

# Museums Marketing Strategy for Wales 2013 - 2016



copyright Newport Museum and Art Gallery

**Short version with detailed initiatives**



Ariennir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Funded by  
**Welsh Government**

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# Museums Marketing Strategy for Wales

Audience Development and  
Marketing Strategy for Museums in Wales  
2013 - 2016

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# Museums Marketing Strategy for Wales

## 1. Introduction: why a marketing strategy for museums in Wales - why now?

### 1.1 Museums in Wales and their visitors

In 2010 there were an estimated 3.5 million visits to Wales' 160 museums and numbers are on the increase.<sup>1</sup> Some places regularly attract as many as five repeat visits from satisfied customers within a single year.

Appealing to families, tourists, school groups, 'cultural' visitors and individuals looking to enjoy, learn and expand their horizons, museums make an undeniable and growing contribution to Welsh cultural and economic life. They support the Welsh people's interest and identification with national, regional and local heritage, helping to nurture and promote a powerful sense of identity and place. Yet we know that, as in the rest of the UK, nearly half the resident population visit very rarely if at all<sup>2</sup> and around 60% of day trippers and holidaymakers<sup>3</sup> don't include museums on their itinerary.

Creative Cultures was appointed in December 2012 to develop this Audience Development and Marketing Strategy as part of CyMAL and the national Steering Group's delivery against the objectives of the Museums Strategy for Wales 2010-2015.

### 1.2 Who is this Audience Development and Marketing Strategy for?

This strategy is written for governing bodies, paid staff and volunteers working in the museum sector across Wales, the funders that support them, the stakeholder bodies that represent and serve them and a wide range of existing and potential partners – most especially in the tourism sector - at national, regional and local level.

The strategy's aim is to support all these individuals and organisations to work together to deliver messages that will both reinforce the already very positive perceptions of the 'museum brand' held by existing visitors and raise museums' profile for clearly identified target groups of infrequent or non-visitors.

<sup>1</sup> Spotlight on Museums data collection from 106 museums in 2011 indicates 9.3% increase on total visitor numbers as compared with 2006 figure for 106 museums. Suggested figure of 3.5m includes estimated total of c. 221,000 visits to the remaining 54 museums

<sup>2</sup> Wales Omnibus Museums, November 2012, Prepared for the Contemporary Collecting Project

<sup>3</sup> Visit Wales 2011 Visitor Survey Tabulations, Nov 2011, Beaufort Research

Implementation of the strategy in the period 2013-2016 will be managed by the national marketing team funded by CyMAL, who are hosted and managed by Wrexham County Borough Council.

### **1.3 Welsh museums and their collections**

The strategy recognises and builds on the rich diversity of the museum sector in Wales not only in terms of size, collections, budgets, size of workforce, location and governance but also in terms of museums' strengths and objectives: the communities they serve, the audiences they seek to reach, the experience they seek to offer and the extent and nature of their collections.

The strategy acknowledges perceived and potential disparities and tensions, particularly between those public sector supported museums whose core funding allows them to offer free entry to all and those independent museums that rely heavily on admission charges – although not all local authority museums are free and many volunteer run independents are. In the current climate all museums are required to develop a keen entrepreneurial spirit. The strategy takes account of the increasing financial constraints under which museums are working – the likely reduction over the period of this strategy- in already stretched marketing budgets and an anticipated reduction in workforce and expertise.

It also recognises that there are many genuinely universal good news stories to be told about museums across Wales: the power and significance of the collections they hold in trust; the opportunities in their galleries for excitement, inspiration and inclusion; the services they provide for schools and communities; and their impressive contribution to tourism and the wider economy.

The range of collections held across museums of every size and type is compelling: from internationally renowned fine art; impressive reflections of Wales' unique craft and design history; to powerful evocations of everyday life, industrial, agricultural, technological and built heritage and military service; and Welsh, Roman and Egyptian archaeology. There is much to celebrate – both on show and behind the scenes: the on-going work of developing, caring for and researching collections that makes museums such a rich and relevant resource for their users: repositories of expertise and knowledge for exploration and sharing.

This strategy recognises the particular role that many smaller independent museums play for communities in Wales, keeping collections and the stories they tell rooted, relevant and local. It recognises that for many museums across Wales collections are not their only, or even their prime resource. Around two thirds occupy and care for listed buildings or scheduled monuments<sup>4</sup>. Many are sited in well loved natural or man-made landscapes and as a consequence can sometimes be seen as a rather 'incidental' attraction by visitors – and sometimes by their funders and managers.

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<sup>4</sup> Spotlight on Museums, 2006, CyMAL, 2007

## 1.4 Modern marketing for museums

Marketing is often misunderstood as relating primarily or wholly to publicity and promotional activities. This is part of the marketing mix but not the whole. The Chartered Institute of Marketing defines marketing as:

*The management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably.*

This needs to include collecting and analysing data on users and non-users; managing and maintaining customer service standards; developing partnership and outreach initiatives and online activities; as well as a wide range of press, PR, promotional, and other activities – anything that helps an organisation to first identify and then meet customer needs in a cost effective and measurable way.

