

# National Coastal Tourism Academy

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UNLOCKING TOURISM POTENTIAL





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“The National Coastal Tourism Academy is a pioneering organisation set up to analyse the nature of coastal tourism and to develop new routes to successful job creation and industry growth.”

## ABOUT THE ACADEMY

**Established in Bournemouth in 2013** and using the resort as a test-bed during its first phase, the NCTA comprises a small team, funded until December 2015 by the Government's Department for Communities and Local Government, working in partnership with Bournemouth Borough Council and Bournemouth University but spear-headed by the tourism industry.

In the process of delivering change, the NCTA has gained great insight into coastal tourism nationally and developed a breadth of knowledge of national importance.

Now moving into its second phase, the NCTA is developing a national on-line **Resource Hub** to support businesses, share the latest research, best practice and lessons learned from the NCTA project and others. This will provide insight into the most economic routes to deliver change and innovation in coastal resorts, as well as providing a virtual network for collaborative working.

To bridge the gaps in coastal resort knowledge, the NCTA works in partnership with Bournemouth University and academia to deliver practical, business centred solutions.

The NCTA has also focussed on improving a visitor's experience to boost repeat and shoulder-season business as a means to lift the local economy and help create new jobs.

In addition to the Resource Hub, the Academy is concentrating on two additional national aspects:

- The evaluation of all NCTA programmes to guide best practice and business support
- Greater integration and sharing of research from Bournemouth University and other academic institutions

**In short, the NCTA is working to create a step-change in the economic fortunes of coastal resorts to safeguard their future, and facilitate smarter and more collaborative working.**



# Our work to date...



## VISITOR EXPERIENCE

At the heart of our Visitor Experience programme is the need to transform service standards within every visitor-facing business across a coastal resort. To this end, the NCTA has launched a series of initiatives focusing on product knowledge and customer care. Trialling different techniques to understand which ones can have the most significant impact.

To improve product knowledge for new staff, the NCTA offers a free online training module – Bournemouth Ambassador, providing information on the resort and surrounding area alongside customer service tips. To date more than **1,500** individuals have completed the course.

Similar modules are now in development for other coastal resorts.

To see more, visit:  
[bournemouthambassador.co.uk](http://bournemouthambassador.co.uk)

The wider resort knowledge suite has also included:

- A **Welcome to Bournemouth employee handbook**, an at-a-glance guide to the resort
- An **Attractions Passport** for front line staff providing free or cut-price entry to tourist attractions to encourage recommendations
- **Bitesize Bournemouth**, an hour-long induction to the resort and chance to network with fellow new employees. It provides a whistle-stop seminar outlining tourist products and news of events and recent openings
- **Familiarisation tours** of the resort
- **Events**, a new, simplified listing on the Bournemouth Tourism website

## CUSTOMER CARE

The NCTA has commissioned research into the entire **visitor journey**, from initial destination research to post visit sharing of memories and follow-up contact. Research findings are being assembled into an on-line tool-kit for accommodation providers, to encourage outstanding personal service from start to finish.

A new customer care framework has been developed to support those businesses without a wider network of support, and provide a benchmark for service in Bournemouth.

- A** Anticipate the customer's needs
- E** Go the **Extra** Mile
- I** Make an **Instant** Connection
- O** Take **Ownership**
- U** Treat every customer as **Unique**

To reward and encourage great customer service, more than **150** customer champions have been recruited across Bournemouth to spot outstanding examples of customer care in action. **These examples are then nominated for a staff award.**





# Business Development



## TRAINING

As a result of our initial business needs research, a series of **training programmes** have been developed covering customer service, marketing (particularly digital marketing) and management skills, to be delivered in either a group or one-to-one setting.

A bespoke **Welcome Bournemouth Host** course, when combined with the Bournemouth Ambassador programme, provides in-depth product knowledge and customer service skills and can now be delivered in a shorter half day course.

## BUSINESS SUPPORT

The NCTA has also undertaken more than **85** 1-2-1 consultations with businesses to understand their challenges and needs. As a result, the NCTA developed Action Team Projects offering support for individual business needs on areas that matter to many coastal businesses. On completion, the results of these projects will be compiled in an **online toolkit** and case studies for other businesses and resorts.

**Action Team Projects** have included:

- launch of a new restaurant and new jobs
- creation of a marketing strategy for a new sector - golf tourism
- introduction of a social media programme for a B&B
- development and evaluation of a new festival
- the setting up of a town centre retail forum
- ...and many more

## SKILLS

The NCTA understands that the industry is struggling to recruit staff with key skills, so we've worked closely with recruitment agencies and training organisations to bridge the divide with industry needs and to encourage apprenticeships, work placements and full-time employment.

One such project is helping to launch a **Chef School**, which offers unemployed jobseekers an intensive eight-week training course leading to a work placement.

The Academy is also helping to create a **Coastal Skills Bank** with the South West Regional Assessment Centre, a new database for employers to access trained hospitality staff at short notice, helping the business and providing the individual with the work experience they need to achieve permanent employment.

