“Full credit must go to the UK tourism board and their programme to fully capitalise on being the Olympic host. Their GREAT Britain campaign and how it exploited the Olympic opportunity, will probably deliver the best results of all.”

Michael Payne
Former Marketing Director of the International Olympic Committee

By creating **match-funding** partnerships we have been able to launch **our most ambitious marketing programme: a four year initiative** to attract visitors to the UK over the period 2011–2015. In just two years our activity has **contributed over £1 billion** to the UK economy. This means that for every **£1 spent by VisitBritain overseas, £20 is spent by overseas visitors** in Britain.
VisitBritain Marketing Highlights 2011–2014

Our story

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games gave us an unparalleled chance to show the rest of the world the best that Britain has to offer visitors from overseas. We knew it could be an excellent catalyst for tourism marketing and development.

By creating match funding partnerships we have been able to launch our most ambitious marketing programme: a four-year initiative to attract visitors to the UK over the period 2011–2015.

Our £100 million public/private tactical marketing campaign and multi-million image campaign promote Britain in an eye-catching and dynamic way using seven themes: culture, heritage, sport, music, countryside, food and shopping.

Highlights have included our first global TV campaign in 10 years, a global movie tie-in on the back of the James Bond film SKYFALL and a rolling programme of special consumer offers to entice people to travel to Britain.

From as early as the Beijing Games in 2008, we worked to set up strong relationships with key international media and populated our online media centre with a comprehensive set of London 2012 Games-related features, information, pictures and broadcast material for media to use free of charge. Our work with international broadcasters secured coverage of Britain in the first six months of 2012 provisionally estimated to be worth more than £1.6 billion. Our online content for the same period was viewed by nearly a quarter of a billion people.

Having recognised early on that London 2012 would be the first Games truly embracing social media, we developed a strong digital strategy to build our networks and develop high levels of trust and engagement. By the time the Olympic Torch Relay began we took our social media engagement to new heights and connected with 60 million people.

When the Games finally arrived, seven years of planning led to a 27-day window when we escalated our activity to levels unprecedented in our history. Overseas, initial scepticism about preparedness and security quickly gave way to delight at the Opening Ceremony. Many millions of TV viewers round the world saw positive coverage of Britain and the welcome and experiences we have to offer visitors.

Britain’s image was significantly boosted, and remains so. The 2013 Anholt GfK global Nation Brands Index ranks Britain third for overall nation brand. Britain has moved up three places to 10th for welcome and up two places to 20th for natural beauty. Our competitiveness has also been bolstered – the 2013 World Economic Forum Tourism & Travel Competitiveness report placed Britain in the top five countries for the first time (up from 37th in 2011).

This is evident in our results. The first two years of our four-year marketing programme has contributed £1.1 billion to the UK economy. This means that for every £1 spent by VisitBritain overseas, £20 is spent by overseas visitors in Britain. Our GREAT image campaign so far has more than doubled the number of visitors considering a trip to Britain.

In response to the success of the GREAT campaign, in December 2013 the Government pledged another £90 million in funding, supporting the campaign until 2016. Earlier in the year we had already seen the importance of working in partnership and how to align to secure an economic legacy. Britain faces increasing competition, a tough economic climate and policy issues that erect barriers to travel. But, using London 2012 as a springboard, we have proposed an ambition for Britain to attract 40 million visitors annually by 2020. This would generate £8.7 billion additional foreign exchange earnings at today’s prices, and support more than 200,000 additional jobs.

The following pages show our marketing highlights from June 2011 to present.
Invitation to Britain

From June 2011 until the Games we ran a series of campaigns offering warm and personal invitations from celebrities, the industry and the public.

We launched our first global TV campaign in 10 years, developed a series of advertisements and produced short films featuring a range of celebrities from Dame Judi Dench to Jamie Oliver and Lennox Lewis that were shown on TV and digital channels around the world.

The invitation from the industry began in September 2011 with a series of stunts in 10 cities around the world using 3D artwork to mark the start of our 2011/12 offers to consumers in key markets.

Working with major commercial partners such as British Airways, DFDS Seaways, P&O Ferries, Radisson Edwardian Hotels, Hilton Worldwide, easyJet, American Express, Virgin, STA Travel and Yahoo! these special offers featured in tactical print and online media campaigns. In 2011/12 we secured more than £11 million of match-funding (cash and in-kind).

