

# Fáilte Ireland - The Fun Starts Here

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## Introduction & Background

Established in 2003, Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority is responsible for the development of a profitable and sustainable Irish tourism industry. A key responsibility of Fáilte Ireland is the development of the domestic tourism industry, the biggest indigenous industry in the country. Irish people spent €1.67 billion on home holidays in 2010 with a total of 7.7 million visits taken. Tourism represents 3.8% of GNP and its estimated that in peak season in 2011 there were 180,500 employed in the tourism and hospitality sector, approximately 1 in every 10 jobs in Ireland. (Sources: CSO & The Fáilte Ireland Policies Unit).

Throughout the noughties the domestic holiday market had been growing in line with population growth. However, once the recession hit, holiday spending fell dramatically in line with shrinking disposable income levels. In 2009 total spending on travel (domestic and foreign) decreased from €8.7 billion to €7.1 billion in just one year. The domestic tourism market, accounting for two thirds of all bednights, was under serious threat as consumers re-evaluated their attitudes to purchasing and consumption in all categories.

While the previous Fáilte Ireland 'Right Here, Right Now' campaign (2007-2009) resulted in the successful repositioning of Ireland as an attractive, aspirational destination and helped drive 18% market growth in the domestic market, by 2009 the campaign was beginning to suffer wear out. More important than this, the consumer attitude to holidays as a category was fundamentally changing. The challenge we faced was how to replace a very successful and well-liked campaign with new work relevant and appealing enough to attract the domestic holidaymaker in a time of extremely reduced disposable income and increased value driven competitor activity.

In March 2010, following extensive qualitative and quantitative research, Fáilte Ireland developed a new multi media advertising campaign to stimulate demand in the home holiday market. One year into our new campaign Behaviours & Attitudes, one of Ireland's leading research companies, confirmed 'The Fun Starts Here' had registered "the single highest level of recall of any campaign their advertising monitor has ever measured".

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## Marketing Objectives

The business objectives for this new campaign was clear to maintain or grow Ireland's share of overall Irish holiday expenditure.

A considerable ask in an extremely competitive market place, where our audience level of disposable income had been decimated and the country was in its 3rd year of economic downturn. Our 2007-2009 campaign had presented Ireland in a new light and conveyed all the attractions on offer. We needed to build on the success of this campaign and make the 'staycation' more appealing than a foreign holiday option. In other words, success would be measured against the previous high performance campaign-no pressure!

There were several communications objectives:

- ▶ Build on the success of the 2007-2009 campaign by continuing to unsettle complacency about Ireland's offering - position Ireland as an exciting destination where people can connect with each other in a fun and enriching way.
- ▶ Communicate the extent of Ireland's holiday offering.
- ▶ Communicate a 'value for money' dimension.
- ▶ Continue to drive holidaymakers to the Fáilte Ireland channels, especially discoverireland.ie.
- ▶ Simplify and energize the consumer journey through discoverireland.ie

These objectives were set with a view to using consumer research and web usage figures to measure our success.

## The Task

The major obstacle to achieving our business objective was the very significant decline in consumer discretionary income. It has been calculated that weekly discretionary income (from which consumers would typically fund holidays) declined by over 40% between 2008 and 2011. (Source: Behaviour and Attitudes). And consumer confidence also remained at a significantly lower level over this period compared to the preceding four years.

Our new campaign would need to deliver on a number levels:

- ▶ Our previous campaign had been incredibly successful in driving bed nights up by 18% and it had been very popular with the consumer. We needed to build

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## Company Profile

### DDFH&B

The DDFH&B Group consists of DDFH&B Advertising, Mindshare Media, RMG, Goosebump and BespokewithDirection - the largest Irish companies in creative advertising, media buying, below-the-line and digital marketing.

Together, we provide channel-neutral, integrated marketing communications campaigns that deliver real, measurable results. We achieve this level of integration by working in a number of small, multidiscipline teams - we call this FUNSIZING. We continue to be one of the most successful agencies in Ireland and are happy to continue to work with great clients such as The National Lottery, Bord Gáis and Fáilte Ireland as well as new clients including SuperValu, Littlewoods, Lucozade and eircom.

