

# Visit Belfast Welcome Centre Opening a new TIC

# Overview

- The new TIC is 'State of the Art'
- Cost £1.8 million (€2.2m)
- Latest technology to meet changing customer needs
- Focus on warm welcome
- Opened Dec 2013

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# Reasons for Relocation

- Lease was expiring in the old building (11yrs)
- Limited 1st floor location
- Changing visitor needs and behaviour
- No technology, traditional ways of working and visitor engagement.
- Footfall was falling / retail sales dropping
- Funding cuts meant no longer sustainable

# Vision - Mission Statement

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***“The new Belfast Welcome Centre should showcase the Belfast ‘story’, its gateway role and its city brand in an environment which is modern and inspired, where technology in all its forms is being deployed effectively, and where efficient and friendly customer handling goes hand in glove with ‘commerciality’.”***

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# Criteria for New Premises

- Visibility and distinctiveness
- Accessibility
- Potential to increase revenue and footfall
- Modern approach to visitor servicing
- Follows best practice
- Proximity to Belfast City Hall

# Services Offered

- Visitor Information on Belfast & NI
- Tickets for tours, festivals & events – Box Office
- Translink Ticket Desk
- Gift Shop
- Left Luggage
- Bureau de Change
- Accommodation Bookings
- Free Wi-fi



# 2014-15 Targets

- 20% increase in footfall (272,000 visitors in 2014-15)
- £1.1 million commercial activity
- 10% increase in visitor spend
- £9.3 million into local economy



# Belfast Story Islands

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- People
- Places
- Industries



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# Themed Islands

- Culture & Heritage
- Maritime & History
- Arts & Entertainment
- Food & Shopping
- Outdoors & Sport
- Family Fun & Attractions
- Beyond Belfast



- Commercial – Sales £100k – staff requirement
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# Self-Service Area

- Showcasing 500+ products
- Live events & social media feeds
- Regularly updated
- Top 20 FAQs in 8 languages
- Build 'favourites' itineraries
- 'Inspire Me' section

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# 16 Screen Video Wall

- Belfast & NI videos
- Advertisements
- Destination, and events messages

Which lends itself for events & launches





# Ticketing & Info Screens

- 3 ticketing screens
- 4 information screens
- Front window screen



# Interactive Maps

- Belfast Map
- NI Map



# Retail

- Belfast-focused
- Reduction of lines (700-120)
- Merchandising
- New lines (gifts etc)
- Sales up 80%
- Target £230K



# Key Steps to get Started

- Business case
- Secure Funding
- Appoint contracts-:
  - Architect
  - Builder
  - Technology Specialist/Developer
  - Interior Graphics
  - Retail Expert



# Content

- Huge part of the move
- Content used to feed all digital screen
- Used our website and new database
- Both VB member and Gateway content data capture process
- 3 people needed for 3 months prior to opening
- Joint working between Visitor Servicing team and Communications team

# Planning Stage

- Architectural Plans
- Allocation of space
- Critical time lines put in place
- Run down of old stock (brochures etc)
- Decisions – what goes/what stays
  - PCs/printers
  - Office furniture
  - etc

# Planning and Logistics

- Physical packing up of retail/brochures
- Preparing for new EPOS system
- Working with reduced square metres
- New ways of working – working ‘smart’
- New retail racking – signage /display
- New brochure racking/storage areas
- Printed materials
- Communicating to staff/staff training
- Avoiding disruption to the full service

# New Ways of Working

- Input from all staff from outset
- Focus on engagement on the floor
- Trainer did sessions on new ways of working, moving away from the desks
- Using iPads while on the floor
- Moving out of comfort zone



# Next steps

Rationalising what we do at airports:

- Staffing
- Literature
- Retail
- Staffed presence plus technology
- Low overhead costs



# Next steps

- Roll out of 4 self-serve kiosks (this week).
- 2x new pods at both airports
- 2x self-serve touch screen kiosks at train and bus stations

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# Thank you

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