



Step it up – Marketing the Wales Coast Path: Writing a promotional newsletter

Time needed for activity You could work on this over several sessions

Location Indoors or outdoors

Context

This activity plan will allow your learners to become marketing experts, working to write a newsletter to promote the Wales Coast Path. You could work on this over several sessions; first discussing what marketing is and what a newsletter is, before moving on to plan and write a promotional newsletter.

Natural Resources Wales’ purpose is to pursue sustainable management of natural resources in all of its work. This means looking after air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil to improve Wales’ well-being, and provide a better future for everyone.

Background - What is the Wales Coast Path?

The Wales Coast Path is an 870-mile-long continuous coastal footpath which stretches along the entire length of the Welsh coastline. The path uses existing rights of way as well permissive rights of way and is marked on Ordnance Survey map products. The path winds its way through towns and villages, across cliff tops and sandy beaches, sometimes darting inland before emerging once again at a sheltered cove. The whole path is accessible to walkers, with some sections suitable for cyclists, families with pushchairs, people with restricted mobility, and horse riders.

Natural Resources Wales works in close partnership with 16 local coastal authorities and 2 national parks on the coordination, Welsh Government grant distribution, monitoring, development and marketing of the Path. It is waymarked with the distinctive yellow and blue ‘dragon-shell’ logo and is managed on the ground by the 16 local authorities and Snowdonia and Pembrokeshire National Park Authorities.

Curriculum for Wales

Languages, Literacy and Communication

- **What matters** - Understanding languages is key to understanding the world around us.
- **What matters** - Expressing ourselves through languages is key to communication.
- **What matters** - Literature fires imagination and inspires creativity.

Expressive arts

- **What matters** - Exploring the expressive arts is essential to developing artistic skills and knowledge and it enables learners to become curious and creative individuals.
- **What matters** - Creating combines skills and knowledge, drawing on the senses, inspiration and imagination.

Science and Technology

- **What matters** - Computation is the foundation for our digital world.



Digital Competency Framework

Completing this activity provides opportunities to meet the following strands of the Digital Competency Framework.

Citizenship

- Digital rights, licensing and ownership.

Interacting and collaborating

- Communication.
- Collaboration.

Producing

- Sourcing, searching and planning digital content.
- Creating digital content.
- Evaluating and improving digital content.

Objectives

Learners will be able to:

- set SMART communication objectives.
- identify and write key messages.
- identify target audiences.
- plan and write a promotional newsletter to communicate their key messages and increase awareness, interest and knowledge about the Wales Coast Path.
- evaluate how effective their promotional newsletter was.

Resources and equipment

- Resource cards – Step it up – Marketing the Wales Coast Path
- PowerPoint Presentation – Step it up – Marketing the Wales Coast Path: Writing a promotional newsletter
- Access to computers, laptops or tablets
- Access to the internet
- Access to packages such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs
- Access to a mood board

What to do

1. What is marketing?

Working in small groups, ask your learners to discuss and write down:

- What do they understand by the term ‘marketing’?
- What does marketing do?
- Why do people use marketing?
- Who uses marketing? Can your learners think of any companies or organisations that market their products?
- When do things get marketed?
- What are the pros and cons of marketing for an organisation?

Marketing is about making sure the right people know about what you have to offer, getting them to come to you and getting them to buy or buy into what you have to offer.

2. The brief

Explain to your learners that they are marketing experts. Their 'client', Natural Resources Wales (NRW), would like their help to plan and write a promotional newsletter for the Wales Coast Path. Their newsletter will be emailed to people from across Wales that have previously contacted NRW to encourage them to visit and discover the Wales Coast Path. Working in small groups, ask your learners if there is a certain section of the path they would like to promote? Or will they promote the Wales Coast Path generally, sharing articles on a number of different locations and topics? If they are unsure, they can learn more about the different sections of the Wales Coast Path [here](#).

What are the pros and cons of a promotional newsletter? Ask your learners to discuss.

3. Background information

What do your learners know about the client?

