



WisitBritain VisitEngland ®

Introduction

Encouraging more overseas visitors to explore Britain is a top priority; it spreads the economic benefit across nations and regions beyond London, and supports growth, job creation and retention. The recent government **Tourism Action Plan** (launched in August 2016) supports this ambition and identifies rail as a key enabler to persuade overseas visitors to travel beyond London.

What is the Final Mile?

The Final Mile refers to the distance from a train station to an attraction. It could be within walking distance, or have a connecting bus service. But lack of detailed information, represents a barrier and may cause international visitors to opt for easier alternatives.

The challenge

Most overseas visitors have limited understanding of Britain beyond London. There are language differences, and fears of driving on the 'wrong' side of the road¹. Lacking the confidence to explore the wider scenic beauty, heritage and culture offering, independent travellers can be daunted unless they are part of an organised tour, or have prior knowledge of travelling by rail in Britain

The solution

Repeat visitors are more willing to explore further afield², therefore encouraging travel beyond London requires flexible and imaginative solutions. The availability of up to date and easy to access information will increase confidence and encourage greater use of rail services to explore all areas of Britain.

This guidance looks at how destinations, train operators and attractions can overcome Final Mile challenges (real and perceived). There are examples of innovative practice capable of adoption or adaptation, along with suggestions, support and advice.

^{1.} Trains, the gateway to beyond London? report for Visit England 2016

^{2.} https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Documents-Library/ documents/foresight_149_-_frequency_of_inbound_tourism_to_britain.pdf



Inbound tourism is the fastest growing travel sector with spend by international visitors expected to increase year on year. The number of visits in 2016 grew by 4% to a record 37.6m, responsible for a 2% increase in spend of £22.5bn. The number of visitor nights spent in the UK also increased by 2% in 2016 to 277m.

www.visitbritain.org/2016-snapshot

It's not a level playing field though. London accounts for 54% of all inbound visitor spend, the rest of England 34%, Scotland 8% and Wales 2%³. Research shows that many of the UK's international visitors have outdated perceptions and are unwilling to explore the unknown⁴.

Across Britain's mature inbound markets, 40% think a good public transport system contributes significantly to a destination being great⁵.

However, many struggle with understanding the distances involved to the time required, believing it takes over nine hours to travel by train from London to Edinburgh (4hr 2om) or six hours to Manchester (2hr 05m).

Simplifying access to the right journey information, tickets and prices (ideally seamless and translated) will help to facilitate progress.

The Final Mile looks at some practical and workable solutions used to address the challenge of keeping inbound tourists informed and feeling confident about their choices.

At Zurich railway station, all information, including timetables, is available in four languages. Lisbon uses a system of contactless smartcards to link trains, buses and tram services. Larger hotels in Amsterdam have display screens showing live departure times and platform numbers at the city's main railway station.

^{3.}https://www.visitbritain.org/visitor-economy-facts

^{4.} Trains, the gateway to beyond London? report for Visit England 2016

^{5.}Trains, the gateway to beyond London? report for Visit England 2016



Take a train into any major hub or airport station and the volume of suitcases and backpacks is quickly evident. Overseas visitors bring luggage so adequate storage solutions are needed.

To encourage travel around Britain using the rail network, try to simplify terminology, review wayfinding at stations and form partnerships designed to minimise the number of transactions visitors must make.

Ways to bridge the Final Mile:

- strategic priorities should recognise and account for the significant growth potential offered by overseas visitors (See GWR case study p.8);
- work with major attractions along your routes to jointly address opportunities for seamless ticket offers (See West Somerset Railway case study p.22 and GWR case study p.8);
- translate simple information announcements and brochures into the most common languages used by your passengers (see London Marylebone and Bicester Village case study p.10);
- simplify language used in announcements overseas visitors will not understand terms such as 'alight here';
- allocating Global Distribution System (GDS) codes to train stations so overseas customers can book rail via airlines;

- review the ease of access around stations for people with suitcases and clearly identify the left luggage facilities where provided:
- review directional signage around stations and onboard so that facilities such as information, catering and toilets are simple to follow and find;
- increase onboard luggage capacity where possible and ensure new carriages have sufficient provision – this assists all passengers, not just those with luggage:
- include country of origin in your feedback questionnaires for deeper analysis;
- tailor questionnaires for overseas tourists; their needs are very different to those of domestic customers.