Effective marketing for 21st century museums is a broad and complex process reflecting the multiple roles that museums aspire and are expected to fulfil in contemporary society. The current Museums Association definition of a museum tells us:

*'Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.'*<sup>5</sup>

But in its recent 'Museums 2020' discussion paper the Museums Association quotes this more far reaching definition:

*Museums can be so much more than buildings that interpret collections. Just for starters, they can help people "develop their identity, build confidence through volunteering, understand cultural differences, have non-partisan public spaces to enjoy, support intergenerational understanding, help recently arrived migrants learn a language/culture/history and find their place in it, give a place for a father to take his son/daughter on their one day a week/ month together, inspire the next generation of scientists, provoke debate, build community cohesion, help prevent illnesses associated with old age, make people go 'wow', encourage tourism, promote economic growth through cultural regeneration, and let people learn through the power of touch"*<sup>6</sup>

Museums should never lose sight of the fact that they do have the potential to achieve all of these things through the unique power of their collections – the excitement of accessing genuinely tangible heritage. But, as well as celebrating the 'product' they offer - collections, people, knowledge, buildings, and surroundings - museums need to focus too on marketing the rich, multi-layered experience that visiting can bring. To do this effectively they need to understand the diverse needs and interests of their potential audiences, develop their 'brand identity' and

<sup>5</sup> Museums Association definition of a museum at <http://www.museumsassociation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics>

<sup>6</sup> Peter Davis, comment at <http://www.museumsassociation.org/maurice-daviesblog/15052012-what-next>.

pitch their message accordingly. They need to ensure that an audience-centred marketing ethos permeates everything that they do: from training the front-of-house team in customer service and making sure the loos are clean; to designing exhibitions; developing online resources; and delivering meaningful, collections-focussed community outreach.

In a recent article, business management academic Paul Williams offers the following 'market-led, mission-relevant definition' of museum marketing as 'fit for purpose':

*In order to further their strategic goals, museums are strongly encouraged to view marketing as being a societal and managerial process which authenticates a museum's mission and is then responsible for the effective, efficient and sustainable identification, anticipation and satisfaction of the requirements of its users and other stakeholders.<sup>7</sup>*

Beyond that definition, this strategy recognises that, for museums, the whole marketing process is very closely allied with advocacy. As part of its 2010 'Love Museums' campaign the Museums Association defined advocacy as:

*Advocacy is the process whereby an organisation seeks to influence others in order to gain support for its mission, interests or course of action. In order to achieve this, networks of support are developed and used to lend credibility, wield influence and offer third-party endorsement.*

The museum sector in Wales needs to develop and communicate a strongly coherent message to politicians, funders and the general public – gathering evidence and raising awareness that, in the words of the Museums Strategy for Wales:

*Museums promote the cultural life of our nation, they encourage active participation in culture, protect our heritage, help expand our international profile and contribute to our tourism industry. At a local level, museums have a role in delivering vital learning and community services.*

## 1.5 Developing the strategy

This audience development and marketing strategy is rooted in the national Museum Strategy for Wales' three guiding principles: museums for everyone, a collection for the nation, and working effectively. It is informed by the national strategy's wider commitment to museums raising their profile and engaging with partners to reach the widest possible audience and builds on the excellent work already achieved in the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales' advocacy strategy and toolkit.<sup>8</sup>

In developing the strategy, the Creative Cultures team interviewed representatives from key 'stakeholder' groups including CyMAL, AIM, the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of

<sup>7</sup> A Modern Approach to Museum Marketing, Paul Williams, Oct 2009 See: <http://www.insights.org.uk/articleitem.aspx?title=A%20Modern%20Approach%20to%20Museum%20Marketing>

<sup>8</sup> See: <http://welshmuseumsfederation.org/index.php?page=advocacy>

Wales, the Museums Association, the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, and the Welsh Local Government Association, and a wider range of potential partners, including Visit Wales and all four regional Tourism Partnerships. The team interviewed representatives from over 25 museums including small and large independents, local authority run services and Amgueddfa Cymru – The National Museum of Wales and reviewed current research.<sup>9</sup>

## 1.6 Key findings

The interviews and research carried out for this strategy told us:

- Museums were keenly aware of the diversity of the sector and did not want a strategy that offered ‘one size fits all’ solutions or sought to impose Wales specific ‘national initiatives’.
- Not only are museum marketing budgets low, and likely to shrink, but the paid and volunteer staff responsible for marketing, while often enthusiastic and imaginative, tend to be untrained and have little time for the work. Most said that they would welcome access to guidance and training in basic audience research and marketing skills and practice.
- The available data on users and non-users of museums across Wales is patchy, but it indicates that while museums enjoy some loyal and enthusiastic support in the family, tourist and schools markets there is a substantial proportion of non-visitors who don’t view museums as stimulating, welcoming or social spaces - especially for family groups.
- The museum sector in Wales is well served by an existing infrastructure of professional and other bodies that provide both networking opportunities and sustainable mechanisms for online support and resource delivery. This offers the national marketing team a strong array of potential partners.
- The UK museum sector is well served by ‘initiatives’, such as ‘Kids in Museums’ or ‘Museums at Night’. Many of the museums interviewed were aware of some or all of these and some were participating selectively – choosing opportunities that matched their target audiences or collection strengths.

## 1.7 Key challenges

The consultation and research indicates that the key challenges for the strategy to address are:

- broadening audiences and challenging outdated or negative perceptions of museums
- increasing museums’ capacity for carrying out audience development and marketing research and activities
- developing the sector’s relationship to key stakeholders and partners who could help develop the market for museum visits

Paul Williams has starkly stated the overall challenge to the museum sector:

*‘Museums in the UK are in a state of transition and are facing a number of special challenges. Traditionally, museums have been important in gathering, preserving and studying historical objects and sites and have had a key educational role. But this is no longer sufficient to*

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix D



*guarantee their survival. Nowadays modern museum managers must also understand, and more importantly, fully embrace the need to attract visitors and other customers.*<sup>10</sup>

Alongside this need for museums to adopt a market facing approach is the need for them to engage with the wider political agenda, to demonstrate the benefit to communities of the work museums do, and the contribution they make to the economic benefit of attracting visitors to Wales.