Understanding their client's business is critical to ensuring the success of their marketing campaign. Ask your learners what they know about Natural Resources Wales? What does the organisation do? How many staff does the organisation employ? What are its roles and responsibilities? **What** is its role in the Wales Coast path? Allow your learners time to carry out some online research and/or show them the 'What we do' video on this [website](#) which explains what Natural Resources Wales does in 2.27 minutes!

What do your learners know about the Wales Coast Path?

Ask your learners what they know about the Wales Coast Path? Have they ever visited or walked a section? Can they complete some online research to learn more or ask family and friends who may have visited? Our **Activity plan - Nature champions** can be adapted and used to help get your learners completing online research into the history and significance of a section of the Wales Coast Path.

Who's the target audience?

A target audience is the specific group of people your learners want to reach with their marketing materials. They are the people who are most likely to be interested in your learners' content. Our **Resource cards - Step it up - Marketing the Wales Coast Path** offer fictional audience groups for your learners to pitch their content to. You could allocate each group an audience to write their promotional newsletter for, let them choose one themselves, or ask them to come up with their own imaginary audience.

4. Opportunities if visiting the Wales Coast Path

If you are visiting the Path with your learners **before** they begin drafting their promotional newsletter there may be opportunities to carry out some market research and on-site investigations.

- **Ask your learners what are their first impressions?** Positive? Negative? What particularly formulated their opinion? Can they play on positive first impressions to help market the stretch of Wales Coast Path?
- **Ask your learners to create a word cloud** – A **word cloud** is a simple visualisation of data, in which words are shown in varying sizes depending on how often they appear in your data. Capturing and visualising sentiments in word clouds can be useful to remind your learners what the unique selling points of the particular section of Wales Coast Path are. Free, **collaborative tools** allow learners to have live word clouds that members of the public or other groups of learners can input into if appropriate.
- **Can your learners prepare a questionnaire?** – This can be a paper copy that your learners take out with them to site and ask path users to complete or they can create a virtual questionnaire using tools such as Microsoft Forms or Google Forms. This is a great opportunity to gain valuable insight from path users which can help inform their promotional newsletter. Learners could gather information on why users visit. How often they visit. What activities do they undertake whilst on site? What benefits, if any, do they feel they get from spending time on the Wales Coast Path? How far have they travelled to get to the path?



- **Can your learners monitor the number of Wales Coast Path users?** Can your learners create a simple data collection sheet to record the number of users visiting the given stretch of path? What age demographic do they fall into? What time of day do they visit? Are they visiting alone, with friends or with family?
- **Give your learners opportunities to take photos** – Shots of the landscape, posed pictures with other learners or photos of path users enjoying the views, can feature in their final promotional newsletter. Remind your learners to seek permission from path users and fellow learners before getting snappy with it.

5. Planning and sharing ideas for their promotional newsletter

Unique selling points

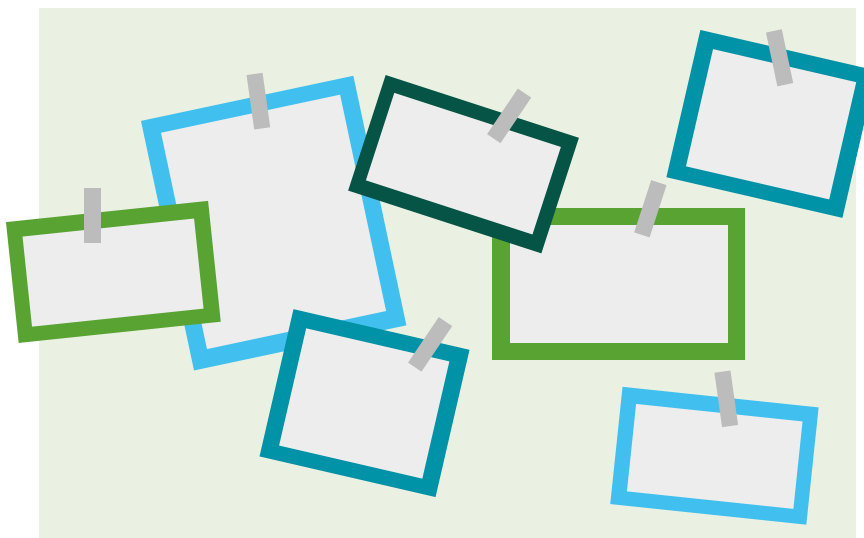
People who work in the marketing industry talk about the Unique Selling Point (USP) – the thing which makes their offer different and/or better than others. Having completed some initial research and maybe having visited the Path, it's time for your learners to discuss and decide what are the unique selling points of the Wales Coast Path that they want to promote? Ask them to note their ideas. Once they've decided what the unique selling points relevant to their target audience are, they need to think of reasons, or 'hooks', to communicate them.

