

## Inside this issue:

### Events:

Tourism Network Meeting: "Influencing the Influencers" - see opposite

The Summer Party - see opposite

Training events - page 6

### How to:

Use turkey twizzlers - page 2

Brands, logos, positioning - which? Page 3

Advertise in on train magazines - page 5

Small words make a big difference - page 8

Get the most from a PR agency - page 10

Promote to visitors on your doorstep - page 11

### Issues:

Fascinating facts and figures - page 2

Eco tourism - page 6

Love Kylie, love London tourism? Page 9

## Wondering who we are?

The Tourism Network is an independent, not-for-profit industry support agency. It was established by Susan Briggs, an independent marketing consultant since 1990. Our aim is to support the UK tourism industry in a practical, enthusiastic and fun way - with training workshops, networking meetings, publications and consultancy advice. Find out more about our consultancy services as well as the free and low cost ways in which we can help you [www.tourismknowledge.com/aboutTN.htm](http://www.tourismknowledge.com/aboutTN.htm)

The Tourism Network Tel: 020 8947 4053  
[Susan@tourismnetwork.org](mailto:Susan@tourismnetwork.org)

## Free tourism training events

Take a look at our new tourism training site [www.tourismtraining.info/events.htm](http://www.tourismtraining.info/events.htm) for details of two free training sampling events.

## Tourism Network Meeting *Influencing the Influencers* Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May

The next Tourism Network Meeting will give you an insight into **how to influence the influencers...** people and companies like guide book editors, tour guides, operators, incentive companies, tourist boards, journalists, concierges, and others who can act as your (sometimes even unpaid) indirect sales and marketing force - if you can convince them that your product or service is a good one.

We're planning a Question Time-style format (except no boring pompous politicians on the panel) so you can get the answers to the questions you'd really like to ask from our panel of representatives from a variety of "influencers". As with all Tourism Network events, there'll then be plenty of time for you to network with the speaker panel and industry colleagues over a glass of wine.

This network meeting will take place from 3.00 - 6.00 pm at the Regency Hotel in South Kensington. You need to book on [www.tourismknowledge.com/events.htm](http://www.tourismknowledge.com/events.htm)  
*Do it now* - we had 150 on the waiting list for our last event!

## *The Summer Party* Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June

One of the perks of working in tourism is that it's such a sociable industry with fun people.

We hope you'll be able to come along to our Summer Party from 7.00 pm on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June, kindly co-hosted by Bateaux London. As well as a fantastic networking opportunity, buffet, and plenty to drink we're planning some fun awards and entertainment by such luminaries as Princess Pat the Palmist and the Crazy Cartoonist. Save the date now and look out for your invitation and full details soon.

## Are you thinking what I'm thinking? Turkey Twizzlers?

There are two very cost effective ways to market any product or service. One is to use PR and the other is to jump on board a bandwagon or piggy back on some-one else's promotional budget.

Look at any newspaper at the moment and two topics recur again and again. Politics and turkey twizzlers. Agreed, it's not a very attractive combination. But use either or both of them as a topic in your next press release and you're almost certain to get free coverage in at least your local paper, if not nationally.

The Lake District has been quick off the mark - or sensible by planning the promotion well ahead since we all knew the election was pending - and already declared itself an election free zone. It's innovative and witty website



[www.electionfreezone.co.uk](http://www.electionfreezone.co.uk) has gained national press coverage, encouraging visitors to "think outside the ballot box". The website includes polls that (unsurprisingly) show that the Lake District is wonderful, and pledges such as "we pledge to allow you to relax and discover your inner self". A simple angle, used very effectively and capitalizing on current affairs to generate free publicity.



As for turkey twizzlers... well, you can either add them to your menu since Bernard Matthews claim that their sales are escalating thanks to the additional publicity (you see - no such thing as bad publicity!) or ban them.

Turkey twizzlers are a hot topic it's easy to grab the headlines by simply using the angle of healthy eating, or give prizes for green-vegetable-eating children in your restaurant.