This need for a wide-ranging marketing and advocacy approach presents a challenge to the museum sector in Wales for, whilst there are examples of museums doing all these things, including insightful user and non-user research,<sup>11</sup> most of the sector simply lacks the capacity and resources to develop a truly 'modern' approach to museum marketing. This would require museums to be enabled to:

- not just promote their collections and buildings or facilities, but also identify and address different audience segments and their needs, wants and attitudes
- have a marketing function which is not just about data gathering and publicity, but which is embedded as a shared philosophy across the whole service - with everyone involved and integrated into its strategic development and delivery
- recognise how the experience of the museum visit can be enriched for a variety of different visitors by increasing their direct engagement with the collections

At present, with some notable exceptions among the larger publicly funded and independent museums, this is a tall order given the numerous constraints on museums' resources, their premises and amenities.

## **1.8 Meeting the challenges - the recommendations**

To meet these key challenges this strategy recommends two priority areas for intervention:

1. A capacity building programme directed at both paid staff and volunteers across the entire sector with the aim of improving and developing audience research and development and marketing skills and practice and laying the basis for sustainable development of marketing in the future.
2. A profile-raising advocacy programme aimed at raising awareness of the value of museums and their collections, their social and cultural value, and the enjoyable and stimulating experience they can offer.

Work on initiatives to put these priorities into action will be led by the Wrexham based national marketing team working in partnership with bodies in the museum, tourism and other sectors.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Williams, A Modern Approach to Museum Marketing, Oct 2009, Tourism Insights website

<sup>11</sup> Amgueddfa Cymru, user and non user research, op cit

## 2. Our strategy for museum marketing in Wales

### 2.1 A strategy for all museums and their partners

Museums in Wales exist as a very visible, and valuable, part of the wider cultural and heritage sector. They are a key component of both the visitor economy and the cultural provision for local communities across the nation providing stimulation, education and fun.

This audience development and marketing strategy seeks to strengthen and promote the important role that museums play. It is addressed to all museums in Wales and to their partners in government (national and local), in the visitor and tourism sector, in education and engaged in a range of community development and support activities.

### 2.2 The overall aims and what the strategy seeks to achieve

Our overall aim is to increase the numbers and range of those visiting museums in Wales, including those making online visits or working as volunteers.

But it is not just about increasing numbers. The strategy seeks to help promote the quality and vibrancy of what museums as a whole can offer and to raise awareness of the cultural, social, and economic benefits of deepening engagement with museums and their collections for everyone who lives in or visits Wales.

The strategy is based on a belief that the key to increasing visitor numbers lies in a range of factors including:

- increasing the satisfaction and enjoyment that each visitor gains from their museum 'visit', whether that is 'actual', on site or 'virtual', online, by understanding and responding to their needs
- applying basic marketing practices and concepts, such as market segmentation, and developing a clear and attractive 'brand' for each museum
- promoting a clear offer that appeals to target markets based on exploring the meaning and significance of the collections which are the heart and soul of museums
- promoting the benefits of volunteering in museums and maximising the opportunities for volunteers to contribute to customer satisfaction, marketing initiatives, and strengthening community engagement
- working in partnership with other museums and bodies, including tourism organisations, to raise the profile, attractiveness and accessibility of museums to important markets

Working towards these broad aims, the specific objectives of this strategy are to:

- Improve the effectiveness and impact of the resources currently available for marketing museums (recognising that it may not be realistic for museums to substantially increase their current level of marketing expenditure)
- Build sustainability into marketing skill development and improved marketing work among museums beyond the limited time period of the strategy

- Challenge the outdated views about museums and other perceptual barriers that discourage a substantial proportion of local populations and tourists from visiting Welsh museums and using their resources (either actually or virtually online)
- Raise the profile of museums and the benefits that they deliver, to everyone in Wales and to visitors
- Improve the strength and effectiveness of all the compelling messages and stories that can be told by museums, directed at their various target audiences
- Strengthen and extend partnership working by museums so that they increase their level of recognition and value as an important element of the visitor economy

### **2.3 Two areas for the strategy to focus on**

The strategy has identified two areas on which to focus:

#### **A) Building the capacity and sustainability of marketing work across all museums in Wales**

This will be aimed at the entire sector with the aim of improving and developing a strong set of audience development and marketing skills and practices and laying a foundation for sustainable development of marketing in the future.

This programme of marketing support will be aimed at paid staff and volunteers from museums of all sizes and governance types and will be developed in partnership with the support and input of expert training providers, museums with good marketing practice and with museum support bodies and other stakeholders.

#### **B) Promoting, profile raising, and advocating the benefits of museums across Wales today**

This will be aimed at raising awareness of the value of museums: the skills and scholarship of curators and the inspiration and satisfaction to be derived from museums' collections; their social, economic and cultural value and the enjoyable and stimulating experience they offer.

This programme will be aimed at the general public in Wales and visitors to Wales, and, importantly, at key funders and decision makers, as well as partners from outside the museum sector. It is also intended to promote the message to people working in museums that the very diverse museum sector will be made stronger by working together.

### **2.4 Success will depend on working with partners**

Both these priority areas need to be underpinned by partnership working involving the national marketing team at Wrexham and partners both inside and external to the museum sector.

## 3. Making the strategy work

### 3.1 Working through partnership

The strategy will only be effective if the national marketing team has the active support and participation of the sector and of key stakeholder bodies. Building this partnership approach should be guided by the notion of partnership as a 'two way street' so that in all cases the benefits of working together are clear to both or all parties involved. Defining and working towards mutually beneficial outcomes will lay the foundations for partnership work to continue beyond the relatively short period covered by this strategy.

The national marketing team based in Wrexham will work with museums, organisations working with and supporting museums, and with key partners beyond the museum sector - including those in the visitor and education sectors.

