

SUCCESSFUL MUSEUM MANAGEMENT



Picture: Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum, Market Square, Lisburn

MODULE 11

**SUCCESSFUL MUSEUM MANAGEMENT THROUGH
INNOVATION AND COMMUNICATION**

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Module 11

TOURISM AND
MUSEUM
DEVELOPMENT



Title:	Successful Museum Management
Topic:	This module contains an example of successful museum management at the Irish Linen Centre and <u>Lisburn</u> Museum.
Educational Objective:	Expanding competencies within the scope of museum management
Key Words:	Sustainability – communication – ability to adapt – harnessing resources – research – inclusion – sense of enjoyment
Duration:	Approx. 30 min. study + 15 min. questions

SUCCESSFUL MUSEUM MANAGEMENT

SUCCESSFUL MUSEUM MANAGEMENT THROUGH INNOVATION AND COMMUNICATION

AREA OF GOOD PRACTICE: TOURISM AND MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

Established in 1979, Lisburn Museum is housed in the town's historic Market House, a mid-17th century sandstone building where weavers once brought their cloth to sell. Originally focusing on the rich history of the town and surrounding area – from its early history as a Plantation town, to the arrival of the Huguenots, the 1798 United Irishman Rebellion and through to its experience of the World Wars, amongst others – the museum expanded in 1994 with the development of the Irish Linen Centre, adjoining the museum. Ireland is famous worldwide for its fine linen, but it was in north east Ulster, particularly around Lisburn, that the industry was fostered. The Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum aims to preserve the history of this industry, from its origins as a cottage industry through to its industrial heyday in the late nineteenth century, and Lisburn's role in its encouragement.

Since opening in 1994, the Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum has developed and grown into a successful tourist attraction and educational facility, this has been achieved by:

1. Building an internationally-significant collection of artefacts, photographs, textiles and ephemera relating to the local area and the Irish linen industry.
2. Developing a successful education programme.
3. Nurturing capacity amongst staff. From the museum's curator – who has over 37 years of experience – to gallery assistants, many of whom have masters degrees, the museum's management encourage, and seek to further, staff skills in history, geography, museum display and interpretation.
4. Encouraging research. The museum employs a full time researcher to work on all aspects of the town's history, and that of the Irish linen industry more broadly. Alongside hosting conferences, the institution also facilitates local and international researchers who work on its collections, or consult its vast reference library.
5. Complying with museum standards. The museum is fully accredited.
6. Programming exhibitions, built on the museum's vast collection, but also responsive to the interests and appetites of the museum's users. Further, local interest exhibitions and displays sit alongside material of interest to an international audience. Visitors travel from far away

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- as Japan and the United States to visit the museum's award-winning 'Flax to Fabric' exhibition, or view nationally-significant material, for example the museum's recent acquisition of Theodore Maas' Battle of the Boyne (1754), in its temporary galleries.
7. Financed by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, the museum benefits from support from the local council who recognise the importance of preserving the town's history, and its role in fostering the Irish linen industry.
 8. Collaborating with community groups, schools, colleges, third-level institutions, government departments, artists, writers and filmmakers, the museum works closely with others to share the history of the town and the Irish linen industry through the development of education programmes, external exhibitions, books, TV and radio programmes and plays.
 9. Maintaining and retaining the skills of weaving damask linen on 19th century Jacquard hand looms.
 10. Using the museum website and Facebook to reach out to users who may not visit the museum.

The museum is managed, and guided, by its mission statement which aims to:

'...present, preserve and interpret through collection, research, exhibitions and educational programmes, the Irish Linen Industry and the history and heritage of Lisburn and district. The museum service promotes knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of its collections to its visitors and a wider audience through display, publications and other media'.

2 BACKGROUND

Lisburn Museum was established in 1979 under the control of Lisburn Borough Council. Aside from its collection relating to Lisburn and district, a sizeable portion of its growing collection focused on the Irish Linen Industry. As such, in 1994 the Irish Linen Centre was developed alongside the museum. This collaboration brought together Lisburn Borough Council, Lisburn Museum, Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and the European Regional Development Fund, who provided 75% funding of the project. The project cost approximately £3.5 million.

3 GOOD PRACTICE

As an accredited museum it is important that the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum strives to comply with the accreditation standards and adheres to the Museum Association's Museum Code of Ethics.