Susan Briggs  
[Susan@tourismnetwork.org](mailto:Susan@tourismnetwork.org)

## Fascinating Facts?

Published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS), "UK 2005" provides an overview of economic, environmental and cultural affairs in the UK.

It includes fascinating facts and figures ranging from the winners of major sporting events and cultural awards to how much the average household spends on transport a week. The full publication is over 500 pages long, so we've been really nice and picked out some of the highlights for you:

- Shopping accounted for 20% of trips in the UK.
- Leisure was the most common reason for travel, accounting for 31% of all trips.
- 21.3 billion text messages were sent in 2003.
- Over 4.4 billion passenger journeys were made on local bus services in 2002/3.

- Mary Seacole, a veteran nurse in the Crimean War, came first in an Internet poll of the 100 Great Black Britons.
- The bulk of tourism services are provided by 131,000 mainly independent small businesses, such as hotels, guest houses, holiday homes and caravan sites.
- Domestic tourists spent in excess of £31.3 billion on day trips in 2003.
- Business travel, which includes attendance at conference, exhibitions, trade fairs and other business sites, accounted for 33% of all overseas visits in 2003.
- Admissions to UK cinemas fell to 167.3 million in 2003 from a record 176 million in 2002.
- In 2002, 71% of online sales of goods and services by UK business in the non-financial sector where in the wholesale, retail, catering, travel and telecoms.
- Total visitor attendance at exhibitions in 2003 fell by 16 per cent, but was only 4 per cent lower than in 2001.
- Including multiple exhibitions, there were 856 events in 2003, attracting 9.6 million visitors.
- There were 1.8 million jobs in the hotel and restaurant trades in the United Kingdom in December 2003. This includes pubs, wine bars and other licensed bars, in addition to businesses offering accommodation and prepared food.
- The world's biggest and most expensive cruise liner, *Queen Mary 2* was launched.
- Churches and cathedrals are also an important part of the nation's cultural heritage, with over one million visitors to both York Minster and Canterbury Cathedral each year.

You can find out more about UK 2005 - the Official Yearbook of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at [www.statistics.gov.uk/yearbook](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/yearbook)

Mary Tebje  
[Mary@tourismleisure.org](mailto:Mary@tourismleisure.org)

## Brands, logos, positioning - what do you really need?

Marketing is full of jargon, much of it misunderstood. Even terms like PR and advertising get used interchangeably but have completely different meanings. In case you're wondering, advertising means spending money to secure space in the media, PR means using your imagination less than your wallet.

One of the most popular bits of jargon being used at the moment is *brand*. How often do you hear about some one trying to *build their brand*, or *create a brand*? However, probe a little deeper and you'll often find they're not talking about a brand at all, but a logo or perhaps positioning. This article takes a quick look at what each of these really are.

One of the ways customers respond to a product or service is according to its **brand**. When they hear or see the name of a place or hotel they have an instant reaction. This may be complete lack of knowledge, such as "never heard of it" which often feels negative rather than neutral, based on the idea that if it was decent they'd at least have heard of it.

Or they may have a more specific response, positive or negative, which will be based on their total experience of that place, product or service. This "experience" will be gained through a variety of factors, sometimes rather vague and seemingly insubstantial.

I remember as a child a decision was made to take a short break in Saffron Walden. In essence we'd decided to go there before we really had any clue of exactly where it was, how long it would take to get there or even what there was there. My father simply liked the name, had met some one nice who'd once lived there and had possibly seen a photo of the place although he couldn't be sure. And yet, he had an instant reaction to a place name.

Without a penny of promotional budget being spent on building a brand (they probably hadn't been invented then), my father had a perception of Saffron Walden. He didn't express it as such but it was a "brand" he liked.

Brands are not logos. A brand is about a (potential) customers' response to a product or service. Each brand usually has a combination of rational and emotional benefits. For example, BA & Virgin are both airlines, and fly some similar routes with similar aircraft and offer broadly similar services in terms of a seat to sit in, food and drink, films on long haul flights etc.