BritRail Passes and M-ticketing

BritRail Passes⁶ have existed since the 1960s, providing easy and cost-effective rail travel for a single fixed price. They enable international visitors the flexibility to travel across Britain, using unlimited trips on a travel day. A choice of seven different passes is available; one covers the whole of Britain while others cover specific geographic regions. They are only available to international visitors and cannot be purchased in Britain.

As part of a Discover England Fund project, the BritRail England M-Pass covering stations in England has been launched in April 2017. This will change the paper ticket to a smartphone or tablet QR code and will improve the overall user experience. Already in the first quarter (April 17 – June 17) 35% of BritRail England consecutive passes are M-Passes.

6. http://www.britrail.com/

Case study

Great Western Railway (GWR)

- pioneering customer-friendly through-ticketing solution



Mind the Gap

GWR operates passenger rail services between London and tourism hotspots in South West England, South Wales and The Cotswolds. The company recognised the business opportunity of offering throughticketing, where travellers purchase one ticket for a complete journey that passes through a number of different transport networks. Through-ticketing is standard practice worldwide, especially within Europe, and is perfectly suited to both leisure and business travellers.

GWR saw the potential to make train services from London available as 'airline add-ons' to flights arriving and departing from Heathrow Airport. The throughtickets needed to include travel on the Heathrow Express, which directly links Heathrow to London Paddington station, and GWR's train services.

Bridging the Final Mile

GWR acquired an airline Global Distribution System (GDS) code to enable reservation agents to book and issue tickets as one seamless customer transaction, with an associated cost saving e.g. Singapore to Swansea tickets consisting of flight and two rail journeys (Heathrow Express to Paddington and Paddington to Swansea).

GWR started offering through-tickets in 2013 and currently works with six airline partners: British Airways, Avianca, Cathay Pacific, Royal Brunei, Oman Air, and Singapore Airlines.

Through-ticketing now offers passengers better choice and easier connectivity beyond London into the regions. With GWR train services entered on the GDS system, any airline can use them, though some are more proactive than others. Train seats go on sale at the same time as airline seats, up to 11 months ahead.

Success for GWR will be measured through expansion in the network of airlines using through-ticketing, leading to increased sales. The service is already showing steady growth through airline promotion. Meanwhile, the original through-ticketing partnership with Heathrow Express and Singapore Airlines won the Integrated Air Rail Partnership at the 2014 Global Air Rail Awards⁷.

www.accesrail.com/products/great-western-rail/



7.https://www.gwr.com/about-us/media-centre/news/2014/may/rail-fly-partnership-wins-international-award

London Marylebone station and Bicester Village

 adding multi-lingual communication and luggage facilities in line with customer needs



Mind the Gap

Bicester Village, Oxfordshire's luxury retail shopping outlet, is attracting increasing numbers of international visitors who pass through London Marylebone station. Believed to be the UK's most visited attraction by Chinese holidaymakers (after Buckingham Palace), Bicester Village also draws large numbers of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) visitors from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Indeed, eight out of 10 Chinese tourists that travel to London as part of their UK holiday visit Bicester Village. Since opening in October 2015, Bicester Village station has served 1.6m passengers.

Bridging the Final Mile

London Marylebone Station

In April 2017, Chiltern Railways, manager of London Marylebone station, introduced platform announcements in Mandarin and Arabic. The announcements were recorded by native-speaking employees, and new members of staff fluent in the languages will be employed to assist on the station concourse.

The train company makes onboard announcements in both languages as trains approach Bicester Village, and Arabic and Mandarin signs have been installed at the station.

Measures to assist Mandarin and Arabic speakers at London Marylebone complements existing multi-European language announcements made onboard Heathrow and Gatwick Express trains, as well as the Eurostar service, helping overseas visitors to travel to and from London with more confidence.

Bicester Village

In response to the issue of luggage storage, they offer a drop off and pick up service at the Bicester Visitor Centre or the Information Hub next to the train station. This enables customers to enjoy the experience with knowledge that their luggage is safe and secure throughout the visit. Furthermore, they offer a London same-night delivery service, whereby shopping will be delivered to central London hotels on the same evening.

https://www.theguardian.com/life and style/2015/dec/13/why-bice ster-is-one-of-britain stop-tourist-attractions

