

SUPPORTING YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DESTINATION MATTERS

tmi
Tourism Management Institute
Supporting and Developing Professionals in Destination Management
www.tmi.org.uk

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From Building Society to Building Networks...

As Head of Marketing for Newcastle Gateshead Initiative, Nicola Short's remit covers corporate marketing, business tourism, destination and events and the NGI and Tourism Tyne & Wear web site.

Trained in marketing, with 16 years' experience in major public companies (Sage UK, Sainsburys and Newcastle Building Society), she talked to Destination Matters about her move into tourism and destination marketing.

DM: You successfully implemented a complete rebranding at Newcastle Building Society. Why the move into tourism?

NS: I'd fallen in love with the whole brand journey, taking the idea right through the organisation out to the front line, and I wanted to explore this in a more cultural area, so I jumped at the chance to be involved with a strong



brand and a locally popular organisation. The tourism aspect was secondary.

DM: So what were the challenges?

NS: Compared with events, the destination side was difficult to get to grips with; I could have done with some sort of induction course. It's

so fragmented - I had no overview of the different organisations involved at local, regional and national level, or the linkages between destination management and marketing, the planners and economic regeneration. So I did what I'd done in previous roles - spent a lot of time building partnerships with key people. It took some time, but it has paid off; we are now the first port of call when anything comes up. Good face to face relationships are really important. And through TMI, I'm starting to build the same sorts of networks at regional and national level.

DM: Would any one thing have helped you find your feet more quickly?

NS: Being in TMI is really helpful. The Annual Conventions are an ideal opportunity not only to learn but also to validate what we're doing up here in NewcastleGateshead. And the networking is invaluable. A TMI buddy system pairing newcomers to destination management with existing members would be even better. Tourism is a really friendly business. My taxi driver the other day said, "You people must really love your work - you're always smiling!"

CPD in practice: EUTO visits Latvia

'Developing Sustainable Destinations' was the title of the annual European Union of Tourist Officers (EUTO) study visit, which took place in Latvia from 23-30 September 2007. Over 60 delegates from 9 European countries joined forces to exchange best practice in destination management.

The programme was organised by LATTURINFO, the Latvian Association of Tourist Officers, and supported through the EU Leonardo da Vinci Programme. For the first time the Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change, Leeds Metropolitan University, organised an academic conference in tandem with the study visit.

'This created opportunities for delegates to attend both academic and practitioner sessions; feedback from both EUTO and CTCC delegates is that this innovative approach worked well and should be repeated in future EUTO Study Visits' Liz Buchanan, EUTO President

Keynote speeches were delivered by Alan Vella from the European Commission's Tourism Unit & Aira Andriksone, Head of Tourism Division, Latvia. Throughout the week high profile speakers explored product development, marketing and training and group discussion was encouraged through plenary sessions.

However the core benefits of the programme have to be seeing effective destination management in practice in other European countries and networking with professionals from across Europe. Highlights included study visits to Cinevilla Film Studio, Roja Fishing village and Laumu Nature Park. There were also opportunities to visit local TICs and a variety of tourism businesses

including a day spa, boutique hotel and travel agent.

A further innovation this year was the introduction of the mystery shopper exercise. Cathy Guthrie, TMI's CPD Co-ordinator, highlights the lessons learned:

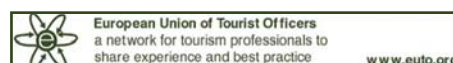
'Being a mystery shopper for half a day was fun with a serious point. Assessing the visitor experience in shops and attractions in Riga makes you understand better how visitors might be reacting to the welcome and experience provided in your own destination.'



“This created opportunities for delegates to attend both academic and practitioner sessions...”

Pictured top: Entrance to Honey Trail in Laumu Nature Park; and below: Delegates in costumes from the film Riga Defenders at Cinevilla Film Studios

Planning is well underway for the 2008 EUTO study visit which will take place in England from 21-28 September. Nottingham and London will be co-hosting the event entitled 'Attractions and events as catalysts for regeneration and social change'. A detailed programme will be published on EUTO.org in Spring 2008. For further information or to register interest, please email: presidency@EUTO.org



VocMat moves on...

As the Vocational Management for Tourism Training in Europe (VocMat) project moves into a new phase, Cathy Guthrie, TMI's main contact for VocMat, reflects on participation as a learning process for her and how some of the lessons have been incorporated into the planning for TMI's own professional postgraduate qualification.

VocMat 1 developed and tested four postgraduate level modules for online delivery via a virtual learning environment. Twenty-two pilot group members completed one or more, and four completed all four, of the modules which form part of the overall VocMat curriculum for accessible, flexible training for tourism managers.

VocMat 2 will continue the project by testing one of the existing modules in three new partner countries/regions (Catalonia, Malta and Turkey) and developing a completely new module for delivery in both new and existing partner countries.

RELEVANT

VocMat brings higher education (HE) tourism specialists and tourism practitioners together. This means that the module material can be really relevant to practitioners, but still have the intellectual challenge which means the participants are gaining new knowledge and skills, not just proving an existing competence. This is exactly what the TMI CPD Programme aspires to achieve.



VocMat VOCATIONAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING
FOR THE EUROPEAN TOURISM INDUSTRY

Communication is vital, not just between the project team but also between module leaders and the pilot group. Distance learning is flexible, but it can be challenging, and regular contact with local mentors and the others in the pilot group has proved to be a key to success. This is something we plan to incorporate into the TMI modules, perhaps with some form of buddy scheme for registered participants.

VocMat has demonstrated that communication between partners is equally important. Identifying a lead HE partner, supported by a

project manager, ensures that issues of accreditation, quality control and validation can be dealt with effectively.

As support to the research group, Cathy has co-ordinated the various Intellectual Property Rights agreements relating to VocMat:

"This is a complex area; getting to grips with it has extended my understanding of the legal side of partnership working, and will help enormously in setting up a partnership between HE bodies and TMI for TMI's CPD Programme."
www.vocmat.com



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CPD Events

21 May 2008, London, Venue TBC

TMI Hot Topic Event

The 2008 Hot Topic Event, in partnership with the British Association of Conference Destinations, will focus on business tourism. Details will be available next year, but make a note in your diary now.

8-9 October 2008 – Bristol, Venue TBC

TMI Annual Convention 2008

The must attend event of the year for destination professionals. The 2008 theme will be Skills and Training, so TMI's Annual Convention is going to Bristol, home of the Tourism Skills Network.

10 January, 2008 – London, Sofitel St James Hotel

Tourism Society – Prospects for 2008

Panel debate on prospects for the tourism industry in the light of the predicted credit crunch on leisure spending, the high value of the pound, visa cost disincentives on inbound visitors, road congestion, increased APD, international terrorism and instability, oil price changes, sustainability travel curbs, and the changed functions and fortunes of tourism organisations.

11 March 2008 – British Travel Trade Fair

Tourism Society – Tourism Question Time

Details available soon from www.tourismsociety.org

Tourism Insights

Insights, the highly respected tourism journal has been greatly missed since its last publication in 2004. It's now been reborn as Tourism Insights, a monthly online subscription service, and incorporates an updated Destination Management Handbook, retitled the Destination managers' Guide. Subscription includes:

- 24-7 access to latest industry debate, opinion, research and intelligence
- News and 5 new articles monthly (to include case studies, market intelligence, industry opinion, future predictions)
- The NEW Destination Managers' Guide
- Insights article archive 2000 - 2004
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