

Making the most of your sponsorship through digital marketing

There are three main elements that you need to focus on achieving when it comes to making the most of your tourism sponsorship online:

1. **Familiarity** – Making sure that those entering and winning are familiar with you. The more this feeling is built, the more likely they are to enter into discussion with you and the more likely you are to build credibility.
2. **Credibility** – You all offer great services and products to those working within the tourism industry, so you want those entering the awards to know that just like them, you are the best at what you do and what you offer.
3. **Perseverance** – Understand that creating familiarity and credibility are inextricably linked and just like trust, which is the overriding result of each, it takes time to build with any potential customer or client.

The awards give you the ability and access to create more familiarity and credibility with those entering, as well as positioning yourself as supporting it rather than selling to it, and as everyone agreed, nobody really likes being sold to.

So how do you do all this and where are the easy wins when it comes to making those entrants potential clients?

Building Familiarity:

Give your service or product a face to relate to

People buy from people so consider using your face in correspondence. My own face goes out on a lot of marketing material for our tourism offering, whether that's a press release, an email saying congratulations or some other method of communication. The upshot is that people become familiar with seeing me in the tourism sector and the end result is that they become more familiar and I become more credible. When it comes to awards night it also means people are far more happy to talk to you as they've seen you constantly!

Building Credibility:

The great thing about those entering the awards is that they're already good, but they're always striving to be better. This means that they often look around at what other businesses are doing and who they're working with.

Make sure that your tourism clients are featured on your website – get testimonials and ensure these are constantly updated and fresh. Is there a specific tourism area of your

website? If not, consider adding one and always make sure the logos are featured heavily. Remember, you're supporting the industry.

Some things for you to be doing...

Get that press release out....

Get a press release out saying that you're sponsoring the awards. If you've not done it already it's not too late. Include it in any newsletters you distribute too – you want people to know that you support the industry and the great people working in it.

Correspond with finalists... but keep it succinct

Robin will send you the award finalists, but as I said, the feedback I've got is that people get bombarded with emails as soon as they're listed as a finalist. Consider leaving your congratulations to just before the awards and say that you look forward to seeing them on the night. If you include your face in your email signature you may well find that they come and speak to you – I've certainly experienced this previously.

Also keep your emails short – now isn't a time for selling – it's a time to give a pat on the back and a little recognition.

Twitter works a treat...

Great thing about Twitter in the South West is the majority of businesses are family owned or small – that means when you tweet you'll usually be tweeting the owner or senior decision maker. Get the finalists into twitter lists and engage with them – this is where the perseverance point from above comes in. When I say engage I mean share and interact with their content – not tweet at them with what you do. This will save you a lot of time but it will win a lot of hearts and minds and be appreciated by the businesses. Remember, you are supporting the sector after all, and by doing that the benefits will always come as long as you stick at it!