

The Production of an IQM Strategy and Three Year Action Plan for Wrexham County Borough

Final Project Report

APPENDICES

Peter Lane, Tourism Planning and Leisure Consultancy Services

in association with

**The University of Wales Aberystwyth
and
The Tourism and Planning Practice**

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Appendix 1

Strategies that Impact on the delivery of Tourism within Wrexham County Borough

Strategy review

This section of the report discusses the relevance of existing strategies impacting upon Wrexham County Borough. Although there are a large number of strategies and policies that must be taken into account, and indeed impact to varying degrees on tourism in Wrexham CB, those that are most relevant to this IQM strategy for quality tourism development are as follows:

Wrexham CBC Strategies	Regional and National Strategies	Specific IQM Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wrexham CBC Unitary Development Plan ▪ Wrexham CBC Corporate Strategy ▪ Wrexham CBC Rural Development Strategy ▪ Wrexham CBC Community Action Programme ▪ Wrexham CBC Countryside Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan: WAG ▪ Achieving our Potential: WTB ▪ Action Plan for the Countryside Experience: WTB ▪ Tourism Strategy North Wales: Planning Tomorrow's Tourism Today ▪ Wrexham TGA Strategy¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Towards Quality Rural Tourism: Integrated quality management (IQM) of Rural Tourist Destinations ▪ Towards Quality Urban Tourism: Integrated Quality Management (IQM) of Urban Tourist Destinations ▪ Towards Quality Coastal Tourism: Integrated Quality Management (IQM) of Coastal Tourist Destinations

Table 1: relevant strategy documents

It would be beneficial at this stage to look briefly at each of the above to establish the relevance of each to tourism development within Wrexham CB. Of necessity, tourism impacts upon many issues controlled at local, regional and national level and features to greater or lesser degrees in strategies and policies not specifically aimed at a 'tourism audience'. Because of this, it is important that Unitary Authorities such as Wrexham work in an integrated, cross-departmental fashion.

1. Wrexham CBC Unitary Development Plan

Any tourism development work in Wrexham CB must succeed within the parameters set out by the UDP as the accepted document for overall development within the geographical boundary of Wrexham CB. A UDP, now in place in every Unitary Authority in Wales, covers all aspects of the Council's remit. Its impact upon tourism and community development is wide, covering as it does accommodation development, community resources, facilities and amenities and access to the environment.

The Wrexham CBC UDP has a specific section entitled '*Community and Leisure Facilities, and Tourism*' (section 9, p54) which indicates that tourism within Wrexham Council is an important asset: many UDPs have no specific mention of tourism as a

¹ Currently entitled Wrexham, Llangollen and Dee Valley TGA Strategy

means of economic development. It is apparent that Wrexham CB already exhibits a commitment to quality provision recognising as it does the need for sensitive new development; limited 'out of community development' and the preference for old buildings to be renovated and converted to visitor accommodation in place of new build. It is this kind of overall commitment by policy makers that makes the introduction of IQM that much easier.

2. Wrexham CBC Corporate Strategy

The Corporate Strategy Statement 2003/2004 (reviewed annually) contains the Vision for Wrexham CBC. Particularly pertinent to an IQM approach to tourism are points 2, 3 and 4 of the overall vision:

Wrexham CB will have:

- Point 2: *revitalised distinct towns and villages and an attractive and viable hinterland*
- Point 3: *a modern, robust economy across all sectors; including health, education, commerce, tourism and manufacturing industries*
- Point 4: *an improving quality of life for its residents, with an emphasis on:*
- *Supporting access to a variety of educational and employment opportunities*
 - *Providing care for the more vulnerable in society*
 - *Providing a decent place to live*
 - *Conserving the environment*
 - *Balancing rural and urban needs*
 - *Promoting leisure, culture and arts*
 - *Promoting the Welsh language to encourage a bilingual society*
 - *Developing safer communities*
 - *Improving health and well being*

Also particularly relevant is point 2 of the strategic aims of Wrexham CBC:

'to work with communities to develop a sense of belonging and shared understanding of their needs...' (p5)

In addition, the corporate policy priorities (p7) again highlight the need for an IQM approach as it specifically states that the Wrexham CBC policy priorities *'cut across service and departmental boundaries and progress in their achievement will be dependent upon collaborative working'* (p7). In particular for tourism, Wrexham CBC have prioritised:

Maximising the benefits of tourism by promotion and sustainable development of a quality product and infrastructure and through raising the profile of Wrexham as a visitor destination and as a venue for major events...'

Again, this is illustrative of the need for an IQM approach as the sustainable development of tourism of necessity involves a far wider definition of ‘tourism’ than is usually the norm amongst policy makers.

3. Wrexham CBC Rural Development Strategy

Although concentrating solely on the rural areas of Wrexham CB, the Rural Development Strategy is equally applicable in its aims and objectives to the more urban areas of the county.

Despite acknowledging the ‘*council’s effective and well regarded tourism development strategy*’², the Rural Development Strategy goes on to recognise that:

‘scope exists for adding value to the development of the rural tourism product...’ (p3)

Further, within the five strategic themes adopted by the strategy, tourism features strongly:

Theme 3: Sustainable tourism: encouraging high value tourism in the rural areas in a sustainable manner.

With the three operational objectives under this theme in the main mirroring the already well established WTB and Wrexham CBC objectives for tourism development, based as they are around ‘distinctiveness’, ‘integration’ and ‘sustainable tourism’, the Rural Development Strategy, in essence, tells us nothing new. It does however serve a valuable purpose in highlighting the importance of tourism as an economic driver in rural areas and the subsequent need for an approach that makes such development sustainable in the long term: an IQM approach is particularly suited to this objective.

4. Wrexham CBC Community Action Programme

From the point of view of the purpose of this document, the most useful aspect of the Community Action Programme is the fact that it has set in place workable mechanisms for a programme of community involvement in tourism development as discussed as a requirement of IQM in the ‘Monitoring Process’ section of the main report pages 29 to 42.

Having said that, the six strategic priorities and cross cutting principles of this Action Programme are integral to the underlying ethos of IQM:

The six strategic priorities being to make Wrexham CB:

- A safe place
- A healthy caring place
- A place where children and young people are valued
- An economically prosperous place

² Now superseded by the Wrexham, Llangollen and Dee Valley TGA Strategy

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- A place that cares for the environment
- A place that values learning

With the cross cutting themes identified for these being particularly relevant to an IQM approach: sustainability; fairness and equality; citizenship; social inclusion; bilingualism; partnership and Welsh culture and heritage.

It is advisable that the structures developed for community consultation and forums by the Wrexham Community Strategy Partnership are utilised by tourism managers within Wrexham as an accepted and workable method for gaining community participation in the IQM process.

5. Wrexham Countryside Strategy

As with the Rural Development Strategy, the Countryside strategy although specifically aimed at 'the countryside' has aims and objectives that are applicable across Wrexham CB. Tourism is of vital importance to the economic viability of the countryside, and indeed the countryside is of important experiential value to visitors.

Key points of Wrexham's vision statement for the countryside are relevant to tourism and in particular to IQM and tourism:

- *Local communities will have safe, easy access to their local countryside, with the option of using a well maintained and regular public transport network or accessing those facilities on bike, foot, horse or car*
- *Countryside will extend from the rural areas into the towns and will be accessed through a well maintained public rights of way system, local green space, country or urban park or linear long distance path*
- *Residents and visitors will be well informed and confident about visiting the countryside with a range of countryside literature on what to do in the countryside supported by an online internet countryside information service*

Wrexham CBC should encourage more linkages to be made between use of the countryside and its produce by visitors and the subsequent possibilities for utilising tourism as an economic driver within rural communities and the environment itself: the use of what is now termed 'countryside capital'³.

6. The Wales Spatial Plan

In 2004 the Welsh Assembly Government published its 'direction of travel for Wales for the next 20 years' in the form of a spatially based development plan. The vision for Wales is one that is:

³ See for example the Countryside Agency report on 'Countryside Capital and its links to Rural Tourism', Garrod, Youell and Wornell 2004.

