

# Top Tips for Destination-Marketing



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# 1 Introduction

Now, more than ever before, we are choosing to holiday in Ireland. Our domestic audience is taking a fresh look at what we have to offer, and people are keen to find wonderful new things to do. For some, that will mean choosing an activity that keeps everyone in the family happy and absorbed. For others, this is a chance to escape for an adventure with friends who have been distant for too long.

With so many people willing to make a break for it, and everyone determined to make wonderful new memories after the monotony of lockdown, there is a great opportunity for us to engage anew with our domestic market.


This is the time to present our destinations as compelling places both to holidaymakers who may not have considered us before and visitors who want fresh experiences as well as the comfort of familiarity.

If your destination has tended to focus on overseas visitors, a new focus on holidaymakers within Ireland can help to broaden your reach in the long term. For places where a focus on marketing as a destination has not been used before, and an individual approach has been the norm, this approach can help you to win a greater share of the domestic market. Now is the time for your destination to shine!



DESTINATION

MARKETING



Ensure that the 'things to do in your area' page on the destination website links to **DiscoverIreland.ie**.

Whether you are developing a destination approach to marketing for the first time or working to grow and strengthen existing collaboration at the local level, there are tips and ideas here that you can quickly put to use.

The guide will help you to:

- Build and maintain a strong destination marketing approach.
- Deliver online and offline destination marketing campaigns.
- Measure, evaluate and review your destination marketing activities.

Visitors want to be certain that the destinations they choose will be accessible, safe, and satisfying. They want us to be clear about the offer of a safe welcome, but they are craving lots of variety and the opportunity to enjoy themselves too.



## 2 Building and maintaining a strong destination marketing approach

### Why destination marketing is so important

As we emerge from lockdown and get to grips with the 'new normal', it is more important than ever for us to collaborate with our tourism partners at destination level.

Fáilte Ireland has carried out research into consumer sentiment to find out what domestic visitors are looking for right now, and the insights from that research can help you to gain a good understanding of what visitors in Ireland want from their holidays at the moment.

Our findings show that people want reassurances about safety. They also want clear information about what is open and how businesses are operating under new circumstances. Visitors want to be certain that the destinations they choose will be accessible, safe, and satisfying. They want us to be clear about the offer of a safe welcome, but they are craving lots of variety and the opportunity to enjoy themselves too.

After lockdown, and the restrictions it brought, we can all relate to people's enthusiasm for experiencing something different. Domestic visitors relish the idea of having plenty of activities to choose from and the opportunity to engage their senses with stimulating things to do!

The strains that have affected our tourism businesses in recent times mean that we are all focused on making sure that our own businesses survive and thrive again. We are still working

in trying circumstances, and that can make us look inwards more than we normally might, but it is more important than ever for us to work together and create a clear picture of what our destinations have to offer potential holidaymakers.

## Putting your offers in context

When you communicate well about your destination, you put your own offers in a much richer context, and when you amplify the voices of partners in your area, you also help potential visitors to pick up on the character and appeal of your destination and the choices it has to offer.

A destination approach helps you to paint a really compelling and engaging picture of the whole holiday experience your visitors can enjoy. You bring your destination into sharper focus and make it easier for visitors to plan and commit to a domestic holiday with you.

As well as talking about our own offerings, share ideas about where to visit and unmissable views, as well as tips on great local food and the best places to make new memories. This destination approach can play a vital role in helping you to give your area standout appeal. For the potential visitor, it builds a sense of anticipation that can turn browsing into booking.

By presenting all that is on offer in your destination, its businesses and location, you make it easier for people to picture themselves spending time and money in your area. This kind of collaboration increases the benefits you bring to your local community too.

The benefits of good destination marketing include:

- A richer destination story that can capture the attention of visitors and influencers.
- Improved internal networking and referrals which can help to keep more visitors in your destination for longer.
- Enhanced local awareness and pride in what your destination has to offer, and a greater role for locals as strong ambassadors for your tourism offering.
- Greater cut-through in the minds of visitors, at a time when competition is fierce.
- Compelling marketing materials and campaigns that make it easier for visitors to commit to your area.

If we only talk about our own product offerings, we give visitors only a small glimpse of what their holidays will be like, and we leave them with quite a lot of planning and thinking to do about how their time away will work.



A destination group can:

- Create inspirational itineraries that resonate with visitors' emotional touchpoints and increase your destination's appeal.
- Talk up your destination in shared communication materials that make research and decision-making easier for your visitors. Websites, maps and social media content can all play crucial roles in connecting the dots and helping people to finalise their plans about where to spend time in Ireland.

