

MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS INTERNATIONALLY

Do you already attract international visitors to your business? The answer for most businesses in the North East will be “yes, but not many”. 2004 figures revealed that of the 5.3 million trips to the North East, 540,000 or 10 per cent came from overseas.

While the domestic leisure market grows at a steady rate, growth in international visitors is increasing rapidly. International visitors tend to spend more and stay longer in the region than domestic visitors.

In 2005, the key international visitor markets for North East England were (in descending order from those making the most visits to the least):

	Germany		Spain
	Norway		Poland
	USA		Canada
	France		Belgium
	Irish Republic		Australia
	Netherlands		Sweden
	Italy		Denmark

(See the table in the ‘Languages mean business for the tourism industry’ toolkit section for number of visitors and spend)

What’s the right choice for your business?

Which one are you?

- Smaller hotel, guesthouse or B&B
- Large hotel
- Restaurant or cafe
- Attraction
- Transport provider



The type of business you run determines the different messages that you want people to hear, and the kind of people you want to hear them. You might wish to translate a menu or brochure, or keep a selection of international dictionaries behind your counter.

You need to target your marketing messages to the different groups of people that make up your potential customers.

You might like to localise your website for other target markets (for instance instead of .uk, why not use .de for users in Germany and .fr for users in France to gain more response to web searches for your organisation). For further information on website localisation see the additional information toolkit section.

- Do you want to target business travellers or leisure customers? And do you want to attract groups, families or couples?
- How will you tell them about your services? What sort of facilities will they be expecting, and what do you have to offer?

International business opportunities...

Golfing holidays are very popular with visitors from Japan and South East Asia and the region has many challenging and beautiful courses to suit all abilities and tastes.

There are a number of other activities that people look for on a short break. You could target those looking to walk, or cyclists from the Netherlands, or fishing enthusiasts from Scandinavia.

It could be that your customers are here on business and do not have a lot of time to spare, but might like to return and stay when they have more leisure time?

Perhaps visitors would stay longer and spend more if they were more aware of things to see and do? Remember that not everyone will be well informed or have done research in advance.

Maybe a leaflet or brochure translated into their first language might be all it takes?

Think about the international markets listed in this section of the toolkit. Consider which markets have direct transport routes into the North East including any new flight connections or shipping links and look at our section Gateways to North East England.

You probably already have international communication skills!

- You can use the language survey to discover your staff's language competence and deliver world class, superior customer service
- If you already have some experience of working in particular international countries or have good contacts with tour operators and travel agents abroad, use these to build your experience and improve your offer.

One NorthEast's Regional Language Network is working to promote a greater regional capability in language and cultural awareness skills for business and employment in the tourism and hospitality sector.

For more information see www.tourismnortheast.co.uk and www.rln-northeast.com

- Be open to recruiting future staff with language abilities to communicate with the markets you will be targeting.

Need advice on international communication?

One NorthEast's Regional Language Network can provide free information and advice on translation, website localisation, language coaching, cultural awareness briefings and sourcing accredited language service providers. Go to www.rln-northeast.com for more information.

Targeting customers in their own country

Marketing activity for your product or service in your target countries should be translated and localised (cultural adaptation) in terms of both content and design.

Messages are more effective when they are appropriate to your customer's understanding and cultural preferences. This may be very different from what works well in the UK market.

Marketing tactics include:

- Website marketing and Online Bookings
- Printed leaflets, inserts, direct mail and email campaigns
- Media advertising
- International tourism exhibitions and fairs
- International PR (mainly for larger hotels and attractions)

General marketing advice

For more information on general marketing tactics you can check the marketing section of the Tourism Business Toolkit, it's available at www.tourismnortheast.co.uk