### PHD

PHD is responsible for looking after some of the largest and most prominent brands in Ireland. Our client list includes: Fáilte Ireland, Kraft Foods (including Cadbury), The Irish Times, Warner, Topaz, Canon, Sage, Citroen, Dr. Oetker, European Commission, Fed Ex, Garmin, Huawei, Kerrygold, Mothercare, National Dairy Council, Sony Mobile, and countless others.

### The Task

from that success and continue to show holidaymakers the familiar in a new way.

- ▶ We needed to develop a through the line campaign idea that could work of all consumer touch-points.
- ▶ Our communications would need to both appeal across the population (from older couples, to young families to singles) and to show a wide range of destinations and activities on offer.
- ▶ We needed to reflect and appeal to a new consumers mind set their need for a release from every day stress through moments of fun and connection with their loved ones, and the importance of delivering on perceived value for money.
- ▶ As holiday planning and engagement has evolved through the greater advent of technology, our campaign needed to connect at all stages of the consumer planning journey.

### The Strategy

Having had such a successful 2007-2009 campaign, it was essential that we establish firstly what elements of that campaign would still resonate and motivate our target audience and secondly what elements of our previous campaign strategy and creative needed to evolve to reflect their current mind-set.

Our first step was to identify the core target markets for the home holiday sector

- ▶ Families young and old
- ▶ Couples young and old
- ▶ Groups of friends

Once we had identified these segments, we needed to know what they were now looking for in a holiday. Research in Spring 2009 explored the motivations and mind-set involved in deciding on holiday locations for these different segments. Some key findings:

- ▶ Consumers believed that they would take a similar number of holidays but they would leave the booking until the last minute to avail of deals. Better value in the prevailing economic climate appeared to be the primary justification for this consideration.

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## The Strategy

- ▶ Four Core Motivational triggers were present for domestic short breaks in Ireland:
  - ▶ Have Fun Together
  - ▶ Relax Together
  - ▶ Reward Myself
  - ▶ Let Hair Down

### Creative strategy

The 2007-2009 campaign had demonstrated the unexpected variety of things to do on an Irish holiday. Our new campaign had to show accessible activities that anyone could try their hand at and, more importantly, drive home the more emotive triggers for taking a holiday fun, reconnecting with loved ones and shared enjoyment. People would sacrifice many things before sacrificing their holiday. Therefore, it was key to understand and portray in our communications what was most important to their holiday experience. And while we had to dial up the emotive and intimate moments of a holiday, we also had to keep many of elements from the 'Right Here, Right Now' campaign that had been so successful:

- ▶ Retain the demonstration of contemporary, iconic Ireland
- ▶ Maintain the energy
- ▶ Continue to surprise and encourage spontaneity
- ▶ Continue to drive holiday makers to Fáilte Ireland Channels
- ▶ Retain the flexibility of the concept so the idea could be adapted to demonstrate a number of activities, regions and target audiences across all media channels.

### Media Strategy

In 2010 our media strategy needed to evolve to incorporate the participative benefit of holidaying in Ireland.

We faced three main challenges:

- ▶ Evolving from showing fun things happening in Ireland to empowering individuals all around the country to believe they could experience all that Ireland had to offer.

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## The Strategy

Our previous activity had told people that Ireland was exciting; we now needed to connect with them in such a way that we empowered them to feel they could be the protagonist of the fun intrinsic to an Irish holiday. Therefore, we had to change the context of our media placement to more shared/participative moments highlighting the accessibility of Ireland.

- ▶ The consumer planning journey radically evolved in the past years. Our research showed that the fun and excitement associated with holidays started the moment the decision to go on holiday happened; not when the holiday is booked as previously thought. Discover Ireland had to be increasingly present at this early stage.

This meant, our campaign took on a far greater digital focus (the 2011 digital spend was 85% higher than the 2009 spend) allowing us to engage through search marketing at the initial planning stage and dynamic display advertising in relevant environments as the holiday research process continued.

- ▶ In an increasingly fragmented media environment, it was getting harder to engage and stimulate consumers. Fáilte Ireland had to find a way to connect and guide the journey to wonderful Irish holiday experiences.

In order to engage with consumers, we needed to do more than buy media space to reach them. Our strategy evolved to connect with consumers through building bespoke content, which stimulated excitement around holidaying in Ireland. This bespoke content complimented the advertising which was presented as editorial, adding credibility to just how accessible and 'FUN' an Irish holiday is.

