





Northern Ireland

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## INTRODUCTION

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Tourism is big business in Northern Ireland and has become one of the major contributors to our growing economy.

During these uncertain times, the tourism industry has focused itself on delivering real value for money, providing the best customer service and giving our valuable guests not just a reason to visit but reasons to keep coming back!

This 'How To' Guide contains tips for enhancing your visitors' experiences with room for you to write down relevant ideas and suggestions. Together we will enhance an already pleasurable (and profitable!) experience.

It certainly is an exciting time for tourism in Northern Ireland. Let's make the most of it!

For even more information on short breaks, visit [www.nitb.com/insights](http://www.nitb.com/insights)



## TIP 1

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# KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER

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- **Learn about your customers before they arrive.**  
Consider their age, their demographic and what would suit them best. Remember, in a challenging market, knowledge is power.
- **Stay up to date with your customers' changing needs.**  
What can you offer them to make their stay more enjoyable?
- **Develop close relationships.** Make sure you offer a warm welcome to all your customers – both new and existing.
- **Discover your visitors' eating habits and cultural norms.**  
When you know your customers you can better meet their needs.
- **Consider your customers' special interests.** Think about how you could accommodate these interests in your premises with equipment or space.

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## WHY NOT JOT DOWN YOUR OWN IDEAS

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## TIP 2

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# INTERNET RULES

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- **Get online!** The Internet means global exposure – show the world you're proud of what you offer! There are various websites on which you can display your profile, and if you have your own website, make sure to update it regularly with any special offers you may have.
- **Remember, visitors record their experiences.** Use this to your advantage – good recommendations can mean more bookings.
- **Use the Internet to learn more about your customers.** Apply this knowledge to make your visitors' experiences even more memorable.
- **Keep in touch with visitors.** Give them lots of reasons to come back and to recommend their stay to others.

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## FIND YOUR STORY

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- **Find what's unique to you.** We all have our own stories to share – from famous visitors to local myths and legends.
- **Encourage your staff to share stories too.** Anyone who has contact with visitors has an invaluable role to play.
- **Celebrate your history.** What events of historical significance took place near you? Direct visitors to nearby landmarks and areas of natural beauty.
- **Keep thinking forward.** What lies ahead for your premises? Make your visitors aware of the 'next big thing' and encourage them to return.

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#### TIP 4

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## VALUE IS KEY

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- **Consider what value means for your customer.** When your visitor knows you've thought about what they want, they will repay you.
- **Consider opportunities that will extend your visitors' stay.** Think about offering benefits for frequent visits or if a visitor recommends you to a friend.
- **Add value by providing information on what to do.** Supply visitors with as much information as possible on what to see and do as well as the surrounding areas. Create a memorable experience!
- **Think of pragmatic ways to add value.** There are lots of ways you can enrich your visitors' experience, without breaking the bank. This could be anything from a personal tour to cooking your guests an authentic meal.

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## TIP 5

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# VALUE YOUR VISITOR AND THEY WILL VALUE YOU...

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- **Encourage repeat visitors with top quality service.** Your visitors should feel like they don't want to stay anywhere else.
- **Keep in touch with previous visitors and give them reasons to return.** 38% of NI and 41% of ROI consumers claim that they like to return to familiar places on short breaks.
- **Be aware of Northern Ireland's events programme.** Use this to develop theme breaks that celebrate our country's uniqueness.
- **Consider offering 'Holiday Specials'.** Remember, ROI and NI Bank Holidays are different so you have two separate holiday markets you can target.
- **Use the shops to your advantage.** Use creative shopping centre promotions to make today's 'Day-Tripper' tomorrow's 'Short-Breaker' with the total shopping experience.

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## CELEBRATE YOUR AUTHENTICITY

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- **Think about what makes you unique.** What do you have to offer that your competitors don't?
- **Take a fresh approach.** Find out what visitors are interested in and tailor their experience by using what makes you different and special. Consider the premises, food and information you provide.
- **Showcase Northern Ireland's unique assets as a whole.** Our country has a diverse range of exciting activities and events – as well as our fantastic local produce and craft.
- **Be an expert.** The more you know about what makes you – and Northern Ireland – a must-see destination, the more you'll be rewarded with happy visitors who can't wait to return!

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### WHY NOT JOT DOWN YOUR OWN IDEAS

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## WORK TOGETHER

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- **Share ideas.** Every business has its own area of expertise so don't be afraid to share ideas. By working with other businesses in your locality, everyone benefits from a more detailed database that can be used to create and enhance the visitor experience.
- **Build partnerships.** Create joint offers by finding other businesses that complement your services, as well as complementing theirs.
- **Combine local knowledge.** Make a note of the distinct places visitors might not find in their guidebook. What hidden gems are there?
- **Go the extra mile.** Work with others to discover and recommend unique activities for visitors.

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## BE BRAVE - GET FEEDBACK

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- **Ask your visitors what they think.** Their suggestions could allow you to attract many more visitors and really improve future experiences.
- **Don't be afraid of change.** If visitors are providing their ideas for a better experience, why not set yourself a target to deliver it? Perhaps you could invite them back when you've made the change!
- **Find out what others are doing.** Remember, feedback doesn't just come from visitors. Keep an eye on NITB's Spotlight for industry insights and consult your staff. They could provide a wealth of knowledge to dramatically improve your business.
- **Look at your surroundings.** When you know what attracts visitors to your area you can identify what really makes your business tick. The more you know, the more you could grow!

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### WHY NOT JOT DOWN YOUR OWN IDEAS

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Northern Ireland  
Tourist Board

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