

HERITAGE BUZZ



catapult®

HOW TO SUPERCHARGE YOUR HERITAGE MARKETING



What's the secret to successful heritage marketing right now?

In a tough economic climate, this is a question many heritage attractions are asking, as the impacts of the cost of living crisis bite and persistent rainfall continues to disrupt the traditional peak season of some venues.

But it's too easy to blame the economy and the weather. Maybe these factors contribute to the problem but perhaps the root cause of your issues are down to the tactics you are using? Maybe there's a malaise in your marketing? Maybe you just need to work a lot harder to ensure visitors feel compelled to visit? Perhaps your marketing is just too hit-and-miss, with no real spine to it?

To quickly test this, ask yourself how much you actually align yourself with your visitors' viewpoints and habits. To what degree do you simply do what you've always done, or just jump on social media because that's what everyone does? Are you simply regurgitating the same old materials every year and doing nothing to switch things up?

If you realise that you perhaps do need to focus and have a rethink, this booklet will help guide you.



Do You Know?

Do you know what your visitors are thinking?

If the answer to the above question is 'no', this latest insight from our Heritage Buzz (www.heritagebuzz.co.uk) team – the tourism and culture experts within serial marketing award winners, Catapult PR (www.catapultpr.co.uk) – should assist your planning.

We literally have the answers that you need, in order to inform your marketing strategies, because we commissioned YouGov to directly pose key questions to consumers across the UK.

This has allowed us to step inside the head of the potential visitor, as we have done on two previous occasions through our own

specially commissioned research, because we know this is the foundation of all the phenomenal success we have with our arts, culture and tourism PR and content campaigns – and all the others that have seen us win 60 top marketing awards thus far (as of July 2023).



However, we are also happy to share some of this insight with you, knowing that our award-winning campaigns are not just based on having the right strategy but very much focused on brilliant ideas and creativity – the Catapult PR/Heritage Buzz secret ingredients that are the 'magic beans' within our numerous brand-building and award-winning campaigns in heritage and tourism.

So read on and take on board the insight. Just remember that it's both what you do and the way that you do it that will be the difference between a supercharged marketing campaign and mediocre one.

Cutting back and saving money



The cost of living crisis is going to greatly influence the majority of your visitors in 2023/4. **85%** of people interviewed by YouGov for our survey said that the crisis will affect their ability to visit heritage attractions.

In areas such as the South East, it will impact **77%** of people; in the West Midlands, it's **96%** of people. The area least affected will be London, where **73%** say the crisis will influence their visits to heritage visitor attractions.

More than a quarter of people (**26%**) say they will only visit heritage attractions that

demonstrate good value for money at the present time. This rises to a hugely significant four-in-ten (**40%**) in the South West, a third of people in the Midlands (**33%**) and **29%** of people in the South East. Least likely to be looking for value for money in a visit are those in London, where this will be sought by **17%**.

One-in-ten people (**10%**) also said they would only consider a visit if there were a special offer on admission. Huge regional variations were seen here, with this being the viewpoint of nearly a third (**30%**) of people in the North East and just **2%** of people in Scotland.

Marketing takeaway:

Heritage attractions must seek to 'add value' to visits by enriching the visitor experience as much as possible, to create good value for money from an experience. Tactical offers should be considered, particularly over the next few months, if numbers need to be boosted. However, the communication of 'value' is still imperative and marketing messaging around this point needs to be compelling and consistent. Even with an offer, people will not turn up unless they feel it will provide a special experience that they can regard as a 'treat' or worth spending on.

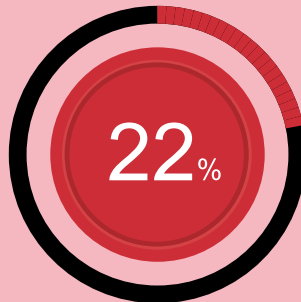


Impacts of the Cost of Living Crisis

More than half of the sample of consumers interviewed (57%) said they felt that visitor numbers to heritage attractions would drop, due to the cost of living crisis. This rose to four-in-ten men (60%).

