

The Swansea Bay Futures Network

Local businesses working together to promote Swansea Bay

Thank you to all those who made it along to the meeting on 13th July about how we can capitalise on the Swans promotion. Interesting!

If we can spread positive messages about what it's like to live, work, visit and study in Swansea Bay, we can help to build a prosperous and exciting future for the city and the region. But all too often, our own lack of self-confidence and aspiration lets us down when it comes to promoting the area, and without coordinated action we risk missing great opportunities to attract visitors, investment, employers and talent to Swansea Bay.

The momentous promotion of Swansea City Football Club to the Premier League is one such opportunity. Suddenly the world is looking at Swansea and speaking the name of our football team. SkyTV and ESPN have been in Swansea this week collecting footage for their upcoming sports broadcasts, and journalists are interested in the 'rags to riches' story of the Football Club. It is not naive or unrealistic to think that we could convert some of this attention into tangible benefits for the area.

But there are challenges. Part of the problem is that different groups are working in isolation, rather than acting together. We also lack consensus on a clear 'brand' for the region, and as a result, we consistently fail to communicate what we're all about in a succinct and compelling way.

The Swansea Bay Futures Network is trying to bring together all those who are interested in making the most of the Swans' promotion, to improve communication and encourage better collaboration between the public and private sectors. But most importantly, we're keen to ensure that businesses have the opportunity to put their own ideas into action.

Business people tend to be proactive types, with little patience for the bureaucracy that hampers the public sector. So it's up to all of us to take the initiative and do what we can to promote Swansea's best bits while we have a bit of media attention.



WE'RE ONLY TALKING ABOUT A FEW THOUSAND VISITING FANS. HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE CAN THAT REALLY MAKE?

While it's true that promotion to the Premier League will not be the answer to all our problems, it is a valuable opportunity to reach a lot of people and leave them with a positive impression of Swansea Bay.

All kinds of people are football fans, and among the crowds in the stands (and watching at home) there will be business people, wealthy investors, influential decision-makers, academics, talented employees, not to mention families, potential holidaymakers, and prospective students.

A small increase in the sense of familiarity these people have with Swansea Bay could potentially give us the edge when they're making decisions about where to locate their new headquarters, where to hold their next conference, where to film their new TV series, where to go on holiday, where to look for work, where to study, and where to invest. The longer term impact of these tiny individual decisions could be significant. It's not something we can ever measure, but nor is it a false hope or a naive aspiration.

HOW CAN WE ENSURE VISITORS HAVE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE THAT WILL MAKE THEM WANT TO RETURN?

Giving visitors a warm welcome is something all of us can contribute towards. A friendly taxi driver able to offer advice about where to go and what to do, a cheerful greeting at shops, bars, hotels and restaurants, and a helpful response when they ask a passer-by for directions - each interaction is an opportunity to make a good impression.

Whatever type of business you run, it's surely worth a brief conversation in the office - ask your colleagues to look for opportunities to be friendly and welcoming to visitors. OK, we don't want them to win the football, but in every other way, we want their visit to be a success. Pass this message on - it may be obvious but it's worth making sure we're all on the same page.

Even simple touches like welcome posters in shop windows, bunting in the city centre, and promotional signage on billboards and buses will play their part, helping to demonstrate our pride and appreciation when we welcome visitors to our region.



Dawn Lyle runs the SBF Network, as a board member of Swansea Bay Futures. This is a voluntary undertaking and I try to fit in my responsibilities to the network around running my business. I certainly don't have all the answers to how we, as business people, can make a difference in Swansea Bay, but I'm keen to get people together to see if we can figure it out. The views in this document have come from a range of sources, but I'm happy to take responsibility for anything that's not politically correct, and I'm really grateful for the support of Network members. Thanks! p.s. I'm off on holiday! See you at the next SBF Network meeting on Wed 3rd Aug, 4:30pm, Suite 6, J-Shed SA1

www.sbfnetwork.co.uk

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Swansea Bay Futures has worked hard over recent years to articulate the benefits that this region offers, and all the key messages are encapsulated in the brand that has been developed as a result.

Swansea Bay Futures promotes the region on the basis of the fantastic quality of life that this place offers, thanks to the perfect co-location of city, coast and countryside.

SBF has developed a website which is updated daily, along with printed materials, imagery, key messages, fast facts, and their popular monthly newsletter - a feel-good digest of all the best news from around the region. Taken together, we have at our disposal a comprehensive toolkit which will enable us to share a more positive picture of Swansea Bay with all sectors of our audience - visitors, employers, investors and talent.

Swansea Bay Futures is highly collaborative in its approach. All organisations who see the benefit in presenting a 'united front' when it comes to promoting the city and the region are encouraged to make use of, or reference to, the promotional resources that have been developed.

Check out the website and make sure you've subscribed to the monthly Bay of Life Watch newsletter. If you're interested in working more closely with SBF, consider becoming an associate member or contact the team to find out more:

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How can we capitalise on the Swans' Promotion? Practical Ideas from Network Members

It's great to see the discussions on LinkedIn following last week's meetings, and some practical ideas we can implement:

How about a Flickr group called Swansea Soccer City 11-12?