We have identified two key priority areas for intervention as the strategy is rolled out to support more proactive and effective audience development and marketing for museums in Wales:

#### **A) Building the capacity and sustainability of marketing work across all museums in Wales**

The strategy will work to build marketing and audience development capacity among museums through four initiatives:

##### **1: Training - helping make marketing effective and sustainable among museums in Wales**

This initiative seeks to help lay the foundation for more effective marketing among museums in Wales through the provision of accessible and attractive training.

##### **2: Supporting skill development and spreading good practice - developing and promoting online support**

The aim of this initiative is to work with key partners including AIM, the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales, Audiences Wales and UK bodies to collate information on online resources which can support the development of marketing in Wales and to actively encourage museums to make use of them.

##### **3: Volunteering - promoting the contribution that volunteering can make to museums in Wales**

This initiative seeks to strengthen the already invaluable contribution that volunteers make to the running and promotion of museums in Wales through promoting to potential volunteers and their support bodies the opportunities for widening the range and skills of volunteers and extending the ways in which they contribute to marketing and audience development.

##### **4: Researching user and non-user perceptions and needs - helping strengthen the basis for marketing in the future**

This initiative seeks to strengthen the basic market and visitor data for museum visiting in Wales and to develop understanding of non-visitor opinion and perceptions, so as to provide a better basis for future marketing work.

## **B) Promoting, profile raising, and advocating the benefits of museums across Wales today**

The strategy will work to promote museums through five additional initiatives:

### **5: Promoting museums to the visitor market through building relations with tourism and promotional bodies**

This initiative will strengthen the visibility of museums to tourists and day-visitors from inside and outside Wales, particularly those seeking information online on things to do in the area or in Wales as a whole.

### **6: Promoting high profile Welsh Museum Awards**

In this initiative the national marketing team will work closely with partners to develop a regular set of awards that will reflect and showcase to the media and the general public the wide range of work undertaken by museums of all sizes and governance structures in Wales and the benefits museums deliver for society and the economy.

### **7: Promoting selective, targeted engagement in a wide range of national initiatives**

This initiative will promote the opportunities on offer to museums across Wales to participate in a range of Wales-wide and UK-wide initiatives and campaigns, that seek to extend and build audiences for cultural bodies.

### **8: Delivering key advocacy messages for museums**

In this initiative the national marketing team will promote a set of key advocacy messages aimed at challenging outmoded perceptions about what museums in contemporary Wales are and do.

### **9: Developing media relations for the museum sector**

This initiative seeks to develop good media relations between the museum sector as a whole and the national media in Wales (and beyond).

These initiatives are set out in more detail below with suggested target groups and marketing messages.

A detailed Implementation Plan is available as a separate document.

## **A) Building the capacity and sustainability of marketing and audience development work across all museums in Wales**

### **1: Training - helping make marketing effective and sustainable among museums in Wales**

**This initiative seeks to help lay the foundation for more effective marketing among museums in Wales through the provision of accessible and attractive training.**

Many museums, particularly smaller ones, say they would benefit from basic marketing training. Others, even where they undertake considerable promotional work, often do so on the basis of very limited resources, and lack professional support or experience with marketing. With new developments like social networking and the use of mobile technology and new research highlighting user and non-user views and needs in the cultural sector, there is a need to lay the basis for a much improved and sustainable marketing effort across the museum sector. This should draw on recent research and marketing thinking and address the changing way in which users access cultural experiences.

Recent years have seen some excellent examples of training and resource development on marketing made available to museums in Wales. Those of our interviewees who had participated expressed great satisfaction with recent ACW funded training provided by Audiences Wales. This strategy proposes to facilitate further development of these training opportunities and resources and to make them as accessible as possible to staff and volunteers from all museums in Wales. This will be an initial step towards raising the standard and practice of marketing in museums in Wales and putting it on a sustainable basis. The aim is to support museums in allocating their limited marketing resources in the most effective way, whatever their market position, and to do so on the basis of good professional practice.

It is proposed that discussions take place with Audiences Wales and other potential partners to develop an extended training programme which can be promoted to, and if possible partly subsidised for, the museum workforce (paid or volunteers). Any subsidy for training from the central marketing budget should not rule out additional funding being sought including via sponsorship and other fundraising.

The training sessions could include issues like: understanding the local and visitor markets; market segmentation, alignment of 'offer' to target audience requirements; the use of online and mobile technology in marketing; how to judge the effectiveness of this and other forms of marketing etc. The approach and content should be 'scalable' to ensure relevance to the needs of small museums or those with limited budgets. It would help if sessions could be arranged on a geographic basis across Wales to facilitate attendance and the use of teleconferencing and online access should also be explored.

The programme could include potential for both paid staff and volunteers, to work towards achieving a recognised accreditation standard in marketing or customer service if required, for example through NVQs, or Chartered Institute of Marketing qualifications.

The training initiative should be linked to the second marketing initiative - promoting online resources and support. Training material should wherever possible be part of the online resources made available to museums to support marketing. Feedback from training sessions - with perhaps an early pilot series, should be used to develop the programme so that it genuinely meets Welsh museum's needs and priorities.

**The target group** for this initiative would be all museums in Wales with particular emphasis on reaching and persuading smaller and independent museums of the benefits of the training. Larger and well resourced museums will still benefit from much of this training and they may also provide valuable case studies and examples of good practice.

