

Reimagining Events

Storytelling

SUMMARY

Insights into how to create a compelling narrative that motivates customers to engage with your event/festival and destination.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Understanding the POWER of storytelling and why it is a crucial tool for events and festivals.
- Knowing the importance of placing your event/festival narrative within the context of its destination.
- Tips for planning and building your narrative for effective communications.
- Repositioning your narrative for diverse opportunities including channels, markets, and customer segments.
- Planning your event/festival pitch to inspire a customer to book.

CHECKLIST

1. Know that mastering the art of compelling storytelling is an essential tool for motivating customers to book your event/festival. Effective storytelling:

- Hooks and holds customers by tapping into their emotions.
- Makes your event/festival and destination memorable.
- Ignites intrigue and delight in customers, inspiring them to engage.

2. What kind of communications does my event/festival need to plan for effective storytelling?

- Written storytelling:** for offline and online communications.
- Visual storytelling:** the power of an image.
- Verbal storytelling:** words used in conversation to enlighten, inspire and engage.

3. Three KEY components must be considered when planning your event/festival story:

i. Northern Ireland's Embrace a Giant Spirit destination experience brand.

As the brand under which your event/festival sits and the brand that clarifies Northern Ireland's destination identity, it is most important that a) you fully understand this brand, b) that you live up to its promise and c) that you share this brand offline and online by using the brand logo whenever possible. You can get this on TNI.com, searching and registering for the 'content pool'. Any questions please email medialibrary@tourismni.com.

ii. Your destination: your event/festival must be placed within the context of its destination, revealing insights into both the people and the place.

iii. Your event/festival: must be a clearly crafted unique story within its destination context.

4. How do I begin to share my destination's story?

Begin by looking at your destination objectively, appreciating its positive points from the perspective of an outsider looking for the first time. Summarise outcomes using the following list for inspiration to create and define a collection of words that you can use in communications:

- **The physical place:** consider the geography and views, the light and the colours.
- **Secrets known to locals:** hidden places to explore, places you love to visit.
- **The heritage, culture, habits, and traditions:** that belong to this place, have influenced, or inspired this place.
- **The people:** who are they? What defines them?

5. How can I prepare the narrative for my own event/festival?

Once you have clarified the destination context, plan to define the components of your event/festival narrative by referring to the following checklist:

i. Define the motivation for your event/festival, reflecting on:

- WHY is the event/festival happening?
- WHAT is its purpose?
- WHAT will customers gain by attending?
- WHO are the organisers/team behind the festival and what is their vision?

ii. Plan visual, verbal, and written content including:

- Your brand
- Visual images that showcase your event/festival in the most positive light
- Words: placing an emphasis on words that enlighten and delight the listener

iii. Itemise what is available for sale. If you have diverse offerings, place these into clear categories such as free, core and premium events.

iv. Clarify booking instructions for online and offline bookings, including international telephone codes for the benefit of out of state customers.

6. How to flesh out your event/festival narrative

Once you have planned the components of your event/festival narrative, you can then expand the narrative using the following for inspiration:

- **Your festival name:** for example, Harvest Moon Food Festival.
- **Your festival USP:** for example, "A celebration of nutritious and flavoursome food crafted by [name place] contemporary food artisans."
- **Your event/story highlights:** for this choose approximately 5-8 details. For example:
 - o An annual ten-day event that takes place in rural [...] the first week in September.
 - o Meet pioneering food producers, gaining insights into the centuries-old single ingredient methods that they offer.
 - o Mingle with generous and high-spirited locals in a place of breath-taking beauty...
- **Your market stall:** define what you are selling, including price and clear price inclusions.
- **Your booking details:** making it easy for customers to book offline and online.
- **Visual imagery and video:** choose wisely to compliment and celebrate your story.

7. Positioning my event/festival story for diverse opportunities

Once you have figured out your event/festival story, you will need to plan how you can position the narrative to maximise opportunities including via diverse:

- **Sales channels:** for example, for social media channels strong visual imagery or engaging video content works well alongside succinct and lively personalised language, whereas indirect sales channels like travel agents use professional and often indirect language.
- **Markets:** think about how you would impart your story to a customer with local insight versus an international customer who may have no shared cultural root and may have a low understanding of your destination and event/festival offering.
- **Customer segments:** think about how communications need to be tailored for customers who have a special interest and deep appreciation for the content of your event/festival versus a customer who has a general interest and a low level of knowledge.

8. Be aware of the difference between the verbal pitch and the actual event/festival experience

- While the experience is enjoyed by the end customer for the duration of the event, the verbal pitch grants the opportunity to express the merits of the event/festival to achieve a sale.
- A verbal pitch must thereby be well-crafted and succinct so that the listener is enlightened, rather than overwhelmed. Via an effective pitch, this customer should feel inspired to make a purchase.

9. How does collaboration play a role in storytelling?

Stories are best told when individuals and the collective share them across communities. In this way, stories are heard more strongly, creating engagement for your event/festival and wider destination.

10. Who is in control of the narrative?

You are. If you plan and communicate your story, the outcome will be increased opportunities for your event/festival and destination.

USEFUL LINKS

Sign up to Tourism NI industry news and events at <https://tourismni.com>

Keep abreast of Tourism NI Insights and Intelligence at <https://www.tourismni.com/industry-insights>

Check out TNI support resources including links to events-specific webinars at:

<https://www.tourismni.com/build-your-business/events-webinars>

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