Sharing their initial ideas with the client

Do your learners need to get feedback and approval from the client before pressing ahead with their ideas? For the purposes of this exercise, the 'client' may be the educator or another group of learners. Briefing their client and outlining their ideas as early as possible will ensure your learners are heading in the right direction and will save them time and energy.

Your learners could pitch their ideas to the 'client' in the form of a:

- **Group presentation** – using Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Slides.
- **Two-minute group talk** – explaining their main ideas and thoughts on the direction the promotional newsletter should take using persuasive language.
- **Mood board** – A mood board is a digital or physical, pictorial collage of ideas that are commonly used in fields like graphic and interior design or fashion. More than just a random collection of images, creating a mood board offers learners the opportunity to visually organise their ideas before moving on to work them up further. The learners in the group could create a collaborative group mood board or each create an individual mood board with the 'client' choosing the mood board that best summarises their vision for the promotional newsletter.





SMART objectives

Once your learners have had feedback from the 'client' and have had the direction for their promotional newsletter confirmed, it's time to set some SMART objectives. Setting objectives will ensure your learners have a vision of what they want to achieve, and they will also provide a benchmark for them to evaluate their promotional newsletter against once complete.

For example:

S - Specific - We want to create promotional newsletter to raise awareness of the Wales Coast Path and keep them up to date with events and work being done along the path.

M - Measurable - We want to increase the number of visitors to the Wales Coast Path by 5%.

A - Achievable - There's no point trying to increase the number of visitors to the Wales Coast Path by 2 million people if your learners only have three weeks to achieve this. Although it's a great aim, it would be very hard to achieve and would have consequences for the local area.

R - Relevant - The whole purpose of their marketing project is to increase awareness and use of the Wales Coast Path. If their plan diverges and ends up raising awareness of a new hairdresser's that has opened in the area, then it's not relevant and your learners need to go back to the drawing board.

T - Time bound - Is what they plan to write about in their newsletter feasible in the time they have available? Encourage your learners to set deadlines to complete tasks by. This will help them prioritise their tasks and reduce the risk of them becoming overwhelmed.

Risks/Challenges

Planning and creating a promotional newsletter may not appear to involve much risk, but closer examination shows thinking about risk is integral to communication. Ask your learners to consider:

1. What could go wrong when they send out their promotional newsletter?
2. What is the likelihood and impact of something going wrong?
3. What can they do to minimise the risk?

6. Writing their Wales Coast Path promotional newsletter

A simple, emailed newsletter is an easy way to keep in touch with loyal or prospective Wales Coast Path visitors, and need not cost a lot. Ask your learners to design a simple template using programs such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs or they can use free, on-line tools such as **Canva** or adapt an existing on-line template.

Show your learners a range of promotional newsletters and ask them to scrutinise them. What are the pros and cons of each newsletter? What lessons learnt can they carry over to their own newsletter?

When writing their newsletter learners should make sure:

It doesn't have a specific date

Unlike a newspaper, it won't be shared daily and displaying a specific date will date the newsletter. 'Spring, RELEVANT YEAR' will be fine.

Their newsletter is interesting and relevant

Ask your learners to imagine that they are they reader...they know nothing about the Wales Coast Path. They should ask themselves "Would I be interested in reading this?". If yes - great! If no, perhaps they need to look at redrafting some sections.