As a Council facility, continual evaluation of service delivery is important to ensure high customer satisfaction levels are maintained.



Picture: Guided Tour of Castle Gardens

Formal and informal evaluation methods are used to survey customers, such as:

- Independent surveys
- Visitor surveys
- Education and event evaluation
- Comments on social Media
- Formal complaints
- Comments in visitor books and comments on exhibitions

Whilst consultation with stakeholders is also important, the identification of non-visitors and the reasons why they don't visit the museum are also important in shaping the Museum's exhibition and events programme.

Whilst the main source of visitors continues to be people visiting family and friends, the museum's marketing strategy also targets:

- FIT's – Flexible Independent Travellers (in particular out of state visitors)
- Tour Operators (both local and Incoming Tour Operators)
- Schools, colleges, universities and non- schoolers
- Pre-school groups
- Local/ National institutions and organisations (Church groups, youth groups, Boys/Girls Brigade)
- Creative Industries
- Researchers with special interest in spinning, hand loom weaving, linen, textiles, and economic and social history
- The museum offers tailored workshops and tours for groups

The development of an annual exhibition and event programme encourages repeat visits. The exhibition programme reflects important times and events that may be of local, national or international significance. Current exhibitions include the museum's permanent "Flax to Fabric Exhibition", "Lisburn 1912-1915", "Market Square through Time" and "Answer the Call - recruitment posters from the Great War".



Picture: Weaving workshop

4 EFFECTIVENESS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

- Critically acclaimed exhibitions
- A Linen Collection of international significance
- Specialist Library Collection focusing on linen
- A very successful education programme
- Unique Damask Linen handloom weaving programme

5 RESULTS AND IMPACT

The museum's collection policy has led to the creation of an artefact collection that has international significance.

High Customer satisfaction levels indicated in visitor surveys, one recent independent survey identified the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum as the third main reason offered by visitors to Lisburn for visiting Lisburn.

A high proportion of visitors to museum events are repeat visitors.

6 ADDITIONAL LEARNING MATERIALS

6.1 Links to websites

<http://www.lisburnmuseum.com>

<http://www.nimc.co.uk>

<http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/Irish-Linen-Centre-and-Lisburn-Museum-Library-Lisburn-P2809>

6.2 Links to videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOm8nHGfsog>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9jLRr-TOxl>

7 QUESTIONS

This is the professional self-learning section to reflect on the topic, improve your skills and sharpen your creativity. Please use it as a starting point for the development of your own ideas and thoughts. Please select at least one of the questions below and note your answer in max. 1000 characters. You can also use the additional online material or consult other online sources to refine your arguments. Please send your answers to the following contact: info@eumillennials-tour.eu

1. The Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum has successfully undertaken several actions to improve as a tourist attraction. What do you think about these steps? Which one did you like the most? Why? What would you have done different?
2. In the Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum evaluation of visitor groups play an important role. What is your attitude towards visitor monitoring? What are the factors influencing the success of evaluations?
3. You are called to Lisburn as a consultant for the future strategy of the institution. In which department of the museum you see the biggest potential? What would your advisory plan involve in general?

Please send your answer(s) to the following contact: info@eumillennials-tour.eu

Please add the number of this module and the number of the question to your answer (e.g.: module 1, question 1.).

We will not give grades. Individual feedback will only be given by the online assessment contact.

8 ONLINE ASSESSMENT

For those that are interested in deepening their knowledge about the module, a personalized online assessment is offered. For all questions on the topic and further information about this module, please contact your expert for your online assessment:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Andrew Kennedy

Tourism Development Manager

Email: andrew.kennedy@lisburn.gov.uk

Phone: +44 28 9250 9483

9 GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Andrew Kennedy

Tourism Development Manager

Email: andrew.kennedy@lisburn.gov.uk

Phone: +44 28 9250 9483

<http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk>

Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum

Market Square

Lisburn

County Antrim

BT28 1AG

Northern Ireland

Phone: +44 28 9266 3377

10 RESPONSIBLE ACCORDING TO THE PRESS LAW

V. i. S. d. P.:

Andrew Kennedy

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Lagan Valley Island

Lisburn

County Antrim

BT27 4RL

Northern Ireland

Phone: +44 28 9250 9250