidental visitors already in your area are outlined on page 8 and 9.

### YEAR TWO: GROW DOMESTIC VISITORS

As noted earlier, Irish residents took 8million trips in 2010, and are a more easy-to-reach market than international visitors:

Find people like your current audience

Using the insights you have on your current audiences, target areas in the country where current attenders come from, or where people of a similar demographic live.

Avail of Fáilte Ireland regional supports

Fáilte Ireland in your region can advise and provide information, advice and guidance on what to prioritise regarding attracting visitors and what your region is already doing in this regard, particularly re domestic visitors, to ensure that you’re not working entirely in isolation.

Target a geographic area

Promote your event in the regions from which visitors come to your area – for example, if your region attracts urban dwellers trying to get away from it all, then increase your promotional activity in those source urban centres.

Collaborate with your neighbours

Working with a local accommodation provider is the most obvious collaboration that would yield domestic visitors: an accommodation and event package could be promoted by both parties to a broader combined base

Think beyond your local town: is there a similar event/venue in your region/destination with similar audiences with whom you could collaborate? Perhaps you could cross-promote to each other’s audiences, or provide a two-show ticket, where audiences come to your event one night and your partner’s event another night.

## YEAR THREE: TARGET OVERSEAS VISITORS

This is a much more substantial investment, as well as being difficult to see a direct response to your international marketing activity. However, if you strongly want to directly promote to international audiences, following are some suggestions:

### Consider relevant markets only

Concentrate your activities on those markets where the tourism sector is concentrating their resources. Tourism Ireland is focused on core markets at the moment – Britain, Germany, France, USA – so there's not much point you concentrating your time and resources on India.

### Know about access

Can overseas visitors get to you easily/cheaply? There is no point in targeting a particular region of UK, for example, if the direct flight has been cancelled. Routes change at quite short notice to keep a regular eye on access to your region.

### Talk to Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland – a lot

Your main tourism relationship will be with Fáilte Ireland, but if you need specific market knowledge, contact Tourism Ireland.

- Contact Fáilte Ireland about media visits and ask about including your event in visiting media's itinerary.
- Send press releases to Emma Gorman, Publicity Officer in Tourism Ireland, for media releases and consumer ezines: EGorman@tourismireland.com or industryopportunities@tourismireland.com. Give outline information as far in advance as you can - don't wait until you know every last detail – and offer competition prizes for media promotions.
- Don't send info directly to Tourism Ireland market offices overseas – send it via the Publicity Officer (staff changeover quite regularly, so your contacts may date). They need a constant stream of information so send them what you have: if they can use it, they will!

### Investigate co-operative marketing opportunities

- If you are programming something from an international source, do let the specific Tourism Ireland market office know about it: they may be able to leverage a bigger impact in the relevant market.
- If you do decide to invest in international advertising/promotion, ask Tourism Ireland for advice on where best to place it: they may be able to relate it into other promotional activity they are doing.
- Find out about co-operative marketing opportunities: register on [tourismireland.com/industryopportunities](http://tourismireland.com/industryopportunities) to view activity of Tourism Ireland overseas and how to get involved.
- Look at the [promotionsireland.ie](http://promotionsireland.ie) website to register for overseas promotions.
- Work with other providers to attach your offering to packages already being sold.

### Work your niche

This is probably the arts sector's biggest strength, and yet we forget to exploit it. We have significant international art form networks that are already a converted audience, so exploiting networks, special interest groups and the 'niche' aspect of your programme means you are pushing an open door

- Seek out similar venues and festivals, look for niche sites that promote your particular art form/type of event.
- Develop 'twin' relationships with artistic partners internationally – a very good example is Open House Worldwide <http://openhouseworldwide.org/>
- Talk to your international contacts about what media and tourism relationships they have in their market. There may be opportunities for Tourism Ireland to utilise those contacts to promote Ireland and your event, perhaps by inviting specific media to come to Ireland.

## TOP TEN TIPS FOR CULTURAL TOURISM

The level to which you engage with the tourism sector, and the time, energy and resources you put into attracting the visitor market will vary for each organisation, event or venue. Regardless of your level of engagement, culturally inclined visitors is a segment that should not be fully ignored. At the very least, we suggest you take on our top ten tips:

### **1. Talk to Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland**

The staff in your regional Fáilte Ireland office, and Tourism Ireland staff in the market offices, are incredibly well informed and are there to provide you with research, advice and resources. Use them!

### **2. Get to know your neighbours**

It's important to have a relationship with the visitor-facing businesses in your area. At the very least invite local tourism trade to your venue/event once a year.

### **3. Be on discoverireland.ie**

Upload your information through the Fáilte Ireland TCS system to ensure you are seen by 13 million visitors on discoverireland.ie / discoverireland.com.

### **4. Take good photos**

Photographs are one of the best ways to portray the audience experience at your event/venue. Take photos of people enjoying your event, not just the performers, to give potential visitors a real sense of the experience you are creating.

### **5. Don't send irrelevant information to Fáilte Ireland / Tourism Ireland....**

Press releases about an event happening next week... pages and pages of performer biographies... very detailed artists' statements... none of this is helpful to promoting your event to visitors.

### **6. ...but do send them key event facts**

Who, what, where, when and why of your event (briefly), how to book, and who your event might appeal to. Include a great image and a media story idea to make promoting your event easy.

### **7. Work your niche**

Remember that you have substantial international contacts and networks through your event programming. Concentrating on converting incidental tourists into ticket buyers is important, but if your programme or your contacts have potential to bring visitors to the area who otherwise may not have made the trip, this can have a direct economic impact on your area as well as your box office.

### **8. Set targets**

Track your activity and progress – otherwise how will you know it's working?