**Marketing messages to museums would:**

- emphasise that the training sessions are specially developed for museums, including the smallest and least well resourced, and respond to clear messages given in developing the marketing strategy
- utilise feedback/testimonials from earlier sessions to promote to possibly reluctant participants saying how useful the training had been and how it adds value for continual professional development as well as being satisfying and fun
- emphasise the links with online support materials on marketing – including those generated as a specific outcome of the training programme itself
- promote any subsidy for attendance

## 2: Supporting skill development and spreading good practice - developing and promoting online support

**The aim of this initiative is to work with key partners including the Federation, Audiences Wales and UK bodies such as AIM to collate and provide easy access to resources which can support the development of marketing in Wales and to actively encourage museums to make use of them.**

One of the many strengths of the museum sector, in Wales and across the UK, is the range of opportunities to access online support material for skill development and for sharing and extending good practice. Not all museums are aware or are actively drawing on these resources, and many will have limited time to do so.

As training and other initiatives of this strategy get underway, the national marketing team should actively promote the inclusion of new marketing support material in online resources and should utilise their own e-newsletter, the CyMAL Current Awareness postings and the Federation's website Rhannu pages and other sites as appropriate to widen access to toolkits, training opportunities, volunteer support and examples of good practice within the sector. It might also be possible to develop partnership opportunities with Cardiff University and Futurelearn.

**The target group** for this initiative will be all museums, particularly those smaller and independent museums that may not regularly access the current online resources or do not feel they have the time or interest to take advantage of online initiatives or toolkit and training resources.

### **Marketing messages to museums should include:**

- Success stories highlighted by examples of good practice and training
- The range and quality of resources provided
- Ease of access and peer group support for using online resources and joining online activities
- Links with and support for the training programme promoted by the strategy



### 3: Volunteering - promoting the contribution that volunteering can make to museums in Wales

**This initiative seeks to strengthen the already invaluable contribution that volunteers make to the running and promotion of museums in Wales through promoting to potential volunteers and their support bodies the opportunities for widening the range of volunteers and extending the ways in which they contribute to marketing and audience development.**

Volunteers are already vital to Wales' museums, especially in the independent sector where they can be the bedrock for every aspect of the running of the museum as well as providing support for the paid and professional workforce. Volunteers are often older people, with years of work experience behind them, but not necessarily offering all the skills that museums need to operate in the modern world. It must be acknowledged that recruiting, managing and supporting volunteers is demanding and time consuming, but many museums could make better use of their existing volunteers and could also find it valuable to attract volunteers from a wider demographic, or with specific professional expertise to offer. It could also be hugely beneficial to offer volunteering opportunities to groups such as younger people seeking work experience or to enrich their CVs, and those within mentoring programmes and students.

The national WCVA and local volunteer centres can provide support to museums who might wish to develop work with volunteers. For example, museums might be encouraged to develop special projects to attract volunteers with professional skills who may be willing to work on a time-limited marketing project on, for example, audience research. Existing volunteers could be included within marketing project work to help enrich their current volunteering experience.

The national marketing team should discuss with WCVA, AIM and the Federation how best they can assist promotion of volunteering in museums, for example by encouraging museums to contact and work with their local volunteer centres, and with educational and other bodies, and how they can ensure good management of volunteers and raise awareness of the resources that will be required for effective use of volunteers.

**The target group** for this initiative would be potential volunteers and their support bodies to promote the opportunities for increased museum volunteering, whether in the number of volunteers, specialist experience, a wider demographic or range of volunteering activity. Museums can be encouraged to develop and offer new forms of volunteering to a wide range of local people who might be attracted to volunteering opportunities with their local museum.

**A second target group** would be key decision makers at local or national level, and/or potential sponsors of programmes, who are seeking to promote volunteering and who should be made aware of both the existing level and value of volunteering in museums and the potential offered by this initiative to increase and enrich the work with volunteers, enhancing the benefits for individuals and the contribution to community well-being that museums are making.

### **Marketing messages to volunteers and their support bodies could include:**

- Good news stories from museums about the contribution (including to marketing work) of volunteers
- The opportunities provided by key partners in the volunteering and educational and other sectors for support in attracting a wide range of volunteers
- The range of volunteering opportunities that could be utilised including special projects associated with audience development and marketing
- The support and training opportunities available and the potential for wider recognition (see Welsh Museum Awards below)
- Stories from volunteers and what they gained from their work

### **Marketing messages to key decision-makers and potential funders could include:**

- How many volunteers are involved in museums, how essential they are to the sectors' continued health and how well the professional museum workforce copes with meeting their needs and learning requirements
- The benefits that individual volunteers gain in work experience, skills and CV development and life satisfaction
- The contribution that museums are making to community welfare through the careful management and support they offer through volunteering programmes and projects

#### 4: Researching user and non-user perceptions and needs. Helping strengthen the basis for marketing in the future

**This initiative seeks to strengthen the basic market and visitor data for museum visiting in Wales and to develop understanding of non-visitor opinion and perceptions, so as to provide a better basis for future marketing work.**

Information on the pattern of visiting museums, on user needs and satisfaction levels and on the views of non-users is limited and patchy. Very little of it relates to the quality and nature of the experience of visitors and the barriers, perceptual or otherwise, that deter local people and tourists from outside Wales from including visits to museums in their leisure time or itinerary.

The Arts Council Wales/Audiences Wales Benchmarking pilot is an interesting experiment from which lessons have been learned about training for and implementing this sort of survey - including providing training for those leading survey work and ensuring that skills are cascaded to all the workforce. The recent BritainThinks report commissioned by the Museums Association and partners, including CyMAL, provides fascinating insights into what both visitors and non-visitors value about museums.

These excellent initiatives should be built on to help provide a more consistent and sophisticated body of data which can be drawn on by museums in developing their marketing work.

A carefully planned, survey programme, and further focus group work, could help develop understanding of non-museum visitors and of tourists and day trippers who don't currently visit museums. It could help identify what might encourage these non-visitors to visit museums or to participate in cultural activities or experiences.

