



BLENHEIM PALACE

Off Season Evolution

Our Evolution

Blenheim Palace Overview

<https://vimeo.com/248473427>

- Home to the Dukes of Marlborough
- World Heritage Site since 1987
- Birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill
- Over 300 years of history
- 2000 acres of 'Capability' Brown Park and Gardens
- A diverse and commercial business with several income generators – property, water, farming, game, visitor business, hospitality, commercial filming
- We want to be the lifeblood of the local economy, to enhance the lives of those who live locally, to share this magnificent place and protect it for future generations



6 Years ago

The world was very different.....

- We were partially open November through until end of December (shoot season on the Estate)
- Christmas activities were light touch and low budget
- We were closed all of January and part of February – deep clean
- Re-opened mid-February always with an exhibition curated by our education department with a low budget

What changed

We went through a visitor strategy review with PWC looking ahead to the next 5 years in 2015 and decided:

- Open all year round
- Engage our visitors more in the experience
- Deliver new site experiences
- Interpretation of the stories and existing activity
- New events in the quieter times or using space more effectively during the year
- Invest accordingly – experience and promotion
- Go deeper with our usps

What we have done to deliver on-site

We decided after testing ideas with focus groups:

- Open every day except Christmas day
- Decided to curate our deep clean – specialist tours and interpretation
- Launched downstairs and upstairs private apartments tour
- Launched Twizy Tours around the estate
- Launched a multi-media guide
- Tried new events – Chinese New Year and Christmas
- Invested and upscaled exhibitions, finding partnerships to help deliver quality –
 - Passion for Fashion – Dior, Louboutin, Christina Stambolian
 - Young Turner
 - Churchill in watercolor

All the things
that have
worked



Events – Mixed Bag....

But we know why.....

The bad.....



[VOTE: Blenheim Palace apologises over Chinese New Year event ...](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/16030772.VOTE_Blenheim_Palace_apologises_over_...)
www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/16030772.VOTE_Blenheim_Palace_apologises_over_... ▼
19 Feb 2018 - A BARRAGE of complaints from disappointed customers has prompted Blenheim Palace to publicly apologise for its Chinese New Year party.

[Blenheim Palace apologises for 'shambolic' Chinese New Year party - i](https://inews.co.uk/news/.../blenheim-palace-apologises-shambolic-chinese-new-year-...)
<https://inews.co.uk/news/.../blenheim-palace-apologises-shambolic-chinese-new-year-...> ▼
22 Feb 2018 - Blenheim Palace has been forced to apologise to customers after their celebration of Chinese New Year turned into "a farce". In an Apprentice-esque blunder, only one food van serving noodles and chips turned up to the event with only a smattering of Chinese decorations visible around the palace grounds.

[Chinese New Year - Blenheim Palace, Woodstock Traveller Reviews ...](https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186362-d190720-r561324441-Ble...)
<https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186362-d190720-r561324441-Ble...> ▼
★ ★ ★ ★ Rating: 1 - Review by a TripAdvisor user
20 Feb 2018 - Blenheim Palace: Chinese New Year - See 6244 traveller reviews, 5006 candid photos, and great deals for Woodstock, UK, at TripAdvisor.

[Celebrate Chinese New Year at Blenheim Palace on 17 February at ...](https://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/.../1272256.Event.Celebrate_Chinese_New_Year_at_Blenheim...)
www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/.../1272256.Event.Celebrate_Chinese_New_Year_at_Blenheim...
Celebrate Chinese New Year at Blenheim Palace. Oxfordshire on 17 February 2018. For the first time

The wonderful!



What we do to drive traffic

Marketing & promotions play an important role to drive traffic in these quieter times:

- Integrated campaigns for events/exhibitions
- Tick box reminders on core day offering across all platforms

Planning in advance is key to maximise potential. Start of Q3 for following year start.

But your messages and offer need to go deeper to really stick and refresh what you do.....

How to do that

Theming

Find creative themes to run across periods you can tell stories through so it creates a bigger noise, can be used across the whole site and is clear to customers:

- Q1 = Hidden Treasures
- Q2 = Flora and Forna
- Q3 = Memorable Performances / Unforgettable Events
- Q4 = Changing times / Traditions at Christmas

Influencers

Tiered packages for influencers – 3 levels. Incentives and payment.

Carefully mapped across key audiences, behaviors, activities and specialist areas.

Partnerships

Research and proactively find like minded brands with similar audience reach – contra deals, offers and small outlay

Suppliers

Find flexible and proactive suppliers to maximise return, but brief them early enough

National Event/Anniversary tie in.....always good!



What more are we doing...

To meet our ever changing audience needs and keep pace in the market whilst remaining authentic we are:

- Using a consultancy to map our stories and visitor flows for the next 10 years to get a clearer set of messages and experience
- Deliver this masterplan in phases across our site – each new space we open or refresh and area we will take the theme from the masterplan
- Using agencies to interpret our stories with the latest technology and ways to deliver our messages and experience

This in turn gives us evolution for our core usps and site delivery to ensure we don't rely on events and exhibitions to drive traffic.

Learnings

- The market and technology is still as fast pace as ever
- You need to know your audiences and how they are changing – don't lead with preference and technology discussions but future proof
- We must keep trying to refresh and raise the bar in our experiences as expectations are high
- Events are more competitive so third party expertise being sourced to support the content delivery and commercial risk/selling
- Investment is key to generate return
- Marketing & Communications needs to be deeper than the what – think about the why
- Use external consultants where needed, consult stakeholders/staff
- Conduct research and keep looking at results so you learn and grow – don't always do what you've always done
- Don't be afraid to change your strategy



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Any Questions?