### **9. Learn from others**

Visit the Arts Audience website to read about the recent cultural tourism experiences of the Linenhall Arts Centre in Castlebar, The Model in Sligo and Galway Arts Festival.

### **10. Be patient**

Making inroads into the visitor market is a long game: it's not going to miraculously happen in one year. Keep at it.

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## **APPENDIX 1: WHO'S WHO IN TOURISM IN IRELAND**

### **Fáilte Ireland**

The national tourism development agency. Formed in 2003 under the National Tourism Development Authority Act to guide and promote tourism as a significant driver of the Irish economy. Fáilte Ireland provides strategic and practical support to develop and sustain Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourist destination. With offices across the country, Fáilte Ireland acts as a corporate resource for tourism professionals and service providers at local, regional and national levels.

[www.failteireland.ie](http://www.failteireland.ie) (trade site) / [www.discoverireland.ie](http://www.discoverireland.ie) (consumer site)

### **Tourism Ireland**

The agency responsible for the marketing of the island of Ireland overseas as a holiday destination. Established under the framework of the Belfast Agreement of Good Friday 1998 and jointly funded by the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive on a two to one ratio.

[www.tourismireland.com](http://www.tourismireland.com) (trade site) / [www.discoverireland.com](http://www.discoverireland.com) (consumer site)

### **Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB)**

A non-departmental public body of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment Northern Ireland, constituted under the Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992. Responsible for the development, promotion and marketing of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination.

[www.nitb.com](http://www.nitb.com) (trade site) / [www.discovernorthernireland.com](http://www.discovernorthernireland.com) (consumer site)

### **Shannon Development**

Shannon Development is Ireland's only regional economic development agency dedicated to promoting and developing the Shannon Region. It also serves as the regional tourism authority, developing new and existing visitor attractions and engaging in strategic marketing initiatives to make the Shannon Region a must-visit location for tourists.

[www.shannondevelopment.ie](http://www.shannondevelopment.ie) (trade site) / [www.shannonregiontourism.ie](http://www.shannonregiontourism.ie) (consumer site)

### **Dublin Tourism**

As of the 16th January 2012, Dublin Tourism, (heretofore a subsidiary of Fáilte Ireland) along with its services and staff, integrated fully into Fáilte Ireland. Dublin Tourism was an important driver of tourism in Dublin as well as a close collaborator with Fáilte Ireland in the on-going development of Irish tourism. [www.visitdublin.com](http://www.visitdublin.com)

### **Dublin Convention Bureau**

The business tourism unit of Dublin Tourism funded by the trade, local authorities and Fáilte Ireland. It is a non profit-making organisation and all of its funds are directed at promoting Dublin as a world-class business destination. [www.dublinconventionbureau.com](http://www.dublinconventionbureau.com)

### **Irish Tourist Industry Confederation (ITIC)**

The representative body of the Irish tourist industry, researching, producing data and reports, forecasting trends and influencing policy and strategic planning to shape the future of Ireland's tourist industry. [www.itic.ie](http://www.itic.ie)

### **Irish Tour Operators Association (ITOA)**

The Irish Tour Operators Association (ITOA) consists of over 30 leading companies, comprising tour operators, handling agents and destination marketing companies, who operate incoming travel and tours to the island of Ireland. Members package and promote various elements of the Irish tourism product for marketing overseas, and provide value-add services that require expert knowledge, marketing know-how and project management. [www.irishtouroperators.com/](http://www.irishtouroperators.com/)

### **Irish Travel Agents Association (ITAA)**

Founded in 1971, the representative body for Ireland Travel agents and Tour Operators, currently with approximately 170 members. [www.itaa.ie](http://www.itaa.ie)

## **APPENDIX 2: SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

The excellent **Research and Statistics section of the Fáilte Ireland website** features many reports on the Irish visitor market, with many references to the cultural sector. Some of the key reports are listed here. [www.failteireland.ie](http://www.failteireland.ie)

Annual Tourism Facts: featuring statistics and detailed information about tourism in Ireland based on research from Fáilte Ireland, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB). Specific regional reports are also available in the “Tourism Regions” page on the same website.

Visitor Attitudes survey: carried out at all air and sea departure points, it looks at visitor motivations, satisfactions and the fit between expectations and reality.

Tourism Barometer: Fáilte Ireland's annual state of the season survey. Done every 6 months (the latest available on the FI site is September 2011, so it's bang up to date), it is designed to provide an insight into tourism performance of the year to date and the prospects for the remainder of the season.

Overseas markets: overall and market-by-market data trends on overseas holidaymakers to Ireland.

Domestic Tourism Research: includes areas visited, expenditure, purpose of travel, type of accommodation and seasonality.

Marketing overview of the Domestic Market: data on the current market environment, the appeal of home holidays, planning and booking, and some emerging trends.

Regional Development Plans: regional-specific three-year development plans, outlining the tourism priorities for each region.

Cultural Tourism: making it work for you: strategy for cultural tourism developed by Fáilte Ireland in 2006 – perhaps a bit dated now, but still worth reading.

Do also check out the Failte Ireland business tools site, which offers free information and advice on marketing, business planning and more. [www.businessstools.failteireland.ie](http://www.businessstools.failteireland.ie)

The **Consumer Insights section of the Tourism Ireland website** contains profiles and marketing insights by specific markets, particularly Ireland's top four markets: Great Britain, Germany, France and the USA, including handy one-page profiles of **Sightseers and Culture-Seekers** in those markets. [www.tourismireland.com/Home/Consumer-Insights.aspx](http://www.tourismireland.com/Home/Consumer-Insights.aspx)

The **Irish Tourism Industry Confederation** also has a significant research section on its website which features excellent industry-focused research as well as a really interesting **Latest News** section. Worth having a regular read. [www.itic.ie/research.html](http://www.itic.ie/research.html)

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