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‘...aiming for a dynamic, prosperous and inclusive Wales, where our heritage and environment are valued and where we work together with our neighbours to achieve sustainable development across Wales’ (p1)

Underpinning this vision are a set of values and objectives that are highly beneficial to a tourism destination looking to implement an IQM approach to development as they, albeit in different language, mirror the aims and objectives of IQM in its broadest sense. WAG illustrate these as:

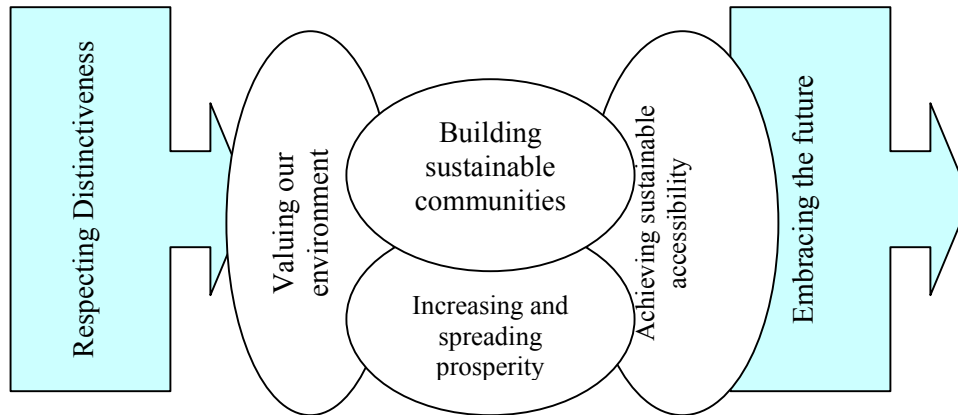


Figure 1 : Values and objectives of the Wales Spatial Plan, WAG 2004

Given that it is to this document that Unitary Authorities across Wales will be expected to work, it is pleasing to note the prominence of IQM values within it.

7. Achieving our Potential: A tourism strategy for Wales

Adopted by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2000 (currently under review), the national tourism strategy for Wales highlights four themes as central to the successful achievement of the strategy's objectives. In relation to this document, the themes identified are integral to the successful deployment of an IQM approach to tourism development in Wrexham CB.

The national tourism themes are:

- *Sustainability* – tourism must be developed responsibly if it is to achieve wider economic, environmental and cultural benefits for Wales
- *Quality* – tourism must be responsive to the needs of the consumer and the industry must adapt its products accordingly
- *Competitiveness* – tourism is becoming increasingly competitive locally, nationally and internationally. The industry in Wales must seek innovative ways to achieve its full economic potential

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- *Partnership* – tourism is a fragmented industry. Effective working relationships are needed to raise the status and prosperity of the industry

These themes are reflected in strategies across Wales, particularly relevant in this instance to those strategies of Tourism Partnership – North Wales and the Wrexham TGA strategy.

8. Action Plan for the Countryside Experience

Produced by WTB in summer 2004, this action plan concentrates on the tourism experience in the countryside of Wales. Again, however, as in the Wrexham Countryside Strategy and the Wrexham Rural Development Strategy, many of its aims and objectives will be pertinent across both the rural and more urban areas of Wrexham CB.

The vision propounded by this Plan mirror those both of the national tourism strategy for Wales, Achieving our Potential and the Wales Spatial Plan. It concentrates on the quality of visitor experience and the potential of economic benefits for host communities, with strategic priorities again mirroring those of other strategies. Perhaps more importantly as far as the remit of this document is concerned, the priorities outlined in the Action Plan for the Countryside Experience mirror those that are the foundation stones of an IQM approach to tourism development:

- *Meeting visitor needs*
- *Communication with markets*
- *Building self sustaining businesses and communities*
- *Integration*
- *Contribution to the sustainable rural economy*

9. Tourism Strategy North Wales: Planning Tomorrows Tourism Today

The vision for tourism in North Wales is defined as being to

...build a viable and prosperous tourism industry attracting visitors throughout the year that:

- *Provides an experience that exceeds visitors' quality expectations*
- *Celebrates the excellence of the superb North Wales environment*
- *Takes pride in the unique culture and heritage of North Wales and its people*
- *Is a major contributor to the local economy and community*

The key policy items underpinning these themes include competitiveness, IQM and sustainability and go on to stress that IQM will be locally based rather than a pan regional exercise. The main elements of IQM as defined in this strategy are:

- *Structures*
- *Visitor Experience*
- *Quality management process*

Section 8 specifically concentrates on the North Wales Borderlands⁴ tourism marketing area and includes an action plan illustrating the linkages between national and regional strategies. The strategy gives a basic competitor analysis and it is recommended that this is used as the basis for a more in depth competitor destination analysis as a part of the monitoring and research element of an IQM approach for Wrexham CB.

10. Wrexham TGA Strategy

Originally Wrexham CB was an integral part of the WTB designated regional TGA of Wrexham, Llangollen and Dee Valley. However, following a WTB review in 2004, Wrexham CB is now a regional TGA in its own right. The strategy developed for the initial, wider TGA is still relevant to the Wrexham CB TGA and it is to this strategy that Wrexham CBC still work.

Particularly relevant to this document is Section 8 which details specifically the aims and objectives of an IQM approach to tourism development. Further, it details suggestions of how the Wrexham CB area could use IQM to work towards a sustainable tourism destination. It is a sensible approach and much has been done in the Wrexham area following these guidelines.

The action plan for the Wrexham CB area contained within the TGA strategy is particularly pertinent to a broad IQM approach to tourism development and it is recommended that Wrexham CBC continue to utilise this in conjunction with the action plan contained within this document that is specific to the implementation of IQM in Wrexham CB.

- 11. i. Towards Quality Rural Tourism: Integrated quality management (IQM) of Rural Tourist Destinations**
- ii. Towards Quality Urban Tourism: Integrated Quality Management (IQM) of Urban Tourist Destinations**
- iii. Towards Quality Coastal Tourism: Integrated Quality Management (IQM) of Coastal Tourist Destinations**

The European Commission reports on IQM in tourism destinations, produced in 1999, were developed in response to the need to improve overall quality within destinations. IQM is described as

‘an approach to managing a tourism destination which focuses on a continuous process of improving visitor satisfaction, while seeking to improve the local economy, the environment and the quality of life of the local community’

The three reports produced by the EC cover coastal, rural and urban destinations, inferring that disparate approaches for IQM should be adopted dependent upon the

⁴ Wrexham CB is currently a part of the North Wales Borderlands TMA

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geography of the destination. In reality, the *process* should be the same in whatever and wherever the destination to allow comparison, measurement of success and exchange of best practice. Nonetheless, it is important that any IQM approach should be adapted to suit local circumstance.

The IQM reports produced for the Commission lack consistency and there is scope for them to be further refined to provide greater clarity and practicality. There is currently no clearly defined framework for all destination types, but it should be remembered that IQM is not a tick box in an action plan – it is a process that should become a continuous way of working.

The critical components for any destination are:

- The need for a vision
- The need for a strategy
- The need for leadership
- The need for partnership
- Effective delivery
- Effective review and monitoring processes
- A fully inclusive and integrated approach to service planning and delivery

It is the aim of the project report to build on the IQM approach propounded by the EC reports and to provide a framework for strategic development complemented by an Action Plan for the introduction of an IQM approach to tourism development specific to the Wrexham county borough area.

Appendix 2

Marketing Report

Brief:

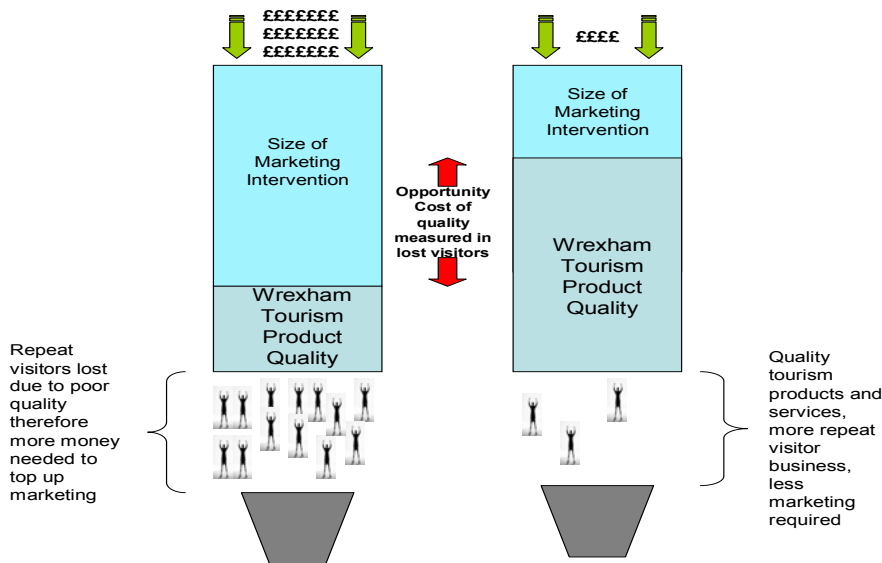
To identify an innovative approach to tourism marketing in Wrexham TGA