The response was higher in certain parts of the UK, such as the North West and East Midlands (68%), the West Midlands (63%) and Wales and Scotland (62%), suggesting the crisis is having greater impacts in certain areas.

It was lowest in Yorkshire and Humberside but still the opinion of more than a third of people (38%).



More than one-in-five (22%) of those surveyed admitted that they personally would be making fewer visits to heritage attractions this year. This rose to almost a third (32%) of people in the North West, 29% of those

in the West Midlands and a quarter (25%) of people in Wales.

This is notable, as interviewees are often reticent to be truly honest about their own financial situations. If 22% are admitting that they will be impacted, the true number is likely to be much higher.

Least likely to be deterred from visiting due to the cost of living crisis were those in the North East (16%), Yorkshire and Humberside (17%) and London (19%).

Marketing takeaway:

Heritage attractions need to go all out to make a visit as much of a must-do as they can, by pro-actively providing compelling reasons to visit. Sitting back and expecting people to just come to you, simply because you are there, is not going to work.



No Real Drive to Visit

Nearly **one-in-ten** people say they will only visit a heritage attraction when they are on holiday. This rises significantly amongst those in Wales and Scotland, where **16%** of people expressed this view.

In the North East, **9%** would only visit a heritage attraction if it were overseas.

Bringing the focus back to the UK, **17%** of men and **10%** of women say they will only visit nearby heritage attractions, so as to save money on petrol. **Over a**

fifth of those in the North East and East Midlands (**21%**) share this view.

Only **8%** of people say they actively plan their visits to heritage visitor attractions, with more women (**10%**) doing this than men (**6%**).

7% of people in Scotland and **6%** in Wales would never go out of their way to drive to a heritage attraction.

Marketing takeaway:

Heritage attractions need to work hard on public relations

activity and engagement within their local area, as drivetime area leaflet racks are likely to produce less footfall than ever. We shall discuss the demise of leaflets later on.

Attractions also need to give visitors reasons to plan a visit in advance - and then hopefully also generate the benefits of advanced online ticket sales. Online marketing collateral and outbound, pro-active PR is crucial here.





Unaware of what's on the doorstep

Although a real effort needs to be placed on the immediate local area this year, a quarter of people surveyed said they know little about the heritage attractions in their local area.

This rose to **39%** (nearly four-in-ten) of those surveyed in the North East, whilst it was **34%** in the North West, **30%** in Scotland and **28%** in the South West and East Midlands. Most aware of their local heritage attractions were people in Wales, where only **5%** didn't know what their local heritage attractions had to offer.

16% say they know little about the stately homes in their local area. This again rose to **39%** in the North East but was also the view of **23%** in the South East and, interestingly, **22%** in Wales – a huge contrast to what was said in Wales about heritage attractions in general.

Marketing takeaway:

Heritage attractions need to switch some of their focus away from the wider area and start to really engage with their local community and schools. Given that local people are probably less likely to pick up a local tourism leaflet (and see feedback on that later on in this document), This will mean engaging in local media relations through exciting local PR.

It will also require heritage entities to become much more explanatory about their attraction and its location within their website copy and online articles. The 'owned' collateral, hosted online by each visitor attraction, needs to work much harder. It should offer interesting insights in general but also geographical references, to help attract the attention of local people via Google searches.

Think this is unnecessary and that social media post boosts will do the trick? Check out our later section on how people decide where to visit!

A hand is shown dropping a coin into a white piggy bank. The piggy bank is sitting on a pile of coins. The background is a blurred image of a person's face.

Reduced spend

Even if you are able to generate visits during the cost of living crisis, you are likely to witness a reduced spend, particularly if you are a stately home offering house and gardens admissions as separate options. **16%** of people say they will save money by opting for gardens only, during the cost of living crisis.

