

Project: VisitWales Review, Strategy and Business Plan

Client: Wales Tourist Board

Date: 2003 - 2005

Team: Roger Carter, Howard Smith, Alyson Dombey, Jon Cockerill

One of the major projects undertaken by the Wales Tourist Board during its last five years was the development of VisitWales, an initiative designed to use electronic systems to enhance the effectiveness of the promotion and distribution of Wales tourism products and services worldwide; and meet a wider range of information and general destination management needs of the Wales Tourist Board, its marketing partners and the tourism industry in Wales. It has been an ambitious project, seeking to satisfy the requirements of a diverse range of internal and external clients.

A key part of the rationale for the development of the system was the creation of an e-commerce platform for Wales' tourism industry, which would ultimately lead to increased marketing efficiencies and better economic returns at national, sub-national and individual business levels. Closely related to this was an objective to increase the ICT literacy and usage within the tourism industry in Wales.

VisitWales commenced operations in the spring of 2002. Its performance proved less successful than was originally anticipated in both strategic and the operational terms. Low levels of business directly generated by the website and through the VisitWales Centre resulted in a significant lack of confidence amongst key internal and external stakeholders, whilst the content management system and the developer support lacked the flexibility and functionality required by WTB Marketing.

Initially, TEAM was asked to undertake a short term review of action required to redress the situations and proposed system upgrades and improvements, specific industry participation targets, action to increase visits to visitwales.com and measures to increase industry confidence in the VisitWales system. It was recognised that, as well as addressing short term priorities and related issues, there was a need to re examine the longer term vision, scope and management of VisitWales. As a result, TEAM was engaged to undertake a strategic review of VisitWales. The objectives were:

- To give a clear vision for the future direction of VisitWales
- To achieve shared ownership and confidence, based on full input from WTB staff and external users of the system
- To redefine the business model for the DMS based on the agreed strategic vision.

The deliverables were:

- a Discussion Paper regarding the strategic issues and solutions
- A Strategy
- A Business Plan for VisitWales 2.