Using our ‘Sharing is GREAT Britain’ creative we asked the British public to invite their friends and relatives here in 2012. We ran a promotion with the Daily Mirror, overseas campaigns with Expedia and digital promotions on our Facebook page and on visitbritain.com.

We also developed a toolkit for our UK industry partners to use to invite previous visitors.

Pre-Games image campaign

Working closely with the Cabinet Office at No 10 and the other government agencies and departments that promote Britain abroad – such as the FCO, UKTI, DCMS and the British Council – in February 2012 we launched the first phase of our tourism awareness campaign in 14 cities in nine countries: Paris, Berlin, New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Melbourne, Sydney, Shanghai, Beijing, Tokyo, Mumbai and Delhi.

The campaign focused on the GREAT Britain themes of heritage, culture and countryside and used digital media, print, cinema, television and outdoor media (posters and screens).

New York commuters saw subway trains wrapped in the Union Flag, and Grand Central Station and subway routes filled with GREAT Britain images. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Metro station on the Champs Elysees was dressed as an art gallery with GREAT Britain images while Sao Paulo had their Metro newspapers wrapped with our invitation to visit Britain, and in Delhi 100 GREAT branded taxis drove around the streets.

We ran a series of launch events in partnership with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office around the world featuring celebrities and royalty such as Prince Harry and Victoria Beckham. Our global TV advert was shown to millions of cinema-goers in France, India, Brazil and Germany.
Welcome and 2012 venues

We worked closely with the Government, the then UK Border Agency, airports and the Airports Operators Association to ensure that GREAT Britain images welcomed visitors on their arrival to Britain in 2012. By Games-time seven airports displayed our GREAT Britain messages. Fifteen visa application centres across the world were GREAT Britain branded, helping to offer potential visitors a warm welcome at the point of application. Through our partnership with LOCOG and Government, we had access to free media sites at selected Olympic venues. Spectators could see GREAT Britain branding in prominent sites at both the ExCeL and the North Greenwich Arena venues. This activity helped to extend a message of welcome – the 2013 Anholt GfK Nations Brand Index study shows that there has been a rise in perception of Britain across a number of categories, and how welcoming potential visitors think Britain is has been significantly enhanced. Britain’s “welcome” jumped three rankings to be in the top ten for the first time.

Games-time

During the Games period, we organised 14 GREAT Britain themed media events, ran a Britain Information desk at the London Media Centre (for which we were a strategic partner), as well as a presence in the media village in the Olympic Park. 500 overseas media participated in media tours to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. During the Opening Ceremony alone we engaged with over 5 million social media users on Facebook and Weibo, many of whom had already followed the Olympic torch on our interactive map on visitbritain.com and via our Facebook app which allowed users to pass virtual flags around the world and compete for prizes.

In partnership with Top Olympic Partner, Samsung Electronics, we created the Best of Britain app for Samsung mobile and smart TV devices. It was downloaded 121,000 times by the end of the Games, with considerable media interest generated from the launch of the David Beckham top tips section.

We organised a World Travel Leaders’ Summit (WTLS) during the Games to showcase London and Britain as a fantastic destination for major events and unique tourism experiences, as well as to encourage additional travel to Britain in 2013 and beyond.
The day after the Games ended, we launched a £13.5 million marketing push with airlines, hotel companies and tour operators offering special deals.

Our offers and incentives centred around the seven GREAT Britain tourism themes: culture, heritage, countryside, sport, shopping, music and food.

Also, our TV commercial was re-edited with Games content under the theme Memories are GREAT Britain, and featured on visitbritain.tv and on travel and lifestyle sites.

Our inspirational GREAT campaign featured full-page adverts in National Geographic in France, the USA, Brazil, India, China and Australia, and we ran special, market-specific GREAT Britain Time Out advertorials in Mumbai, Delhi, Shanghai, Beijing, Sao Paolo, Sydney, Melbourne and New York.

We have been continuing to use key events and anniversaries, supported by PR, to reinforce the message that the time to visit is now.

Activities include our work with film studios on a James Bond themed campaign to mark 50 years of Bond movies and the release of the latest film, SKYFALL.