The percentages are significantly higher in some parts of the UK - **27%** in the East Midlands, **26%** in the South West and **23%** in the North West. They are lowest in the West Midlands (**6%**).

This will satisfy some visitors completely, as **7%** find the gardens of stately homes more interesting than the home itself.

If the weather is bad, this creates something of a problem. More than **one-in-twenty** (**6%**) would only even consider visiting a stately home if the weather were good and they could spend time in the garden. The percentage is more than double that in the South West (**13%**) and is **12%** in Yorkshire and Humberside and **10%** in the East of England.

Marketing takeaway:

It is likely that visitors instantly see the attraction of spending time outdoors at a stately home, so the trick is to find the stories that make the indoor facilities, furnishings, works of art, antiques and exhibits, just as inviting. Seek out the stories and personalities behind the inanimate objects, to bring these to life, but then tell these stories extraordinarily well in your website copy and also through in-depth articles in a website news area. You could also do what Catapult PR clients can do with our help and create a podcast. This will help visitors realise that they will miss out, if they do not see what is indoors as well as outdoors.

The disengaged

Despite the cost of living crisis, price of petrol and weather, one major issue is that people are just often not engaged with heritage attractions.

27% of people surveyed had not visited a heritage attraction in the past 5 years, with the geographical areas in which this was most prevalent being the North East and North West.

9% of people have never ever visited a heritage attraction, with this rising to 19% of people in Wales, 16% in the North East and 15% in the East of England. **One-in-ten** people in the South East said the same.

On the plus side, 21% of people visited one heritage



It doesn't matter

attraction last year (39% of those in Yorkshire and Humberside and 33% of Londoners said this). 26% of those surveyed visited more than one (41% in the East Midlands and 39% of those in the North East).

Marketing takeaway:

There is an opportunity to try to engage those who are not currently considering heritage attractions an experience 'for them'. This will mean communication and an online reaching out to people, with lots of explanation of what's available and why it is for everyone. Do this and you could grow your visitor base or at least ensure you are the one attraction visited, when people are deciding where to go.



The things they've never done

Steam railways and steamboat attractions have an opportunity to appeal to visitors on the basis of enticing them to do the things they've never done.

39% of those surveyed (and 41% of men) have never sailed on a steam cruiser/heritage boat and 17% have never been on a heritage steam railway.

The areas in which fewest people have enjoyed a steam cruiser experience

are the East Midlands (46%), West Midlands (46%), North East (45%), Yorkshire and Humberside (42%) and North West (41%). Most likely to have enjoyed such an experience are people living in Scotland (26%).

The regions where fewest people have enjoyed a steam railway experience are the East Midlands (29%), North East (27%), South West (24%) and London (23%).

Marketing takeaway:

Steam attractions should adopt a partial 'bucket list' approach to their messaging, urging people to experience something new and not regret never having experienced the thrill of steam travel, whether by boat or train. Making this relevant to both genders and finding ways to tease the experience through words and imagery, including podcasts, should help widen the visitor net.





PEOPLE



ELITE

Barriers to engagement

Heritage attractions have certain barriers to engagement to break down, if they are to boost visitor footfall in the longer or shorter term.

Overall, 7% of the people surveyed felt that stately homes are too elitist, with this view shared by 18% of interviewees in the North East and 15% of those in the North West. The region where this did not feature as a viewpoint was Yorkshire and Humberside (0%). 8% also find stately homes dull, with 13% of

men feeling this, contrasted to just 3% of women. Areas in which people are most likely to feel this are the North West (15%) and Yorkshire and Humberside (14%). Notably, only 3% of people surveyed found museums dull.

Areas that find stately homes interesting are the North East (20%), the West Midlands, Wales and the South East (12%).

9% of people in the North West also felt that stately homes that do not open at

weekends do not really care about the paying visitor, a viewpoint shared by 4% of men overall.

7% of interviewees in the North East also felt that stately homes are too much about the can't do this and can't do that.