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Wrexham County Borough have recognised that marketing does not sit outside other general destination management responsibilities of a local authority, but rather it is an integrated part of it's tourism output. This approach acknowledges that managing the visitor experience is made of both demand and supply side activities. The demand side in creating a powerful image or brand of what the Borough stands for in people's minds (this can be the indigenous population; potential inward investors as well as tourists – day and staying) and supply side measures that meet the expectations of all those stakeholders in terms of the product supplied at the point of delivery – whether it be the warm welcome offered by the receptionist at a hotel, the cleanliness of public toilets, the efficiency of local road networks and signs or the new town centre children's event.
- 1.2 The two sides of responsibility come together to create a seamless visitor experience. However, the one driving and integrating force that should fuse both sides of the visitor equation together is "quality". This can be defined in many ways but usually from the point of view of meeting and exceeding customer expectations; making sure the promise meets reality or when a visitor's first visit is not their last.
- 1.3 The IQM strategy for Wrexham County Borough has concentrated on a four stage process that will leave as its legacy an integrated and practical approach to searing quality into the tourism value chain and its business processes in both the public and private sectors:
- Work and plan together
 - Know your area
 - Know your business/destination
 - Acting on results

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- 1.4 These “moments of truth” in the quality assurance process all impact upon the successful delivery of marketing – which is not the sole responsibility of the County Borough.
- 1.5 It was agreed by all parties during the consultation process that without a quality visitor experience across all tiers of their interaction with destination Wrexham, effective and sustainable marketing of the County Borough was going to be a difficult task. This view can be demonstrated by the “leaky bucket” analogy depicted below:



- 1.6 Here, successful marketing is shown as a direct function of the quality of the destination as a whole. The better the tourism products and services, the more powerful the visitor experience, the less hard marketing has to work to bring the visitor back. Deterioration in quality leads to more disappointed visitors who are unlikely to return and these lost pieces of business fall out of the destination taking their investment wealth with them. The only way to make up for decreasing visitor returns is to pump more money into marketing to attract more new business.
- 1.7 However, this is not a sustainable cycle of investment. Wrexham have recognised this and implemented a quality strategy to create a robust position of managed growth through quality concentrated initiatives. This will deliver long term sustainable success to the destination and increased competitiveness from the County Borough’s own tourism value chain.

2.0 Tourism Audit Overview

2.1 In relation to the compilation of an IQM strategy for Wrexham a significant number of background papers were identified and studied for relevance and context. In relation to the marketing overview, the following documents have been reviewed:

- Wrexham County Borough Tourism Statistics 2003-4
- Wrexham County Borough STEAM results 1998 -2003
- North Wales Visitor Survey 2003
- Wrexham County Borough Tourism Strategy 1998 -2003
- Wrexham, Llangollen and Dee Valley TGA

2.2 One to one interviews have also taken place with a variety of tourism practitioners in both the public and private sectors and a review of marketing materials both traditional and new media.

3.0 Current Marketing Direction

3.1 The WTB deliver their marketing work through UK Marketing. The priority areas for promotion are mostly within a two-hour drive time, the M4 Corridor, Midlands, North West, Hampshire and the West Country. TV press and direct marketing are all upweighted in these areas. Secondary areas are defined by the media channels with reference to coverage on digital platforms, national press and magazines.

3.2 The leading, generic holiday proposition for Wales is “The Big Country” which started back in 2001 and is currently organically evolving into a new but related creative approach. The campaign *“promotes the real Wales and speaks from the heart of Wales to capture the authentic sense of the place, people, culture and the true visitor experience.”*

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3.3 This holistic position is reinforced with secondary propositions around “Activity Product Campaigns”. These include:

- Adventure Wales
- Cycling Wales
- Mountain Bike Wales
- Walking Wales
- Fishing Wales

Other activity marketing is also carried out around golf and horse riding and outdoor activities generally.

3.4 WTB are currently evolving their targeting approach to visitor segmentation, looking to define by attitudes and motivations rather than demographics. This study tried to illicit further information from WTB on this matter, but were repeatedly unsuccessful in establishing contact with the UK marketing team and no calls were returned to us. Segmentation is important because the purpose of segmentation is to split the whole audience of a specific market into groups with different wants & needs with respect to a product/service. This then enables the development of a set of messages that fit the wants & needs of particular segments and also selection of a target group, which is the group that shows the best fit with one specific brand of this product/service.

3.5 Segmentation therefore enables more targeted marketing – communication that only targets people who have an interest in a specific brand of product/service. Segmentation also enables the development of a tone of voice that a certain target group is likely to respond to. This results in better effectiveness of marketing communications, e.g. more responses per advert.

3.6 Segmentation techniques such as socio-demographic profiling (Demograf/ CAMEO) start with post codes. Neighbourhoods are grouped together into groups - according to what stage of the life cycle they are in, how affluent they are, whether they own their home, etc.

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- 3.7 It assumes that people of similar socio-economic profile also have similar wants and needs and it also assumes that people of different socio-economic profile have dissimilar wants and needs. One just has to think of ones own neighbourhood to know that is not true. In the same neighbourhood you will find people who go on holiday to a nice cottage in the UK every year and people who would never dream of having their main holiday anywhere else that the South of France.
- 3.8 The second drawback is that socio-demographic profiling is usually based on the 'current customers'. A database of current visitors is profiled using postcodes and then other neighbourhoods with the same socio-economic profile are targeted. This means the market is not being broadened. There might be a group of people out there who would use a certain brand of product/service - but they don't really know what it offers them.
- 3.9 Lifestyle profiling has been used in a wide variety of industries for years. This is due to the fact that a person's outlook on life and general motivation have often been found to show a close link as to which brands of products and services they would use. There are strong distinct differences between the different lifestyle segments in terms of what they like to do in their leisure time and what type of holidays they are taking.
- 3.10 Lifestyle segmentation therefore enables us to investigate the whole market rather than basing decisions on current visitors only. This enables the broadening out of the market and appeal of the product. Lifestyle segmentation is also more effective on deriving distinct groups of consumers with very different attitudes and behaviour. We can then select the groups that show the best fit with the Wrexham product and could also target different groups with different aspects of the product if necessary.
- 3.11 Our recommendation is to ensure that the segmentation profiling predicated upon lifestyle and not more simplified geodemo/socio/economic models and in fact uses commercial modelling tools (such as TGI BMRB) as this tends to be more intuitive and of the moment than some public sector methodologies. (Please refer to the tourism & planning practice

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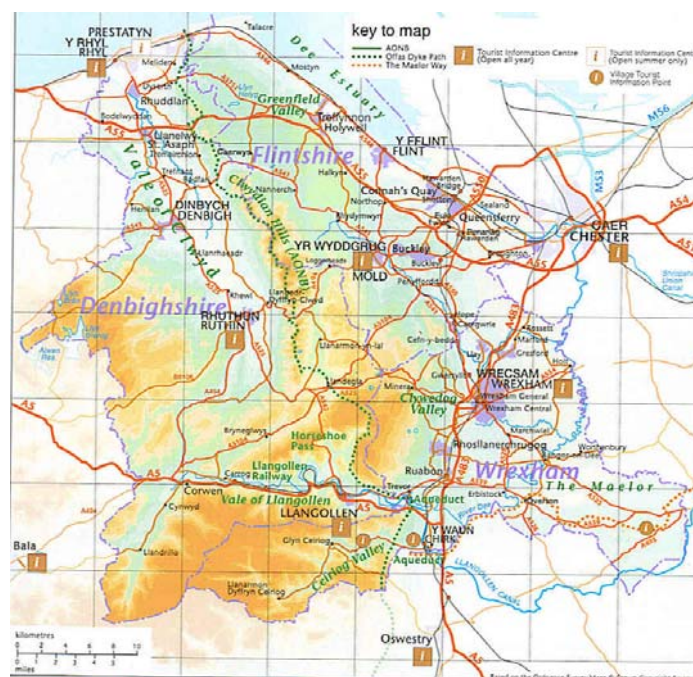
if you wish to pursue lifestyle segmentation methodologies further outside the WTB model).

4.0 Delivery mechanisms in Wales

4.1 The WTB works in a marketing (and operational) partnership with four regional tourism partnerships – north, mid, south– west and south- east Wales. This project concerns itself with one of those, the Tourism Partnership North Wales (TPNW) founded in 2002. Each regional partnership is responsible for working with WTB on Marketing Area Partnerships (MAPs). In North Wales, 5 MAP's have been established including:

1. Isle of Anglesey
2. Snowdonia Mountains and Coast
3. North Wales Coastal Resorts West
4. North Wales Coastal Resorts (East)
5. The North Wales Borderlands

4.2 The North Wales Borderlands includes the three administrative areas of Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham.



