



NORWICH

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Background

Norwich BID was established in November 2012 to enhance and promote the local environment for its businesses, employees, customers and the community. Now approaching the end of its first term, it has engaged in a range of activities that have added value to the local economy. It's four priorities are promoting Norwich, developing the Norwich experience, making Norwich cleaner and greener, and providing a stronger voice for local businesses.

The use of heritage in place branding in Norwich

Norwich is a city with a rich heritage; it was arguably the UK's prime city during medieval times and the place brand that has been embraced has cultural heritage at its core. However, whilst this identity is strong, there are other cities in England (such as York) that have similarly strong medieval credentials.

The place brand that has been developed is **Norwich: City of Stories**. City of Stories was conceived as a promotional campaign, but it proved so popular that it evolved into a brand. This popularity was tested extensively across a broad range of demographic groups and achieved high levels of approval universally.

The brand reflects local heritage from both a literary and industrial perspective. Norwich is one of only three UK cities to be awarded UNESCO City of Literature status and exhibits literary strengths that are both historical (Julian of Norwich in the 14th century) and contemporary (Ian McEwan and subsequent graduates from the UEA's MA in creative writing). The development of the Jarrold printing press (now celebrated along with the history of printing at the John Jarrold Printing Museum) underlines the industrial importance of literature to Norwich.

Norwich BID's role in place branding

Norwich BID has worked collaboratively with a range of partners, including the Destination Management Organisation (Visit Norwich), to develop and implement the City of Stories place brand. Enabling the brand to achieve traction required it to be tailored for different audiences; local businesses are an important audience and Norwich BID has been influential in engaging in this group.

From a practical perspective, the brand has been strengthened through increased uniformity across the promotional activity undertaken by a range of organisations. The brand became visible at transport

hubs and embedded through the presence of four murals within the city centre.

Applications (or apps) for smartphones have been developed as an integral part of the visitor offer. In addition to providing useful information, these apps are often interactive and involve web-mapping software that supports events such as literary trails and the city of ale trail. Norwich BID has also provided advice to Norwich Castle over a Heritage Lottery Fund application for restoration of the Castle's keep.

Benefits of heritage/place branding activities

Traditional impact measures such as footfall are monitored in Norwich. Data are then analysed to identify patterns and discern the extent to which specific events and festivals increase footfall within the city centre.

Modern technology has provided the opportunity to develop new metrics. For example, provision of free Wi-Fi to registered users across the city centre generates a rich source of information, both in terms of the proximity of residence of those that register, and the frequency and times of day that they subsequently log on to the network.

Ultimately, the ambitions are to increase visitor numbers, extend their dwell time, and increase their expenditure during their visit.

Challenges to delivering heritage/place branding activities

Authenticity is essential to the development of a credible place brand. Norwich was able to achieve this because of its indisputable literary heritage, but was also conscious not to present literature as something that was exclusively historical. The brand responded to this desire by extending the strapline to "Norwich City of Stories...come and write yours".



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