## Regional supports for destination development

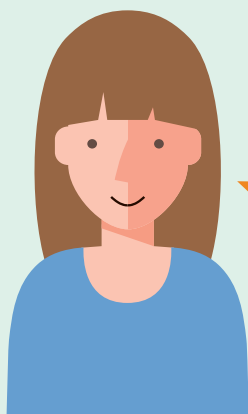
Many destinations now have an umbrella-style destination development group in place that supports planning and marketing and helps to communicate an area's appeal. In many areas, you will find that there is a Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP) Steering Group that guides the overall tourism development of the destination and undertakes or co-ordinates marketing campaigns and initiatives.

Other destinations have established destination marketing groups. More recently, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of key destinations have established Destination Recovery Task Forces. All of these groups, and any new groups that are forming, should work with their local Fáilte Ireland team to co-ordinate tactical marketing activity for the destination with a focus on speeding up recovery.

## Making destination marketing networks effective

A good destination marketing network pays equal attention to its own structures and to the needs of the visitor.

- **To be effective**, a network must have a set of clearly defined goals.
- **To be strong**, a network needs good organisational and administrative structures in place so that it can function well, carry out its plans, and endure over the longer term.
- **To attract visitors**, a network must put visitor needs and the quality of their experiences at its core, so that it can tell them a rich and persuasive story about how good their experience will be when its individual elements come together.



**If you want to go fast,  
go alone. If you want to  
go far, go together.**

*African Proverb*

**A strong organisation:**

- Has criteria and membership standards.
- Invests in maintaining and growing membership.
- Evaluates and communicates success continuously.

**A strong visitor experience:**

- Communicates a powerful destination promise for visitors, one which is developed and consistently supported by all destination members and the wider community.
- Identifies flagship destination experiences that are championed by all in the destination.
- Focuses on the bookability and saleability of offers provided by the network's members.

## Six features of effective tourism destination networks

Strong and effective tourism networks and destinations:

1. Are very clear about their purpose, goals and objectives and remain focused on them at all times.
2. Put the interests of the destination first and focus all collaboration efforts on enhancing the destination rather than individual businesses: they communicate the magic that happens when individual elements combine.
3. Comprise a mix of businesses from different sectors – accommodation, activities, food and attractions – and celebrate the location and its environment.
4. Enjoy good stakeholder support – both from businesses in the destination and from any public bodies or agencies that support tourism in the area.
5. Have formal structures for engagement, which often include a membership system, committees and meetings, among other features.
6. Maintain a strong commercial focus and are able to measure the commercial impact of their activities.

### Tourism Destination Networks

Are about destinations not businesses

Bring together a cross-section of business types

Involve businesses and agencies

Have a clear purpose and key objectives

Have structures and frameworks that ensure collaboration

Are commercial as well as community-focused

Use this simple, one-page 'goals sheet' to agree and track network goals, and you will keep all of your members on the same page too!

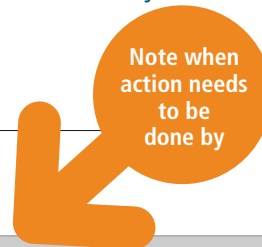


## CLEAR GOALS: GET EVERYONE ON THE SAME PAGE

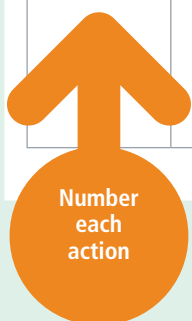
### GROUP GOALS & MILESTONES

Define and assign what is needed to achieve the overall objectives

**GOAL 1**



Number	Action Required	What will it do	By when	How will we know it's done





## Prepare for challenges at destination level

With the best will in the world, challenges can crop up when people work together, especially when that work is carried out in a voluntary capacity. Differences and frustrations can arise for all kinds of reasons. A lack of clear objectives or accountability, uneven input and contributions, differing expectations, volunteer fatigue, and poorly managed meetings can all undermine initial goodwill, and good old-fashioned personality clashes can come into the mix too at times!

You will want to avoid or minimise these kinds of challenges and manage roles, responsibilities and expectations in a positive way, and so it can help to pay attention to the five key enabling conditions for an effective network.

Make sure your destination network is fit for purpose by checking that it has:

1. Strong and enthusiastic leaders who have the authority and credibility to lead.
2. A shared vision and purpose that is reflected in everything the network does.
3. Clear and consistent goal setting procedures.
4. Funding and financial management mechanisms.
5. Member and stakeholder engagement mechanisms.