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MAP's bid for marketing monies to TPNW over and above their own baseline activities. For an award, consideration must be given to the North Wales Tourism Strategy and the Marketing Area Action Plan. A nominal sum of £50,000 is allocated to each MAP but bidding is competitive.

4.3 The North Wales Tourism Strategy identifies 3 core priorities:

- strengthen the unique sense of place;
- improve the quality of tourism facilities; and
- reduce seasonality across the region.

4.4 Relevant Promotion themes are:

- promoting off peak short breaks and additional activity holidays;
- retaining existing markets to help manage structural change;
- encouraging the use of IT within marketing; and
- improving the visitor welcome.

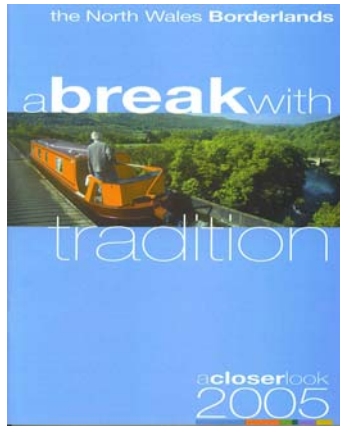
4.5 North Wales are forecasting tourism growth to increase by 6% per year by above average increases in the short break market.

5.0 Wrexham Specific Context

5.1 Wrexham's tourism strategy (1998 – 2003) examines both product development matters (supply side) and marketing (demand side). It was noted that Wrexham was one of the very few Welsh local authorities that dropped its administrative name in favour of the marketing name "The Welsh Borderlands". In 1996 this became the "North Wales Borderlands" in line with the WTB strategy. The Wrexham marketing debate centred around 3 core themes:

- The Town Centre
- North Wales Borderlands
- Major Events

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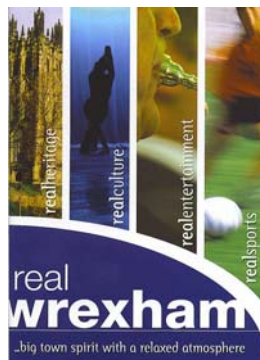


5.2 Overall this sought to ensure the town centre was an integral offer of the Wrexham visitor experience.

5.3 An indication of the type of visitors coming to Wrexham can be found in the North Wales Visitor Survey 2003. Those visitors were described overall as mature middle class “empty nesters” and the key market for Wrexham. A large proportion of visitors to Wrexham are day trippers.

6.0 Branding Issues

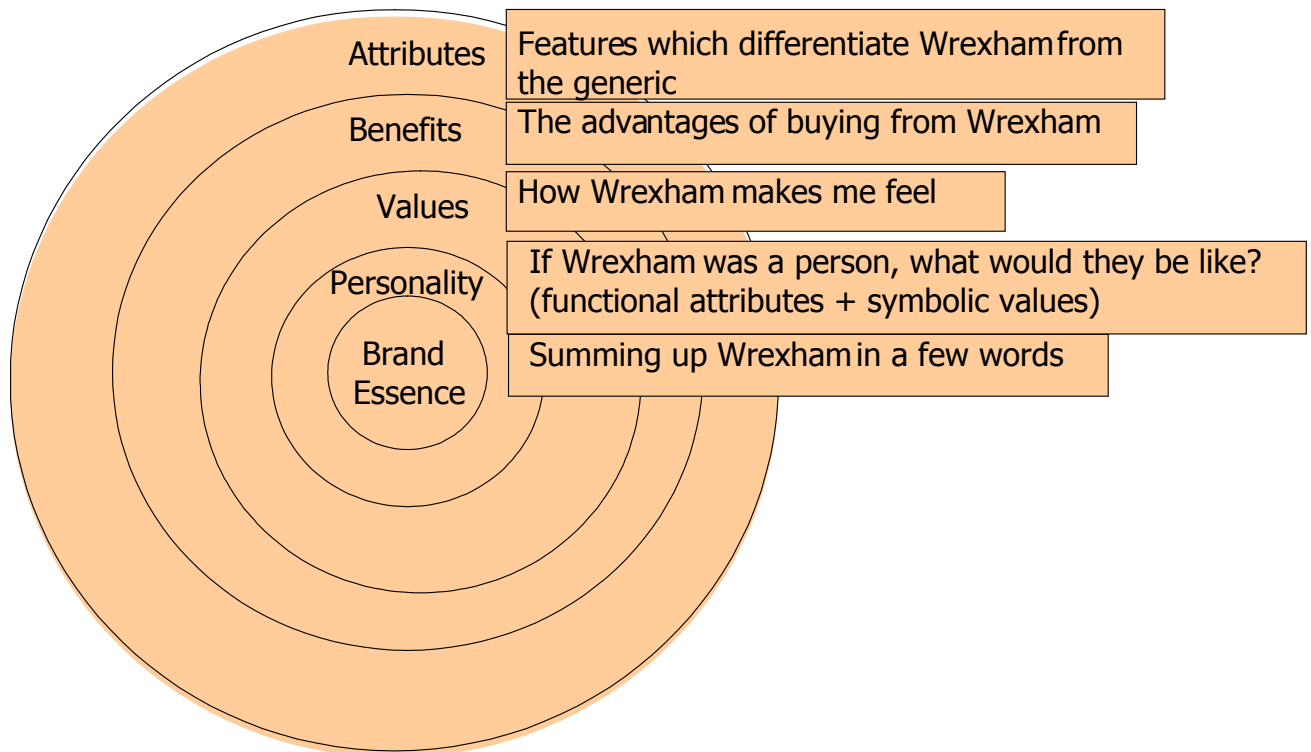
6.1 Wrexham is now considering, with the active support of the private sector engaging its own local authority level marketing activity. The first output of this marketing development work is the Wrexham guide:



6.2 Whilst this has established some destination precedent it does not appear to have emerged through a strong creative process of brand research and action planning. We would recommend a destination brand workshop and mapping exercise be undertaken to qualify the enduring creative that will capture a compelling brand for Wrexham. This

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should be done using a proven and robust methodology such as the following brand wheel process:



6.3 This evolutionary process has a number of benefits:

- firstly it sets the tone for the brand and the creative marker for how it will be interpreted and evolve;
- secondly, this builds the destination brand and the way it is positioned on a robust framework that is difficult to challenge;
- thirdly, the very process engages with the private and public sector and brings education and ownership to the final interpretation; and
- fourthly, the cost of this work can be amortised across the years of its implementation and its mediums (print, web, advertising, flyers, pop ups, direct mail, event banners etc etc).

6.4 This work should be complemented with some external independent consumer/visitor facing focus group work. As the visitor is the purchaser in the model that is tourism, not the vested interest stakeholders operating within the destination itself.

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- 6.5 It is also important at this stage to consider the competitive position of other destinations and attractions to critically understand the drivers for tourism success. It is important to understand that destinations are generally mature market facing propositions, having been in existence for hundreds if not thousands of years. As such they are commoditised constructs. That is to say they all share many attributes that they claim are distinctive to themselves – such as high quality urban environments, unspoilt countryside, attractive coastline, good accommodation providers, an interesting events programme, attractions of varying types, places to eat and drink all easily accessible by train or car. The truth is that, functionally, destinations generally provide most of these products leading to similar visitor offers. Expressing difference therefore can only occur emotionally not by physical product range and this is where destination brands have been capturing practitioners imagination.
- 6.6 We will now examine what we mean by a destination brand as it is not necessarily the conventional view.

7.0 Destination Brands are not Mars Bars



- 7.1 Destination brands generate a set of expectations and images of a place prior to consumption. Destination brands are not like normal product brands as the interaction between consumer and place are very many and none can be controlled. Destination branding is not like product branding. When we talk about branding we are talking about “consumer trust”. Brands are powerful because they paint pictures in peoples minds and they consistently satisfy consumer needs. We trust brands because of this consistency – it allows us to develop a special relationship with the brand that leads to loyalty which brings repeat purchasing. This is why for instance so many people buy Heinz baked beans – they trust them to always taste the same.
- 7.2 Another example can be found by looking at the customer value chain behind the Mars Bar, the owners control the ingredients, packaging, supply chain, presentation and price – cumulatively these go towards creating a trusting relationship between chocolate bar and consumer. The relationship can be managed and brand values reinforced. Destination managers/promoters control few if any of these important factors – the train that runs late, the surly hotel receptionist, the attraction that is closed on Sunday, the litter in the streets, the poor restaurant food and the unclean toilets on the water front. In essence, they do not control the destination being experienced, and where consistency in that relationship is missing, trust is sacrificed. There is a greater chance of the relationship between visitor and destination to break down given the cumulative number of interactions that visitor will have with the place they visit. That is why destination brands really only exist in peoples minds and not in reality. Destinations can be

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creatively interpreted through a variety of mediums but an enduring brand based relationship is difficult to attain.

