



Case Study

ModSquad Helps Tourism Ireland Reach More Travellers Around The World, Through Native Language Engagement

Tourism Ireland is responsible for marketing the island of Ireland overseas as a holiday destination. The organisation showcases Ireland's spectacular landscape, rich culture, and engaging people online – through its website, social media platforms, and forums – to build anticipation for a visit. With 21 markets, Tourism Ireland needed a partner to help manage a variety of communication channels and to speak authentically to consumers – through their own native language.

A FITTING, FLEXIBLE SOLUTION

In late 2016, Tourism Ireland was wrapping up a successful year that saw 10.3 million visitors to the island of Ireland. Its aim was to build on that growth and to expand its social and community reach even further. Brian Harte, Tourism Ireland's Head of Customer Engagement & E-Marketing, describes the importance of that continued growth: "Tourism is the island of Ireland's largest indigenous industry, employing around 325,000 people across the island."

"When we came to ModSquad," continues Harte, "we were looking for a digital native service that could match our ambition and deliver on our strategic opportunities. We prioritised community online to focus on one-to-many communication. That one-to-many communication, supported by ModSquad, allows us to serve consumers through long-life question-and-answer content; an example is our Ireland.com community forum. With ModSquad playing a community management role, we were able to expand our engagement with prospective visitors. ModSquad provides tactical, opportunistic services, based on its core competence in community management."

"Tourism is incredibly competitive. Our goal is to be the best destination marketer in the world. Just as our digital and community management work has to reflect that ambition, we need that reflected by our partners. What's great about the relationship with ModSquad is the energy and ambition they bring. It's really what makes the relationship work."

THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY

With its daily engagement process, ModSquad's dedicated team moves beyond routine social customer support. The Mods have broadened the scope of their engagement to create moments that bring people together. Jenny Young, ModSquad's Market Development Coordinator, recalls an example of this: "We help manage the Tourism Ireland community forum, where we focus on identifying situations where we can make authentic human connections," she says. "When a woman in our community told us it was her dream to visit Waterford, the county of her ancestors, our Mods connected her to a local from that town. He mailed a stone from the local beach to the woman. She posted a picture and told us, 'I never thought that I could come to Ireland, but here I am holding it in the palm of my hand.' That's something that took 30 seconds for our team to do, but making that connection created an inspirational moment for this person. That human element of our engagement is one of the key areas where we add value. Being able to connect with people in such an emotional and meaningful way is quite powerful. It's not something an AI or bots would be able to do."

A key to ModSquad's success is the belief that excellent quality starts with hiring the right staff for each engagement. The Mods are successful because they are already a part of the digital community targeted by clients. Mods are placed on projects for which they have a strong affinity; they're already a part of the communities they work in. Says Young, "Our Mods are travellers and Ireland enthusiasts who have explored the island extensively. Many of them want to make their life about travel and they're able to connect with customers and provide suggestions that turn a holiday into a dream vacation. We're able to make it easy for those customers through our engagement."

GREATER ENGAGEMENT, LOWER COSTS, MORE VISITORS

Visitor numbers continue to rise, with around 11.2 million visitors to the island of Ireland in 2018, generating €5.86 billion in revenue.

In terms of social media activity, Tourism Ireland currently ranks as the fourth most popular tourism board in the world on Facebook (with over 4.3 million fans), number four on Twitter (around 522,000 followers) and number four on YouTube (over 60 million views).

Jenny Young says, "We've helped Tourism Ireland deliver more social engagement with our dedicated focus on those platforms." ModSquad has driven engagement up while increasing cost-efficiency.

Joanne Murphy, Tourism Ireland Spain, describes how the Mods' localised activity helps her team. "They're efficient and social media savvy. They offer advice on how to approach situations, based on their social media experience. And, they're agile in adapting to suit our needs. Changes can be made quickly with the Mods; that's never an issue. It's been a positive experience working with ModSquad."

Each of Tourism Ireland's 21 markets is handled uniquely by regional Mods, who offer native-language work in multiple languages on social media. This localised effort pays off in providing market-specific support to Tourism Ireland's worldwide fans. Utilising local agents ensures a familiarity with the tourism customs of their particular market while maintaining a wide range of knowledge about visitor interests ranging from genealogy to golf.



Tourism Ireland
Marketing the island of Ireland

**FOURTH MOST POPULAR
TOURISM BOARD GLOBALLY**



4.3+ Million Fans



522,000 Followers



Over 60 Million Views



“Everything works. The staffing model, the interaction, all of it. ModSquad does a great job supporting Tourism Ireland to continue to grow visitor numbers to the island of Ireland.”

– **Brian Harte**

Head of Customer Engagement & E-Marketing
Tourism Ireland

THE RIGHT TOOLS TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Achieving these goals was facilitated by introducing the optimal tools to address the needs of Tourism Ireland and its programming. “We use third-party engagement tools,” says Young. “By bringing in the right solutions, we’ve helped to streamline the communications among the market offices. This helps us plan and develop social strategy around where we can drive the greatest influence with our engagement. We’ve helped to grow Tourism Ireland’s Twitter outreach to such an extent that 50% of all engagement on the platform is now comprised of positive interruptions — reaching out to users outside of our established channels and getting people thinking about the island of Ireland as a destination.”

Harte sums up Tourism Ireland’s experience with ModSquad. “Everything works. The staffing model, the interaction, all of it. ModSquad does a great job supporting Tourism Ireland to continue to grow visitor numbers to the island of Ireland.”

