

i-SITE Visitor Information Network Webinar - 26 March 2013 - Summary

Why is Tourism New Zealand Involved?

Tourism New Zealand became involved in both VIN and Qualmark in the 1990's to ensure it had influence on the quality of overseas visitors' experiences once they had arrived.

- ✔ Tourism NZ markets NZ as 100% Pure New Zealand
- ✔ i-SITE NZ delivers a 100% Pure Welcome
- ✔ Qualmark helps assure 100% Pure Experiences

About i-SITE New Zealand

New Zealand's official Information Centre Network. All i-SITEs independently owned – united by common brand and membership of VIN Inc/i-SITE New Zealand.

- ✔ 81 i-SITEs, 9 associate (non-branded) members
- ✔ 25 are owned by RTOs, 28 by Councils, 16 Trusts/Inc Societies, 10 Independent, 2 DOC. Almost all rely on some form of Council grant/contract
- ✔ Employ >540 staff
- ✔ Handle >8.9 million visitors
- ✔ Turnover >\$82 million
- ✔ Only 9 profitable before Council/RTO funding. Total deficit of >\$10 million
- ✔ VIN Inc – Incorporated Society - trading as i-SITE New Zealand
- ✔ A crown entity subsidiary - controlled by Tourism New Zealand exercised through its right under the VIN Inc constitution to appoint three directors/Chair of the management board of six
- ✔ Tourism New Zealand manage i-SITE brand in partnership with industry
 - Sets membership requirements and standards
 - Provides funding and staff resources to coordinate network
 - \$250,000 pa to fund business plan and >\$150,000 pa in kind support
- ✔ i-SITEs pay \$160,000 in membership fees pa (\$1,500-\$2,500 each)
- ✔ New Strategic Plan developed for 2013-2016

i-SITE New Zealand's Role

Training & Standards

- ✔ Training of i-SITE staff to NZQA standards and delivery of sales training workshops
- ✔ Quality assessments
- ✔ Conference and regional meetings
- ✔ Monitoring financial performance

Marketing Communications & Business Systems

- ✔ Brand Awareness
- ✔ Promotional resources
- ✔ Network communications

Partnerships & Stakeholder Management

- ✔ Provision of Duty of care to Visitors
- ✔ Governance

Market Trends

All data from Tourism NZ's [Visitor Experience Monitor \(VEM\)](#) 2011/12

i-SITE experience is showing consistently high satisfaction levels – 87% (up from 86% previous year)

Awareness of i-SITEs amongst overseas visitors is down on previous year

- ✔ 56% of international visitors are aware of i-SITEs
- ✔ 47% of these visitors became aware of i-SITEs by walking past one
- ✔ 24% became aware through guide books
- ✔ 23% became aware through family/friends
- ✔ Visitors from Germany have the highest awareness, China the lowest

- Australia also low
- On average visitors used six i-SITEs during their stay (Germany 11)

Reasons they used an i-SITE? Convenience, helpful staff, large amount of information, trust and the ability to book.

The reasons for using i-SITEs have remained stable over the last year with collecting information continuing to be the most common reason for using i-SITEs.

What do visitors most want from an i-SITE?

- Maps (66%)
- Attractions/activity information (59%)
- General information on the region (58%)
- Directions (41%)
- Information about city/town amenities/services (33%)
- Accommodation in the region (26%)
- Suggested itineraries (24%)
- General information about another region (24%)
- Event information (22%)

Compared to a year ago, the impact of i-SITEs on the decision to use an activity, accommodation or transport provider has indicatively increased.

- The perception of the i-SITE experience is higher amongst those who used i-SITEs to make a booking than those that only collected information.
- Use of i-SITEs has a small but positive impact upon overall visitor satisfaction, with this mostly seen in the Australian, German and Chinese markets.
- Unsurprisingly, use of new forms of technology continued to increase in 2011/2012, particularly Wi-Fi and smart phones
 - 47% of visitors using Wi-Fi
 - 28% using a smartphone
 - Use of internet cafes declining
- Of those who used technology in New Zealand, two thirds agreed they used technology just to collect information
- More visitors have experienced a technological problem than a year ago.
- International tourists are demanding more free public Wi-Fi internet spots

What is the most frequently searched information using technology?

- Where to get internet access (45%)
- Weather information (43%)
- Maps (33%)
- Check/confirm existing travel plans (28%)
- Attractions/activities (27%)
- Directions (26%)
- General information about the region (21%)
- Transport/travel options (20%)
- Accommodation in a different region (19%)
- Compare prices/find deals (16%)

Changing market mix

- Fewer visitors from western markets (UK/NAM/Europe)
- More visitors from Australia, Asia

Local government change

- 78 local authorities – most fund tourism through RTOs and i-SITEs
- Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Act 2012 – Dec 2012

Background:

- Rates have increased by an average of 6.8% p/a since 2003 - more than double the rate of inflation
- Local government debt has quadrupled over the past decade from \$2 billion to \$8 billion
- The new Act focuses local authorities on doing the things only they can do, and do well. It encourages them to reduce red tape and compliance costs; minimise rates; lower debt and provide high quality infrastructure in a cost-effective way.
- The new Act reinforces that local government acts on behalf of its communities and works with them to decide what local services and infrastructure will be provided and at what cost.

i-SITE Ownership

Approximately one third of all i-SITES are owned by Council, another third owned by RTO's (which are mostly funded by Council's) and the remaining third made up of DoC, independent or trusts, some of which also receive Council funding, therefore it is important to strengthen the ties between RTO's, Council's and i-SITES.

New strategy

Corporate Profile and Strategic Plan – completed December 2012

<http://www.tourismnewzealand.com/news-and-features/latest-tourism-news/2013/01/i-site-2013-2016-strategy/>

Marketing

Extensive marketing underway and on-going, some of which include:

- Location map pad Distributed to all i-SITES and the PDF available on newzealand.com http://www.tourismnewzealand.com/media/882882/i-site_location_map_pad_2013.pdf
- A Chinese language version to be produced April 2013
- Welcome signs in distribution (March/April 2013) - Designed to offer a standardised welcome to visitors in their own language and provide a link to after-hours web page listing of other i-SITES
- China welcome brochure to be revised (May 2013). TNZ China Market Development Unit arrival brochure to be reprinted with QR code to highlight China FIT access to network
- Expert Local Knowledge campaign <http://www.tourismnewzealand.com/news-and-features/latest-tourism-news/2013/02/i-site-launches-expert-local-knowledge-campaign/>
- Extensive Airport advertising done, with a variety of large digital screens (arrival areas) and digital pathways in Auckland domestic and international, Wellington Domestic, Christchurch and Queenstown (domestic and international arrivals).

Offshore Events

i-SITE New Zealand is focusing on promoting the i-SITE brand to international visitors before they travel to New Zealand. A strong i-SITE presence at international consumer shows including:

- Australia Holiday & Travel Shows
 - Melbourne/Sydney/Brisbane Feb/Mar 2013
 - i-SITE consultants attend: branded i-SITE counter
- NATAS Singapore
 - Feb 2013. i-SITE maps distributed from New Zealand stand

newzealand.com

i-SITE.org and QR code on maps/ads all redirect to newzealand.com from Dec-12, which has resulted in being able to now monitor page visits and referrals, all of which have increased.

newzealand.com has also been modified for improved rendering on smart phones from late January 2013

Social Media

Social media sites Facebook and Twitter rebranded Jan 2013 and strategic focus refined.

- Facebook currently 7,007 followers (as at 25 March 2013)
- Twitter currently 1,443 followers (as at 25 March 2013)