



Background

Worthing BID was first established in 2008. the priorities agreed at that time were:

- A cleaner and well maintained town centre
- A safe and welcoming town centre
- A vibrant and well-marketed town centre.

Based on analysis of the BID's 2007 business plan, the BID was assessed through the search term frequency analysis as exhibiting 'heritage without place branding'. However, the activities of the BID in the intervening years, captured in this case study, suggest that the BID is increasingly involved in place branding.

The visitor economy is considered to be very important to the BID area. The BID reported that that the three most important objectives are:

- Keeping the public realm clean and tidy
- Increasing visitor numbers from further afield
- Increasing footfall from local residents

Worthing BID's role in place branding

The BID sees maintaining Worthing's historic role as an historic market town as part of its role. It would also like to assume greater involvement in promoting tourism and to more actively protect the hotel and hospitality industry.

Place branding activities are important to the BID as it seeks to build a sense of pride in the town and encourage customers to visit the businesses the BID represents more frequently. The BID supports activities in pursuit of this objective, such as the reinvigoration of the town market, which celebrates the heritage of the town.



The BID has played a key role in reintroducing the 'I [heart] Sunny Worthing' brand. Although it is possible that this will prove to be a temporary, as Adur & Worthing Councils has been considering the introduction of a new brand for some time.

The BID's brand is promoted through welcome banners on the approach to the town, on town centre rangers' t-shirts, on branded buckets, spades and deckchairs at the beach, and through a loyalty card that entitles holders to discounts at local retailers and enables the BID to develop an enhanced understanding of the customer base.

Heritage and place branding in Worthing

The town has a prominent heritage asset in the historic pier, plus three theatres and the oldest working cinema in the UK. Visual images all feature the historic Dome cinema or pier. Images of the Dome are also being used on some buses.

As a coastal town, Worthing also has considerable fishing heritage. In recent years, the BID has supported a community co-operative called Catchbox Worthing. Catchbox has linked local fishers with local customers to develop sustainable incomes for fishers and awareness of sustainable food sourcing.

The BID considers it to be beneficial for the town to invest in place branding activities involving heritage. A giant deckchair adorned with the 'I [heart] sunny Worthing' brand celebrates Worthing's heritage as a seaside resort. Visitors often take photographs on the chair and post on social media, which has generated positive coverage.

Involvement with other organisations

Adur & Worthing Councils, the local Chamber of Commerce, Hospitality Association, PubWatch, and ShopWatch are involved in place branding. The Councils take a clear lead on cultural heritage, and there is scope to coordinate the activities of all interested parties more effectively.

The benefits of place branding and heritage

The BID considers that investing in place branding activities is beneficial for Worthing and that heritage and place branding activities are valuable in making the town distinctive, so that visiting is a leisure experience rather than just the purchase of goods and services.

The BID is trying to increase footfall as businesses want to see more people through their doors. Footfall is monitored on an hourly basis, and has increased in the last year.

The performance of shops and vacancy rates of units are monitored; these measures have also improved this year.



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