

TOURISM STUDENTS COLLABORATE WITH PURE CORK TO CONDUCT MARKET RESEARCH FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A VISITOR PASS



BACKGROUND

Pure Cork is the official tourism brand for Cork, showcasing all that Cork City and County has to offer visitors. Cork is now advertised as a Maritime Haven with a large variety of attractions including Blackrock Castle, Blarney Castle, Cork City Gaol, Mizen Head and The Jameson Experience.

THE NEED

Pure Cork has been considering introducing a visitor pass much like The Dublin Pass. However, market research was required to gauge industry perceptions of the proposal, as well as feedback from locals and tourists. As the pass would require a large investment, input from stakeholders was vital to assess the potential of the pass.



THE SOLUTION

CIT's Tourism Management students collaborated with Pure Cork to assess the feasibility of the pass by carrying out market research and internal and external analysis. Their findings outlined some factors which could affect the progression of the pass:

- Competition, in the form of the Visit Dublin pass was one of the threats identified.
- Most visitors came from the US, with over 57% staying in Cork for only 1-2 nights, suggesting the pass would need to cover entries to attractions in under two days.
- The pass should be marketed to tourists online, with 59% of visitors discovering 'things to do in Cork City' through online channels.

The research group made several recommendations to Pure Cork, including collaborating with Fáilte Ireland to include the visitor pass in tourism campaigns, guerrilla marketing campaigns on billboards, bus shelters and public areas around Cork City and social media competitions to coincide with the launch of the pass.

The group suggested investing in SEO to increase the visibility of the pass during online searches for 'things to do in Cork'. Customisation of the pass, allowing visitors to choose the attractions they'd like to visit, the time frame and the option to include public transport was also suggested.

BENEFITS OF THE ENGAGEMENT

The project gave CIT's Tourism Management students the opportunity to collaborate with a variety of tourist attractions. They gained invaluable experience working with a high scale brand and industry mentor, conducting research for a new initiative that could change the face of Cork tourism in the future.

Pure Cork acquired the extensive market research carried out by students. This gives Pure Cork the background knowledge and evidence they need to evaluate the visitor pass initiative.

"I was very impressed at the level of research conducted. The presentation was very well delivered by the students. The information we heard today will greatly benefit our future initiatives."

- Seamus Heaney, Pure Cork.