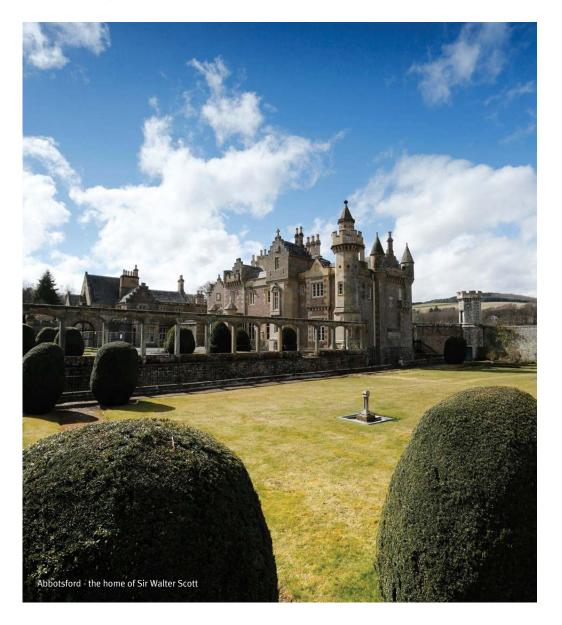


Final Mile - Best Practice Guidelines
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Case study

Borders Railway

 opportunities for tourism on one of the Great Scenic Rail Journeys of Scotland



Mind the Gap

The Borders Railway, the UK's newest railway and part of Scotrail's Great Scenic Rail Journeys opened in 2015 representing an exciting new tourism opportunity for the Scottish Borders, Midlothian and Edinburgh.

Running between Edinburgh and Tweedbank, the journey takes less than an hour and makes it easier than ever for visitors to explore the regions connected by the new railway line. This new line has helped transform the tourism economy and support the ambitions for growth, reconnecting the south east of Scotland to a UK-wide rail network.

Bridging the Final Mile

In identifying opportunities for the tourism industry VisitScotland developed a strategic plan working closely with key stakeholders. Activity included developing story ideas, securing press trip participation, developing media collateral and creating a marketing campaign. Using a Borders Railway Toolkit⁸ the tourism industry are encouraged to use their own platforms to spread the tourism message far and wide.

ScotRail have created dedicated Borders Railway offers made available to customers including partnerships with Abbotsford House, the home of Sir Walter Scott, Floors Castle, National Mining Museum Scotland and Go Ape. Scotrail have also developed a range of tourism ticket offers across its network including the 'Spirit of Scotland Travel Pass'.

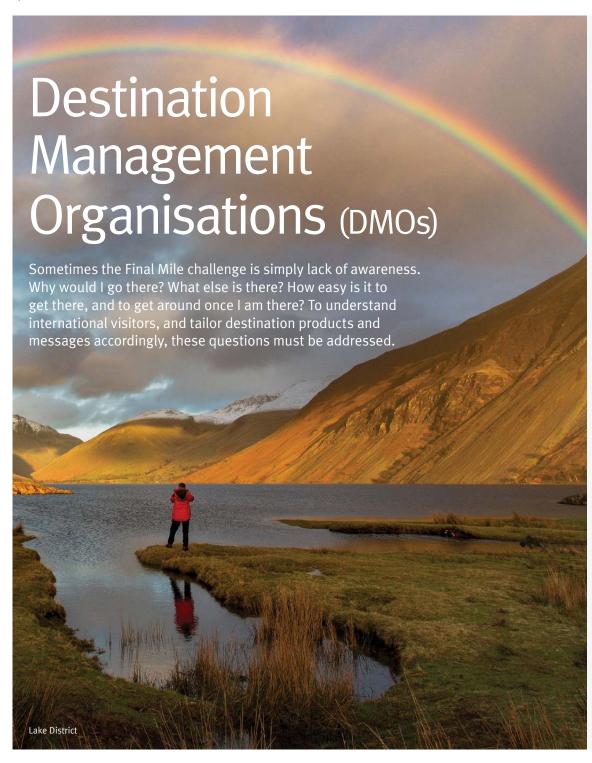
Run by part of City Sightseeing Worldwide, and operated by Borders Buses, new open top tours 'Hop on, Hop off' have been launched in summer 2017 and will allow visitors the opportunity to explore the region. The tours will include stops at Galashiels and Tweedbank railway stations.