Under the tagline ‘Bond is GREAT Britain’, our campaign included cinema, press, digital and outdoor advertising. Our first ever film tourism ad was shown in cinemas in inbound markets, such as Australia, Brazil, Germany and the USA. We also launched an online SKYFALL experience, ‘Agent UK’, designed to engage with our digital and social media followers as well as a sweepstake competition in overseas markets.

Memories are GREAT Britain

Bond is GREAT Britain
We extended our partnership with British Airways to include an additional £7.5 million investment in China, Japan, India, UAE, Canada, Brazil, Russia and the USA. Under the slogan ‘The Big British Invite’, the campaign featured ‘real’ British people from famous sites and attractions inviting potential visitors to visit Britain and included print and digital advertising featuring special fares, as well as a dedicated website with promotional fares from British Airways. It was punctuated by promotional events in the USA, Moscow, Shanghai, Tokyo and Mumbai.

In August 2013 we extended our five year partnership with the Premier League for another three years through to 2016 and launched our ‘Football is GREAT’ campaign. Under the tag line, ‘Take Me There’, the campaign includes an inspirational season-long digital game offering football fans around the world the chance to win a trip to Britain, with complimentary match and attraction tickets and a behind-the-scenes stadium tour. Via regular digital and social media activity throughout the season we are highlighting the tourism offer in key football regions, such as Wales, the North West, North East, and London. Content includes player interviews with Rio Ferdinand, Ryan Giggs and David Luiz, and ‘Footballers’ Favourites’ itineraries, backed by well-known Barclays Premier League players such as Steven Gerrard, who give their recommendations for what to do in Britain.

A new dedicated Barclays Premier League content hub on our LoveWall provides information on results and fixtures, teams and club locations, as well as links to match break packages with Thomas Cook Sport, stadium tours sold on the VisitBritain Shop and club hospitality packages. ‘Take Me There’ is supported by targeted media buy across China, UAE, Norway, Sweden and Hong Kong where interest in football and the Premier League is greatest. We are also working with Super Sports and NBC, the official Barclays Premier League broadcasters in China and USA, to run TV advertising and dedicated programme coverage to highlight Britain as the home of football.
We have rolled out a number of in-market campaigns and promotions.

Our first-of-its-kind partnership with Bloomingdales helped showcase the best of England, Scotland and Wales with a GREAT British takeover of the flagship store in New York. The takeover paid homage to Britain, with shop windows showing inspirational British displays, Union Jack carpets, GREAT branded hearts to welcome shoppers at entrances and London Underground roundels (with designer names instead of stations).

Exclusive custom-made travel packages were available for Bloomingdales shoppers, inspired by iconic British landscapes and themes. Packages included Royalty & Rock, Town & County, Opulence & Escape, and History & Legend.

As part of one of the largest music festivals in the world we created a GREAT British Rock Street at Rock in Rio, Brazil and hosted a Beatles tribute band who replicated the last ever concert the Beatles performed. The concert was a highlight of the festival and took place on the rooftop of our building inspired by Saville Row.

One example of our activity in Europe was a five month competition with BMW MINI in Germany to win a seven night tour of England in a MINI. In the GCC we ran a competition to win a cycling trip to Britain to capture the growing interest in the sport, and to celebrate the Grand Départ starting in Yorkshire in 2014.

Celebrating new routes with airlines saw us run a series of campaigns with operators in India, China, UAE, Australia and the USA with Air India and Birmingham Airport; organise a panda flashmob in China with British Airways, and harness technology to invite visitors to experience British attractions virtually in shopping malls across Saudi Arabia with Qatar Airways.
In 2013, Carnival Films kindly provided a set of unique images from the Downton Abbey series to create exclusive marketing materials for the GREAT Britain Campaign. At the end of 2013, we partnered with US broadcaster PBS to launch a Heritage is GREAT campaign capitalising on the popular TV period drama, to promote Britain’s heritage, culture and countryside.

We sponsored exclusive screening events in New York and Los Angeles where we gave away branded tea bags, and ran Downton Abbey themed events in key US cities including San Francisco, Dallas, Houston, Chicago, Boston, Washington and Philadelphia.