Their brand values are very different from each other. Customers' perceptions of them are more emotional than rational. BA is seen as a more traditional, established and serious airline. Virgin is seen as more entrepreneurial, youthful and fun. And yet the real question should be whether or not they can get you to your destination in safety and on time.

That's the power of a brand - it makes consumers feel things about products and services that influences/clouds their judgement!

Having a strong brand means that consumers feel they know what they're getting before they actually get it. And because tourism is largely made up of experiences you can't sample in advance of making a purchase - i.e. you can't sleep in a hotel bed for five minutes to decide if you're going to have a good time before actually making the booking - then brands are important. Tourism is about creating the right perception.

However, just because brands are important, it doesn't mean you can create one from scratch or even build a brand without some expertise, budget and insight. Many brands emerge over time and the consumer's mind isn't so easily manipulated. Artificial brand

building doesn't necessarily work. The best brands develop over a period of time. If brands are about consumers' response to a product or service, then there is a huge amount of work to do to influence how that consumer thinks. Designing a logo or strap line isn't what brand building is about.

Logos are often confused with brands. A logo may encompass or represent a brand and all its values but not every logo is a brand... The famous Nike tick is a logo and a brand, because its adherents have an instant response to it and what it means.

Few logos are true representatives of a brand. They are usually simply a way of building name recognition, and often not even that but simply a designers' fantasy. Nothing wrong with designing a logo but it can't replace the wider effort involved in building a brand. Some designers confuse the issue further by saying they are brand specialists whereas they mean they are good at designing logos.

Positioning is something else to be considered in the overall battle for the consumers' mind and wallet. Positioning a product or service can help change or enhance its image and identity. But it isn't about changing your product or service, rather about deciding how you want to be seen by consumers. Positioning is once again about influencing visitors' minds and demonstrating how your destination, accommodation or attraction is different to or better than your competition.

In our next issue we'll look in more depth at how you can build a brand and what you need to do - even if you don't have a big budget or degree in psychology!

Susan Briggs

## On track advertising - in and out of town

Over the past few years you'll have probably noticed the "in journey" magazines placed on board the trains. And you've probably also seen, or even been featured in, the well established *2 for 1* leaflet, produced by Hill Meyer Allen (headed up by an ex-rail man) that is distributed through all the stations into London. Each Train Operating Company has its own version, offering discounts and 'added value' on London attractions, restaurants and theatre.

They are all vying for the attention of commuters and visitors, whether it be Heathrow Express and their '*VIA*' magazine or South West Trains '*e.motion*' or Virgin Trains '*hotline*', to name but three, all in an effort to encourage greater use of the trains not just for commuting but leisure too. But what value do these magazines bring and should you be advertising in them? What we need to evaluate here is the benefit of communicating with commuters via these types of rail magazine and the probable outcome.

*VIA*, Heathrow Express's latest bimonthly has certainly stepped up the design since its predecessor. With their combination of tourists, business travellers and domestic commuters there's a good case for consideration with this one, though you'll need to position your ad strategically. The distribution is well targeted but don't forget you only get the people coming into London Paddington, if it's the other journey - they're leaving!

Other magazines such as *hotline* and *e.motion* are more lifestyle focusing on getting people out of London to enjoy the rest of the UK. They have evolved from their original and rather boring "let's tell you about the railways" subject matter and now have a more in-flight magazine style with sound bites

on cities and places you can visit on their networks. Because of this London is only a small part of the make up of each magazine.

Some train operating companies make good use of established London Guides for their promotion of travel to London. For example ScotRail and Hull Trains use *The London Guide* to add value - and that lateral thinking is perhaps the better idea for the majority of train operating companies to consider for inward journeys and would be a better place to spend your money.