Some museums, including of course Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Trust, have considerable experience of developing and commissioning audience research work and their advice and input would be invaluable alongside that of CyMAL, ACW and Audiences Wales. It may be possible also to draw in one or other of the Universities or education centres which specialise in visitor or market research work.

It is proposed that CyMAL lead a discussion with potential partners to develop a programme that will produce quantitative and qualitative data of most use to museums as a whole in their understanding of their markets and visitor needs and to explore how this can be made accessible to museums for use in developing their own marketing efforts.

**The target group** for this initiative would be a group of museum stakeholders as well as other bodies involved in undertaking or commissioning relevant research work into cultural activities and the visitor economy.

**A second target group** would be the museum sector - informing them that research was being undertaken and securing participation and support.

## **Marketing messages to museums and partners in the visitor economy would include:**

- The insights into user and non-users, their perceptions, needs and the quality of their visiting experience that will be gained from surveys that sample the 3.5m visitors each year to museums of every size and type across Wales
- The benefits to museums and tourism bodies of greater understanding of users' and non-users' expectations and views
- The promotional opportunities and advocacy gains for museums and for national partners, including local and national government, from publishing results of well-designed surveys
- The professional benefits, necessity even, of measuring the impact of marketing investment over the long term

## **B) Promoting, profile raising, and advocating the benefits of museums across Wales today.**

### **5: Promoting museums to the visitor market through building relations with tourism and promotional bodies**

**This initiative aims to strengthen the visibility of museums to tourists and visitors from inside and outside Wales, particularly those seeking information online on things to do in the area or in Wales as a whole.**

Tourists, from within and outside Wales, are an important market for all museums. Museums offer both enjoyment and cultural stimulation to a wide range of visitors from family groups to cultural tourists. Yet many bodies working in the tourism economy, such as the regional tourism partnerships, would welcome more proactive engagement from the museum sector. Museums currently have variable connections with local, regional and national bodies and groups promoting Wales to tourists.

Tourists and day-visitors are increasingly using web sites as their source of information on possible activities, and accessing them by mobile devices like smart phones and tablets. In many cases, tourism promotion sites will be prominent in many online searches for activities either nationally or within an area - whilst local museum web sites may be harder to find.

The opportunity exists for representatives of local museums to forge stronger and more productive links with visitor and tourism partners and to enrich the tourist offer through promoting local museums.

This initiative will first seek to build relationships between museums and tourism bodies (for example representatives of local museums may attend meetings and assist the work of their local and regional tourism bodies) and through this seek to ensure greater access to museums by tourists.

The national marketing team will seek to secure agreement for existing visitor and other tourism websites to carry a regular 'Museum story of the month' with a picture and headline in a prominent position that links to a regularly changing, engaging 'good news' story. These stories should celebrate museums and the unexpected range of their activities, the enjoyable and stimulating experience they offer visitors, the quality and helpfulness of the workforce and the deep resources of knowledge and expertise they hold and share. Each story should provide a live link to the originating museum's own website and aim to stimulate further virtual exploration and actual visits to museums.

Securing this exposure for monthly museum stories will require the national marketing team to lead on careful negotiation with the tourism sector as well as sourcing, shaping and supplying a lively stream of stories.

**The target groups** for this initiative will be first the national, regional and local groupings formed to promote Wales to tourists and secondly all Welsh museums – encouraging them to get more involved with their local, regional and national tourist bodies as appropriate.

**The marketing messages to promote greater involvement and visibility to the visitor market could include:**

- The mutual value of partnership working to increase the attractiveness of museums in Wales to tourists and day-visitors
- The wide range of unexpected and fun activities available at museums
- Museums are everywhere and available to everyone living in or visiting Wales
- Museums have changed and offer exciting and enjoyable new experiences which are relevant to our lives today
- How museum users can access and benefit from the high standards and variety of expertise, knowledge and skills and the sheer enthusiasm of curators, learning and outreach officers and volunteers in Welsh museums today
- How visitors were surprised or delighted by something they saw or experienced

## 6: Promoting high profile Welsh Museum Awards

**In this initiative the national marketing team will work closely with partners to develop a regular set of awards that will reflect and showcase to the media and the general public the wide range of work undertaken by museums of all sizes and governance structures in Wales and the benefits museums deliver for society and the economy.**

A high profile series of Welsh Museum Awards will recognise and celebrate the successes and contribution that museums make to life in Wales and to its image outside the country. The awards should have the explicit aim of creating a positive image for museums. This must be targeted at the media and the general public as a whole, but most particularly to those who do not currently consider visiting museums. The awards should avoid any sense of a sector congratulating itself to itself, but be directed at a varied public and wide range of stakeholders.

Stakeholder bodies may already be considering awards either for museums alone or along with a range of cultural bodies and it is hoped this initiative could help bring together and press forward these discussions through the formation of a working party which could be serviced by the Wrexham based marketing team.

The proposed awards scheme should aim for a high level of professionalism both in the conception, planning, judging, presentation and promotion. It will need to achieve wide support across the museum sector and recognition of the awards' value and integrity among partners and stakeholders. As with the 'Museum stories of the month' referred to above, the awards scheme should be designed to appeal to the public and to achieve widespread coverage in all media.

There could be many ideas for the shape of the awards. Rather than featuring a single 'museum of the year' the awards scheme should include several carefully designed categories and aim to promote museum work which, for example: provides exciting and informative visitor experiences; offers involvement for local communities and volunteers; offers stimulating out-of-the-classroom learning experiences; and promotes Wales to tourists.