### How to engage network members: the do's and don'ts

#### Do

- Keep communications regular, clear, and concise.
- Invite people to contribute personally.
- Respect members' time and contributions.
- Reiterate the network's vision and purpose often.
- Remind everyone of the goals and keep everyone aware of progress against those goals.
- Have fun, where possible, and keep things positive at all times.
- Keep a record of all meetings.
- Prioritise sound and transparent financial management.

#### Don't

- Allow a few members to dominate.
- Have too many meetings.
- Allow meetings to deviate from an agreed agenda or run over time.
- Become dependent on external funding or develop an expectation of ongoing funding.
- Put individual members' interests above the interests of the group.

## 3 Delivering online and offline destination marketing campaigns

Destination marketing gives you the opportunity to connect with potential visitors and tell them about what your destination as a whole has to offer them. From the point of view of your own business, it allows you to present other local businesses, locations, and attractions (free and paid), as part of the added value they gain when they book with you.

To attract more traffic and attention, and ultimately drive more visitors and revenue to your area, you will need your destination website to make a great impression. It will often be the first place people visit when they are trying to figure out what makes your destination tick.

### Top tips for a great destination website

A great destination website provides a compelling and convenient 'one-stop shop'. It brings lots of local offerings together, sifting and sorting them so the visitor can see their relationships easily. In fact, it gives potential visitors a bird's-eye view of what a destination has to offer, as well as enough detail to help them make definite plans.

There are some things to remember when you set out to build, revamp or optimise your destination website:

#### 1. Invest in building a good website

Building and maintaining a good destination website involves time and money. Any group or network looking to create or improve a destination brand should plan and budget carefully so that their website can tell the destination's story in a really impactful way.

#### 2. Build in measurability

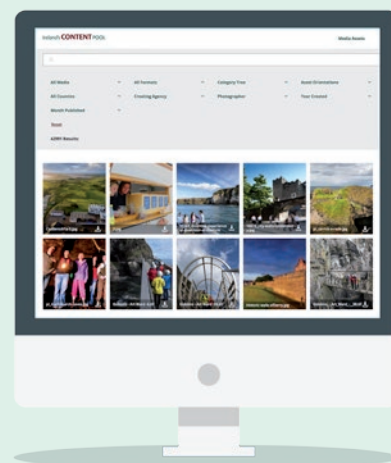
Measurability should be built into a destination website from the planning stage: Google Analytics can be set up to measure engagement, conversions, bookings, email sign-ups, events, and goals, for example. (Your web designer can help with this).

#### 3. Feature strong imagery

Great websites need to feature strong visual imagery. Use great photography and videos on your website and you will immediately give visitors a sense of your destination and its brand before they have read a word. For tips on how to make the most of images, [see Imagery that Engages and Sells](#) and the accompanying downloadable document [Top Tips - Creating Compelling Imagery](#). (Remember to tag images and videos for visitors who are using screen readers).

#### 4. Beat the blink

A good website should pass the '5-second blink test': a visitor should know within 5 seconds what you are offering them and what you are asking them to do next. Make sure 'calls to action' are visible and communicate easily and well.



## 5. Communicate your destination's USP

Make sure that the unique selling point of your destination is clear and visible on your destination site. What is the essence of the destination and which customer segment does its message chime with most?

## 6. Reinforce the destination's brand

Include the relevant Fáilte Ireland destination brand, whether that's the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Ireland's Ancient East or Dublin. When you use the destination brand logo, imagery and language, you tap into the visitor's familiarity with and warmth towards that brand, and you can begin to show how your destination brings the regional brand to life.



## 7. Target customer segments

For each customer segment you are targeting, make sure there is great, unique content on the site. Local tips, stories, and itineraries for trips of various lengths (24/48/72 hours) can draw visitors' attention. Meanwhile, content pieces that focus on things like family-friendly days out, rainy-day things to do, and pet-friendly offerings can help to attract particular interest groups and boost your visibility to those groups in search engine results.

## 8. Promote compelling offers

The best way to make a destination website more compelling to visitors and make its work more measurable and commercially viable too, is to add an 'Offers Section' or 'Campaign Landing Page' to your website. This is where accommodation, food and activity offers can be bundled and targeted by customer segment. Ideally, if possible, make these bookable online on the destination website. If there is no booking engine built into the site, have an 'Offers Section' that drives visitors directly to the sites of bookable businesses in the destination. It will be important to agree a way of capturing the effectiveness of these conversions with businesses that are represented in the 'Offers' section.