A recent report⁹ has revealed that tourism has received a major boost since the introduction of the Borders Railway. Success has included a 16% increase in visitor spend generating an 8% increase in employment related to tourism in the Scottish Borders and a 12.3% rise in the number of visitor days in hotels and B&Bs in Midlothian.

http://www.bordersrailway.co.uk/ https://www.scotrail.co.uk/scotland-by-rail/great-scenic-rail-journeys



8. http://www.visitscotland.org/business_support/advice_materials/toolkits/borders_railway_toolkit.aspx 9. http://www.bordersrailway.co.uk/news/tourism-visitor-figures-boost-attributed-to-borders-railway/



Wayfinding information should be simple and informative. There is a middle ground between providing too much detail, and not enough, both of which can lead to confusion.

Some urban destinations have implemented legible city wayfinding 10 – with larger scale 15-minute 'finder' maps as well as a five-minute radius map. These encourage longer walking journeys beyond e.g. a transport hub, and enable visitors to set out with confidence.

Ways to bridge the Final Mile:

- Build partnerships
- with other destinations and attractions on strengths or common themes that will strengthen the appeal and desire of international tourists to visit (see North Wales Tourism case study p.18 and p.19);
- with transport operators, to make it easier for the international tourists to reach you (see Gateways of England case study p.14 and p.15).
- Website information
- provide detailed information on all public transport options;
- list travel times from major UK hub cities near your region eg London, Edinburgh, Manchester and Birmingham;
- mention the frequency of daily services for weekdays and weekends;
- where there is more than one railway station, differentiate journey times into the relevant station e.g. Paris has seven stations and indicates which station is required for different destinations (ideally it would also give guide travel times);

- suggest overseas visitors use Trainline for timetables and best rate point to point tickets, as individual train websites is too confusing. Already operating in 20 countries, many international visitors will be aware of Trainline, and have the app on their smartphones;
- promote BritRail Passes to encourage overseas visitors to explore regions outside of London, with clear and concise benefits explained. One ticket that covers all travel is preferred by overseas visitors and avoids complicated ticket machines, queuing etc.;
- navigation to the journey planner / how to get here section should be possible within two or three clicks from the home page;
- consider adding an interactive map of journey times from main transport hubs and key local attraction easily navigable via rail to convey information visually in numbers, making it easier for visitors who don't have English as their first language.
- Arrange workshops for local attractions with a focus on finding ways to overcome Final Mile challenges using best practice examples, e.g. where a cluster could develop a solution which works for them all and is financially viable.
- Promote shoulder/off-season activities to encourage visits when transport operators, attractions and accommodation are quieter and actively looking to grow business.

"Two years ago, we became part of Team Europe, promoting Conwy to the Japanese as one of 30 beautiful European town and village destinations. We've attended trade shows, translated websites, information and itineraries, and hosted fam trips. We've now seen an 84% increase in Japanese visitors."

Jim Jones - North Wales Tourism

'Gateways of England'

- developing two-centre holiday packages which address intercity travel





Mind the Gap

'Gateways of England' is a Discover England Fund year one partnership project to encourage Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) visitors to travel to London and beyond to Manchester for a twin-city holiday, using open-jaw ticketing (flying into one destination and out of another) and offering the option of using train travel between cities.

Middle Eastern markets don't generally choose rail as their first mode of transport, however it is becoming more popular. To connect the two cities, customers will be offered the onward travel option to fly, self-drive or travel by train.

Airline carriers and operators have reacted extremely positively to the London and Manchester partnership, which is designed to encourage tourism dispersal across England.



Bridging the Final Mile

London & Partners and Marketing Manchester have teamed up with dnata travel services, the world's largest air travel service provider and specialist in Middle East markets, dnata, or their ground handler service, will facilitate and sell packages that include flights, transfers, hotel, connectivity between both cities (rail, car hire or flight) and a range of experiences and attractions within each city.

The packages will be flexible, with product and transport options added/selected in line with customer wishes e.g. familyfriendly activities, shopping or sports.