Care will need to be taken to ensure the award scheme is genuinely inclusive and celebrates all that is great and exciting among all museums in Wales. This may mean including categories that particularly focus on the smaller and less well resourced museums whilst others could be relevant to all museums - including Amgueddfa Cymru. Awards could recognise, for example: new displays; best temporary exhibition; community links and volunteering; education initiatives; best promotional campaign; positive visitor feedback; an excellent project on a limited budget (emphasising the excellence); best partnership project involving an Amgueddfa Cymru site; or a 'People's Choice' award with online voting.

Award winners can be widely promoted on museum, tourism and other web-sites. Experience from models elsewhere in the UK, for example the East Midlands region, indicate that the national marketing team and individual museums should be able to use the awards process to secure good media coverage at each stage of the process: launch; long listing; short listing and the actual awards.

Sponsors could be sought for the various categories and the active support and involvement of Amgueddfa Cymru, AIM and the Federation should be sought in their development. Awards could be annual or biennial and might be linked to other award schemes or be stand-alone.

An extensive period of discussion, planning, negotiation and fundraising will be required for these awards and it will be important to find a way of placing them on a sustainable organisational and financial basis. It is hoped that the awards will draw on the active support of key partners in their development, organisation and promotion.

**The target groups** for this initiative will include the key museum stakeholders in the first instance who will need to develop the proposal for the awards and seek a sustainable basis for them. Once the awards are established their promotion will be directed at all museums, especially to encourage and support participation from smaller and more isolated ones, museum visitors and those who do not visit, stakeholders at local, regional and national level, and the Welsh and UK media. Promotion of the awards will be to as wide a range of the general public and of stakeholders as possible.

**The marketing messages should include:**

- Museums' contribution to our cultural life deserves to be celebrated and recognised
- Museums in Wales are exciting and innovative places and centres of great knowledge and expertise
- Welsh Museums are at the cutting edge
- Even small and local museums are providing exciting experiences for everyone – visitors and workforce - and provide good value



## 7: Promoting selective, targeted engagement in a wide range of national initiatives

**This initiative will promote the opportunities for museums in Wales to participate in national promotions that seek to extend and build audiences for cultural bodies. It will then publicise the benefits to museums, who might be reluctant to get involved, and promote good news stories from museums who do participate.**

A wide range of Wales-wide and UK-wide initiatives and promotional opportunities are on offer to Welsh museums. This strategy does not suggest that the national marketing team should generate any new 'Wales only' events or programmes.

Museums across Wales differ considerably in the extent to which they participate in existing Wales and UK wide museum or cultural initiatives. Many do participate, choosing initiatives that play to their strengths as an organisation or the content of their collections. They benefit from these initiatives as they provide a ready branded and promoted vehicle for raising their profile and sometimes reach audiences who would not otherwise engage with museums at all. In other cases, however, museums do not feel able to devote their limited resources to participation or do not see their relevance.

National initiatives provide an opportunity for museums to promote themselves to new and wider audiences. It is proposed that the national marketing team should act to make known and promote a full range of these opportunities so that individual museums can assess when and where involvement will be beneficial to them. It is recognised that not all museums will take part in all initiatives. It is recognised that this needs to be tackled sensitively so that a 'one size fits all' approach is not assumed but that museums need to be fully informed of the opportunities available to them and actively encouraged and helped to participate where relevant.

The national marketing team, as well as ensuring museums are aware of the initiatives and the potential benefits, should actively collate feedback from museums on their participation and share lessons and good news stories so that other museums can consider their own future involvement.

These initiatives are also likely to provide opportunities for partnership working between museums and more widely across the cultural and heritage sector. Many museums are already closely linked to libraries, archives and galleries and others might be linked on a local or regional basis to undertake joint work with other cultural partners such as the National Trust or the Art Fund. The upcoming activities around WW1 are already a focus for cross-sector working and other opportunities should be sought.

**The target groups** for this initiative will be all museums, their workforce and their governing bodies and also potential local partners for example libraries, archives, galleries and visitor attractions.

## **Marketing messages could include:**

- Museums and their collections have a unique relevance to their local communities and the development of the community
- Museums can be a means to join in some great local, regional, national and UK wide events
- Museums are accessible and open to all
- Museums offer a surprising range of fun activities to suit all and are relevant to our lives today
- You can benefit from joint ticketing or joint promotional offers that many museums make

## 8: Delivering key advocacy messages for museums

**In this initiative the national marketing team will seek to promote a set of key advocacy messages aimed at challenging outmoded perceptions about what museums in contemporary Wales are and do.**

For the museum sector in Wales and across the UK as a whole it is clear that audience development and marketing needs to be underpinned by advocacy – the promotion of key messages about the exciting diversity of what museums do and the audiences they serve.

Both as part of marketing to current non-visitors and as a basis for partnership building with the tourism sector, local authorities and others, it is critical to update people's understanding of the richly stimulating experience that museums have to offer to people with widely differing backgrounds, interests and needs and to stress museums' particular relevance to people's sense of place and community. It is important that the work of the national marketing team serves to promote museums' contribution to formal and informal life-long learning and skills development and to Wales' local, regional and national economy – especially through tourism. Wherever possible these messages need to be backed by both hard statistical and engaging anecdotal evidence.

The Federation of Art Galleries and Museums in Wales' 'Advocacy Strategy 2011–2014' and 'Advocacy Toolkit' for Welsh museums were published in 2011 and cite the definition included by the Museums Association in its 2010 'Love Museums' advocacy campaign materials:

*Advocacy is the process whereby an organisation seeks to influence others in order to gain support for its mission, interests or course of action. In order to achieve this, networks of support are developed and used to lend credibility, wield influence and offer third-party endorsement.*

There are two main ways in which advocacy is considered and undertaken:

**1) As a form of political communication** used to influence political decision-making. It might be undertaken in order to influence funding settlements, policy, legislation etc. With the reputation of lobbyists in decline, many believe advocacy has become a 'softer' and more acceptable way to refer to political communications.

