

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS
CUSTOMER SERVICE & MARKETING MATERIALS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of these materials was made possible with funding from the VLSP section of the LSDA www.ldsa.org.uk

The following article explains the development of the project and participants

78 DERNGATE, NORTHAMPTON - A VLSP DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

I was made aware of the VCE case studies and development projects through a circular letter sent to Kingsthorpe Community College by the LSDA. As Director of the Vocational Faculty at Kingsthorpe Community College, Northampton it was passed on to me. I had already been planning to use a new heritage attraction, opening November 2003 in Northampton, as case study materials for AVCEs in Leisure & Recreation and Travel & Tourism and GNVQ Leisure & Tourism. To get funding for this work was an added incentive, so an expression of interest in a LSDA development project was submitted. To be successful in achieving funding – from a first time bidder – was a tremendous boost.

The heritage attraction is 78 Derngate, a tiny terraced house in the centre of Northampton which was the last architectural work undertaken by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and the only house he designed outside Scotland. Heritage Lottery Funding, a hard working Board of Trustees and a strong Friends of 78 Derngate Society were all involved in restoring the house to its 1916 art deco grandeur. The Trustees ensured 78 Derngate had an educational aim, lifelong learning as well as a specific area aimed at art and design from KS1 upwards. This would include a section on the 78 Derngate web site and teachers' packs. Nothing had been planned for students studying business, leisure or travel, so my aim was to provide educational materials based on customer service and marketing which would cover these vocational areas, and would be general enough to survive the changes from AVCEs to the new GCEs in these subject areas.

The customer service materials written aim to show that regardless of the size of the organisation, or the sector in which it is in, the provision of excellent customer service, and the maintenance of quality standards is essential for its success. 78 Derngate is currently exceeding all visitor number targets – 4000 visitors over two months, not bad for an attraction with a maximum capacity of 100 a day, over six days in a week. Much of this must be attributed to the highly successful press coverage (but it has made my task of writing materials on marketing virtually impossible) in all quality national press (main papers and supplements), its own TV series made about the restoration – The House that Mackintosh Built for Discovery Home & Leisure, a starring role on Richard & Judy and as a success story on the BBC's Restoration series. Materials were written and extensively trialled by my 6th. Form students who had the added advantage of being able to visit 78 Derngate, some even revisited as mystery customers to check the quality of service provided by the volunteer

guides. The original plan was to put some of these student assignments on 78 Derngate's website, but I became fearful of plagiarism so dismissed this idea.



STAFF FROM OAKLANDS COLLEGE, ST. ALBANS
PRODUCING THE VIRTUAL TOUR IN THE
KITCHEN OF 78 DERNGATE

The development project funding allowed a lot more to be carried out. One of the developments for the website which the House Curator wanted was a virtual tour. One of the Friends of 78 Derngate overheard these discussions, and offered the services of his ICT team from Oaklands College, St. Albans. He would be delighted to do the commentary for the tour, and colleagues would digitally photograph panoramas of the rooms in the house. The LSDA funding would allow for this development, with monies being paid to 78 Derngate to reimburse expenses to the Oaklands College team. I was delighted to find such a willing and capable volunteer, as preparing a virtual tour was beyond my technological skills.

A conference has also been arranged for the academic year beginning September 2004. All 6th. Form students studying AVCEs in Leisure & Recreation and Travel and Tourism within the county would be invited – to a maximum of 100 participating students. I was fortunate to palm the organisation of this off to a partially retired colleague – Pat Sketchley, who was in school part time delivering Vocational GCSE Leisure & Tourism. The conference would be free (a huge plus, so participating centres would only need to pay for transport to Northampton), and would have speakers from the LSDA (Gillian Frankland); the voluntary sector (Sylvia Pinches, 78 Derngate House Curator); the public sector (James Seymour, Marketing Manager Northampton Borough Council) and the private sector (Tony Clark MP, director of Northampton Town Football Club). Northampton Guildhall, a stone's throw from 78 Derngate was sourced as the venue and three groups of students will rotate around the speakers for a morning in October in order to gain an insight into customer service and marketing of these organisations. The fees for the speakers and the hire of the venue are all being funded from the development project grant.

The funding from LSDA will be used by a wide range of educational institutions directly (through the virtual tour and the conference) and indirectly by anyone having access to the educational materials on the website. 78 Derngate has benefited by having extensive educational materials and a virtual tour developed for them, and the publicity and potential visitors this may create. I personally have benefited by having a creative challenge and being able to prepare quality materials for my own students to use. I would recommend that centres take up the challenge of applying for such development funding – very hard work but rewarding.

Hilary Blackman
Vocational Faculty Director
Kingsthorpe Community College
Northampton
May 2004

The following individuals and organisations are thanked for their contribution
78 Derngate www.78derngate.org.uk
Sylvia Pinches – House Curator
Rob Kendall – Chair, Friends of 78 Derngate
Les Patterson – Secretary to the Trustees 78 Derngate
James Seymour – Marketing Manager 78 Derngate
Kingsthorpe Community College
Pat Sketchley for organising the conference
Gillian Frankland Lead Consultant LSDA, for support throughout
Tony Clarke MP for agreeing to speak at the conference
David Moore for proof reading
Oaklands College, St. Albans – Richard Everett, Dave Pullin, Tom Robinson
and Carol Howard

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Development & Management of Visitor Attractions – John Swarbrook
Published by Butterworth Heinemann

Leisure & Tourism – Tony Outheart & Lindsey Taylor
Published by Collins

Marketing for Tourism by J.C. Holloway & R.V. Plant
Published by Pitman

Travel and Tourism – Ray Youell
Published by Longman

GNVQ Leisure & Tourism – John Ward
Published by Stanley Thornes

Leisure & Recreation – Tony Outheart, Lindsey Taylor, Ray Baker & Neil
Proctor

Published by Collins

Travel & Tourism - Tony Outheart, Lindsey Taylor, Ray Baker & Alan Marvell
Published by Collins

Customer Service in Leisure & Tourism – Adrian Lyons
Published by Hodder & Stoughton