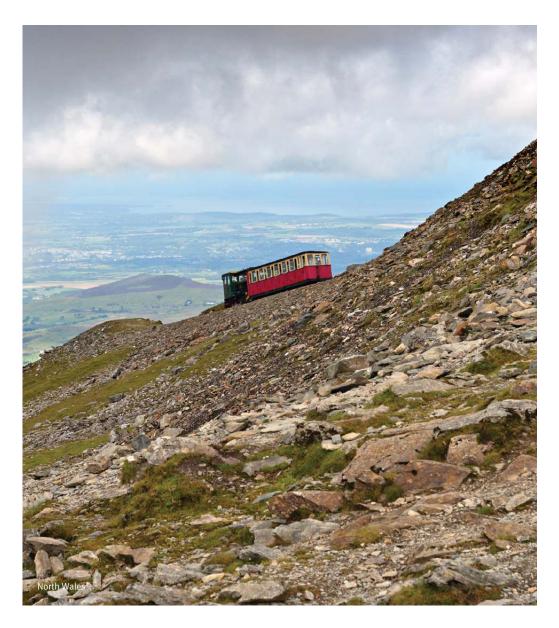
Success for the Gateways of England partners will be measured by growth in holiday duration and expenditure in the UK. This will be evaluated by the number of packages sold, nights stayed in London and Manchester and the extra product purchased pre-travel through dnata. The campaign increased total deal sales for London & Manchester YOY.

Additionally, open-jaw ticketing will help to fill seat capacity on flights in to, or out of, Manchester.

The primary barrier for using trains for many inbound travellers is quite simply that they do not know where to take a train to and from London – a gap in product knowledge - and they are unsure where they can find information¹¹.

North Wales Tourism

- strong partnership raising international profile



Mind the Gap

Despite a great visitor offering, North Wales was overshadowed by larger destinations, and perceived as being too far from London, despite taking just 2hr 30min to reach. It lacked the international profile needed to benefit from direct flight routes into gateway airports at Manchester and Liverpool, or the excellent mainline train services to nearby cities including Chester.

Unfortunately, connecting local train services into North Wales are currently disjointed, complex, and unable to cope with increasing demand. Not only that, but it is likely to remain this ineffective until a new rail franchise comes into effect in 2018.

Bridging the Final Mile

North Wales Tourism, a private membership company and destination organisation, has overseen the region's reinvention. Local, private, and public sector investment from activity attractions like Surf Snowdonia, ZipWorld and Bounce Below has emerged to complement the natural attractions of Snowdonia, a designated Dark Sky Reserve, and established resorts like Conwy and Llandudno. Thematic years, promoted by Visit Wales, encourage

collective buy-in, where existing assets can repackage themselves and work together to target overseas markets. Collectively they create marketing momentum as a 'world first-class destination', to increase profile, leverage funding, and support lobbying activity. The company is a partner in Growth Track 360, which calls for substantial rail investment in the cross-border North Wales and Mersey Dee area. It maintains a high-profile presence, visible at both Manchester and Liverpool airports, and is gaining increasing amounts of organic media endorsement. It features on Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2017 list and TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice 'Top Places to Visit in the UK' - to name just two. Local lobbying activity has created a dialogue where a bus company has agreed to scope out the possibility of creating bus routes to service attractions throughout the Conwy Valley.

Success for North Wales Tourism is already measured through increased media and travel trade recognition. The addition of buses serving Conwy Valley tourist attractions, and a new rail franchise in 2018 investing in local train services, will make future access to the area easier, enabling a projected growth of 6-8%.

www.Gonorthwales.co.uk





Most online review sites show questions from overseas visitors asking how to get to attractions by public transport. You may have the most marvellous collection, wonderful location or provide a fantastic fun day out; but if overseas visitors can't find you they will choose an alternative option.

The provision of clear, accurate and up to date travel information is vital. Make it easy for visitors to find and follow directions with confidence, or they will go elsewhere to spend their time and money.

It's no longer enough to say you can travel by this or that method. To plan their visit effectively, visitors require detail of how to get their, including how long it takes and approximately how much it costs.

Ways to bridge the Final Mile:

- include detailed public transport option information on your website and test it first-hand make the journey and follow the instructions for clarity and accuracy (see example template on page 26);
- offer incentives to visitors using public transport, including BritRail 2for1 offers

 they reduce pressure on car parks and support local services;
- take online credit card bookings so overseas travellers can commit to the visit pre-arrival;
- translate information into other languages if unsure of your main

- overseas markets the local destination organisation can advise (see London Marylebone station and Bicester Village case study p.10);
- work with a local train operating company to arrange a one-ticket solution where appropriate; (see West Somerset Railways case study p.22 and p.23);
- join or form a marketing consortium for overseas markets, turning 'competitors' into partners to offer critical mass and reciprocal deals (see North Wales Tourism case study p.18 and p.19);
- in relevant rural areas consider applying for LEADER grant¹², e.g., wayfinding, GPS app etc

West Somerset Railway

- one-ticket solution encouraging day trips from London



Mind the Gap

England's longest heritage railway runs on 20 miles of a former branch line, carrying 200,000 visitors per year between Bishops Lydeard station and the coastal resort of Minehead. Most visitors arrive at the attraction in their cars, which puts strain on already limited parking facilities. However, travel via public transport meant visitors arrived by mainline train services into Taunton, then had to use a local scheduled bus service to transfer to Bishops Lydeard before they reached the attraction.