Include information about things that readers want to know about

Ask your learners what sort of information could they include?

- Information about wildlife sightings and how certain species are faring along the path?
- Details about new services or facilities for example, a stretch of path which has received some remedial work or new water refill station.
- Make it personal - people like reading about people. Are there any new members of staff or is there a new volunteer working on site?
- Details on forthcoming events.
- Information on 'What to see in spring at xxxx' to tempt them to come back and visit.
- Useful information such as bus times and routes.
- Educating their subscribers about conservation work along the path - what's being done and why?
- Can subscribers help by sharing sightings of a certain species of wildlife or complete a citizen science survey the next time they visit?
- A special offer. These are a good way of attracting visitors to the Wales Coast Path. For example, a free cuppa in the on-site café for readers if they take and share a selfie of themselves visiting a certain location along the path.

Be short and snappy

Today, people tend to have a shorter attention span. Learners should keep the text concise and to the point. Is there a webpage that your learners can link to if readers want to learn more about a given topic?

Tone of voice

Just like spoken word, your learners' writing tone of voice matter. Advise your learners to keep it simple. Use straightforward language with no jargon, slang or acronyms. Remind them that they are speaking directly to their chosen audience through their newsletter. They should take their time and search for appropriate words for their audience and use positive language. Learners should adopt an active voice as opposed to a passive voice. For example, the dog chased the cat not the cat was chased by the dog. Writing in the second person will help build a personal relationship with the reader. For example, learners should use 'you' or 'we' as opposed to 'Natural Resources Wales wishes you' or 'I hope'.

Choosing the right images

When choosing images for their promotional newsletter ask your learners to consider:

- **Do their images help the user understand the point they are trying to make?** If they are marketing their section of Wales Coast Path as a great place to see wildlife, then having a photo of a bird or mammal is pertinent.
- **Does the image speak to their target audience?** For example, if they are appealing to families, a picture of a family out walking will be best.
- **Does this image create emotional appeal?** For example, does it encourage the customer to visit the site and walk along the beach for themselves?
- **What message does this image send?** Is there a message being sent at all? For example, if they are looking to advertise somewhere as being a quiet location, perfect for a spot of yoga they might want to include a photo which doesn't have people picnicking in the background.
- **High-res images are a must** - Competition is fierce, subscribers will expect to see high quality images. Pixelated images won't do! Learners should make sure resources are copyright free or they have permission to use them.



Photos, graphics and videos are freely available on websites such as:

- **Pixabay**
- **Pexels**
- **Unsplash**
- There may be photos on our **Natural Resources Wales website** your learners can use (providing they aren't copyrighted).
- **Visit Wales** offer high quality, downloadable and copyright free photographic images and films to help promote Wales. Images can be searched by place, attraction or by key themes.

Keep it clean and simple

Less is more. A busy newsletter can look cluttered and might not get read. A clean design is timeless and won't hurt their readers' eyes! It's ok to have some blank space – the simpler the design the easier it is for the reader to digest the information.

Their newsletter is branded and includes relevant logos

Who's been involved? It's important to ensure the newsletter is 'on brand' and acknowledges partners. Do any logos need to be included?

That their newsletter isn't going to distress their reader's retinas

Bright colours will hurt their readers' eyes and put them off reading their newsletter. Their newsletter needs to look professional and shouldn't be a shower of colour. Suggest your learners stick to 3 to 5 colours in their colour palette. They should ideally choose a main colour, a secondary colour, and an accent colour. When deciding colours, a website such as the free to use, **Adobe Colour Wheel** may be of interest to your learners. By moving the wheel learners can see what shades compliment their chosen colour. The menu on the left allows learners to choose the type of relationship they want between colours. Once they have found a colour palette they like, they simply need to make a note of the 'R, G, B' readings (red, green and blue) and adjust the colour readings of the shapes and graphics on their newsletter to get the colours they like.