## The Idea and Communications Activity

Our communication idea was simple and powerful 'The Fun Starts Here'. This phrase tapped in to the consumers need for fun and escape on their holidays. It also communicated that this was available right on their doorstep and it would be demonstrated throughout all communications. It was an umbrella idea that would allow us communicate a variety of messages for brand, product and regions and across all media channels. Across the overall brand campaign, the media investment in 2010 was valued at over €6.9m and €4.6m in 2011.

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## The Idea and Communications Activity

### Brand Campaign

A major new TV campaign was developed and launched in March 2010 to drive awareness of the new brand platform. Shot all over Ireland, the suite consisted of a 90sec TV and cinema edit as well as 1 x 60' and 3 x 30' TV edits all with a strong call to action to visit [discoverireland.ie](http://discoverireland.ie).

The TV ad still needed to show the epic beauty of Ireland but the tone and mood had moved on from the 'Right Here, Right Now' creative. Our focus was on accessible fun and the moments of bonding you can enjoy on holiday in Ireland. A considerably hard working execution, each of the 9 vignettes showed a different region and activity being enjoyed by one of our target audiences. The music for the campaign was a high energy, original Irish music track from Dublin band The Heathers. The music was a bold choice considering the wide breath of appeal necessary- the objective of which was to aid cut-through.

### Regional Campaigns

The brand campaign was run in conjunction with regional campaigns covering the North West, the West, the South East, East Coast & Midlands and the South West. Each of these regional campaigns, while supporting the brand message also carved out a story specific to their region and what it had to offer.

On Today FM, listeners of the Ray D'Arcy show were able to nominate their favourite holiday destination in Ireland and then ultimately vote as to where the show went on their summer break.

On Newstalk the Tom Dunne show travelled around the country broadcasting from key holiday destinations and interacting with all of the exciting attractions around them.

### Festival And Events Campaigns

A partnership was developed with RTE which resulted in the production of a new TV show 'The Festival Roadshow'. This ran during the main holiday season 2010 and brought to life the many events happening throughout the country.

Media partnerships in 2011 allowed the development of weekly 90 second guides to what's on in Ireland for both TV and radio (the TV3 Discover Guides and IRS National Event Guides) and the production of regular bespoke 32 page 'Discover Ireland' guides with the Irish Times.

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## The Idea & Communication Activity

This activity was supplemented with weekly events press ads in national newspapers and supporting editorial features across both years.

### Discover Ireland Special Offers Brochure

In both 2010 and 2011, Fáilte Ireland developed and distributed a number of Special Offers brochures in partnership with national newspapers. These high production value brochures were hugely impactful and full of relevant information and great value offers for each season. Each brochure release was supported by press and radio to generate awareness of the brochures and to drive consumers to the online version on [discoverireland.ie](http://discoverireland.ie)

## Results

### Business Objectives

- ▶ Our business objective was to hold Ireland's share of the holiday market at current level. A difficult task considering the downturn in consumer sentiment and their levels of disposable income. This goal was massively exceeded with a very strong increase in the number of Irish people taking trips in Ireland, up from 28% of the population taking a break in 2009 to 36% in 2010. A year on year increase of 26%. (Source: Ipsos MRBI). In addition, Fáilte Ireland revenue estimates for 2010 were exceeded by 22%.
- ▶ The Central Statistics Office is yet to publish 2011 results but the national hotels survey is showing a 5% growth in bed night sales for the domestic market. This growth is despite the considerable contraction in overall holiday spends by Irish people, resulting in share gain for Irish vs. foreign holidays.

### Communication Objectives

- ▶ By February 2011 the awareness of any element of 'The Fun Starts Here' campaign in peak season reached the exceptional level of 89% of the population. (Source: Behaviours & Attitudes)
- ▶ Behaviours & Attitudes reported that 'The Fun Starts Here' registered "the single highest level of recall of any communications programme their advertising monitor had ever measured". The February 2011 tracking showed how the

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## Results

campaign had significantly outperformed the market norm across the board but particularly in levels of involvement and engagement.

