



Digital Marketing Awards 2012

fDi RECOGNISES THE BEST DIGITAL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS FROM AGENCIES AROUND THE WORLD. **COURTNEY FINGAR** REPORTS

The business world went digital long ago, but investment promotion agencies (IPAs) in many cases have been slower to fully utilise online platforms to market the locations they represent. But digital marketing is essential to being competitive in the FDI arena, and IPAs are now racing to develop their online presence and embrace social media. At a time of reduced government budgets and pressure to lower expenditure, the clever IPAs are looking to maximise online advantages. But what makes for a successful digital marketing strategy? What innovative approaches by IPAs are bringing results? Which cities, regions and countries are out front in the online marketplace? Which locations are doing the best job at digital marketing?

fDi set out to find out which

locations are the leading performers in this field. A process of information-gathering that first began this summer has culminated in the announcement of the results of **fDi**'s first-ever awards for digital marketing excellence, with IDA Ireland capturing first prize. New York City Economic Development Corporation, Invest Victoria, Scottish Enterprise and CINDE (the Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency) rounded out the overall top five.

Innovation

IDA Ireland was also cited as the best country-level IPA for digital marketing, as well as the most innovative (of any type of IPA), and its website was rated number one globally. Another Irish organisation, ConnectIreland, a government-led incentivised jobs referral programme that was ▶

TOP OVERALL DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

RANK	AGENCY	LOCATION TYPE
1	IDA Ireland	Country
2	New York City Economic Development Corporation	City
3	Invest Victoria	Region
4	Scottish Enterprise	Country
5	CINDE (Costa Rica)	Country
6=	Columbus Region	City
6=	Greater Halifax Partnership	City
8=	Calgary Economic Development	City
8=	Invest Hong Kong	City
10=	Nova Scotia Business	Region
10=	World Business Chicago	City

TOP WEBSITES

RANK	AGENCY AND WEBSITE	LOCATION TYPE
1	IDA Ireland www.idaireland.com	Country
2	Columbus Region www.columbusregion.com	City
3	Scottish Enterprise www.sdi.co.uk/invest	Country
4	Calgary Economic Development www.calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com	City
5=	Invest Hong Kong www.investhk.gov.hk	City
5=	New York City Economic Development Corporation www.nycedc.com	City
7	ConnectIreland www.connectireland.com	Country
8	Nova Scotia Business www.novascotiabusiness.com	Region
9	Invest Victoria www.investvictoria.com	Region
10	World Business Chicago www.worldbusinesschicago.com	City
11	Liverpool Vision www.liverpoolvision.com	City
12=	Ohio Aerospace Hub www.ohioaerospacehub.com	EZ
12=	Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone www.rakftz.com	EZ
14=	CINDE (Costa Rica) www.cinde.org	Country
14=	Vasterbotten Investment Agency www.viavasterbotten.se	Region
16	Richardson Economic Development Partnership www.telecomcorridor.com/international	City
17	Greater Halifax Partnership www.greaterhalifax.com	City
18	Proexport Colombia www.proexport.com.co	Country
19=	Berlin Partner www.businesslocationcenter.de	City
19=	London Economic Development Corporation www.ledc.com	City

BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

RANK	AGENCY	LOCATION TYPE
1	New York City Economic Development Corporation	City
2	Proexport Colombia	Country
3	Greater Halifax Partnership	City
4	London Economic Development Corporation	City
5	Liverpool Vision	City
6	City of Hamilton	City
7=	IDA Ireland	Country
7=	Invest Victoria	Region
9	Calgary Economic Development	City
10	WestHolland Foreign Investment Agency	Region



IDA Ireland's top website for digital marketing

appointed by IDA in an effort to attract investment through the use of the global diaspora, placed among the top 10 websites and came third for most innovative.

New York City's economic development agency also performed well, not only coming second overall but also coming top for its use of social media, placing fourth for most innovative and ranking first among cities.

Australia's Invest Victoria was rated the best region as well as third overall, while its website placed in the top 10.

Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone Authority triumphed in the category for special economic zones, with Daegu Gyeongbuk Free Economic Zone Authority coming second, Ohio Aerospace Hub third, Lodz Special Economic Zone fourth and Klaipeda Free Economic Zone fifth. Ohio Aerospace Hub and RAK FTZ both had websites rated in the top 20.

Invest Hong Kong was another strong performer, coming third among cities, joint eighth overall, joint fifth for best website and joint 10th for most innovative.

Canadian triumphs

Canadian organisations were well represented at both the city and provincial level in the awards. The Greater Halifax Partnership came sixth overall followed by Calgary Economic Development at joint eighth and Nova Scotia Business at joint 10th. The London Economic Development Corporation, from Ontario, ranked fourth for its use of social media and its fellow Ontarian city Hamilton was sixth in the same category.