The 2 for 1 discount leaflet has grown from strength to strength but currently has no editorial content - if you make an offer you get a space. The take up on offers is substantial but make sure you get your terms and conditions right as their print run may have your offer in at peak seasons, bank holidays, school holidays and at 2 for 1 that may be a little too generous. I had an experience of this during the Easter holidays and the attraction was containing a small riot amongst visitors clutching their 2 for 1 offers because they hadn't imposed strict conditions before submitting their offer.

Finally, On-Track is a train operating company partnership between the overground network that covers the areas of London served by trains instead of tubes, such as parts of South West and South East London. This could develop as a separate London Overground brand, sustaining a lively magazine with a substantial target audience, overcoming the London gap. They are in debate about going forward with such a publication and your comments would be welcomed on this as I believe London's Overground Network does need better representation and branding,

*VIA* is published by River Publishing Ltd. Tel. 020 7413 9370 (Sales)

Mark Hendriksen  
[mark@tourismnetwork.org](mailto:mark@tourismnetwork.org)

## Tourism training - making it easier to get the training your company needs

The Tourism Network has been awarded a significant amount of funding from both the London Development Agency and the European Social Fund to help tourism businesses in London identify the training and skills development initiatives that could help improve their bottom line and enhance their profitability.

Over the next few months we're developing a new website [www.tourismtraining.info](http://www.tourismtraining.info) containing help and advice about training and staff retention. The site is already live but will be further enhanced with much more information, particularly about training courses available to you and your colleagues.

As part of this project we'll also be launching the first Tourism Network Handbook - more on this in the next issue of this newsletter.

There are two ways in which you can immediately benefit from this new initiative. You can subscribe (free) to the new quarterly newsletter called The Bottom Line, about training and staff development that will also give you access to some special events and services. To register just go to [www.tourismtraining.info/newsletter.htm](http://www.tourismtraining.info/newsletter.htm)

We're also arranging a series of (mostly free) events where you can sample different types of practical training. You can already book for two forthcoming events. The first of these takes place on 11th May in Central London and focuses on customer care for international & disabled visitors, including a special sample presentation on welcoming Chinese visitors.

The second event is on 12<sup>th</sup> July in East London where we'll have a brief training course on promoting high quality products to the Meetings, Incentive, Conference and Exhibitions' market, focusing on how to

convert enquiries and show rounds into business.

Both events are free to companies employing less than 250 people and cost just £20 for all others. **Brunch and networking opportunities are included!**

**London based businesses can book either of these events now by going to [www.tourismtraining.info/events.htm](http://www.tourismtraining.info/events.htm)**

The London Development Agency has announced details of other staff and training initiatives and full details of these are now available on [www.lda.gov.uk/tourism](http://www.lda.gov.uk/tourism)

If there's any type of training you're looking for and can't find please get in touch and we'll help you to find it.

## Understanding ecotourism

Punta Mona, a 30-acre organic farm and educational retreat has just been recruiting for a full-time permanent manager for an ultra-ecological lodge in the rain forest on the beach in the Gandoca Manzanillo refuge in the Caribbean, looking for a professional with education and experience running hospitality businesses including accounting, marketing, personnel management and entrepreneurial spirit. You could do that!

If you don't understand a single thing about ecotourism, it's worth noting - you could work in fabulous, exotic parts of the world, on low pay, with high job satisfaction away from the tread-mill that is our modern urban life.

### Defining ecotourism principles

The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as *"responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people."* This means that those who implement and

participate in ecotourism activities should follow the following principles:

- Minimize impact
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate
- Support international human rights and labour agreements

Sustainable tourism is the umbrella for tourism activities that consider the environmental, ecological, social and cultural impact of their activities. Eco-tourism sits within this, as one type of activity, but what differentiates it is the fact that eco-tourism uses the natural environment as its hook; so the great outdoors, meet the Hill Tribes in Thailand, or walking holidays in Yorkshire etc.