Heritage is GREAT print ads featured in The New York Times Sunday Magazine and Sunday Los Angeles Times, and we are sponsoring the PBS Masterpiece Classics sweepstake competition, offering US and Canadian viewers the chance to win a trip to Britain and have afternoon tea with Lady Carnarvon at Highclere Castle.

Through our partnership with Yahoo! we secured an interview with Mrs Patmore (Lesley Nicol) Downton Abbey’s favourite cook, discussing her favourite things about Britain, as well as her take on 1920s fashion.

In 2013 the Downton Abbey competition had the potential to directly result in 105,904 tourist nights in Britain, contributing over £10.5 million in additional visitor spend.

In early 2014 we created a TV ad and digital experience around the ‘Sounds of GREAT Britain’ for use on TV and digital channels in key markets. It portrays the rich diversity that Britain has to offer, against a soundtrack to a modern, contemporary Britain.

‘Sounds of GREAT Britain’ features a plethora of locations, landmarks, people and experiences, from across England, Scotland and Wales, each accompanied by its own distinct sound. The soundtrack is by award winning UK band Rudimental.
To encourage more US travellers to visit Britain we developed a TV and digital advert with Expedia.com. The TV ad presents Britain in a new light to the US visitor focusing on the unique culture, heritage and countryside offered in Britain. Expedia’s vast product range gives the US consumer the opportunity to book ‘All of GREAT Britain, all in one place’.

Filmed on Westminster Bridge, in Loch Ness, Inverlochy Castle and on a train across the Cynghordy viaduct, the advert aims to motivate Americans to explore the UK. The advert was shown during the Oscars, shown during other high profile shows in the US and across a range of news and lifestyle digital media.

Our digital advertising campaigns run across Europe, the US and Canada and our campaign in key growth market Brazil involves print, digital and cinema advertising to drive booking.

In 2011–13 we raised £26 million in partner support from tourism industry partners and global brands and worked with key tourist boards and trade associations.

In September 2013 we launched a campaign “Flying in the face of ordinary to Britain” with London & Partners and Virgin Atlantic to entice more Australians to visit, with a special fare to London with a bonus trip to Manchester, Edinburgh or Aberdeen as well as online and print advertising.

To encourage more visits from key European markets, digital campaigns offered special fares with easyJet and P&O Ferries. In Germany we also ran digital and print activity with Hilton, as well as developing a TV advert and digital takeover in collaboration with Hostelworld.

Another joint hotel initiative involved Radisson Blu Edwardian with whom we launched online promotions in Australia, Canada, Germany and the USA. A different approach saw us devising sweepstake competitions and a travel agent campaign in the USA with Trafalgar.

The focus of our marketing work in Australia, China and South Africa was on digital, print and ‘out-of-home’ advertising with STA Travel whilst, in New Zealand, our advert was aired on TV.

Our ‘out-of-home’ advertising in the UAE, Australia, India and China, in partnership with Emirates, encourages visitors to explore the diverse regions of Britain by flying to gateway cities.

Loch Ness, location of filming.

Cynghordy, location of filming.
Our engagement via digital platforms and social media is a key part of our global marketing strategy.

VisitBritain’s engagement via digital platforms and social media is a key part of our global marketing strategy. The websites visitbritain.com, visitbritain.tv and the visitbritainsuperblog have performed well, and we have a strong presence on a wide range of digital platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Weixin and Chinese microblogging site Weibo.

In 2013 we agreed a strategic alliance with No. 10 to create the world’s leading social destination by merging many of our social media channels. Our Facebook page, ‘Love GREAT Britain’, already has nearly 2 million followers. We also continued our partnership with Yahoo! to ensure content about Britain is accessible on one of the world’s most visited homepages.

Our digital platform the ‘LoveWall’ went live in summer 2013 in multiple languages with localised home pages. It features inspiring VisitBritain.tv videos and Flickr images which users can move into their ‘suitcase’ to build itineraries and maps of their journeys. These can then be shared by email and across social media platforms.

Our campaign ‘The Summer of Music’ involved solely digital activity with a music documentary mini-series and a multi-market competition to “live like a rock star”.

Our digital presence
Power of PR

By the end of 2013 we released 250 story ideas, new releases, top 10s and features all uploaded onto the media centre. In the first two years of our marketing programme we generated 60,000 pieces of coverage with an advertising equivalent value of £6.9 billion.