And, proving that size is no barrier to a successful showing in the online arena, Richardson,

TOP CITY DIGITAL MARKETING

RANK	AGENCY	COUNTRY
1	New York City Economic Development Corporation	US
2	Calgary Economic Development	Canada
3=	Invest Hong Kong	China
3=	World Business Chicago	US
3=	Greater Halifax Partnership	Canada
6	London Economic Development Corporation	Canada
7	Columbus Region	US
8	Liverpool Vision	UK
9	Berlin Partner	Germany
10	Invest in Bogota	Colombia

TOP REGIONAL DIGITAL MARKETING

RANK	AGENCY	COUNTRY
1	Invest Victoria	Australia
2	Nova Scotia Business	Canada
3	Vojvodina Investment Promotion	Serbia
4	Vasterbotten Investment Agency	Sweden
5	WestHolland Foreign Investment Agency	Netherlands

TOP COUNTRY DIGITAL MARKETING

RANK	AGENCY	COUNTRY
1	IDA Ireland	Ireland
2	CINDE	Costa Rica
3	Scottish Enterprise	UK
4	Proexport Colombia	Colombia
5	Agence Marocaine de Développement des Investissements Morocco	

TOP ECONOMIC ZONE DIGITAL MARKETING

RANK	AGENCY	COUNTRY
1	Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone	UAE
2	Daegu Gyeongbuk Free Economic Zone	South Korea
3	Ohio Aerospace Hub	US
4	Lodz Special Economic Zone	Poland
5	Klaipeda Free Economic Zone	Lithuania

Texas, with a population of roughly 100,000, appeared among the top 20 websites.

Some of the independent judges who helped score the competition weighed in on what they discovered during the assessment process.

“In our analysis of the digital marketing strategies, we have observed that the most successful IPAs are very active in the key criteria for successful digital marketing: visitor tracking, innovation, effective use of social media, and a modern and professional website

[which is marketed] through search engine optimisation and with clear information and ease of contact.

Those that are most active in these criteria have scored highly, notably IDA Ireland which we ranked top of the Overall Best Digital Marketing award,” economic development consultancy IBT Partners stated in a summary of its findings from the judging exercise.

“We have observed that the quality and originality of the IPAs’ marketing strategies determine whether they are able to transform

website visitors into potential leads for investment. We have also noted that there exists great disparity between the participating IPAs, indicating how recent the realisation of the immense importance of the online world has been and the varying extents to which individual IPAs have been able to react to this realisation.”

Engaging online

However, IBT Partners predicts this disparity will lessen as more and more agencies realise the effectiveness and importance of a successful digital marketing strategy.

Anatalio Ubalde, CEO of GIS Planning, a provider of online economic development solutions, felt that cities put in the best efforts with their websites. “The websites for cities were a distinct cut above those for any of the other entrant categories, mostly in terms of design aesthetics, but also often in terms of the content presented,” he said. He singled out Invest Hong Kong’s website for particular attention, saying it was his top choice for its “top-notch” design, “informative and stylish” videos, varied information and logical layout.

He was also impressed by Invest in Bogota’s “simple and effective website design”. He said: “It was very clear about what it wanted to communicate. There were other websites that may have had more content, but that did a poor job of prioritising what the location wanted to present first and foremost about itself.”

He considered ConnectIreland to be the most innovative because of the intriguing idea behind its incentive-based ambassador programme. “The video explaining how this programme works was particularly well done,” he added.

He also offered some advice to organisations in need of a digital marketing upgrade. “Many websites used slideshows on their homepages to effectively communicate key points as to why a location is a good place to invest. This is a best practice that some of the lower ranking locations should really consider,” he said. “Several of the websites that had an English version had linkable pages that were not in English, which was very frustrating. Several also had links that [didn’t work], which reflects very poorly on a location’s professionalism.” ▶

MOST INNOVATIVE DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

RANK	AGENCY	LOCATION TYPE
1	IDA Ireland	Country
2	Nova Scotia Business	Region
3	ConnectIreland	Country
4	New York City Economic Development Corporation	City
5=	Proexport Colombia	Country
5=	Ventspils City Council	City
7	World Business Chicago	City
8	Invest Victoria	Region
9	CINDE (Costa Rica)	Country
10=	Greater Halifax Partnership	City
10=	Invest Hong Kong	City



Ireland's investment promotion agency has topped fDi's Digital Marketing Awards

Methodology

fDi Magazine invited representatives of investment promotion agencies, economic development organisations and others charged with attracting FDI to complete a 15 question survey on their digital marketing strategy and initiatives. We received over 50 entries from all regions of the world; and from organisations representing locations at all levels (city, region, country and special economic zone). A panel of internal and external judges independently reviewed and ranked the entries across eight categories.

Each judge submitted lists of their chosen top 10 overall digital marketing strategies (including investment promotion agencies of all geographies and location type); top websites; top social media strategies; most innovative strategies; as well as their preferences for best among cities, regions, countries and economic zones.

The fDi Benchmark research team devised a scoring system based on a scale of 0 (lowest ranking location) to 100 (highest ranking location) and applied this to the judges' ranking of the respondents to give the final results.

The ranking was based purely on the survey the entrants submitted. The judges then came to their own findings by assessing that information, and by visiting any relevant organisation websites and social media profiles provided. ■

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