## 9. Let people know you're open

While the COVID-19 public health emergency continues, it is vital to communicate directly on your home page that your destination is open and that businesses are ready to welcome visitors. Reassure potential visitors that they will be safe, without allowing the safety notice to cloud your overall message and welcome.

## 10. Link to the national picture

Link the homepage and information on 'things to do in your area' to [www.DiscoverIreland.ie](http://www.DiscoverIreland.ie), so that potential visitors can build a broader picture if they intend to widen their travels.

## 11. Include testimonials

Warm words from previous customers can have lots of impact on potential visitors. We know how important review sites are, and it is just as important to showcase reviews on your destination website as it is to have them on TripAdvisor.

## 12. Build social connections

Promote your destination's social media profiles on your site, and use icon links to direct visitors to your Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts so that you can start communicating with them on a regular basis.

Warm words from previous visitors can have lots of impact on potential visitors.

## How to plan an online destination marketing campaign

An online destination marketing campaign can drive traffic to your destination website and on to your network's members. There are a number of steps to take and questions you can use when you are planning an effective online campaign:

### Step 1: Agree objectives

What are your SMART goals? Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound goals are effective because they are targeted and measurable.

### Step 2: Decide on key customer segments

What is your ideal target customer segment? If you are planning a 2020 campaign, give it a head start by focusing on the customer segments that are already warming to Fáilte Ireland's 'Ireland, make a break for it!' campaign. These are:

- Families with young children
- Families with teenagers
- Friends on a short break
- Irish people, visiting friends or relatives, who are on day trips

Target segments change regularly, so check out Fáilte Ireland's consumer sentiment insights at <https://covid19.failteireland.ie/industry-updates/category/consumer-sentiment-behaviour-reports/>

### Step 3: Work out your key messages

- What are the key messages your destination needs to promote to attract its target customer segments?
- What are your target segment's key needs?

If you are planning a 2020 campaign, it will achieve greater impact if you align it with Fáilte Ireland's 'Ireland, make a break for it!' campaign. Include messaging around reconnection, authenticity, freedom, and inspiration to build on the ideas the campaign is already circulating and remember to underpin those messages with the reassurances about safety that matter so much to us all right now.

**If you are planning a 2020 campaign, it will achieve greater impact if you align it with Fáilte Ireland's 'Ireland, make a break for it!' campaign.**



**DISCOVER SOME OF THE INCREDIBLE PLACES AND EXPERIENCES THAT ARE NOW OPEN AND WAITING TO WELCOME YOU.**

**WILD ATLANTIC WAY**  
 It's time – to pack your bags and head off along the 2,500 km coastal stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way. From Main Head to Kizen Head, this one-of-a-kind route is brimming with epic scenery and the promise of adventure. Set your spirit soaring with craic agus ceol in Westport, cycle coastline trails and uncover hidden beaches in Co. Donegal, or sail into the Atlantic air of Kinsale Bay, where you can also savour some of the region's most delicious seafood. And if you yearn for an adventure, look no further than Killarney, nestled in an awe-inspiring National Park.

**IRELAND'S HIDDEN HEARTLANDS**  
 Picture yourself at last in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, where secret tracks and trails give way to the beautiful blue waterways of the Shannon, and the choice between outdoor pursuits and rest and relaxation is once more yours to make. Defined by the serene landscape of Ireland's most famous river, this region winds its way south from Carrick-on-Shannon, through Athlone, and into the spectacular Lough Derg. Set yourself adrift with a cruise boat rental, go kayaking on Lough Oughter, find time to unwind in Lough Key Forest Park, or delight your kids with an unforgettable trip to Baysports waterpark.

**IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST**  
 A summer story is yours to bring to life in Ireland's Ancient East, where epic landmarks meet mountain pursuits and coastal trails. There's plenty to discover here – from family adventures to quirky experiences and true cultural gems. Get moving again with a bike ride along the Waterford Greenway, wander through the sweeping grounds of Wexford's Johnstown Castle, or escape to Kilkenny, where winding streets and a majestic castle are open for discovery. And with so many beautiful countryside and coastline vistas to choose from, you won't be long finding the perfect picnic spot to make summer memories in.