Recognising the challenge of this multistep, multi-ticket process, West Somerset Railway enlisted the help of their destination organisation, Visit Somerset, to meet Great Western Railway (GWR) and bus operator Buses of Somerset, to discuss a solution.

Bridging the Final Mile

All partners were receptive to a one-ticket solution. Journey times and prices from West Somerset Railway service were added to GWR's computerised system,

enabling passengers to book a seamless journey from their station of origin through to Minehead, inclusive of the bus connection. The one-price, one-ticket solution represents a 19% saving against buying the separate components for those travelling from Taunton.

GWR also removed peak-time restrictions on the early London to Taunton service, enabling visitors to enjoy West Somerset Railway as an affordable day trip from London, GWR provides the booking process and also carries out much of the marketing.

GWR intends to extend tickets sales, by offering and selling the through-ticket option to international visitors (see case study on page 8).

Success for Visit Somerset, based on similar through-ticket examples, is predicted to see an increase of 60,000 visitors and a £1million boost to the local economy over a five-year period.

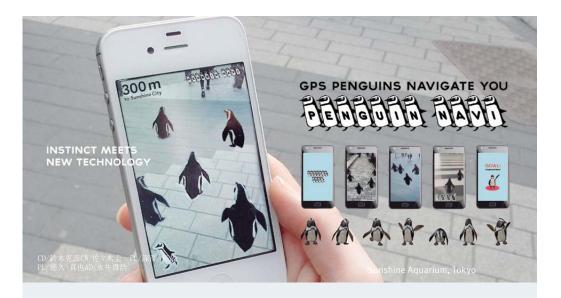


www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk www.gwr.com/destinations-and-events/heritage-railways/west-somerset-railway Final Mile - Best Practice Guidelines
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Case study

Penguin Navi

- innovative directional app where people follow penguins



Mind the Gap

Tokyo's 35-year-old Sunshine Aquarium was experiencing a significant reduction in visitor numbers as it struggled to compete with other attractions. Located in a dense part of the city, and 1km from the nearest train station, managers realised that many potential visitors were having difficulty finding the aquarium, and losing their way en route, thus missing out on the attraction altogether.

Bridging the Final Mile

Working with a marketing agency, Sunshine Aquarium launched Penguin NAVI, an innovative app which combines GPS navigation, motion sensors and augmented reality technology.

www.sunshinecity.co.jp/aquarium www.youtube.com

At the nearest train station, visitors download the app to their smartphones, prompted by signboards with a QR code, and follow virtual penguins directly to the aquarium entrance.

Penguins are a popular feature at the Aquarium, especially with families, and the campaign motto was 'Let penguins bring people'.

Success was immediate. Attendance at the aquarium increased by 152% on the previous month, despite no change in exhibits. Research showed 93% of users planned to recommend it to friends and family. The campaign also won a Silver Lions Award at Cannes for best use of technology, giving the Aquarium an international profile.

Case study

Mountain Goat

- local knowledge-driven service solutions for global operators



Mind the Gap

Already an established provider of rural transport services around the Lake District, Mountain Goat saw increasing numbers of travellers were arriving with limited awareness of the area's geography and transport options.

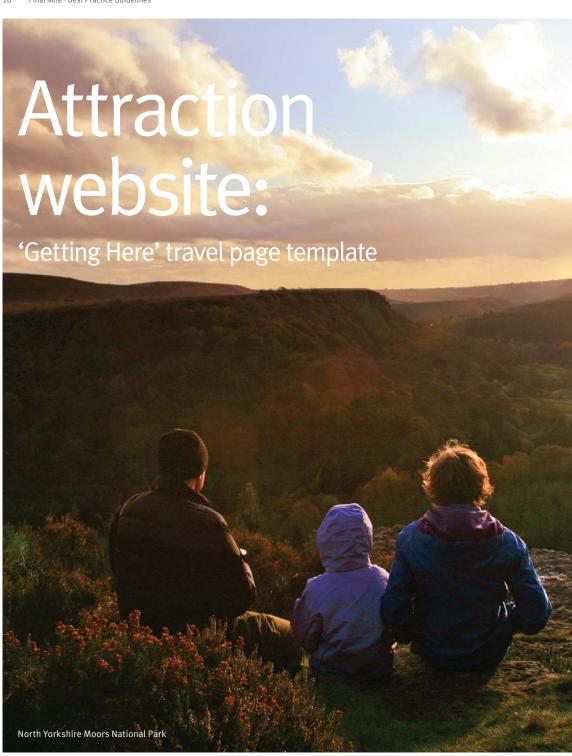
The company started providing visitorfocused daily guided sightseeing tours, walking guides, and the 'Cross Lakes Experience' bus service. The number of overseas visitors continued to grow and the company recognised a great business opportunity to provide local expertise and specialist ground-handling services for the Lake District.