- 7.3 All destinations, Wrexham included, by their very nature are complex geo political manifestations. Other standard consumer products are not as multi dimensional in nature. It is therefore easier for products to find points of differentiation. Destinations are different from product or service brands because the number of consumer interactions with that destination are so great and trust cannot be reinforced in this fractured interaction of person and place.
- 7.4 Destination images are the means by which prospective consumers determine a destination's potential for satisfaction – the more favourable the image the greater the likelihood of choice. We need to think about Wrexham's current image and how people currently perceive it. Ries and Trout said “**positioning is a battle for people's minds**”. Real repositioning, which is what has been occurring in Wrexham over the last few years and will continue with the town centre redevelopment proposals is about infrastructural investment. The main issue facing Wrexham is one of lag between perception and reality.

“Image is perception, identity is reality”

- 7.5 This interpretation is reinforced by speaking to the private sector who in turn are the “front of house” operators dealing first hand with the visitor. A destination's image is crucial to its marketing success and the images used allow prospective consumers to determine a destination's potential for satisfaction – the more favourable the image the greater the likelihood of choice - one of the reasons the Lake District and its powerful imagery succeeds in attracting the numbers it does.
- 7.6 Destinations very rarely come with a zero base of understanding (other than perhaps the original New Towns) and this is expressed by the image continuum. This highlights that consumers are exposed to approx 3,000 brand messages a day – from the moment they

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get up to when they go to bed. People's perceptions of destinations come from the cumulative input of a place's long political, social, cultural and economic history.

7.7 From the image perspective, destinations are seared into our minds by 3 main sources of imprinting:

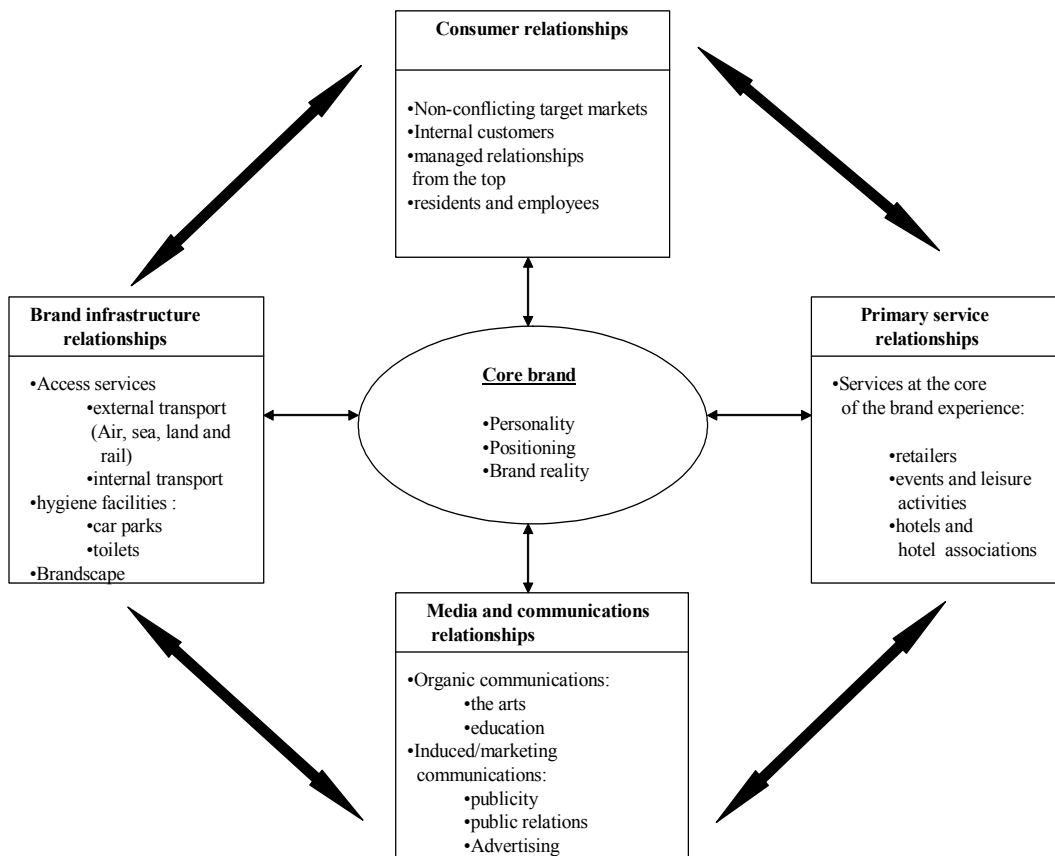
1. **Organic images** – representing the totality of existing knowledge of a destination formed by newspapers, radio, TV, news, films, documentaries, periodicals, novels, dramas, classes on geography and history.
2. **Induced Images** – are those that the destination and all its shareholders put into the market place in their own self interest.
3. **Complex image** – that is the final piece of the jigsaw that comes from an individuals direct experience with a destination.

7.8 Some destinations have stronger reputations than others because they have existed for longer as places for people to gather – particularly in a religious context Cathedral Cities (York, Durham), have a greater historical critical mass of population/businesses/attractions (Edinburgh), are regarded as capital and great trading cities (London), are places of special landscape qualities (National Parks) or have historical connections with a different time (Victorian coastal resorts). It will always be the case that some destinations have been quicker to market than others and take up a greater share of mind than others. The network marketing paradigm below recognises that place branding requires:

- investment in buildings and infrastructure – promising the brand experience suggested will match the reality;
- a strong network of stakeholder relationships who share a common vision of the brand and destination;
- careful selection of target markets; and
- service orientated approach to quality service delivery.

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7.9 Wrexham has shown many of these qualities in the regeneration work it is carrying out including the Ramada Plazza Hotel. However, Tourism requires still greater degrees of private sector engagement and the recognition of quality in the visitor experience (the IQM project).



7.10 Finally, we need to consider Wrexham's position in relation to its core tourism facing attractions. It has been argued that immediate or planned "step changes" are possible in the tourism performance of places by attractions investment – the argument of "if you build it they will come". In a very few instances, the confluence of opportunity, chance, bespoke funding, dynamic leadership or changing consumer interests has successfully come together to make a tourism attraction of its moment and a huge success. Examples of this would be the Eden Project (1million visitors a year) and perhaps Alnwick Gardens (450,000 visitors) both driven by visionaries (Tim Smit and The Duchess of Northumberland) supported by investor confidence and appealing to a broad market with a proposition that captures the imagination (in both cases the attractions development

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coincided with an ageing population interested in gardens and gardening that was also reflected in the expansive TV coverage at that time). These projects have indeed created powerful tourism legends and created an economic legacy to be admired. They demonstrate what can be achieved and the impact they can have on their local and sometimes regional economy, but the particular circumstances that made them flesh are not easily replicated.

- 7.11 The British landscape is littered with well intentioned tourism projects that have failed to meet up to expectations and have instead turned into white elephants or gone bankrupt taking all invested monies with it into administration. The Millennium Dome is perhaps the most well known failure, and that in a city of nearly 8 million people. Many other tourism projects have gone the same way initiated and sometimes kept alive by Heritage Lottery Money or local authority sponsorship. Insufficiently robust economic modelling, over ambitious visitor figure forecasting and perhaps over supply being the main reasons for closure. Tourism projects will always be put forward as exemplar regeneration projects because they not only appeal to local populations, they potentially bring in new visitors and their economic spend, but they also contribute to the repositioning of the destination where they are located which has spin off effects into other areas such as investor confidence.
- 7.12 Wrexham County Borough Council must listen to the concerns of the private sector about critical mass of tourism products, but at the same time, be mindful of the above and carefully consider the issues of substitution of visitors that can happen more readily in geographically smaller destinations.
- 7.13 So a case has been made that in fact few, if any, destinations have a critical uniqueness about them. At a broad level they contain essentially similar attributes. Wrexham for instance puts forward a variety of experiential propositions (not including accommodation) in its mini guide (A5 size):
- ✓ Town experiences
 - ✓ Art
 - ✓ Relaxation

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- ✓ Village life
- ✓ Rural Retreat
- ✓ Further afield
- ✓ Local Produce
- ✓ Fishing/Horse Riding/Walking/Outdoors
- ✓ Country Houses and Gardens
- ✓ Heritage/Christian Heritage
- ✓ Museums
- ✓ Waterways
- ✓ Racing/Football/Golf
- ✓ Events

7.14 Looking at this list and the products could be applicable to many other destinations. But how does the visitor rank those attributes and which of them are the most effective catalysts to make them take a holiday in a particular location?