**DUBLIN**  
 The big city break is here again! It's time to plan your escape to Dublin, where urban parks and stunning architecture sit side-by-side, and Ireland's best sights, shops and restaurants are waiting to welcome you. Indulge yourself on Grafton Street, lose yourself in the creativity and culture of your capital's many galleries and museums, or head for one of the many coastal villages that offer stunning views of Dublin's shimmering bay. And after a day spent soaking in the city's atmosphere, you'll find no shortage of ways to dine. There's nothing quite like summer in the city.

*Ireland's never felt bigger.* **DiscoverIreland.ie**

**Step 4: Promote offers on a dedicated landing page**

A landing page for network members' offers, aligned with your campaign, should feature on your destination website. Hits on the page will indicate how well the campaign has been received, and clicks on its offers will drive interest on directly to businesses within your destination network. Remind them to track the resulting sales!

## Helpful Resources

For more information on how to make the most of your destination website, including tips on how to design landing pages to drive conversions via dedicated offers, see the videos and support materials on 'Optimising direct sales conversion through digital with own brand web'. You can share these materials with your web designer.

See <https://covid19.failteireland.ie/sales-and-marketing/driving-domestic-sales/optimising-direct-sales/>



## Step 5: Decide on your campaign message and collateral

If your campaign is going to win attention for your destination online, you need to spend time deciding on what your message is going to be and how and when you will get it across. While some of the work involved in creating the campaign might fall to individuals or sub-groups within your network, it is vital for everyone to be clear about and committed to the message of the campaign.

Together, you need to decide:

- What is the hook?
- What photography, videos, pieces of content does it need?
- What messaging will be used to get member businesses to subsequently share online using their own websites and social media?

## A successful online promotional campaign: #StrandhillMoments



A 2019 campaign promoted Strandhill, Co. Sligo, to a target audience of pre-teen families. The local destination network identified the core needs of this segment as connection and memory-making.

The **#StrandhillMoments** campaign was created to encourage families to spend time together in Strandhill enjoying the best outdoor activities, food, accommodation and visitor attractions the area has to offer.

A family video, photography, an influencer FAM trip and key family content pieces on [gostrandhill.com](http://gostrandhill.com) were used to amplify the campaign. Meanwhile, its simple hashtag encouraged visitors who took up the offer to join in with spreading its message.

### Step 6: Devise a content calendar

A content calendar is a great tool for planning out the pieces of content you will prepare and publish on your website, newsletter, and social media. Having a calendar also means that you can coordinate with network members to make sure they help your campaign to reach the widest possible audience.

Sample Content Calendar								
Publish Date	Duration	Customer Segment	Theme	Caption	Format	Platform	Cost	KPI
06 Aug 2020	06 Aug – 28 Aug 2020	Families with teens	Adventure	Whether you are looking for soft adventure or high adrenalin, Lahinch has an activity for you this summer.	Video with targeted social media adverts	Facebook, Twitter and Instagram	€280 per 2-week period	Increase social media traffic to website by 5% Potential reach 24,000

### Step 7: Activate the campaign

Once your campaign is ready to go, you will need to use all of the resources available to you to drive visitors to your website and social media profiles, where they can engage with you directly. Earned and paid media both have a role to play at this stage.

Earned media, or 'online word of mouth', can take the form of mentions, shares, reposts, reviews, recommendations, and even the responses generated by viral videos.

Paid media enables you to create exposure for your destination using social media advertising, influencer marketing or 'pay per click' (PPC) and display ads.

### Step 8: Measure the campaign's effectiveness

If your destination website is fully bookable, you can measure your success in terms of revenue and bookings (€/#). If your destination website does not have a booking engine built in yet, you can use softer metrics like website traffic and referral leads to your members' websites. Social media reach and e-zine sign-ups give you other ways to track engagement too.



## Top tips for a great digital destination marketing campaign

### 1. Develop a great idea

Come up with a great, creative idea that reflects your destination. Decide on the hook and prompt the tourism businesses in your destination to be proactive in making use of it.

### 2. Choose your campaign #hashtag

Use it on your destination and platforms and get your members thinking about innovative ways to showcase your destination as they share posts on Instagram and other platforms.

### 3. Create evergreen content

Create great pieces of content that can be re-used and shared again and again (e.g. 'Top 10 things to do in your destination for families').

### 4. Optimise business listings

Ask all of the businesses in your destination network to optimise their Google My Business profiles to improve their Google rankings. This is the home of their Google Map listings, Google reviews, and other basic information, like opening hours, that can be quite changeable at the moment. It is important that all of these listings are kept up to date.