Measure	Market Norm	Discover Ireland
Staying Power	+11	+37
Involvement	+8	+50
Likeability	+41	+61
Top of class	+17	+36
Persuasion	+17	+77

In addition our campaign hugely exceeded the norm for hitting Key Performance Indicators. Our KPI were based on responses to 3 statements:

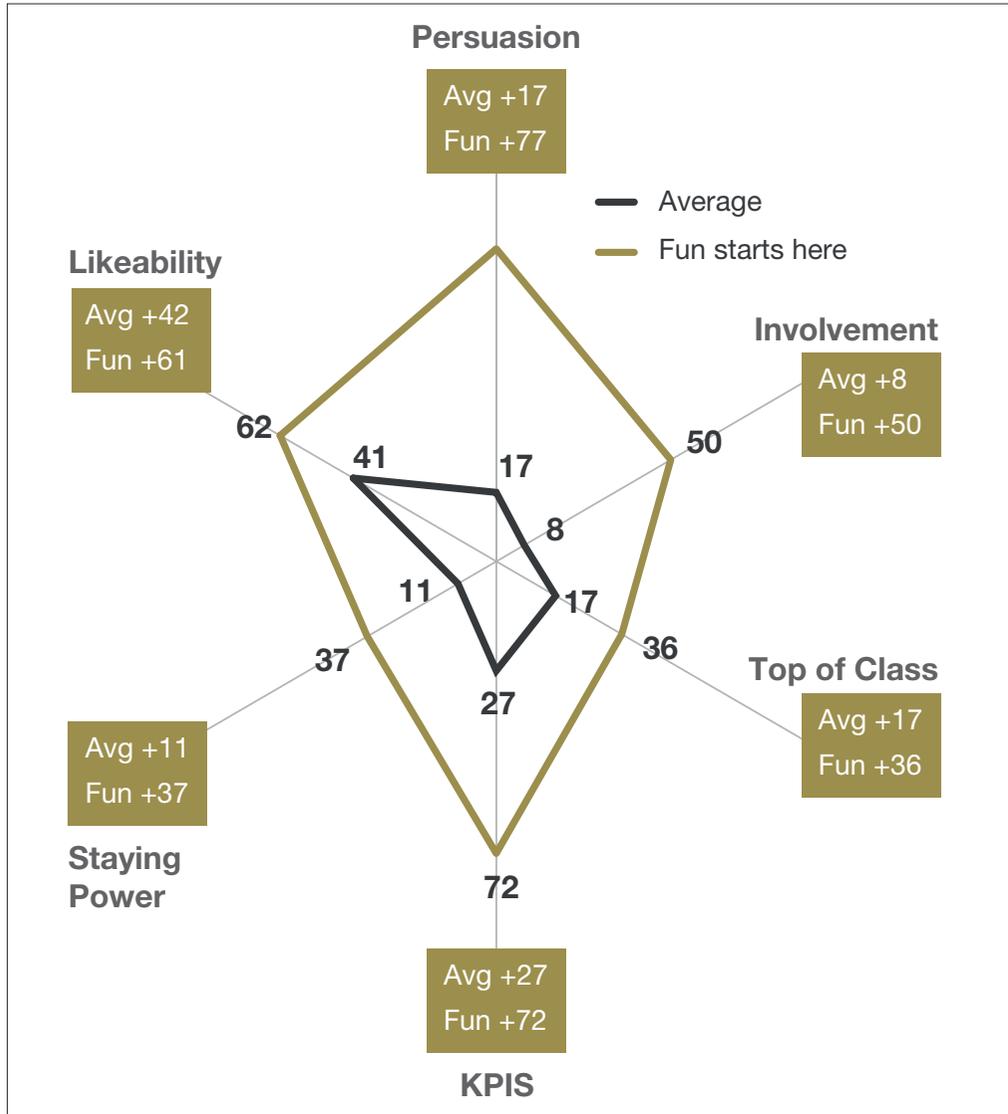
- ▶ Holidaying in Ireland is fun for everyone young and old
- ▶ Holidays in Ireland are great for spending time with family and friends
- ▶ Holidays in Ireland are exciting

This was a clear measure of our success and delivering on our first 3 communication objectives portraying Ireland as exciting, with a diverse range of options on offer and a holiday destination where you can enjoy real connections with loved ones.