So, why should UK businesses be interested in this niche market? What difference will it make to your bottom line? Here are a few facts and figures:

- Ecotourism is considered the fastest growing market in the tourism industry, according to the World Tourism Organization with an annual growth rate of 5% worldwide and representing 6% of the world gross domestic product, 11.4% of all consumer spending - not a market to be taken lightly.
- Tourism is changing rapidly as nature, heritage, and recreational destinations become more important, and as conventional tourism is forced to meet tougher environmental requirements. This presents a challenge to government and

private enterprise to develop new approaches to the tourism market.

- Successful tourism must benefit local populations economically and culturally to give them incentives to protect the natural resources which create the attraction
- You may be aware of the "triple bottom line" phenomena which encourages business managers to think in terms of not just the good old fashioned financial bottom line, but in terms of two additional "bottom lines," namely the so-called "social bottom line" and "environmental bottom line."
- Individual operators and communities often do not know how to communicate with potential clients. They may lack professional language skills. I recommend that RDA's pay professional editors to review and edit brochures and websites.
- Ecotourism has even been defined as cultural tourism - a cross cultural experience.
- The trick with ecotourism is to preserve the natural resources whilst also promoting them and accommodating growing volumes of tourists.
- Unfortunately, what has often given the destination initial appeal is spoilt and destroyed by a successful promotion and exploitation of the resource.
- It is not a marketing ploy, nor is it scenic or nature-based travel.
- I have saved the best fact for last - the best thing about Eco or sustainable business practices is that you save money.

There are few Eco-certified accommodation providers or tourism providers in the UK, which I could find. The Orchid Hotel, Mumbai, India is a 245-room, five star, ECOTEL-certified establishments and was designed from the outset with preservation of the environment in mind. It has some novel ways of getting their customers involved too. See [http://www.orchidhotel.com/mumbai\\_hotels/enviroguests.htm](http://www.orchidhotel.com/mumbai_hotels/enviroguests.htm) Closer to home, the

Considerate Hoteliers Association is working to offer advice on environmental and sustainability issues to its accommodation providers who are members. Check out <http://www.consideratehoteliers.com/>

So if you want to forge ahead then check out this great website which is full of practical tips for both you and your clients. <http://www.planeta.com/ecotravel/tour/hotels.html>

### Do you ever feel environmentally guilty when you fly? Then buy some trees!

An Australian non-profit environmental organization, called Greenfleet has developed a programme that allows people to also do their own "carbon-neutral" travelling.

Greenfleet's programme allows people to pay for trees to be planted to compensate for the carbon emissions that result from their travel. [www.greenfleet.com.au](http://www.greenfleet.com.au) has an online greenhouse calculator so that air travellers can work out the amount of carbon dioxide produced from their one seat on a flight and the number of trees that need to be planted to absorb those greenhouse emissions can then be calculated.

Mary Tebje  
[Mary@tourismleisure.org](mailto:Mary@tourismleisure.org)

### Small words make a big difference

Sometimes we assume we either need a big budget or lots of power to make a difference to our marketing efforts. But often all you need is a little imagination and a few tweaks to what you already do.

There's a great story about a poverty stricken man who approached an international hair shampoo manufacturer, promising them a way to double their sales with minimal investment and without changing their product at all.

After some extensive negotiations they agreed to pay him a significant sum of money in return for his "secret". Like all the best ideas, it was simple and for many years shampoo companies used it.

On the back of the bottle where the instructions for use are given: "apply to wet hair and rub to create a lather, then rinse thoroughly", he suggested adding one word. It was "repeat". And it worked!

A couple of years ago I noticed the signs at underground stations describing how trains are running. Next to the name of each tube line, station managers added either the words "delays occurring" or "normal service". Simple enough.

More recently I noticed a small change at some stations, a change that's slowly spreading to them all. Next to the tube line names the words "normal service" have been replaced with "good service". Same service, same staff, no cost just one changed word. And yet imagine the difference that makes to both customer and staff perceptions of the service offered and the change in morale!