### 5. Make the most of your network members

Harness their online power by asking them to use the destination campaign hashtag alongside Fáilte Ireland hashtags: [#discoverireland](#) [#staysafe](#) [#makeabreakforit](#) and [#feelsbigger](#), as well as the appropriate regional hashtag (e.g. [#irelandshiddenheartlands](#) [#irelandsancienteast](#) [#lovedublin](#) [#wildatlanticway](#))

### 6. Monitor reviews

Appoint someone to monitor reviews across the destination, and ensure reviews are being monitored in each network business too. Reviews can be crucial in helping potential visitors as they make their decisions, and they are more important than ever now because people are checking to see what they can expect now that COVID-19 restrictions are in place. Reviews also give you instant feedback and insights into visitors' views about your destination. Just bear in mind that your responses will also shape how they view your area!

### 7. Gain support from local heroes

There are 'go-to' people in every community in the country who know everyone and are at the heart of everything that goes on. There are other locals who are very active on social media and have built up their own significant, personal audiences across Ireland and beyond. Those people are your local ambassadors. They can help you spread the word about your destination. Tag them and thank them for helping to encourage interest!

#### Helpful resources

Check out Fáilte Ireland's guides on how to drive footfall and revenue:

<https://covid19.failteireland.ie/sales-and-marketing/driving-domestic-sales/driving-footfall-and-revenues/>





## How to devise and implement a media plan

1. **Radio** advertising works – 81% of Irish adults tune into radio daily across national and local stations. Get your destination onto the radio by exchanging destination vouchers for radio airtime. Contact the local or regional station in the location that your destination wants to target. You can offer to sponsor a destination prize for use in one of their competitions or participate in other promotions to gain on-air mentions.
2. Select **newspapers** in easy-to-reach markets and offer competition prizes in return for advertising space.
3. Identify Irish morning and daytime **TV programmes** with travel segments that give you low-cost opportunities to have your destination highlighted. A short video and promotional offers profiled on TV can really drive domestic bookings to your destination.
4. Align your messaging with the national 'Ireland, make a break for it!' campaign. The campaign is all about the excitement of being able to get away, whether that is just for the day with your family or for a short multiday trip. Remember the focus of that campaign is on destinations, so you can pick up with the detail where it leaves off! It is important that you use the key messages from the campaign in your social media posts, online content and advertising material as this connects your destination to the national campaign and carries the goodwill and interest it has generated over to your network members.
5. Make sure all tourism businesses in your destination update their listings on Discover Ireland.

## Get active on Discover Ireland

Fáilte Ireland has a new digital presence at **DiscoverIreland.ie**. In fact, the updated site is at the centre of a digital eco-system which will deliver a more efficient and engaging digital experience for visitors than we have ever offered before.

The 'Ireland - Make a Break for it' campaign is driving visitors to it as their first destination and the most trustworthy source for the best things to see and do on holidays in Ireland. Its role is to drive those referrals on to local industry websites and booking engines and it is targeting domestic visitors, as well as people in Northern Ireland. To get those visitors to you, make sure your presence on DiscoverIreland.ie is as good as it can possibly be!

Cost-effective top tips for connecting with the national advertising campaign

1. Ask businesses in your destination to add or update their business information through the Get Listed form on **[www.failteireland.ie/get-listed](http://www.failteireland.ie/get-listed)**. Their information will then be displayed on DiscoverIreland.ie
2. When businesses are updating listings, they need to:
  - a. Upload high-quality images of their business and destination
  - b. Check contact details are correct
  - c. Update opening hours
  - d. Check their website address is correct
  - e. Add links to landing pages for dedicated domestic offers and social media platforms
  - f. Enter a clear description of the experience offered and the destination in which it is located
3. Ensure that the 'things to do in your area' page on the destination website links to DiscoverIreland.ie
4. Share stories or 'great discovery' tips with Fáilte Ireland for potential use within the 'Ireland – Make a Break for it' campaign by submitting content to **[social@failteireland.ie](mailto:social@failteireland.ie)**.
5. Ask destination members to follow and connect with the campaign on social media. They can share the campaign's content and engage with people who are looking for suggestions on local hidden gems and best things to see and do in your destination. As always, it will help to tag the campaign using **#DiscoverIreland** and regional hashtags to increase reach and ensure your destination is part of the wider conversation. The regional brand hashtags are:

**#WildAtlanticWay**

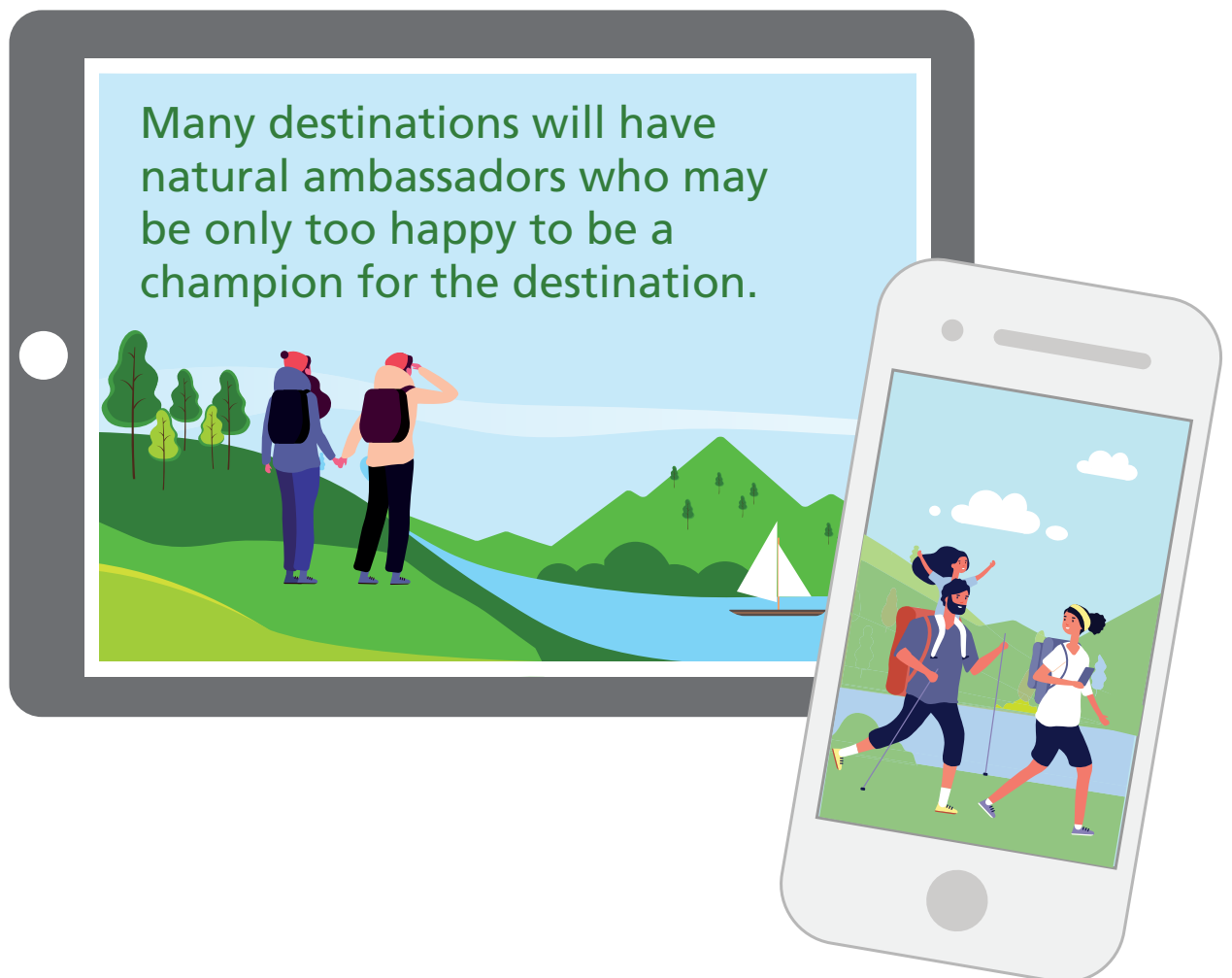
**#IrelandsAncientEast**

**#LoveDublin**

**#IrelandsHiddenHeartlands**

## How to devise and implement a PR plan

1. Make sure you make use of every free PR opportunity to drive awareness of your area.
2. Write press releases that highlight destination experiences and stories. Include good, high-resolution images when you send them on to local, regional and national papers and magazines. Send updates to journalists regularly, so they become familiar with you as a source of good content for your destination.
3. Find somebody who can act as an ambassador for your destination. Many destinations will have natural ambassadors who may be only too happy to be a champion for the destination. A great champion could be a GAA player, a musician, an actor, a surfer, or someone who simply reflects or embodies all that is good about your area.
4. Make sure that all businesses in the destination make the most of positive PR coverage across their social media channels and on their websites to engage the domestic market.
5. If you manage to secure a visit from a journalist in the near future, encourage them to link your destination to the 'Ireland, make a break for it' campaign.