In 2013 broadcast highlights included a 45 minute programme presented by Brazilian celebrity Glory Maria, created with Globo TV, the biggest broadcast company in South America and 4th in the world. Its estimated advertising equivalent was £8.5 million.

To capitalise on the media anticipation of the royal baby's arrival in 2013 we invited eight journalists from top publications from China to Canada to experience the best of child friendly London and princess pampering in Wales on a ‘Babymoon trip’. To celebrate the birth we invited more than 50 media and partners to a royal baby shower in New York as part of the official visit by the then Minister for Sport and Tourism, providing journalists with story ideas to encourage visitors to Britain.

During men’s fashion week, we worked with the British Fashion Council and London & Partners to position Britain as the ‘Home of Menswear’. Britain’s fashion design credentials helped us target international media from Brazil, France, Italy, Spain, Sweden, the USA & UAE, including top fashion titles such as Esquire and GQ.

For the Coronation Festival we worked with VisitEngland to take a group to visit Royal Warrant holders and a trip to ‘Royal’ Norfolk.

At the start of the one-year countdown to the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, we worked with VisitScotland and Glasgow City Marketing Bureau to showcase the city. We also recreated the thrill of the Ryder Cup with five journalists from Europe and the USA who competed at Gleneagles on the championship course, ahead of the 2014 competition, followed by a trip around the Highlands in a preview of the Homecoming 2014 tour.
Engagement with Travel Trade

Our work with the overseas travel trade continues to play a major strategic role in our marketing and in 2012/13 we ran 17 global missions, and reached 34,600 travel trade and business representatives to promote Britain to international travel buyers.

In 2013/14 we saw a 20% increase in UK suppliers at our International Business Exchange in London, a 50% increase in buyers at Destination Britain APMEA in Bangkok and a record level of UK suppliers at our fifth China sales mission.

Our enhanced sales tools include a new dedicated trade website, and BritAgent, our training programme is growing all the time with over 9,000 travel agents registered.

Highlights of our joint campaigns with tour operators in market include work with the biggest travel agent consortium in North America, Travel Leaders Franchise Group, and a year-long marketing campaign with Mercury Travels, India’s leading independent tour operator to position Britain as a premium honeymoon and luxury destination.

As part of our GREAT trade partnership with GZL in South China, we ran various marketing and PR activities throughout 2013 such as media and consumer events, TV and radio advertising and a wrapped bus which drove around Guangzhou for four months.
## What people say about us

"In 2006 India was my 17th biggest market from overseas and this year it’s my second. And all that growth is down to going on the VisitBritain workshops in India, to the Destination Britain APMEA events in the Far East and doing efficient follow up.”

Ashley Jones  
Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum

"Expedia offers a global platform for partners to use the platform that we have, to reach millions of travellers from around the world. VisitBritain is extremely professional in what they do, and sets standards across all tourism boards that we deal with."

Seamus MacCormaic  
Expedia

"Since we launched the campaign in Italy, bookings have gone up by 20%. To go up by 20% has been fantastic. And from learning from that one lesson, we have also decided we will partner with VisitBritain on our Spanish markets in the next year."

James Mossay  
Monarch

"VisitBritain really opens UK theatre to the world. It really does push us and the message of UK theatre out to the world."

John Bridge  
MADE

"There’s a real status to working with VisitBritain. It allowed us to be really innovative and work really closely with VisitBritain to make sure we not only hit our numbers, we blew them out of the water in a really fresh and interesting campaign."

Alec McCrindle  
Yahoo!

"GREAT Britain You’re Invited has been a huge success for British Airways. Following these events we saw a spike in number of visits to ba.com and an increase in bookings."

Tohmeen Ashraf  
British Airways

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### Highlights in numbers from April 2011–March 2013

**Overall impact of overseas work**

£1.1bn

£17.9 million in export earnings generated in the UK 2011-13

157% increase in unprompted recall of advertising compared with major competitors, USA, Australia, France and Italy (2012/13)

60,000 individual pieces of TV, radio, print and online coverage with advertising equivalent of £6.9 billion

£26 million of match-funding generated (cash and in-kind)