**“Making a step-change in tourism to UK coastal resorts and ensuring they have sound economic future underpins everything the National Coastal Tourism Academy does.”**



# Research

## Guiding industry performance

### INFORMED DECISIONS

To establish an accurate baseline for the project and refine our programme of activity, the NCTA commissioned visitor, community and business research to provide an **in-depth overview of the visitor economy** in Bournemouth. This research has been combined with national data and made available to businesses, along with recommended actions, to help them make better informed decisions.

### BENCHMARKING

In addition to our baseline research, the NCTA is working with industry to trial two bench-marking tools:

**T-stats** is an online database allowing businesses to monitor their performance against others.

**The Satisfaction Tracker** offers businesses an easy way to monitor their guest's satisfaction and benchmark their performance through an online survey.

### ACTION RESEARCH, DELIVERING GROWTH

The NCTA's major research programme is focussed entirely on finding solutions to challenges faced by coastal businesses and destinations to deliver change. These are large-scale projects working in consultation with Bournemouth University and the industry:

#### Shoulder Season Action Plan

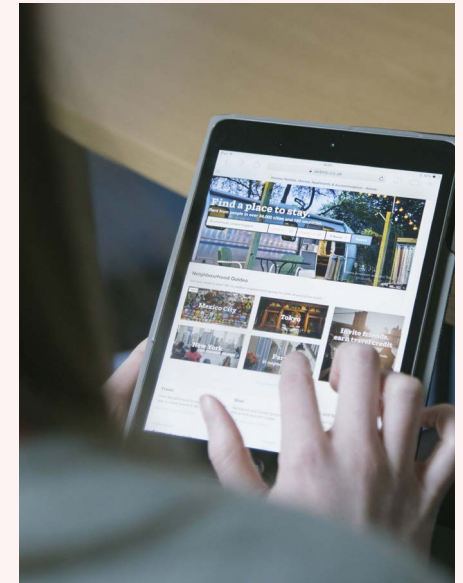
Sizzling summers underpin the fortunes of many coastal resorts, but how can new business be enticed in shoulder and off-peak months? This new research has identified who takes breaks at this time of year, what they do and how they could be persuaded to choose, in this case, Bournemouth. Working with key stakeholders, targeted shoulder season marketing campaigns have been developed and will go live in Spring 2015. Alongside this, the research is guiding product development at business level to deliver change.

#### Plotting a new visitor journey for coastal tourism

Relatively little is known about the visitor's journey at destination level, from the initial decision making, through the in-resort experience to post visit. This research will identify the journey by visitor type. By plotting the moments that matter, and working collaboratively, the NCTA seeks to improve the visitor's journey to provide a more holistic and improved destination experience.

#### Business Events Action Plan

The lucrative conference and incentives market has become increasingly competitive nationwide, but is recognised as a major driver in the tourism economy. The NCTA's research on the current market needs, future trends and buyer perception was developed into an action plan for Bournemouth in collaboration with all key stakeholders. The action plan has been approved, and aspects have been funded and are now being implemented.



#### Destination Feelgood

The follow-on project to our new research on the size and opportunities of the **Health and Wellness** market. This project, working with Bournemouth University and part funded by ESRC, is working with local businesses to share the latest research, build a network of interested businesses, and identify ways they can adapt their businesses to tap into this profitable sector.

#### Tourism Innovation Programme

Twenty rising stars nominated from the local tourism industry have been brought together to create a think-tank to inject new energy and creativity into the future direction of Bournemouth's tourism industry. The programme is a personal development journey for the cohort, but will also introduce innovation into local businesses and the destination.





# Coastal Activity Park

The NCTA is evaluating the effect of a new coastal attraction in Bournemouth. The Coastal Activity Park offers a range of facilities and year round events. Visit [coastalactivitypark.co.uk](https://coastalactivitypark.co.uk)

Success will be measured by increased participation, economic impact, visitor satisfaction and stakeholder perceptions. The learning will be shared on the NCTA Resource Hub.

## Resource Hub

### Sharing what we know and best practice

A key part of the NCTA's work is to share the knowledge and lessons of the work undertaken in phase 1 - the Resource Hub on our website will share the results, tools and knowledge from the NCTA project along with resources designed to help businesses and destinations achieve growth. Specifically the resource hub will contain:

- **Visitor Experience strategy** – a recommended approach to improving the visitor experience guided by our research and trials in Bournemouth.
- **Market intelligence and sector guides** – all of our research summarised for businesses with key findings and recommendations for action that will achieve growth
- **Toolkits**, case studies and best practice on the issues that matter to the tourism industry in coastal destinations

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### A NATIONAL PICTURE OF COASTAL TOURISM

The NCTA is undertaking extensive research to understand the nature, challenges and priorities of coastal tourism. A comprehensive review of existing data, supported by discussions with destinations, consumer research and a business survey will be used to raise the profile of coastal tourism and shape the next phase of the NCTA's work.

“Everything the National Coastal Tourism Academy does is driven by the tourism industry and underpinned by research to boost the economy and create jobs.”

## Contact us

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## THE NCTA IN NUMBERS...

More than **1,500** Bournemouth Ambassadors

**185** Bournemouth businesses engaged in activity with NCTA

**50** Individual projects delivered by the NCTA

Over

**160**

Customer Care Champions

More than

**4,500**

unique visitors to the NCTA website

**1**

Award

'NCTA delivering excellence in the visitor economy'

...IN THE FIRST 18 MONTHS