It'd encourage the uploading of images for all related to the game ... from fan photos taken on mobiles at the Liberty to kickabout shots on the beach and in the back yard, from the Ashleigh Road groundsmen to Ashley Williams supporting Street Soccer Cymru.

It'd be simple, fun, inclusive, would draw user-generated content and would attract media interest.

I'm game ... are you?

[Andy Pearson, Effective Comms]
effective-communication.co.uk

"It is true that your average soccer fan will not be interested in staying over but then Swansea is not average. Did anyone think of Swansea Stopover? It could be promoted on the Swans (and Osprey's websites) and introduce all the things you can do in Swansea:

Beach/watersports (swimming - sea and pool - wind surfing, boarding, wind-carting), adventure activity (climbing, archery, pony trekking, paragliding, cycling); culture (Mdme Patti, Dylan Thomas, Richard Burton- just a bit east); eating; walking (the promenade, gower coast, the beacons)

If this can link easily to accommodation then maybe local businesses can begin to reap benefit of the 2-3000 traveling supporters that will be coming to the City every other week for 9 months! And whats more with the aim of repeat business and referrals who knows what the multiple will be.

The easy thing to do is to say no-one else does it, the productive thing is to demonstrate how different and great Swansea really is."

[Bob Gibbon]

Design an Advert for Swansea Bay

We're looking for local businesses and individuals to put their creative talents to work for the benefit of Swansea Bay. Design an advert for the region, or any aspect of it, and you might see your messages appearing on billboards, buses, local and national press, assorted websites - even on TV or the Big Screen in Swansea city centre. This is one way of capitalising on the fact that the media and thousands of football fans will be looking at Swansea when the football season starts, and it's your opportunity to communicate directly with that audience.

What aspects of the city do you think we should be promoting, what positive messages do you want people to see, and how do you think we can entice more people to live, work, invest, visit and study in this region? We all have a different perspective on the place, and there are many different audiences to target, so we want to put together a gallery of adverts reflecting ideas and messages from a wide range of people.

If you're not a graphic designer, feel free to mock something up in Word or Powerpoint. If we like the concept we'll get it worked up into a professional advert design. It's more about the messages, the photos and the 'angle' that you want to pitch.

Submit your advert designs to us by email, and we'll share them all online. We've got the support of local media, the Council's tourism team, and businesses throughout the region - and we'll all be working to share the messages you give us. You will be credited on the finished artwork if you wish (or you can submit adverts anonymously). We would also welcome video and multimedia submissions.

There are no rules - please help us!

Submit your piece by email to:

ideas@sbfnetwork.co.uk

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WHAT'S BEING DONE OR CONSIDERED BY OTHERS?

Swansea BID is in talks with Swansea City FC and city centre retailers (including Debenhams, M&S and independent traders) about programme advertising, advertising hoardings inside the stadium and loyalty cards for home fans. They will be putting up bunting in the city centre. BID's strategy is being considered next week and will be shared with the network once approved.

A working group made up of City & County of Swansea, Swansea City FC, the Stadium Management Company and the Welsh Government met this week to discuss their strategy. They are working on (i) A clear message which can be consistently used for promoting the city, but this "has not been agreed as yet"; (ii) Transport plans; (iii) Media engagement.

The Liberty Stadium website is currently undergoing a revamp. In particular the travel plan is being revisited and will be a major focus of the new website. Discussion is currently happening at a high level about including wider Swansea information. It is likely that SCFC will direct web traffic to the Liberty site for general information. Consideration is being given to putting a directory of information about local hotels and restaurants onto the Liberty site as a resource for visiting and home fans. All tickets will now carry the Liberty Stadium web address on the reverse.

The tourism team at City and County of Swansea were making a bid for additional resources for marketing activities. The plan is to focus on marketing Swansea as a destination, in London, the midlands and the north west of England, linked to the clustering of fixtures for clubs based in these areas. A draft strategy is in place.

Discussions have taken place with First Group about showing promotional footage on buses taking supporters from the Park & Ride to the stadium.



SWW Media have made connections with local media in locations where other Premiership clubs are based, due to contacts from those areas wanting information on Swansea and the Swans. These contacts could be useful going forward. SWW Media are keen to support the private sector is getting key messages out via their publications.

Swansea Bay Futures have set up a page on their website for visiting supporters <http://www.abayoflife.com/en/premier-league-supporters/>. This will be made available to any network member who would like to make use of it and suggestions for improvements are welcome (ruth@swanseabayfutures.co.uk)

SBF already have four area promotional panels in the away supporters concourse at Liberty, featuring Three Cliffs view, Worms Head & surfer, Afan Forest Park family bikers and Kite Surfing on Swansea Bay.

Let us know what your organisation is doing so we can share it with the group - communication between all parties is key!

Calling all online socialites

If you spend time on LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter, if you write a blog or run a website, or if you spend time on footie forums - your city needs you! Put in a good word for Swansea online, and you'll be playing a vital part in our online marketing campaign. If you need access to news and imagery, a good place to look for content is www.abayoflife.com - and make sure you subscribe to Bay of Life Watch, the monthly email newsletter packed full of all the good news stories from across the region. Connect with us and help to spread the word - it's guerilla marketing and everyone can make a difference!

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