Ensure everyone in the area knows all there is to offer within your destination.



## Top tips on getting destination members proactively selling

1. Target people from important market segments that can drive people to you in numbers. Employees of corporate and pharmaceutical companies, members of sports clubs or people who are involved in special interest groups and associations are all worth considering. It is a good idea to:
  - Select specific segments.
  - Identify appropriate contacts within the segment.
  - Visit, call or email key people to communicate offers and start to build a relationship.
2. Put your destination's offers in front of potential visitors, perhaps via company intranet sites, social clubs, or notice boards to significantly raise awareness of your destination.
3. Ensure everyone in the area knows all there is to offer within your destination. Then, encourage them to make positive recommendations, so that visitors have more choice and feel supported in finding something they like. Hopefully, they'll tell others about their new discovery and spread the word about your friendly and helpful destination too. Cross promotion works!
4. Use your evergreen content and your itineraries to showcase your destination to key market segments. These materials give visitors compelling reasons to visit and spend time in your area, and not just in the businesses or free attractions mentioned in 'Best of' lists. Longer dwell time equals more spend and – hopefully – a richer, more rewarding experience for the visitor and your community.

## 4 Destination marketing: measurement, evaluation, and review

It is very important to measure, evaluate and review collaborative activity so that you can make the most of the effort you and your neighbours put into destination marketing. Having a clear understanding of your progress really helps with destination member engagement because it helps you to give positive feedback on the time and money people have invested. This kind of information is also valuable to funders or supporting agencies who have become involved in supporting your destination.

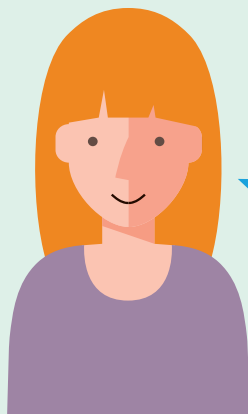
### Understand what 'success' means for your group

It will be important to identify the key factors that contribute to your destination's success and track them over time. Some of those markers will be local achievements that are specific to your group, but it will also be important to have a strong sense of how you are performing against more general targets to track your competitiveness as a destination.

Evaluate your progress regularly by asking key questions about how your organisation is performing:

- Which media platforms have performed best for you?
- Which media or PR opportunities have had the greatest impact?
- Which market segments delivered more or offer new opportunities (e.g. young families; older, off-season visitors; group leisure bookings)
- Which experiences were accessed the most and gave your destination true standout appeal?

When you ask data-driven questions regularly over time, they will help you to evaluate your progress, and the answers you produce can inform your network's decisions about future strategy so that the time and energy your members invest in destination marketing continues to produce the best possible results.



**It will be important to identify the key factors that contribute to your destination's success and track them over time.**

## What should we measure?

There are lots of sources of data you can use to track and evaluate the performance of your destination network and the effects it produces. When you are looking to establish measurement criteria and indicators of success, consider tracking data such as:

- Site traffic
- Conversion rate (the number of visits divided by the number of sales)
- Clicks from the destination website to members' sites
- Media mentions
- Influencer coverage
- Shares, likes, comments, reach
- Newsletter sign-ups, open rates, and clicks
- Number and reach of marketing assets created
- Hosting of FAM trips
- New visitor experiences
- New destination packages
- Member sentiment (tracked via surveys)

### Act like a business that others can buy, invest in or fund

A Destination Network needs to act like a business and communicate the benefits it delivers to members and other stakeholders.

Ultimately, strong and effective networks should aim to provide full bookability for their members. The awareness that the network creates about the destination can then be converted directly into sales on behalf of the network members. Bookability will make your destination more appealing and accessible to visitors. It will also demonstrate the effectiveness and strength of sales and marketing at destination level.



# 5 Template Destination Marketing Plan

**Destination Name**

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**Overall Destination Plan Timeframe**

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**Overall Goal of Destination Marketing Plan**

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**Example Objective 1: Update brand messaging to align with the 'Ireland, make a break for it!' campaign**

**Actions**

No.	Action	Who	When	KPIs	Costs	Actual ROI

**Example Objective 2: Create a landing page on the destination website for all destination offers**

**Actions**

No.	Action	Who	When	KPIs	Costs	Actual ROI