

Project Title: **SHORT STORIES FOR SHORT BREAKS**

Category: **2.0 PRINT**
2.2 CONSUMER

Client Company: **NORTHWEST DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (NWDA)**

Design Consultancy: **VIV'ID(A) LTD**

Current date: **16TH JUNE 2010**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (300 WORDS)

ENGLAND'S NORTHWEST - SO GOOD WE DESIGNED A BOOK ABOUT IT!

Despite being a region of fantastic contrasts; from the awe-inspiring vistas of the Lake District to the white knuckle rides of Blackpool, the cultural hotbed that is Liverpool, Roman splendor of Chester and Manchester, the original 24-hour party city – perceptions of the Northwest as a short break destination did not reflect this diverse offering.

Research carried out by the NWDA highlighted a contrary message of ingrained negative associations, creating a barrier to people considering the region for short breaks. One of the main barriers identified was the lack of information, highlighting the need for more factual information to fill the gaps with 'good' information.

From this Vivid devised Short Stories for Short Breaks book, a call to action for the national media campaign, to challenge and change negative perceptions, with a focus on an editorial led solution and the end goal of measurable results with increased visitors and spend.

The design delivered firsthand captivating experiences of the region and its 'hidden gems' in the style of a personalised journal, enabling it to:

- Contain core messages, firmly based on the region's brand values
- Reference the region's attack brands and products
- Provide an emotional connection conveying diversity and vibrancy through surprising with richness and revealing the undiscovered.

Evaluation demonstrates a 110:1 ROI and significant shifts in perceptions of the region with 80% of respondents from outside the Northwest agreeing that they were surprised by the wealth of venues and products in the region. 98% expected to be making visits to England's Northwest, with 87.7% of those who had made an overnight stay indicating that the book had influenced their decision.

The design was so successful it was commissioned for a third season with a further reprint of books.

“By telling stories through marketing, we engaged and influenced people to make premium short breaks during a recession. Vivid communicated the vibrancy and diversity of the region, changing perceptions and persuading our target audience to explore the richness of the Northwest of England. In addition the creative assisted in key relationships with the regions, with all of the regions using the designs within their own campaigns”

Rob Martell, Tourism Marketing Manager, NWDA

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

2.1 OUTLINE OF PROJECT BRIEF

Despite the success of regional events – from 2007's Manchester International Festival to 2008's Liverpool Capital of Culture - some negative perceptions of the region remained, holding back the growth of the region as a tourism destination.

Research indicated the main barrier to visiting the Northwest was a 'lack of or /poor' information and so the vacuum was filled by 'bad' information, therefore 'facts' were needed to fill with 'good' information. In addition, cultural changes in Liverpool and Manchester recognised by some but not perceived wisdom.

As the lead body for economic and tourism development in the region, the NWDA required a new approach to their 09/10 marketing campaign to inform and attract visitors to the region - celebrating the regions diversity and vibrancy via the key attack brands of Liverpool, Manchester, Chester, The Lakes and Blackpool, along with a range of high profile and undiscovered products and events in two key themes (culture and countryside).

The main marketing objective for 2009 was to not only continue to shift perceptions of the region; but also to drive action, in terms of visits to and visitor spend within the region.

2.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Vivid was briefed to create a new 'guide' to the region, firmly based on the region's brand values; surprising with richness referring to the region's 'attack brands' (Blackpool, Chester, Manchester, Lake District, Liverpool) and be usable across both themes of (city/culture/arts and outdoors/nature/countryside).

Key design objectives were to:

- Create positive awareness of the region, based on the strength of the region's diversity and vibrancy through attack brands and the wealth of cultural / countryside events and products.
- Create an emotional connection to the region by providing engaging and stimulating content, via a more experience-led route, conveying both the diversity of region along with undiscovered areas.
- Inspire the audience to consider the Northwest as a possible future short break destination through the delivery of 'good' information.
- Appealing to culture vultures and countryside lovers, raising awareness of the regions diverse cultural / countryside events and products whilst maintaining a consistent approach to communications.
- Deliver a strong call to action for a national media campaign, resulting in visits to the region.

