

# Communicating with Customers

## case study: Mazzard Farm

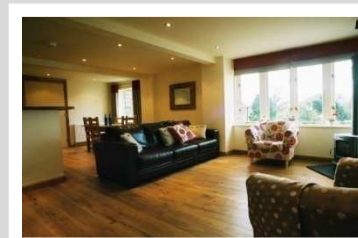


15 June, 2010

Escot Park, Escot, East Devon

# Communicating with Customers case study - *content*

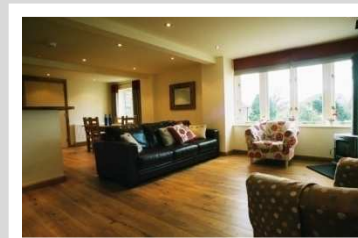
- **Mazzard Farm** holiday cottages – who we are
- What is green about communication?
- Key communication moments
- What do we do differently?
- What does green mean to our guests?
- Challenges
- Future



# Mazzard Farm holiday cottages – *who we are*

- Brand new self-catering cottage complex (6 cottages), converted from two large redundant farm buildings
- We opened in July 2008 – *note: we had never done anything like this before!*
- The cottages sleep between 2 and 10
- All cottages are luxury, VisitBritain 4\*/4\* Gold cottages, with a very contemporary look and feel
- Our key target market is young families
- Set in 17 acres of gardens, orchard, play areas, woods and fields
- Situated on East Hill, just south of Ottery St. Mary, near the Jurassic Coast in Devon
- Gold GTBS and Silver Award in 2009/'10 SWT Awards (Sustainable Tourism)

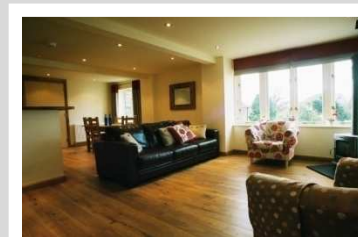
**Key Fundamental Principle behind our business: to be as green as we can be, yet without in any way shape or form compromising on luxury and convenience**



# What is green about communication?

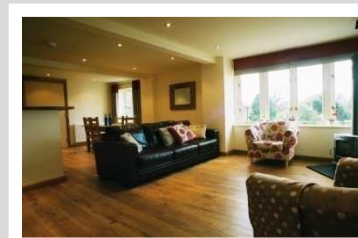
Communication can play a key role in sustainable tourism:

- Informing guests (and potential guests) of the environmental steps you have taken, and what they can do to help
- Encouraging guests to enjoy the immediate area in which they are staying, and to buy local
- Helping to remove obstacles to sustainable ways of travelling
- Removing the myth that '**Green = Basic and Alternative**'
- Hoping guests learn something they can apply back at home



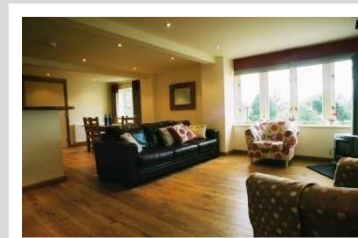
# Key communication moments

- Your website (as that is the first place many ever 'meet' you)
- At any opportunity you converse with guests and potential guests, whether by phone, e-mail or through print
- A week or so ahead of their stay (when guest is planning the trip)
- During their stay
- After they have gone back home
- And for as long as they allow you to send them your newsletter



# What do we do differently? (I)

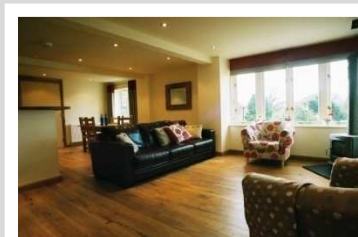
- We try and 'think green' whenever communicating with guests, no matter what the topic
- We have a dedicated section on our website providing a large number of reasons why travelling to Mazzard Farm by public transport is a real alternative (and just one reason 'why not')
- Upon booking, we provide all guests with a 'Rough Guide' to East Devon. Result: vast majority of guests end up exploring immediate area around the farm, rather than making long journeys (which has more advantages than just 'green' ones)



## What do we do differently? (II)

- On site, we display a variety of subtle posters and references encouraging sustainable behaviour (reduce/reuse/recycle, use of drying rack vs. dryer, drink tap water, encouraging wildlife, etc.)
- We are in the process of creating a number of posters highlighting the impact of our biomass boiler, reduced car use and recycling in terms of energy and CO2 savings

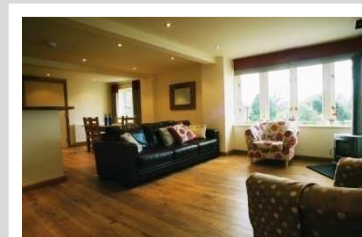
***Key to all of the above is that we will always use a positive message, don't 'ban' anything, and will not force anything on people. We believe in the carrot, not the stick***



# What does green mean to our guests? (I)

We have just completed a small survey where we asked people who stayed with us their views on Green Tourism

- 100% indicated we had been successful in our green attempts
- Yet, 66% said it was a 'nice to have', not a deal maker/breaker
- Encouragingly, 30% indicated that as a result of their stay at Mazzard Farm, they had somewhat positively altered their 'green behaviour'
- When asked what they would typically associate with Green Tourism, sadly, negative terms such as 'alternative', 'basic' and 'expensive' featured ahead of more positive associations such as 'inspirational', 'comfortable' or 'fresh'. Not one person associates Green with 'luxury'



## What does green mean to our guests? (II)

Yet, in written feedback, many highlight their positive experiences at Mazzard Farm, i.e.:

*“... Perhaps even more inspiring are the eco features they have introduced; nappie recycling, eco paints, wood stoves and wood chip burner providing all the hot water ...”*

*“...The cottage was spacious and comfortable. The grounds were stunning. Eco credentials spot-on...”*

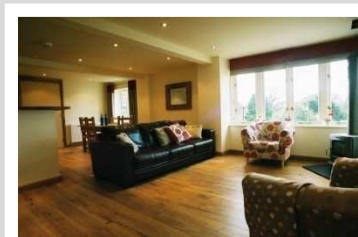
*“We loved Mazzard Farm's green credentials, but particularly the fact that Ruud and Jac were so personally passionate about the environment (in a gentle 'isn't this good?' kinda way, rather than a bash-you-over-the-head-and-hope-you-join-the-green-campaign kinda way!)”*



# Challenges

Needless to say, we do still face a number of challenges:

- Getting more people to take up the 'car free' offer
- Ensuring all people on site know that we recycle, and what they can (need to?) do to help us a little
- Convincing some people that there really is no need to light up their cottage as if they are competing with the Blackpool seafront
- Finding a new local groceries delivery service
- Finding a 'green' marketing portal that brings us significant web traffic

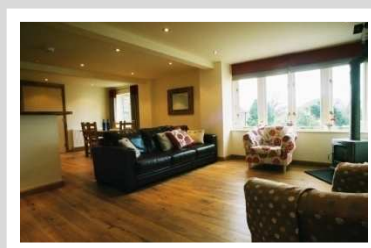


# Future

- Is to continue trying to stay fully up to date with developments
- To try and find more ways of being even more sustainable
- To keep listening to our guests
- To keep using communication as a way to help our guests as well as the environment

But most of all:

- To help spread the word, and highlight that ***it really isn't that difficult to be green***



# Mazzard Farm – contact details

For more information, please contact:

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