

SINNIO

FRAMEWORK PAPER

The Place Marketing Evaluation Framework

Sinnio's interpretation of Government Communication Service and Local Government Association principles: how places can evidence the difference their marketing makes, not just the activity they deliver.

Sinnio

Independent Strategic Marketing & Communications Consultancy

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The principle

Effective place marketing is not a communications exercise. It is a continuous cycle of insight, planning, behaviour change and evaluation. Both the Government Communication Service and the Local Government Association emphasise the same foundations: understand audiences before acting, set objectives that describe change rather than activity, and evaluate outcomes as well as outputs.

Outputs demonstrate delivery. Outcomes demonstrate impact. Evidence-led place marketing seeks to understand both.

Outputs and outcomes

EVIDENCE TYPE	EXAMPLES
Outputs what was delivered	Campaigns run, events held, publications issued, social media growth, coverage secured, partnerships formed.
Outcomes what difference it made	Footfall, repeat visits, customer spend, trader sales, dwell time, visitor satisfaction, recommendation, perception change, return on investment.

Five measurement domains

DOMAIN	TYPICAL MEASURES
1. Awareness & reach	Prompted and unprompted awareness, campaign recognition, reach and frequency by audience segment.
2. Attitude & perception	Perceptions of the place against defined attributes, consideration to visit, net promoter or recommendation measures.
3. Behaviour	Footfall by day-part, first and repeat visits, dwell time, movement patterns, participation in events and offers.
4. Commercial	Trader and operator sales, occupancy, spend per visit, conversion of visits to transactions.
5. Place outcomes	Vitality indicators, tenant mix, investment attracted, resident and stakeholder confidence.

Making the evidence credible

- **Baseline first.** Capture each measure before activity begins; change cannot be demonstrated without a starting point.
- **Objectives before activity.** Define the behavioural and commercial change each campaign exists to create, in numbers where possible.
- **Proportionate attribution.** Perfect attribution is rarely possible in a place; triangulate timing, geography and audience data, and be honest about confidence levels.
- **Listen to the floor.** Traders, operators and frontline staff observe customer behaviour daily; structured listening is evaluation evidence, not anecdote.
- **Report both sides.** Present outputs and outcomes together, so decision-makers see delivery and difference in one view.

The evaluation cycle

BASELINE	Where are we starting from?
OBJECTIVES	What change are we pursuing?
ACTIVITY	Outputs, delivered to plan
MEASUREMENT	Across the five domains
ANALYSIS	What changed, and why?
LEARNING	Fed into the next cycle

A reporting structure that works

A single page, produced on a consistent cycle, is more influential than an occasional long report. A workable structure: headline outcomes against target; the five domains with direction of travel; what was delivered; what was learned; and the decisions the evidence now supports. Aligned with GCS evaluation principles, this turns marketing reporting from a defence of activity into a tool for decision-making.

Places that adopt this discipline stop asking "what shall we promote next?" and start asking "what do we want people to do next, and what does the evidence say will move them?"

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