**2) As a form of stakeholder communications.** Stakeholders are broadly defined as "any group or individual who can affect and is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives" (Freeman, 1984). Advocacy, where it is focused towards stakeholders, is an approach that would view political decision-makers as just one of the many groups potentially interested in a museum's mission, interests or course of action.

The stakeholder approach to advocacy takes a broader view, and recognises that many different groups, with differing interests, are involved in making decisions and wielding influence. It also allows museums to undertake advocacy at different levels – from building relationships with a local authority to demonstrating the value of a museum's work to community leaders.

The key advocacy messages identified by the Federation are:

1. Museums empower people through education and inspiration
2. Collections in museums help communities to regenerate and forge their identity
3. Museums contribute to the economy

A series of supporting statements for these are expanded in the Toolkit:

See: <http://welshmuseumsfederation.org/index.php?page=advocacy>

The MA's 'Love Museums' campaign materials provide statistics and analysis to support advocacy messages around visiting (visiting figures and satisfaction levels), communities, tourism, and economic benefit.

See: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/love-museums>

### **Some key messages for the national marketing team to promote are:**

- **People value museums.** Visitor numbers are high, and increasing, and visitor satisfaction levels are good. As evidenced by the Museums Association's 2013 'Public Perceptions'<sup>12</sup> research, even non-visitors value museums' role in caring for and preserving national and local heritage and trust them as repositories and sharers of knowledge and expertise.
- **Museums are relevant.** Their role has changed over time and never more so than in the last 10–15 years. As well as their traditional role of collecting, preserving and sharing rich collections and related information, museums now play an increasing role in supporting both local and dispersed communities (including online 'virtual' communities).
- **Museums strengthen people's sense of heritage and place.** Welsh museums, from small independents to the largest nationals, have a key role to play in supporting Welsh people's engagement with their heritage and their sense of place. This can be very local – with small local museums in particular holding collections at the heart of the communities for which they have the most deeply resonant meaning and value.
- **Museums can be catalysts for regeneration** through the creation of new venues and civic spaces.
- **Museums provide exciting spaces** for formal and informal learning offering alternative, out-of-the-classroom experiences that challenge and engage young people and learners of all ages.
- **Museums support skills development.** Through encouraging participative practice (e.g. co-curation of exhibitions) and working with community groups and individual volunteers and work placements, museums can offer a resource and 'safe space' for developing people's skills and confidence both for the workforce and the community.
- **Museums are good for business and support the tourism economy.** They showcase the best of the nation's history and culture to the widest possible audiences. They attract ever-greater numbers of tourists through their doors. Through the money they spend these museum visitors deliver economic benefits to local economies.

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<sup>12</sup> Public perceptions of and attitudes to the purposes of museums in society: A report prepared by BritainThinks for Museums Association, Britain Thinks, Museums Association, 2013  
[http://www.museumsassociation.org/news/03042013-public-attitudes-research-published?utm\\_source=ma&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=03042013v](http://www.museumsassociation.org/news/03042013-public-attitudes-research-published?utm_source=ma&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=03042013v)

- **Public expenditure on culture is a small fraction of overall government spending**, but reaps dividends. Museums are both part of and support the creative and cultural industries. The sector as a whole, and most individual museums, operate on a mixed economy model drawing on a variety of income streams, including not just public funding, but private investment, individual giving and earned income. A level of public subsidy remains vital to the on-going success of the sector and public support for this funding remains high. Museums and galleries generate meaningful economic benefits, through areas such as jobs, tourism, inward investment and regeneration. This economic return often levers significantly higher economic benefits - putting more in than it takes out. Museums and galleries are a sound investment.

And a key message for the museum sector itself is that it is stronger when working together.

**Target groups.** The advocacy message should underpin everything that the marketing team does, informing: press releases aimed at the media and general public; partnership building with the tourism industry, the wider heritage sector and education bodies who provide important markets for museums; as well as communication with local and national politicians and all local, regional and national individuals and bodies who set policy or provide resources for cultural provision.

## 9: Developing media relations for the museum sector

**This initiative seeks to develop good media relations between the museum sector as a whole and the national media in Wales (and beyond). Developing good media relations will be vital to delivering the advocacy message and individual newsworthy stories effectively at national level.**

Most local and regional museums have useful, productive relationship with their local media, enabling them to place stories regularly in the local press or on local radio. However, they struggle to interest the national media or local TV. This initiative seeks ways to broaden the national media's awareness of and links with the museum sector as a whole and increase the capacity and ability of local museums to access national media contacts.

Amgueddfa Cymru invests in a national marketing, press and communications team and has built strong, but carefully nuanced relationships with national press and media contacts. There is potential for Amgueddfa Cymru to offer advice to the national marketing team and to support the team's developing its own contact base.

As well as ensuring that projects involving partnership between local museums and Amgueddfa Cymru always get promoted to the national media, it might occasionally be appropriate for Amgueddfa Cymru to lead on stories that draw on the work of museums across Wales and reinforce the nationals' own advocacy message by demonstrating the social, economic and cultural value of the museum sector as a whole.

The regular online 'Museum stories of the Month' initiative (see above) will provide a helpful mechanism for the national marketing team to source and promote stories of potential national interest to the national media. It is vital that stories should be selected that illustrate the key advocacy messages listed below.

**The target groups** for this initiative will be all national media, traditional and online.

### **Marketing messages could include:**

- Examples of how museums are contributing to local or national social, economic and cultural priorities enhancing people's lives
- Unusual or exciting developments and newsworthy stories relating to collections, donations, finds or exhibitions of more than local interest
- New developments in museums particularly relating to technology