2.3 OVERVIEW OF MARKET

The global economic recession presented us with big challenges for tourism marketing in 2009. While domestic tourism was forecast to increase as foreign holidays were cut back, city breaks and cultural trips were set to be squeezed significantly.

Two key audiences were identified, namely ABC1s, couples, aged 35+:

1. Empty nesters across the UK who loved the great outdoors and city breaks
2. Culture Vultures, predominantly in London and South-East, who sought their culture abroad

Our qualitative research highlighted three important insights about these two audiences:

- a. They increasingly ignored traditional tourism marketing, not finding it credible or differentiating compared to foreign destinations
- b. They listened to recommendations from trusted sources (friends, family, advocates) when deciding where to go
- c. They made their minds up either at the weekend or on their commute to and from work

2.4 PROJECT LAUNCH DATE

September 2008

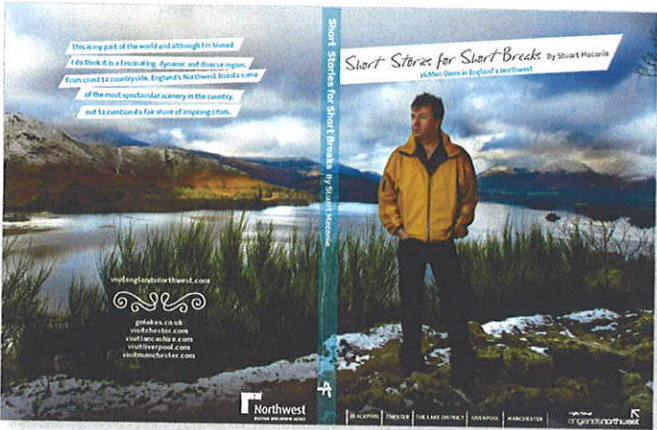
2.5 SIZE OF DESIGN BUDGET

£25,000*

*includes a proportion of editorial/ambassador fees which were used across the national media campaign.

2.6 OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION (387 WORDS)

Our over-arching design strategy was storytelling. This meant creating a design solution to showcase the diversity and vibrancy of the region through an ongoing narrative with our audiences, integrating with offers to capitalise on latent demand.



Short Stories for Short Breaks allowed us to address the main barriers of visiting, based on first-hand written accounts and imagery of the Northwest in the style of a travel journal.

These stories came together in a free 128-page book that could be requested through a website and enjoyed on the commute to work or at weekends.

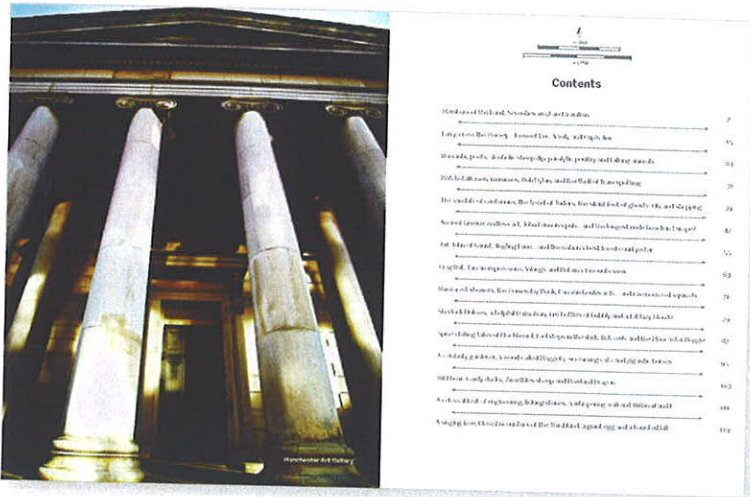


Stuart Maconie was secured to add credence and credibility to the design, offering the perfect fit to the Northwest and, as the UK's biggest-selling travel writer, he is authentic, relevant and trusted.