So is there a simple way you can change your service or make your marketing more effective? There is. **You!**

When you write a brochure, advertising or website copy, turn round the way you describe your facilities. Instead of writing "we offer excellent services..." address the customer directly by using the word "you" and describing how your excellent services can benefit them. *You'll be glad you did.*

Susan Briggs  
[Susan@tourismnetwork.org](mailto:Susan@tourismnetwork.org)

## Love Kylie, love London tourism?

In an earlier issue of this newsletter we called for a new Chief Executive of Visit London who would be passionate about London, who understands the tourism industry, who's perhaps come up through the ranks so they know how the big *and* little boys feel. Some one who's been to the travel trade parties and can now act like a Pied Piper to make everyone feel part of the game.

As former marketing director of Selfridges, James Bidwell was responsible for "tasks" such as launching the Love Kylie luxury lingerie range. But how well will this prepare him for his new role at Visit London?

There are parallels between promoting Selfridges and London. When Gordon Selfridge developed the concept of his store in 1908, he said he wanted to create a place where "people are encouraged to make a day of it". London is just a few steps further on - we'd prefer people to stay a few days...

A few years later, Bidwell was quoted as calling Selfridges "a lifestyle place to hang out in" rather than a department store. And of course he understands customer needs and the importance of a quality experience. So far, so good.

With such strong competition from other cities such as New York and Paris, it's important that London trumpets its brand values. Having opened stores in Birmingham and Manchester and adding sparkle to the London store, Bidwell also knows all about building a brand.

His sense of innovation is encouraging, understanding the need to move with the times and give the media and public something to talk about. Selfridges became licensed for weddings because "it's about inspiration and fun, and offering customers something new at every turn". Just like London.

These skills can easily be transferred to the tourism industry, although despite being a Visit London board member for some time, James Bidwell will presumably still need to learn how the travel trade really works at a more grass roots level. He can probably use some of his media skills to "rally the troops" and call Visit London Partners to action, encouraging greater participation.

His appointment is little surprise, given that Visit London's public funding is unlikely to continue at the current level. More income is needed from the private sector. Attractions, hoteliers, tour operators have only so much more to give. So where can additional income come from? Err - retailers?

For years retailer have benefited from tourist's spending sprees but not necessarily contributed financially to London's promotion overseas. Clearly someone with a retail background will be more capable of going after their marketing budgets. So that's the big boys sorted.

Government funding is ploughed into organisations like Visit London because of the many small businesses that are involved. If they can be helped to grow, they'll employ more people. But those small businesses don't necessarily feel that such organisations are actually being run for their benefit. It remains to be seen whether smaller businesses will feel they can relate to the big brash new Visit London headed by some one from a glamorous West End store.

Given his track record and previous experience, James Bidwell is set to make a success of his new role and to further enhance London's position as a destination. He should also be able to bring in the cash. If he can somehow find a way of convincing all the smaller partners that they really are *partners* and that their voice will be heard, then it'll be a job doubly well done. We'll feature an

interview with James Bidwell in a forthcoming issue.

As for having been to *real* travel trade parties, well there's going to be a great one on the 22nd June... maybe see him there?

Susan Briggs  
Susan@tourismnetwork.org

## Getting the most from your PR agency

Despite being one of the most cost effective promotional tools, PR or Public Relations, is still widely misunderstood. It's defined as "relations between an organisation and the public" so should be an integral part of every business.

Perhaps part of the confusion is due to some bad experiences with a few PR practitioners failing to meet their clients' requirements who then feel they "got their hands burnt".

PR should really be about getting people to take action, to buy into your service. Advertising is generally about paying for space to place an ad, whether in print, radio or tv. PR is much broader.

In recent years, smaller agencies have been invaluable in re-shaping the PR image. Working without the overheads and bureaucracy of larger agencies they can develop a more personal interaction with the client and in most cases offer a more cost-effective, hands-on service. Agencies should understand your product inside out and be passionate about it too.

We've found that many tourism businesses and destinations don't really understand PR or use a fraction of its full potential, yet they are willing to spend far more on advertising, without any guarantee of success.