Bridging the Final Mile

Mountain Goat set out to build relationships with the global tour operators selling the Lake District. There are no shortcuts to working with the travel trade and, as such, the company invests in attending the major travel trade shows and events. Using their local knowledge and tour operator licence, they can offer packages which are tailored to international visitors, and provide cost-effective services for tour operators, including transfers from Manchester and Liverpool airports.

Success requires an understanding of market needs, and for providers to take the time to build strong trade relationships. Over 10 years they have seen a 30% increase in overseas visitors.

www.mountain-goat.co.uk/



The purpose of your website travel page is to provide clear, accurate and up to date information which reassures visitors and helps them to plan effectively.

Assembling the detailed information might take a few hours of your time, however visitors may give up, become confused or not bother in the first place, so it is time well spent. Make the information easy to find and to follow, so that more visitors are encouraged to use it.

Best Practice

Since all attractions are different, this template focuses on suggestions which can be adapted to local circumstances.

Content – focus on all areas of transport – rail, bus, car, cycling where appropriate. This will serve as a useful on-going reference source for you.

Navigation – keep it simple, intuitive and available within two or three clicks of the home page.

Getting here by train

- The nearest train station is [name].
- Mainline services run from London (2hr 25m): Manchester (1hr 30m); Leeds (45m).
- Journey times and prices vary according to the time of day – please check train timetables [link to National Rail Enquiries website, telephone +44 8457 48 49 50]. Or download an app such as Trainline.com or Rome 2 Rio from your smartphone app store.
- Upon arrival at [name] station you should follow the bus/taxi/walking instructions given below.

Getting here by bus

- From [name] rail station, you should take bus service number [7] or [27]. The bus stop is located at [the station/ stop H /outside shop]. Tickets can be purchased from the driver or from the ticket machine at the stop. You will need the exact amount as no change is given.
- The bus journey takes [15] minutes and costs [£2.30 single; return fare £4.50].
- Buses run approximately every [30] minutes, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, and hourly at weekends.
- Include a link to the local bus service provider website or national website www.traveline.info/

Getting here by taxi

- There is a taxi rank outside [name] rail station.
- Provide some local taxi company numbers.
- The taxi journey takes [10] minutes and costs
- If no taxi service is available it's best to say so.

Getting here on foot

approximately [£7.50].

- From the rail station / bus stop there is a [1km] walk [describe terrain e.g. flat, gentle incline, steep] which takes approximately [15] minutes.
- Follow directional signs marked [name of attraction] (include a picture of the sign if possible).
- Provide a map with directions and walking distances – ideally easy to download and print. Include post codes for users of online map apps e.g., Google.

Contributor details

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Best Practice Guidelines and if you would like more information on final mile solutions see below for contact details.

Gateways of England

Eliza Ferguson Senior Marketing Manager London & Partners eferguson@londonandpartners.com

Mountain Goat

Stephen Broughton Managing Director stephen@mountain-goat.com

North Wales Tourism

Jim Jones Managing Director Jim.jones@nwt.co.uk

West Somerset Railway

Colin Howard
Head of Commercial Services
colin.howard@wsrail.net

Phil Silk

Freelance Designer studiounite.com

Great Western Railway

David Gardner Head of Sales & New Business Great Western Railway david.a.gardner@GWR.com

Visit Britain

Charles Wilde Rail Project Manager charlie.wilde@visitbritain.org

Live Tourism

Jackie Ellis, Copy Editor Associate Jackie.ellis@live-tourism.co.uk

Visit Scotland

Gordon Smith National Partnerships Manager Gordon.Smith@visitscotland.com