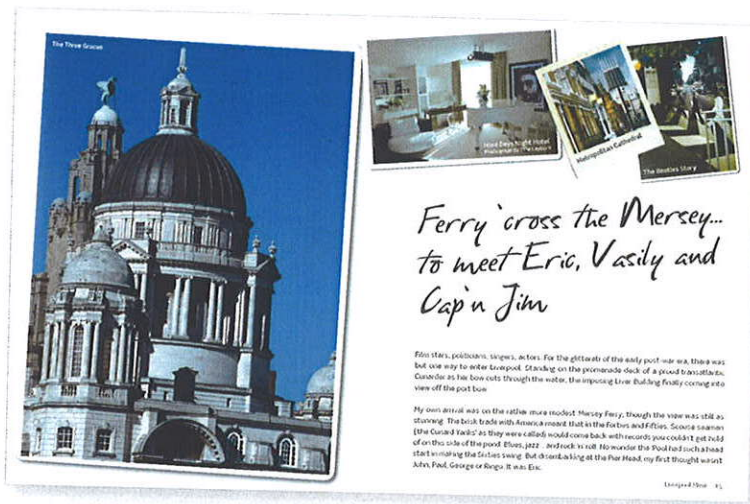


The rich personality of Stuart Maconie taking a different look at 'his' Northwest gives the design a fresh and spontaneous feel, instead of a the tired travel guides we are so used to seeing, giving the impression of Stuart travelling the region, writing fifteen stories/travel guides, and highlighting the cream of 2009 events for visitors.

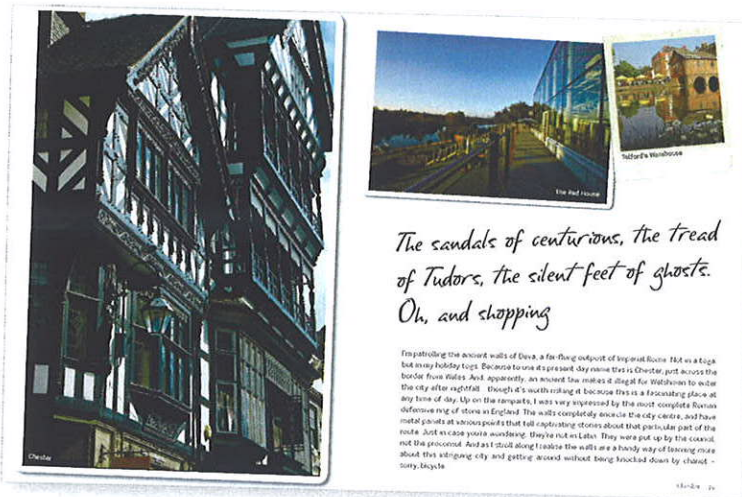




The content focused on short breaks and thus promoting short breaks based around these themes, referencing the region's attack brands where relevant and designed inspire the reader to create their own short story and consider the Northwest as a possible future short break destination.



The design treatment took inspiration from a long-copy, editorial features and the style of a travel/photo journal, the narrative and visuals would engage the consumer in a fresh and approachable manner giving the reader a sense of almost being there and unexpected enchantment.



3. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The effectiveness of Stuart's Stories for Short Breaks in delivering the NWDA's original objectives was assessed by an independent evaluation by England's Northwest Research Services in early May 2009.

3.1 QUANTITATIVE FEEDBACK

- 11,400 visits to the region were generated, directly influenced by the book.
- A further 34,000 visits, directly influenced by the book were being planned within the next 3 months.
- 52.6% of respondents had made trips to the Northwest since receiving the publication. Roughly half of those making trips indicated that their trips involved overnight stays with a mean average of 3.4 nights.
- 41% of staying trips and short breaks to the Northwest were planned since receiving the book and a further 44% indicated some of the short breaks were planned only after receiving the book demonstrating that it had influence.
- Almost all respondents (98%) expected to be making visits to England's Northwest, with 87.7% of those who had made an overnight stay indicating that the book had influenced their decision.
- When compared to the website (which was a host for the call to action) this was a 43% uplift indicating that the main driver for change of perception and visit was down to the design and content within the book, however both channels were well received and to have been a strong influence, therefore it should be concluded that the 'rounded' campaign delivered the key messages at the appropriate time.
- 87.4% of respondents were within the key demographic of aged 35+.
- Approx. 3,600 email addresses were provided by the NWDA for research purposes. By the end of May 2009 600 responses were recorded, giving a 17% response rate. This in itself may be considered a positive reflection as in general consumer cold email surveying tends to produce a 5%-10% response rate, to achieve this level indicates a high interest in the campaign.