Marketing takeaway:

Go out of your way to try to break down preconceptions about stately homes, if you want to try to grow your visitor base. Do this by focusing on your tone of voice

online and the messaging that you communicate. Reach out to potential visitors by developing a news/blog area that is continually communicating the reasons to make a visit and doing so in a very human voice.

Find ways to appeal to men, in particular, through your content, as they are most definitely less engaged by heritage than women are. Consider experiences that might draw more men into your orbit, so that you can try to tap into a new audience.



WELL BEHAVED
DOGS
ARE WELCOME

Children and dogs

The majority of interviewees felt stately homes to be child and dog-friendly, although, in Wales, 8% said they are not welcoming to doggy visitors and 7% of people in the East Midlands felt the same.

Regional variations were also seen in child-friendliness with 11% of interviewees in Scotland and 7% of people in the East of England believing that stately homes do not welcome kids.

Marketing takeaway:

If you are child and dog friendly, make this known through your online communications and press stories. If you see a niche here, create particular PR campaigns around these themes and then repurpose the content for blogs/news articles and social media.



How to supercharge your heritage marketing: part 1

If you want – or need – to boost your heritage marketing this year, the first thing to do is to consider how people are likely to ‘encounter’ you.

As we have already shown, the value of the drivetime market (and the payback from your leaflets sitting in racks in drivetime towns, motorway service stations and other locations) will fall off this year, due to the economic crisis and prices at the pumps.

However, there is more reason to have less faith in leaflets than just that. Only 6% of the people surveyed said that they use leaflets as a source of reference when planning where to visit. The only region where there was any indication that leaflets play a part

was the Midlands. 18% of people in the East Midlands use them, as do 8% in the West Midlands. In regions such as the North West, East of England and Wales, leaflet usage is as low as 3%, whilst in Scotland and London it is 4%.

Social media is not the means by which the decision-making is taking place, this determining where to visit in the case of just 8% of interviewees. The most likely region to use social media for this purpose was London 14%.

17% of people (and 20% of men), use the recommendations of family and friends when planning which heritage attractions to visit.



Contrast all of these with the most popular method and you will perhaps appreciate the importance of website content and website news/blogs areas. 48% of interviewees said that this is how they choose which heritage attractions to visit. This was the average response, with two-thirds (66%) of people in Yorkshire and Humberside saying this and 57% of those in the East of England agreeing. The only region that did not have more than four-in-ten people referencing online content on an attraction's

website when planning where to visit was, in fact, the West Midlands, where the percentage using this method was 28% - still more than a quarter.

Marketing takeaway:

It is essential that you pay attention to your website copy and keep a fresh stream of content and information appearing in your news section. There is a huge opportunity for you to engage prospective visitors in this way and communicate on-message points that can break down objections to a visit and compel people to want to experience what you can offer to them for themselves.



How to supercharge your heritage marketing:

part 2

For many heritage attractions, it will mean letting go of old tactics and not being too seduced by social media.

There is every reason to focus on your website content, not just because prospective visitors are using that when planning their visits but because Google too is looking to push websites that really help the end-user, through informative and helpful content, way up the rankings. All the old tactics of stuffing websites meaninglessly with keywords are now defunct. So too are short articles of just a few lines. What does it say about your desire to give visitors a good experience in person, if you can't be bothered to provide interesting information online? That's how Google sees it, anyway.

In fact, some of the drop-off in your visitor numbers,

if that's what's happening, could be because of the new algorithms that Google has launched, in its search for 'helpful content' that it can reward and promote.

As we have also seen, communicating with your local area, in particular, is super-important but that means storytelling on a continuous basis and in a compelling way. Many attractions struggle to do this. This is where an exciting and creative PR campaign can pay dividends, raising awareness of what you have to offer but also engendering a desire to visit.

PR activity is actually the cornerstone of much of the marketing world now, building the online content and thought-leadership that Google wants to see, generating media articles, offline and online that can help boost your profile and web traffic (via back-links from external website articles) and also producing the content that you need for other channels, such as your social media.