8.0 Destination Attributes Discussed

8.1 VisitBritain have recently examined this area on what the visitor values taking a holiday in Britain. This was a piece of national research involving over 1,000 visitors who identified 32 separate attributes that contributed towards the holiday experience. These have been subsequently scored and mapped and we will now examine them in relation to the Wrexham holiday proposition. The attributes Wrexham can lay claim to are identified in yellow, which shows a good spread of coverage.

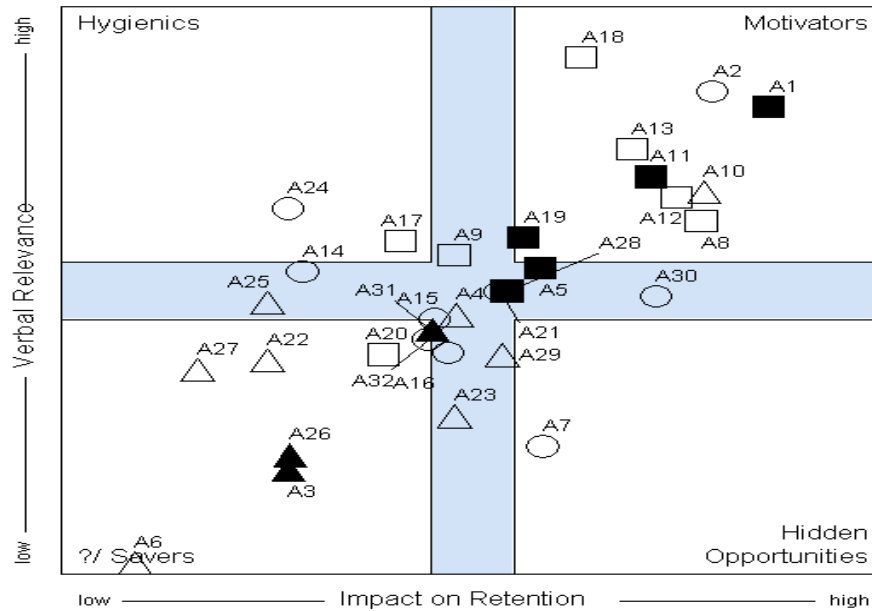
8.2 The VisitBritain results identify strengths, priorities and opportunities for destinations to consider in managing their product mix.

All attributes were plotted along two planes. One measuring the relevance of the attribute, the other how likely it would be to stimulate satisfaction and retention to the visitor. Attributes were scored as following:

Performance	
■	far above average
□	above average
○	average
△	below average
▲	far below average

8.3 Attributes therefore falling top right hand corner were attributes demanded by the visitor:

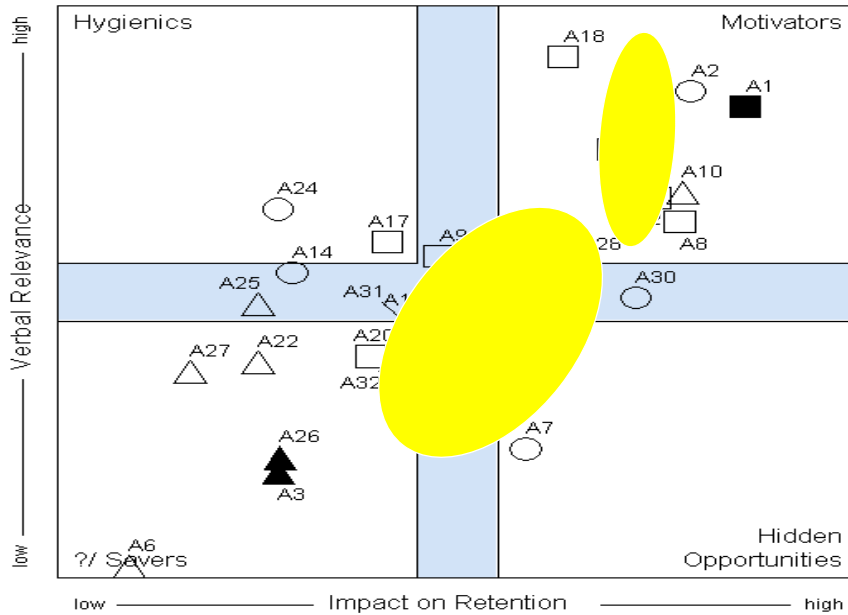
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Overall, the study showed visitors are looking for primarily unspoilt countryside, quality food and dining opportunities, somewhere they can visit several locations by car, interesting villages and market towns to visit, a choice of B&B's and guesthouses and history and heritage. Wrexham must ask itself, both singularly, and in association with the partners in the Borderlands campaign, how the tourism offer stacks up against this set of criteria.

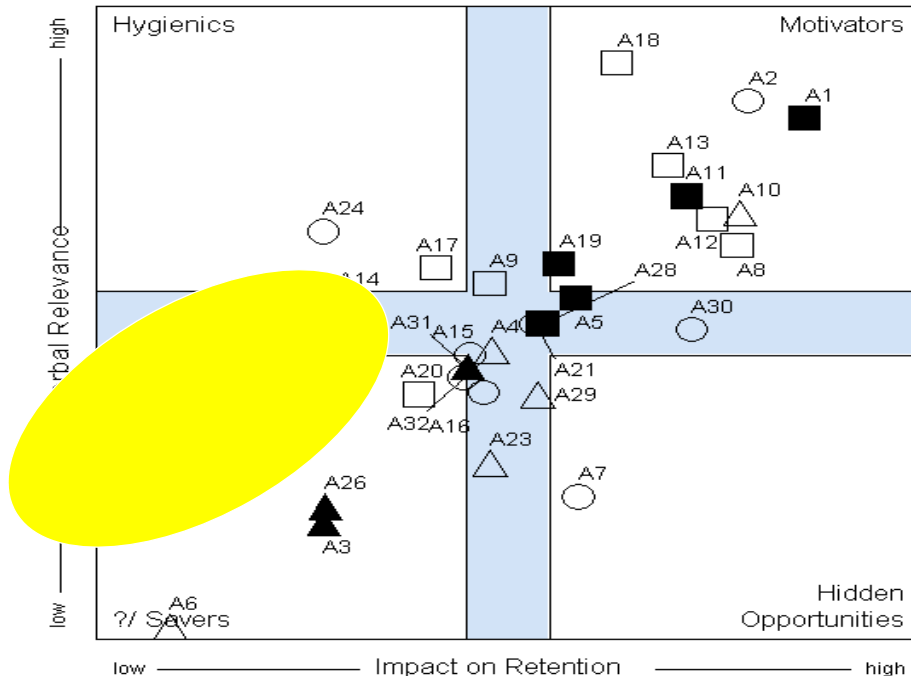
In terms of priorities destinations should be looking at their wildlife and natural habitats as well as their beaches and coastline (A10 and A2), the former relevant to Wrexham the latter to the Borderlands:

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- 8.4 This diagram also highlights hidden opportunities which a destination may seek to consider as it looks at its product mix. These are the range of local produce and crafts, choice of camping and caravanning facilities, activities for children and exploiting myths, legends and folklore. Again some attributes Wrexham may wish to concentrate on.
- 8.5 The final diagram below highlights factors which the majority of our visitors see as neither particularly important nor relevant to a short break destination.