3.2 ECONOMIC IMPACT & RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- The overall spend on the 8000 copies of Short Stories for Short Breaks book incl. design, production, distribution and low percentage of overall campaign spend (given that the whole campaign was not aimed only at drawing in book requests) is £68,250.
- Based on a total of 38,220 trips generated through marketing, the total economic impact is £7.514m, the return was 110:1.
- This in comparison to industry benchmarks from Enjoy England of 20:1 and 61:1 for the most recent previous NWDA marketing publication 'PRIME'.

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3.3 INFLUENCE ON PERCEPTIONS

- 95.1% of respondents indicated that the campaign had to some extent influenced visitors to attend events or visit venues that they had not previously aware of, a 33.1% uplift when compared to a previous NWDA campaign (PRIME) at 62%.
- 80% of respondents from outside of the Northwest agreed that they were surprised by the wealth of venues and products in the Northwest region, emphasizing the role the publication played, a 7% uplift when compared to a previous NWDA campaign (PRIME) at 73%.
- There was an overwhelming agreement (94%) that respondents wanted to "see more of this sort of information to promote the best in the Northwest region" a 9% uplift when compared to a previous campaign (PRIME) at 85%.

3.4 QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

Verbatim responses were very positive, and it is a measure of satisfaction with the book that many respondents gave answers that fitted into more than one category. There was an undercurrent within the comments that the personal style of the design, layout, writing, recommendations and selection of photos being seen as high quality, were particularly welcomed, with the 'quirky' nature being mentioned.

"This book changed my ideas about the Northwest"

"The production & the design of it was outstanding"

"The design & quirky concept"

"Good to read a proper BOOK rather than a magazine-type promotion"

"Easy to pick up and put down. Looked at in the coffee breaks at work. It really sold the area well, helped with the planning of future trips"

"it is a beautifully illustrated book I would have been seriously tempted to pay good money for had I seen it in a shop. Thanks again and keep up the good work."

Almost all of the comments indicated that Stuart Maconie was an excellent choice as a brand ambassador.

4. RESEARCH SOURCES

1. Short Stories for Short Breaks Campaign Evaluation, prepared by England's Northwest Research Service for Economic Development and Tourism.
2. Visitor spend calculations evaluated the marketing's economic benefit to the region using STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor).
3. Short Break Perceptions of England's Northwest, produced by MORI for NWDA.

5. OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

5.1 STUART MACONIE

Perhaps unsurprisingly Stuart's profile led to an appreciation of the campaign, it should be born in mind that this was a considered part of our campaign thought and design. Commissioned by Vivid as an impartial ambassador to enhance the travel journal style and this element should be considered as a design approach. He does not 'take over' the campaign and his input enhances rather than defines the campaign; verbatim responses included

"He's northern enough not to patronize those who live (in the Northwest), but not so northern he'll scare off southerners"

"I was surprised and pleased. I had not heard of him before, and he came across as a refreshing change from some of the more popular presenters"

"Excellent idea... an inspired combination"

5.2 LARGER CAMPAIGN

Stuart's Short Stories for Short Breaks book was part of the NWDA's annual media campaign and the primary call to action with a website as a host to order the book.

The evaluation results are primarily measures of the effectiveness of the book in influencing visitors decisions to visit and stay in the Northwest. Approx. a quarter of all respondents recalled seeing the advertisements, given that these tactics were intended to drive potential visitors to request a copy of the book as the main source of information for planning and visiting the region it has little impact on the effectiveness of the book itself.

5.3 THE IMPACT OF STAYCATIONS

Whilst Enjoy England research identified an uplift in domestic holidays in 2009, city breaks and cultural trips were set to be squeezed significantly and competition intensified within the UK. Whilst the book capitalised on a staycation market and the North West of England witnessed above England average in terms of uplift of Staycations of at 11.70% as opposed to 12.24% for the Northwest for the Northwest. The staycation situation alone should not be credited for the effectiveness of the campaign in terms of perception and ROI results.

Rachel Emson - Vivid - Managing Director



Nigel Dove - NWDA - Director of Marketing and Communications



2010 DBA Design Effectiveness Awards

