

CIT MSC IN MARKETING PRACTICE STUDENTS COLLABORATE WITH WEST CORK MODEL RAILWAY VILLAGE TO CONDUCT MARKET RESEARCH AND RECOMMEND FUTURE STRATEGIES



BACKGROUND

The West Cork Model Railway Village (MRV) in picturesque Clonakilty, is the leading tourist destination in West Cork. The main part of this attraction is a model village of different towns in West Cork, including Clonakilty railway station.

It also showcases miniature running trains, remote control boats, a play area, an information centre, a cafe and a train in which guests can ride through Clonakilty town. The business is coming up to its 25th anniversary and decided to reach out to CIT MSc students to research and present some new strategies they could practically implement coming up to this big milestone.



THE NEED

MRV has a high number of visitors during the peak season, but low volumes outside of this time. They also feel they are not reaching a large customer base through their online platforms.

The attraction itself has several features which could be utilised, such as large open areas and an empty building which was previously a café.

As MRV is a non-profit organisation, they stressed that the strategies provided be practical and fitting for a low budget organisation. This meant students had to be pragmatic when brainstorming their strategic ideas.

THE SOLUTION

A market research report was conducted by the class, with an approach in mind that would best suit this type of non-profit business. Strategies based on their findings were presented, using props, videos and Q&As to convey the student's proposals. These included:

- Improvements to the website to make it more visually appealing and promote more online bookings.
- Collaborating with local businesses to hold events at the attraction. This would utilise the unused space, gain more revenue and build strong relationships in the community.
- Making the attraction more interactive, such as having treasure hunts or games for children visiting the site.
- Intergenerational learning centres, connecting an older generation group with a play school or young school group. This would bring the two target markets together at once all having a keen interest in the attraction itself.

BENEFITS OF THE ENGAGEMENT

The students gained invaluable experience working with a very niche organisation in Ireland. This process allowed them to think more practically when producing ideas for a business.

MRV benefited from the extensive market research conducted by the class. This included customer surveys/interviews and visitor statistics.

Strategies were also proposed that MRV could effectively implement in the future. These were well thought out and researched in-depth to ensure feasibility.



“The benefits of working on live cases for students are manifold. Applying theory learned in the classroom to real-life situations generated numerous benefits for the students who undertook the project. In addition, West Cork Model Railway Village benefited greatly from the insights generated by our students.”

- Mike Falahee, Marketing lecturer.

“We were delighted to collaborate with the MSc in Marketing Practice on developing our marketing strategies. The students gave us a number of tactics and ideas that stayed through to our core values and budget. We found working with the students very beneficial and would recommend it to other businesses.”

- Maryanne Coughlan, Marketing Coordinator, West Cork Model Railway Village.