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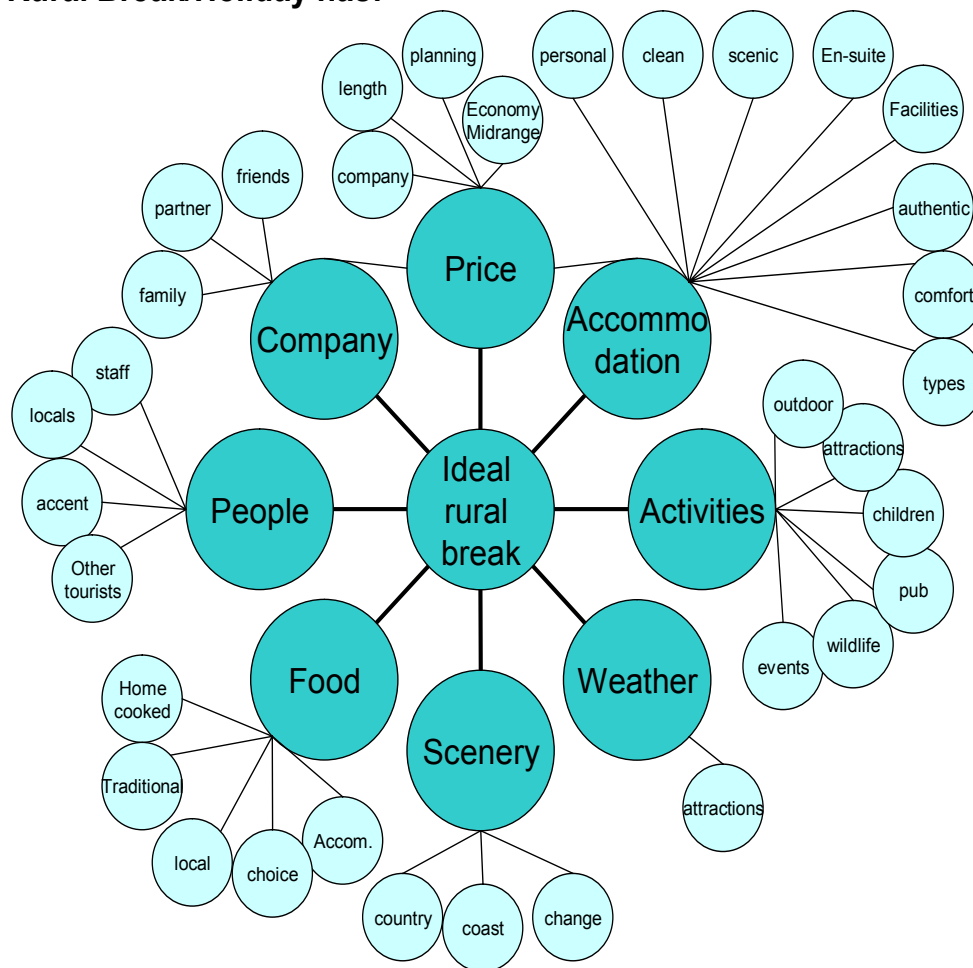


The key point to make here is that A27 relates to attractions and this is part of the consideration set of things to see and do by visitors to destinations, but the research has shown it is but one consideration of 32 considerations and when weighted into the visitor journey, on its own the attractions attribute does not score as highly as some commentators expect.

- 8.6 This research demonstrates a more sophisticated and holistic view that a visitor has and expects from a destination. Wrexham's town based offer through its built heritage and surrounding unspoilt countryside place it in a good position and the research demonstrates Wrexham's concentration on "outdoors product" is the right approach from the consumer's perspective.
- 8.7 This analysis was backed up by another piece of research (25 profiled focus groups across the country) carried out by Alcazar (copyrighted) a Newcastle based Branding and Research Agency in 2004 that found consumers distinguish, in the main, between two types of "experience packages".

8.8 This research was based on emotions and motivations not just visitor values, that can change over time. Visitors were found to want to “escape to relaxation” with a countryside break or “escape to excitement” on a city break. Each short break package requiring different visitor experiences. The closest to the Wrexham offer is the rural break which identified an “ideal set” of factors that were required to illicit the required emotional response. Which for a rural break was relaxation, healthy, tired out, welcome, not wanting to go home, stimulated and interested and excited and after the holiday re-charged and energised.

The Ideal Rural Break/Holiday has:



Again this demonstrates that attractions are but one small part of the demands a visitor places on a destination to fulfil their holiday/short break/day trip needs.

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8.9 In summary, the current national research indicates attractions are but one part of the visitor experience and destinations need to work on driving quality through the broad tourism value chain rather than concentrating on attractions alone. Wrexham's approach is therefore rightly justified by their current approach. If we follow the line of established reasoning therefore we do not necessarily need to be adding to the visitor experience of Wrexham, but rather making sure what is experienced by the visitor is logical, integrated and suffused with quality and matched with powerful visitor facing communications. The challenge then is to ensure the destination is speaking to the right people which is why segmentation is so important.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 We have shown that in conversation with the private sector Wrexham has the ability and support to seek out its own town specific marketing programme, providing it can lever the funds to do so. However, there is no quick solution to powerful marketing – the ability to sell the right thing to the right person at the right time and at the right price. This is a multi-dimensional challenge requiring careful planning and execution.

9.2 Many private sector operators, whilst having sympathy with the Borderlands campaign and understanding the funding necessities of the project, still have a desire to see Wrexham “do its own thing”. They are clear that much of their business, from day trips to overnight stays comes from the east and the Chester area. Visitors from the North are coming from the other parts of the Borderlands (Flintshire and coast) and are on a day visit to Wrexham. This position is reinforced by the TNS visitor survey which we have expressed some concerns over. The influence of Chester over visitor behaviour and spend in Wrexham cannot and should not be ignored. We can understand the political reservations that may arise, however the evidence of the visitor leakage from Chester should be acted upon in the forward facing marketing work of the authority.

9.3 Marketing is the main activity that engages the private sector as it is a demand driver for their products and services. Previously not delivering Wrexham specific marketing and instead being involved at a broader Borderlands level has possibly led to a partial

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disengagement of some of the private sector tourism businesses in Wrexham tourism initiatives. If Wrexham can deliver its own marketing work, this may be the catalyst for more business engagement in the local authorities work.

9.4 If Wrexham are to manage their own marketing then the following recommendations are suggested:

- resolve the brand proposition – define the destination brand and let this inform the creative execution - involve focus groups to plot current mind maps and the near market stakeholders to facilitate “buy in” to the process and results (predicted costs around £14,000);
- initiate a segmentation programme to identify the audience (predicted costs £2,500 to £12,000). From this work will come media information on what the target audiences wish from a destination by their lifestyles and media information on what they read and watch and listen to;
- continue to drive quality initiatives through the tourism value chain by adopting IQM recommendations;
- recognise the attributes demanded by visitors in the VB research and reflected in destination Wrexham; and
- continue to work with the private sector and to engage them in the process.

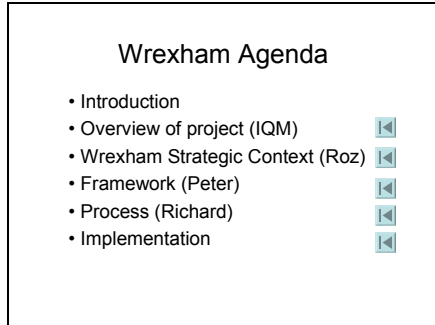
9.5 Wrexham should be confident that it has some persuasive visitor attributes and the ability and desire to market itself to new and existing audiences.

Appendix 3

Workshop Presentation

Appendix 1

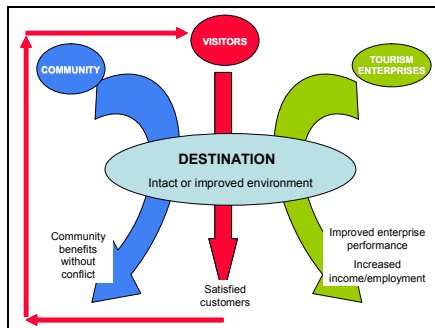
Slide 1



Slide 2

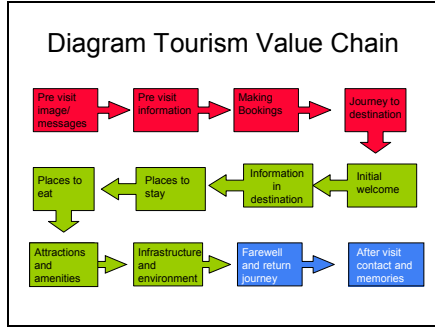


Slide 3

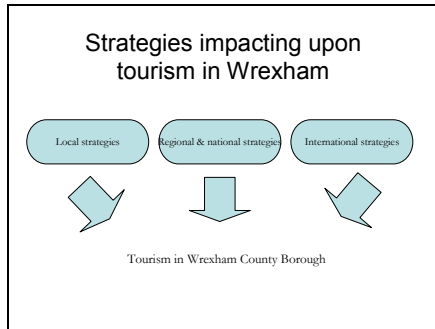


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Slide 4



Slide 5



Slide 6

Wrexham CBC Strategies	Regional & national	International IQM strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrexham CBC Unitary Development Plan • Wrexham CBC Corporate Strategy • Wrexham CBC Rural Development Strategy • Wrexham CBC Community Action Programme • Wrexham CBC Countryside Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan (WAG) • Achieving our Potential (WTB) • Action Plan for the Countryside Experience (WTB) • Tourism Strategy North Wales: Planning Tomorrows Tourism Today (TP-NW) • Wrexham, Llangollen and Dee Valley TGA Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towards Quality Rural Tourism: IQM of rural tourist destinations • Towards Quality Urban Tourism: IQM Of Urban Tourist Destinations • Towards Quality Coastal tourism: IQM of Coastal Tourist Destinations

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Slide 7

- **UDP:** Accepted document for overall development within Wrexham CB area
- **Wrexham Corporate Strategy:** Provides a vision for Wrexham CB
- **Wrexham Community Action Programme:** provides structure for community involvement in tourism development
- **Wrexham Countryside Strategy:** provides an overview of access and information issues alongside environmental concerns

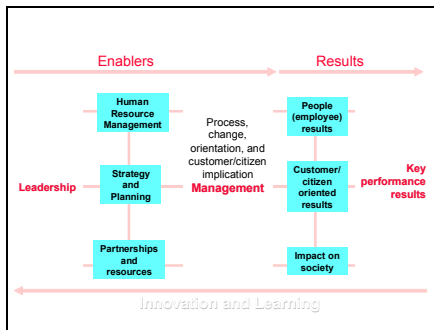
- **The Wales Spatial Plan (WAG):** *'direction of travel for Wales for the next 20 years'*
- **Achieving our Potential (WTB):** sustainability; quality; competitiveness; partnership
- **Planning Tomorrows Tourism Today (TP-NW):** quality; excellence; sustainability
- **Llangollen, Wrexham & Dee Valley TGA:** quality; sustainability; action plan for Wrexham TGA area

Slide 8

Questions

- Issues surrounding current Wrexham Tourism Forum?
- How to motivate industry?
- Who should lead?
- Who should be involved?
- What should any new body look like?
- Is there a clear vision for tourism in Wrexham already?