Make it easy for users to get in touch

How do users get in touch if they want to find out more? Learners should ensure contact details are in a prominent position. Remind your learners that this is a learning exercise, they shouldn't provide real contact information.

Include a call to action

After reading the newsletter, what do your learners want the reader to do? On behalf of the client, it's up to your learners to let the audience know exactly what they want them to do. 'Book today!', 'Click here to find out more' or 'Visit soon!'

Ask your learners to consider:

Publication – If they were creating a real-life newsletter, how often would they publish it? Weekly? Monthly? Bi-monthly? Quarterly? Newsletters should be sent regularly but not too often. What's the right balance to keep their readers informed without their emails becoming a pain and being moved to the deleted items folder? If they publish their newsletters too frequently, they might run out of things to share!

General Data Protection rules (GDPR) – If they were sending out newsletters in real-life to email addresses, your learners would be collecting personal data in the form of email addresses. They would need to ensure they adhere to the General Data Protection rules. This would mean asking those on their distribution list for consent. Further information on GDPR can be found **here**.

What do your learners think of GDPR? How could they make sure that they comply? Could your learners create a data capture form to seek subscribers' consent?



7. Identifying success

How will your learners know if their promotional newsletter has made an impact and if they've met the 'client's' brief? In order to monitor the success of their marketing materials, it is essential that some measures of success are identified and monitored. Did they achieve their objective? If yes, great. If no – why not?

- If the group wrote their newsletter to encourage walkers to walk a particular stretch of the Wales Coast Path then monitoring the number of walkers visiting would be a way of measuring success.
- Monitoring the number of hits on a webpage following the sharing of their promotional newsletter would be a measurement of success.
- If your learners did a 'before' questionnaire to gain users thoughts on a particular stretch of path, they could prepare an 'after' questionnaire? Has their promotional leaflet changed users' perceptions of the Wales Coast Path?
- Monitoring the number of subscribers to their newsletter would be one way of identifying success. The more people that subscribe, the greater the reach their newsletter is achieving and the more successful their campaign has been.

Lessons learnt

Once they have written and published their newsletter, ask your learners to work together to note any lessons learnt. Noting these lessons means that if they were to run another marketing project in the future, they will have captured their project's successes and weaknesses and can take steps to ensure things go more smoothly next time.

Suggested key questions

- What are your promotional leaflet's unique selling points and goals?
- Who is your target audience?
- What kind of content will your Wales Coast Path promotional newsletter include?
- How will you know if your Wales Coast Path promotional newsletter has had an impact?

Adapting for different needs/abilities

More support

- Break down each stage and check understanding before moving on.
- Provide your learners with a template to draft their newsletter.

More challenge

- Learners work through the designing of their promotional newsletter independently.
- Can they draft a newsletter for each of the four seasons focussing on different topics?

Follow up activity/extension

- Run a social media campaign to interact with potential visitors, post information and encourage people to visit the Wales Coast Path. Our **Activity plan – Campaigning for nature** can be used as a guide.
- Perhaps your learners are regular visitors to the Wales Coast Path? Would they like to be influencers? They could try their hand at vlogging for the Wales Coast Path and share seasonal changes using our **Activity plan – Create an enviro-vlog**.
- Can your learners promote what the Wales Coast Path has to offer in the form of a promotional leaflet? Our **Activity plan – Step it up – Marketing the Wales Coast Path: Designing a promotional leaflet** explains how to do this step by step.



- How about writing text for a promotional website with our **Activity plan – Step it up – Marketing the Wales Coast Path: Writing text for a website**.
- What are your learners' graphic design skills like? Can they plan, design and create a promotional poster using our **Activity plan – Step it up – Marketing the Wales Coast Path: Designing a promotional poster**.

Other resources

From information about the background and history of the trail, to information on things to see and do, the **Wales Coast Path website** has a wealth of information available to help your learners.

Looking for more learning resources, information and data?

Please contact: education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk or go to <https://naturalresources.wales/learning>

Alternative format; large print or another language, please contact: enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk 0300 065 3000

