

Interviews with Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust

Subject: External Relationships and Issues

1. Which other travel and tourism organizations (such as transport providers and accommodation providers) does the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust work with – in what way and why?

We work with Shropshire and Wrexham Railway with a joint ticket that includes admission, the Gorge Connect Bus and the train journey. This is a good way to encourage visitors from London and the South-east.

2. Does the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust work with national or regional development destination management organizations? Please describe how you do this.

We work with county organizations such as Shropshire Tourism and Ironbridge and Telford Tourism; regional organizations such as Tourism West Midlands and national ones such as Visit Britain. We buy adverts and editorial in their publications, attend exhibitions collectively and go on sales missions. We do this as there is strength in a destination sell when marketing to certain segments, such as groups and international buyers.

3. Key factors such as increased environmental awareness, socio-economic changes and government influences have a huge impact on the UK travel and tourism sector. How have these factors impacted on your organization and how do you expect them to impact you in the future? How do you manage these impacts?

Changing demographics, economic considerations, government policy, terrorism, exchange rates all have an impact on tourism and we need to plan accordingly to react to these changing dynamics. We need to ensure our product is suitable for an ageing population, our prices represent good value for money and that we are a safe and secure place to visit.

Subject: The Business Environment

1. What is the structure of the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust and why has that structure been adopted?

A new management restructure has been developed, which groups departments in a more strategic and business-based framework to ensure business sustainability. Two main drivers lead the business practices: at the higher level, the Strategic Management Team (SMT) looks to the whole business operation and future development, this is in turn developed with the museum management team on the delivery and implementation level. The main departments in the SMT are Operations, Academic and Curatorial, Finance and resource and PR/Marketing. The whole is overseen by a Board of Trustees.

2. How does the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust respond to business opportunities and innovation? And also environmental pressures?

As the largest independent museum in the UK, IGMT has always had to be business based and as a charity it relies heavily on support from local business and groups and so has always worked innovatively and with a lot of freedom to choose its own development. The SMT team actively seeks out supportive business opportunities as part of its remit. As a



large and conscientious employer we respond positively to environmental requirements; our main aim is the continued preservation of the area's history and landscape.

3. How do the key departments within the organization work together to respond to these opportunities, pressures and crises?

New management restructure has resulted in a smaller but more consistent team who can quickly come together to provide support and resources for all departments within the museum. We work very closely with the local council and other bodies and are able to call upon support from these areas too. As an independent museum we have an excellent internal structure, which manages all aspects of our operation; we also have a clear disaster plan and procedure in place to safeguard key department operations and the ongoing preservation of our collections.

4. How does Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust deal with change to ensure employees react positively and do not resist change?

Clear line management, open communication, regular meeting, sharing of MMT and SMT minutes, published business plans, staff forums, internal newsletters. Appraisals and one-on-one meetings.