PR content is not just for newspapers but for all of your channels, through the art of repurposing – taking one piece of content and adapting it for all of your needs. You just can't do this with an advert or a social media post. Learn the art of repurposing and it will save you time and energy and also enable you to go cross-channel with your marketing, maximising the value of each piece of content.

In marketing terms, you need to look at the PESO model (PAID, EARNED, SHARED and OWNED) and alter the weight you give to each of these elements.

PAID leaflets will not work well for you and neither will paid advertisements.

EARNED exposure, through PR in national, regional and local media, will raise awareness of what you offer and deliver the third-party endorsement benefit that comes from media exposure. If it also results in back-links in online articles, your website will

also benefit. By repurposing press releases, you can also create a lot of collateral for your OWNED assets.

SHARED marketing is still important, even if not the means through which people are deciding to visit you. Just make sure your messaging is consistent across your social channels and has a synergy with the rest of your marketing. Ideally, make it all part of a campaign that sits together to present you to the UK prospective visitor as a professional and interesting place to visit. However, do be aware that you could waste your time creating social posts about which nobody cares. You could also waste marketing budget in placing ads and boosting posts, for little more benefit. Try to be bold with your content and that's where some payback will come and don't necessarily cover all channels. If you can't be bold, create content as a brochure-style reference point, for when

people check you out, because you've managed to grab their attention elsewhere.

OWNED material is crucial, given our research findings. Your website copy needs to really make it crystal clear why someone should spend their money, time and energy visiting you and why you care enough to make that experience special, if they do.

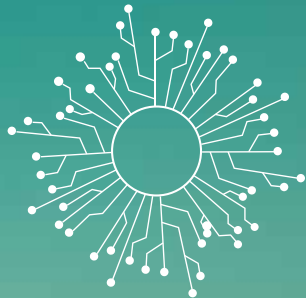
You need to be filling a blog/article area with interesting articles that go into more depth about particular features, events, aspects of what you do and how you do it. By creating a strong framework for articles and incorporating thought-leadership, knowledge and helpfulness, you can start to tick the Google helpful content box.

Remember that putting effort into your OWNED assets makes absolute sense. If you push all of your marketing down social channels that you neither own nor control, you are at the mercy of those who do. You are building your marketing reputation on sand, not solid foundations.

Also remember that it could take some time for the economy to bounce back but, as in all such times, it is those who pro-actively market during a crisis who come back stronger after it. Start building your offline and online presence now and you will be brilliantly placed to capture visitor footfall share both now and when families have more disposable income to spend.



How to access further advice and help



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If you would just like to chat through the content of this booklet, please feel free to book a half-hour Discovery slot here (<https://catapultpr.as.me/schedule.php?appointmentType=46427461>).

If you would like to discuss how we could assist your heritage attraction, you can book either a Discovery slot as above, or a longer one-hour meeting here - <https://CatapultPR.as.me/?appointmentType=46428305>

Alternatively, just email jane@catapultpr.co.uk to arrange a convenient time for a call or to arrange a face-to-face meeting.

More information about Catapult PR is at www.catapultpr.co.uk and we can provide any attraction or stately home with a completely bespoke level of support, either on a year-round or project basis, and for PR, copywriting, blogs and articles and social media (with combined packages also available).

We also have special packaged support and mentoring packages available through Heritage Buzz - www.heritagebuzz.co.uk

You can listen to our Poodling Around podcasts about leisure clients and former clients by heading here - <https://poodlingaround.libsyn.com>

One of our clients, located in the county of Cumbria, recently commented that they fully appreciate just how much we have contributed to their success over the past few years. That has been through PR profile and repurposed content for website and social media use, not to mention podcasts and audiograms. The campaign has been so successful that it has already scooped 5 PR and marketing awards, with more potentially in the offing. Remember, that there's nothing to stop you super-charging your visitor numbers to the same degree and that it can be done at a very affordable cost.

