



Hidden Britain

....Leading the way in discovering and developing responsible rural tourism

Totnes External Marketing Audit Summary

To complete the view of Totnes from an outsider's perspective, Hidden Britain reviewed the external marketing presence of Totnes. The audit used Hidden Britain's External Marketing Evaluation tool, which is designed to provide a critical, objective view of how the destination would be perceived by a visitor prior to arrival. The tool looks at all aspects of the visitor journey from initial awareness, through decision making to information sourcing and planning a visit. This analysis is intended to complement the standard mystery visitor study which looks at the experience on arrival.

Below is a summary of the findings.

TOTAL SCORE

163 out of possible 310 = 53% (Market Town Average = 40%)

1. VISIBILITY AND QUALITY OF INFORMATION FOR SEARCH

Score 22 out of 30

Strengths

- » Relevant visitor information and information sites for [Totnes](#) appear prominently on page one of a Google Search for both the destination name and attaching "visit" to the destination name.
- » The main visitor information site www.totnesinformation.com appears as the top ranked option on search for both terms
- » Relevant Totnes information is also available on several other sites, notably the town council site www.totnestowncouncil.gov.uk and independent sites: www.englishriveira.co.uk, transitiontowntotnes.org, www.visitsouthdevon.co.uk and wikipedia
- » Sites contain an enticing range of images of the town
- » The town council site has a visible "Totnes Information Centre" link on the LHS menu however the title is ambiguous at best ("Visitor information" would be better) and the positioning means it is secondary to all the top level navigation options.
- » There is a Wikipedia entry which tells something of the history and attractions of the town
- » Collectively, the sites provide a clear visibility for Totnes as a destination.

Weaknesses

- » None of the independent websites featuring visitor information contain links to the main tourism site www.totnesinformation.com

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- » There are two other duplicate "official" sites showcasing visitor information on Totnes, both of which are poorly designed and populated; www.totnes.com, www.gototnes.com
- » Majority of information available across key sites is directed towards residents and the community as opposed to visitors
- » Given the proliferation of Totnes sites the overall picture is somewhat confusing and the names and meta descriptions that appear are not as clear as they could be in helping a visitor determine their best "front door".
- » The overall content does not convey a consistent identity for Totnes and does not really make the most of the product and offer

2. DESTINATION WEBSITE (www.totnesinformation.com chosen as the most visible website)

Score 73 out of 90

Strengths

- » Domain name and description makes it immediately clear that the site offers information and likely to be a first port of call to visitors.
- » Website is solely visitor dedicated
- » Design uses consistent colour and fonts throughout, although a little bland and corporate
- » Site loads quickly, looks the same across all major browsers and is easily usable in a mobile browser although homepage is a little long at 4 page scrolls
- » All key information (public transport info, accommodation contacts and attraction details) are reachable in less than 3 clicks (but see below note on page layout)
- » Site contains business listings, up-to-date events calendar, useful links and the heritage trail as a suggested itinerary
- » Outstanding speed and quality of response to contact request via the website

Weaknesses

- » Domain name is a little generic and could be overlooked as the link between visit and information is not that clear "visittotnes" or "discovertotnes" would have more punch.
- » Site looks and feels rather cold and business-like and does not really showcase the destination well
- » Although high quality, the choice of imagery is too abstract and does not convey the destination particularly well
- » Header box text is especially poor and bland - we understand these are actual quotes but they say absolutely nothing meaningful at all so are a waste of prime real estate on the site
- » All content is © 2009...
- » Contact information is clear, but the opportunity for visitors to interact is limited by the absence of social media channels.
- » Page layouts give prominence to static text on left hand side of pages where the really important links are set to the right in a sidebar, this is confusing for the user in knowing where to click (particularly when hitting a top level category page e.g. attractions) and top

level pages feel like an unnecessary filler which delays getting to your destination. Essentially the visitor journey through the site is not as easy as it could be.

- » Site is fairly text heavy with no calls to action in the text (e.g. surrounding area" page)
- » Very little information in terms of the retail offer

3. SOCIAL MEDIA

Score 9 out of 20

Strengths

- » A vast amount of Totnes information and content on social media, which together help build an enticing picture (particularly passionate discussions on Twitter and great images on Flickr)

Weaknesses

- » No social media accounts linked to www.totnesinformation.com
- » No destination presence on social Media
- » Some detrimental content ranks highly (top Youtube video is about a fight in a kebab shop)

4. PRINT

Score 19 out of 20

Strengths

- » Attractive (and current) Totnes visitor guide is available to download (clearly labelled and information on where it can be found locally - as well as offer to post a copy out)
- » Good quality publication with high quality images, information broken down into experiences (rather than just a directory) and calls to action throughout.

Weaknesses

- » Publication shows minimal style consistency with the website
- » Clear links in certain places are missing (e.g. top 5 page)
- » Website address not especially prominent

5. THIRD PARTY WEBSITES

Score 11 out of 30

Strengths

- » Totnes is well featured on local and regional websites run by DMO partners
- » There is a link on home page of the town council's site (but see above).

Weaknesses

- » Links from third party sites feature a lot of very old looking imagery and often very little actual information thereby making the link less enticing to click
- » Several sites provide information but do not include a link to the Totnes website

6. IDENTITY & MESSAGE

Score 29 out of 120

Strengths

- » The key marketing channels all reference the history of Totnes and major heavily on attractions and activities (essentially what you can do)

Weaknesses

- » The visitor offer is articulated in a fairly generic way. Nowhere does the real character and individuality of Totnes come across. Some glimpses in the leaflet but no real articulation elsewhere of the alternative, eclectic, independent, free-thinking aspects
- » Most information is presented in rather bland and generic formats (e.g. grey colour schemes and corporate wording).
- » Little consideration of who the visitor audience is, at present offer is designed to be all things to all people.
- » The key differentiating point occasionally is mentioned but not pushed strongly enough or is obscured by "facts" (e.g. number of listed buildings)
- » No use of a consistent stylistic brand or visual identity across any of the media (everything looks very different)
- » Little consistency of a conveyed offer for Totnes by businesses or third party providers although it is clear that the offer exists and they are aware of it.

7. OVERALL IMPRESSION OF EXTERNAL MARKETING

BEST

1. Totnes is well represented on search engines
2. The town is well featured on other tourism websites run by local and regional DMO partners
3. www.totnesinformation.com offers a site dedicated to visitor information.
4. The site provides easy access to an excellent downloadable printed visitor guide
5. There is a good spread of Totnes information and compelling images and content on social media
6. Excellent response to queries and contact via the website

WORST

1. The real character and differentiating points of Totnes are not well communicated through the marketing channels - it appears just like any other Market Town (which it clearly isn't)
2. There is no consistent online brand, identity or distinctive message for visitors
3. www.totnesinformation.com provides plenty of information but is not particularly user friendly,

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- appears too corporate and is simply not as good as the Totnes guidebook
4. The opportunities to interact with visitors via social media are being missed
 5. The choice of imagery (particularly online) does not really convey the destination well.
 6. Little evidence of any joined up marketing between businesses and organisations on behalf of the destination (lots of people doing different things)