Customers can be skeptical about advertising messages because they know they've been paid for and created to appeal to us. So ad agencies have to be more and more creative, driving up costs. We think advertising is worthwhile - but it needs to be supported with PR.

So what should be watchwords for PR agencies and how should you go about choosing one? Most agencies will boast of their media contacts and experience, but what have they done to support sales or economy growth? Driving awareness is integral to any campaign, but unless PR talks about revenue growth, you're wasting money. Tourism PR in particular can't afford to fall victim to the 'one trick pony' approach. It needs to use different methods to achieve the ultimate goal. PR is not just about media coverage. These are just a few things that agencies should provide as part of a tourism brief.

- Talking to the media and ensuring that you have a constant presence within the target media outlets.
- Creating collaborations with third parties who can complement your service and attract new business.
- Sourcing association with influential personalities whose notoriety can attract attention to your service and grow credibility
- Creating event ideas that put you in direct contact with your target audience
- Developing promotional concepts that drive people to use your service and increase your marketing database
- Organising press trips that give journalists and business partners a better understanding of your service
- Reactive and proactive press office that represents you and deals with requests
- Managing the needs of your other agencies - ad agencies/web marketing suppliers etc
- Sourcing sponsorship opportunities to assist with costs associated with events or campaigns

- Issue regular reports to you that communicate the status of ongoing work

### How much should you be paying for PR and what should be the focus of the brief?

There is no minimum or maximum as it depends on what is involved. However agencies should be flexible depending on the commitment. If you can commit to a contract lasting 12 months or more, the fee is likely to be more flexible than with a shorter contract.

Unless you have supplied a specific brief, we'd expect the agency's proposal to cover:

1. Revenue/tourism growth
2. Positioning you in the manner which best suits your service - *luxury hotel, low cost airline, adventure destination*
3. Driving awareness of your service and what it has to offer

In the end, you get what you pay for so don't expect to get an all singing all dancing PR strategy for £1000 per month. If an agency says they can, you should question whether they are actually up to the task. Ask to see any agency's portfolio and coverage relating to the agency's achievements associated with their work on other client accounts.

PR used to be criticised for its over billing and hourly rates, but now many agencies will happily suggest fixed monthly rates so there are no nasty surprises with the invoice. Ask what's included in the fee and what expenses will be added. Expenses over £50 should be approved in advance to avoid any disputes.

PR is an indispensable sales support vehicle, which when used in the right way should enable you to concentrate on developing the quality of your business.

**Brett Gregory-Peake, Managing Director of Frank & Earnest Communications**  
Brett@FrankandEarnest.com

### Promoting to the visitors on your doorstep

Later this year, The Tourism Network will launch a new "how to" advice and information pack designed to help tourism businesses and destinations make the most of the markets on their doorstep. Everyone knows that local residents and VFR (Visits to Friends and Relatives) are important but few make real and differentiated efforts to reach them.

"Civic pride" is another buzz term that guarantees funding these days but it seems to be one to which most organisations only pay lip service. We'll be looking in more detail at what it really means and ideas for enhancing it. We're also interested in any positive or negative examples you've either come across or been involved in.

We'll be examining the VFR market in more depth and looking at what you need to do to encourage more business in this way. The advice pack will include ideas for local campaigns, how to involve a wider range of people, sample marketing plans, PR angles and storyline suggestions, as well sample marketing materials.

We are also looking at a number of case studies of what's happening around the country so we can draw conclusions and lessons from different types of campaign and activity. If you'd like to be featured or perhaps you have a problem you'd like help to solve please contact me - you might even be able to get some free advice!

We'll announce full details of the pack shortly. In the meantime, you might like to see our outline article on the VFR market which is already free and available for you to download by going to [http://www.tourismknowledge.com/Friends\\_and\\_Family\\_Reunited-VFR\\_market.pdf](http://www.tourismknowledge.com/Friends_and_Family_Reunited-VFR_market.pdf)

Susan Briggs