Slide 9



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Slide 10


IQM - EFQM

Structure and functions	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership• Strategy• Personnel Management• Use of resources• Process of service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Client satisfaction• Staff satisfaction• Integration into the community• Operational results

Slide 11

The 4 “Moments of Truth”

- Work and Plan together
- Know your area
- Know your Business/Destination
- Acting on Results



Slide 12

1. Work and Plan together

- Establish an effective tourism partnership
- Provide leadership
- Agree a vision
- Produce strategy & action plan
- Agree targets
- Manage budgets
- Establish monitoring and evaluation processes

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Slide 13

2. Know your area (fit between business and destination)

- Wrexham County Inventory
- Distilling headline economic factors
- Understanding where your business/public sector activities fit
- Qualitative analysis – benchmarking, satisfaction surveys

Slide 14

Analysis (Think about your business and destination in relation to)

- Geographical/Physical
- Economic
- Social
- Cultural
- Political
- Administrative
- Environmental

Slide 15

2. Know your area because

- captured information identifies gaps and weaknesses
- Competitive Context
- Market realism
- Destination Distinctiveness

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Slide 16

Questions

- Do you agree with the identified areas?
- Who will collate information? (generic v specific)
- Current tourism marketing practice thoughts?


Slide 17

Marketing Questions

- Britain v Wales v Borderlands v Wrexham? Brand strength
- Marketing outputs – traditional and new (quality/quantity/legacy)
- Positioning?
- Products? (new devt + existing)
- Who is responsible for what? (new customers v old customers)
- Existing markets v emerging markets?
- Data Management responsibilities?

Slide 18

3. Know your Business (fit between business and other businesses/customers)

- Resources – building, fixtures and fittings, statutory responsibilities, emerging initiatives
- Processes – visitor journey/supply chain
- People/ Staff – discrete areas of responsibility? (training/skills issues)
- Customers – visitor research/visitor data/segmentation (public/private sector responsibilities)
- Business Performance 

Slide 19

Business Performance

- Agree your performance criteria
- Collate trend information
- Use economic intelligence to draw conclusions and stimulate actions
- Results can be “hard” and “soft”
- Must be consistent and rigorous to enable fair comparison
- Case Studies

Slide 20

Questions

- Are there any more stages in knowing your business that we have missed?
- Are you already thinking about your business in this way?.....or are you too busy?
- Would you be interested in learning from “best performers” elsewhere?

Slide 21


4. Acting on Results (at the destination level)

- establishing a clear monitoring process
- reviewing information regularly
- modifying plans and actions accordingly

Slide 22

Questions


- Do the private sector care about the destinations performance?
- Do they think they can influence that performance?
- Do you want to get involved in managing that impact?.....working and planning together



Slide 23

QUESTIONS...


- Are you familiar with these strategies?
- Are they relevant to what you do?
- If not why not? If they are, how?



Slide 24

Conclusion

- Does quality matter?
- Would the process identified help in delivering a quality service/product/destination?
- Where do we go from here?



Appendix 4

Questionnaire

Appendix 4 – Workshop follow up questionnaire

The Future of Tourism for Wrexham – Delivering Quality Tourism

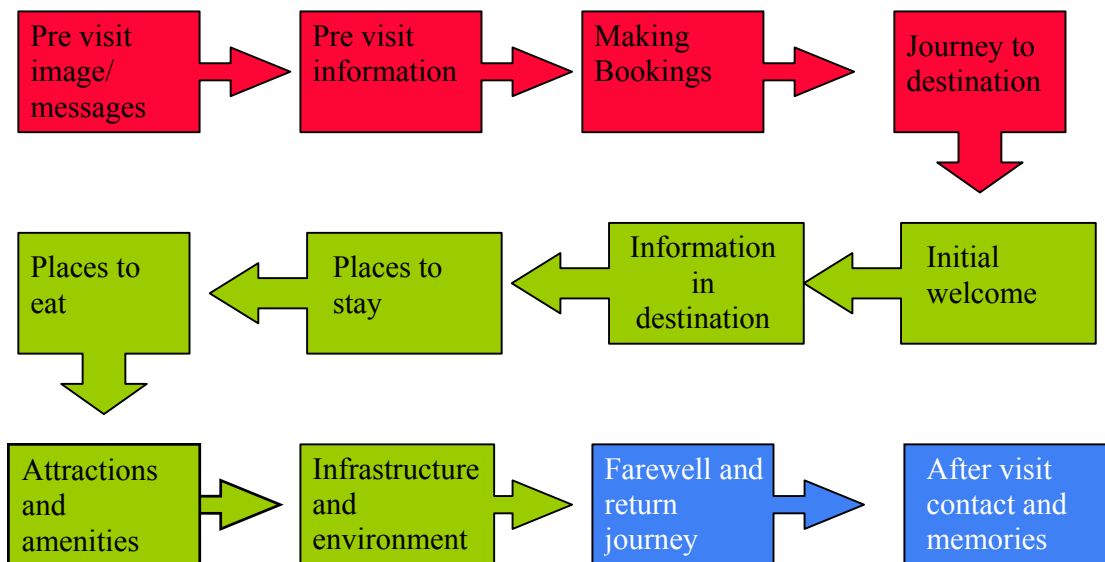
Follow up to the Seminar held on the 4th May 2005

A seminar was held on the 4TH May 2005, for officers involved in tourism, to discuss the future of tourism for Wrexham. It was organised by Peter Lane Tourism Planning and Leisure Consultancy Services who are working with Wrexham Borough Council to put together an Action plan for developing and managing 'quality tourism.'

One of the main issues dealt with at the seminar was how the quality of Tourism services provided by the public and private sector could be improved.

It was suggested that the various steps along the 'Visitor Journey' (see below) could be used as the basis for setting out the actions needed at each stage for both the public and private sector to ensure a quality experience for the visitor.

The Visitor Journey



It is intended that a toolkit will be prepared to set out all the actions that need to be considered in delivering a quality visitor service. The actions will be based on the 'Visitor Journey' and the four key components of tourism service delivery;

- Working and Planning together,
- Knowing your area,
- Knowing your business and
- Acting on results.

We are very grateful to those of you who managed to attend the seminar on the 4th May as the issues discussed have helped us to shape our ideas for the future.

How you can help further

Even if you attended the seminar we would be grateful if you could all spare a few moments to answer the following questions and/or provide us with any comments you might wish to make about the management and development of tourism within the Wrexham area.

Questions

1. The Tourism Forum is seen as a useful way of working in partnership with the private sector. Do you think the Forum should?

- Have the power to influence Policy decisions in relation to tourism?

YES **NO**

- Be allocated a budget to control for tourism related activities including marketing?

YES **NO**

2. Do you feel that there is a clear vision for the future of tourism in Wrexham that is known by and shared by all Council service providers and partner organisations?

YES **NO**

3. Are you aware of the range of strategies that already exist that have an impact on tourism?

YES **NO**

4. Would it help if your service was provided with a simple, clearly set out vision and action plan for tourism in Wrexham that clearly identified your actions and responsibilities and those of other public and private sector partners?

YES **NO**

5. Would it help if those actions were related to the components of the visitor journey shown above?

YES **NO**

6. Would you find a toolkit containing a list of all the suggested things that you could do to help 'Deliver Quality Tourism in Wrexham' useful?

YES **NO**

Please return your answers and/or comments to planetplc@aol.com or mail them by **10th JUNE** to:-

**Peter Lane
Planet PLC
Streamside
Hutton Village
Guisborough**

TS14 8ED

Appendix 5

PowerPoint presentation