



idea
THE SECRET KENT TOUR
 PROTOTYPE WITH INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

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1. WHAT?



- ▶ A website and app dedicated to the best things to do in Kent, that enables visitors and locals to discover the small businesses, organisations and enterprises that are just off the mainstream map .
- ▶ Raises awareness of those destinations and services that offer alternatives to the mainstream fare of the county and it meets the needs of those visitors and potential visitors seeking experiences beyond the orthodox. Places the region in a different light, revealing some of Kent’s gems in an attempt to surprise and inspire new visitors, as well as existing visitors who might think they have seen everything there is to see in Kent, further challenging perceptions.
- ▶ Utilises user-generated content based on the experiences of previous visitors and locals.

2. ASSETS & PROFITABILITY



Customers:

- ▶ introduction to SMEs within the county that the visitors might otherwise be unaware of
- ▶ offer a collection of inspiration suggestions
- ▶ tool aimed to ease the planning process

SMEs:

- ▶ exposure to a larger target audience
- ▶ increased revenue that arises from increased awareness of the ‘Secret Kent Tour’ brand
- ▶ opportunity to plan activities outside high season as a means to increase visitation appeal in low season months

3. SUCCESS FACTORS



- ▶ Availability of suitably alternative venues and/or experiences.
- ▶ Sufficient user generated content will need to be sourced.
- ▶ The ‘Secret Kent Tour’ will need to be appropriately branded and marketed.
- ▶ Sound set-up to obtain the buy in of particularly locals sharing their experiences.

4. PARTNERS



Who to work with in partnership

- ▶ tourism attractions
- ▶ other similar SMEs
- ▶ restaurants, hotels, B&Bs, cafés
- ▶ shops
- ▶ experience and leisure providers
- ▶ Visit Kent



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5. COMMUNICATION

Targeting of communications via appropriate alternative travel/accommodation channels and partnerships:

- ▶ Lifestyle titles and sections in regional/national press
- ▶ Digital channels
- ▶ Travel trade
- ▶ Destination newsletters/website
- ▶ EasyBus, Southeastern, Stagecoach etc.
- ▶ Kentish Festival sites
- ▶ Travel bloggers
- ▶ Promotions with franchise groups outside the region (e.g. Lonely Planet, Time Out etc.)



6. FOR WHOM?

- ▶ SMEs: Small 'off the grid'/alternative offer hoteliers, B&B owners, landlords, restaurateurs, 'experience' curators (e.g. guided walks/cycles).
- ▶ Visitors: primarily younger visitors, enthusiastic, explorers at heart, with or without families, who desire and value alternative experiences - early adopters and trail-blazers.



7. HOW DOES IT WORK?

As a site dedicated to alternative things to do in Kent, the site/app will initially need to be populated with organisations and enterprises that are genuinely alternative. These will be crowd-sourced in the first instance, looking to the individual SMEs to present their story. Thereafter the site /app will require significant promotion and a strong call to action in order to encourage user-generated content. Thereafter the site can be used as a planning and inspiration tool and will allow users to upload their alternative Kent. The site will be highly visual. In line with current trends and research, it is expected that potential visitors will appreciate people's views more than the manicured approaches that SMEs would use.



8. TIMING

This idea is a long-term one as it is based on several development stages, including developing a sound set up process, identifying key players that could act as ambassadors, securing investment, building a digital platform and collecting sufficient alternative venues/experiences. Also, adequate promotion and visibility will take time.



9. CHALLENGES

- ▶ What are possible challenges that SMEs can face?
- ▶ Competition from each other - mainstream organisations trying to 'muscle-in' on the 'alternative' space.
- ▶ Raising sufficient awareness to generate content
- ▶ Giving people a strong call to action to get involved
- ▶ Wide distribution to ensure visitors start using the tool.



10. FINANCIAL

Development costs, marketing materials, maintenance, staff resources to coordinate and manage the project



11. MONITORING & MEASURING

Number of SMEs, digital analytics and footfall monitoring once the platform is launched, ROI for marketing, increase in user-generated content, press/blog coverage