Measure	Market Norm	Discover Ireland
Hitting KPI'S	+27	+72

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## The Results



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### The Results

- ▶ In the November 2011 B&A tracking it was clear that Ireland was perceived as an appealing holiday destination that could deliver value for money.
  - ▶ 71% of respondents agreed with the statement: "Ireland is an exciting holiday destination"
  - ▶ 88% of respondents agreed with the statement: "People of all ages can take holidays in Ireland"
  - ▶ 74% of respondents agreed with the statement: "Ireland is a fun destination for holidays"
  - ▶ 63% of respondents agreed with the statement: "Ireland has many good-value holidays"

### Digital Objectives

Two of our communications objectives were to get more people to the discoverireland.ie site and to make their experience better so they would spend more time there. This was clearly achieved.

#### 2010

- ▶ 28% of consumers used discoverireland.ie to plan Irish breaks.
- ▶ The key site statistics were (v 2009, GoogleAnalytics):
  - ▶ +17% unique visitors
  - ▶ +30% page views
  - ▶ +10% more time spent on site
  - ▶ -9.6% lower bounce rate.

#### 2011

- ▶ Website visits increased by a further 3%
- ▶ 8 tactical campaigns throughout the year drove 105,650 clicks to the new site for a conversion rate 230% above average
- ▶ Search was used to drive 1.8 million visits to the site
- ▶ Facebook delivered a further 20,771 visits
- ▶ 13,500+ Facebook members
- ▶ 1,500 Twitter followers
- ▶ The Discover Ireland App developed was downloaded 5,329 times from July to December - over 5 times more than 80% of all branded apps (Source: Deloitte)

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### Impact on behavioural activity and payback

1. In February 2011 Behaviour & Attitudes tracking found that 50% of Irish people were motivated into immediate and specific action related to holiday planning or purchase by our campaign.

Specifically:

- ▶ Made a mental note to find out more later: 24%
  - ▶ Checked newspaper for deals: 7%
  - ▶ Looked up internet about holiday breaks in Ireland: 17%
  - ▶ Decided to take a holiday break in Ireland: 8%
  - ▶ Booked a break in Ireland now: 5%
  - ▶ Any Specific Action: 50%
2. Ipsos MRBI data showed the campaign had impacted on perceptions of the home holiday in the following manner:
    - ▶ Those very satisfied with their most recent holiday in Ireland rose from 58% in 2009 to 79% in 2011
    - ▶ Those very likely to take a short break in Ireland in next 12 months rose from 31% in 2009 to 35% in 2011
  3. The Special Offers brochures were hugely successful. In 2011 87% of people agreed that they made Ireland seem more appealing and 73% felt that they made them more likely to take a break in Ireland. 48% of those who read the brochure have kept it for later reference. (Source: B&A)
  4. The TV ad used a track called 'Remember When' by The Heathers. We promoted the band and garnered much media interest, including a Heathers performance on the Late Late Show. The track went on to top the download charts.

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### Summary

Fáilte Ireland tasked us with developing a campaign that would ensure home holidays would maintain share of Irish holiday expenditure. Our 2007-2009 campaign had successfully repositioned Ireland as an exciting holiday destination and resulted in 18% increase in share. In 2010 we were faced with developing a new strategy and creative work that could evolve the brand communications from this high benchmark but in the hugely challenging environment of the financial downturn.

To meet this challenge we needed a deep understanding of our potential holiday makers and how we could motivate them to use their limited discretionary income on a home holiday.

We launched our campaign in March 2010. 'The Fun Starts Here' idea was present in all aspects of the communications - brand, regional, events and festival, Special Offers brochures, media content partnerships and on the discoverireland.ie website.

The campaign has delivered on all levels and spurred 50% of people into taking immediate action related to planning or purchase of an Irish holiday. The creative has achieved scores higher than any other campaign ever researched by B&A tracking. Each year there has been growth in the number of visitors to the discoverireland.ie site and the time they spend engaging with the content there. In addition, the brand has established a presence across social media and developed an App to promote all Ireland has on offer.

The attitudinal effect of the campaign can be gauged by the consumer's perceptions of Ireland as an exciting holiday location, has something to offer for all age groups, that offers good value and is a fun place where you can spend time with family and friends.

There was a clear business impact reflected in the increase in bed nights achieved for the indigenous holiday sector. This is a hugely important growth, given the additional weight the domestic holiday campaign had to carry in light of the downturn in foreign inward tourism.

Overall, this case study demonstrates the effectiveness of a campaign built on a solid proposition, clear strategic planning and a consistent execution across all platforms-in delivering tangible strong results.

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