



Regional and Local Food and Drink Brand Case Studies and
Research for Cambrian Mountains Initiative



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Scope of the Research

Dyfodol Cambrian Futures (DCF) is seeking to develop a sustainable model for the Cambrian Mountains brand, that will include sustainability of the initiative into the future.

CamNesa committed to providing a minimum of two case studies as an output. Due to the early stage of development of the group to take the initiative forward, CamNesa has researched four initiatives.

Research Structure

CamNesa sought to interview key figures in the Welsh and English food sector with experience of delivering regional and local initiatives in relation to food branding and marketing through the brand.

Those interviewed included professional brand and marketing consultants working on key Welsh programmes such as Cywain and Agora, as well more regional initiatives such as Pembrokeshire Produce Marque, New Forest Marque and the development of Cotswold Fayre.

Interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis and with the guidance of a directed discussion document that focused on four core areas:

- Background of the Brand / Initiative
- Structure of the Initiative
- Governance
- Growth

The findings of the interviews and desk research can be found in the following sections of the report. As CamNesa operates to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, the responses from those interviewed have been anonymised.

New Forest Marque



Background

The initiative was set up 15 years ago and supported through European funds in the early stages of development.

The marque was based on a 'forest friendly' farming identity and closely aligned to common land use within the New Forest. At the present time, provenance is the key indicator of the Marque. In the early stages of the scheme, there was no membership fee in place, but this changed as EU funding reduced and the initiative had to become self-sustaining.

A membership structure is in place based on an annual fee based on business turnover.

Structure

The Marque currently has 155 members across categories.

The scheme currently operates on a criteria based system according to sub sectors of the food and drink trade, for example farmers as primary producers, bakers using New Forest ingredients and retailers. The categories for the Marque can be found [here](#).

Each category has criteria for member applications that need to be fulfilled.

Governance

The New Forest Marque is operated as not-for profit limited company and is managed by a co-ordinator and supported by a board of Directors.

The Marque has a close affiliation to the National Park Authority for the New Forest, with 50% of its income supported by the national park.

The board of Directors arbitrates over membership application that may not meet criteria for the Marque. It should be noted that the number of categories under the Marque provides wide ranging opportunities for local producers to become involved and even then, flexibility and creativity is used to ensure that the Marque is as inclusive as possible.

Policing of the use of the Marque takes place through a mix of producer visits by the Scheme Co-ordinator, policing by members and Directors and through the declaration signed by members.

Future Development and Growth

The initiative wishes to move to a stated objective of self-financing. There are limitations in place with regard to manpower to run the initiative with dependency on voluntary time and goodwill.

A targeted growth of 15% per year will help support a move towards self-financing alongside other initiatives that will support income streams into the organisation.

Summary

The Marque has developed over a 15 year period to a point where it has a well formed governance structure, membership structure and offer to members. Its website is well formed and provides clear information with regard to the Marque and New Forest products.

Dorset Food and Drink



Background

The Dorset Food and Drink brand was set up eight years ago and in the early stages was developed by the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty landscape team with DEFRA core funding.

The initiative was a further development of the Direct from Dorset Scheme that served as a base from which to build the food and drink identity.

Structure

The structure of the initiative is very broad in that it is open to all food and drink businesses in Dorset. The focus is on the effective marketing and communication of the Dorset food and drink offer and supporting members businesses. The organisation has a corporate partner scheme that offers support to member producers through legal advice, accountancy and other business matters.

The initiative current has 178 members and like the New Forest Marque, is broken down in the categories within food and drink

Governance

The organisation is set up as a Community Interested Company that resides within the local authority.

Under this structure the organisation has a board of Directors with a co-ordinator delivering the programme. The organisation has clear links to the AONB and funds itself almost entirely from membership fees and a mix of income generating activity such as pop up festivals.

The structure of the organisation provides sound governance for the management of the organisation, membership and activities.

Future Growth

There is an opportunity to further grow the initiative and there is recognised need for further segmentation of the Dorset Food and Drink brand. There is currently no distinction between products grown / reared / processed in the geographic area and imported products that are used or distributed by businesses in the area.

The suggestion is therefore to segment the scheme accordingly to ensure the consumer is able to recognise Dorset produced products.

Summary

The scheme has been able to develop into a recognised brand and through a number of commercial activities is able to 'wash its face' in terms of achieving self-funding.

The initiative is effectively a food and drink directory, but with brand recognition and other supporting activities being delivered by the organisation to members for their benefit.

Pembrokeshire Produce



Background

The marque was developed in 2003 with the aim of providing a recognisable brand for the identification of Pembrokeshire produced food and drink for consumers within the area. As a geographical brand managed by the local authority, it is restricted to the county of Pembrokeshire.

The inception of the initiative was driven by consumer research that demonstrated the need to identify produce within the county more effectively throughout retail, hospitality and direct sales sectors.

Structure

The structure of the initiative is based on a simple declaration by producers that is validated and audited by the local authority food officer. The declaration is made against a set of regulations outlining the requirement of the mark.

The scheme has over 280 members throughout the county and is supported by a number of activities around the mark.

Governance

The governance of the mark is through the local authority. The food officer manages the scheme and has a close working relationship with trading standards who provide a supplementary policing funding.

Future Growth

Having been in existence for some considerable time, the mark has been subject to development and diversification into other business areas.

The main developmental area was for the initiative to move into distribution of members produce that led to the creation of a physical distribution hub, Pembrokeshire Produce Direct Ltd. The project operated for a number of years with funding being initially provided for early stage development through the Wales Rural Development Plan, eventually being wound up in late 2014.

Cotswold Fayre

COTSWOLD FAYRE*

Background

Cotswold Fayre started as a distribution hub for a few small artisan producers in the Cotswolds, in 1999, delivering products to what was then a niche market of local delis and farm shops. Fast forward a few years to 2003, and the company had in the region of 800 products, eight employees and 300 customers.

It took a further five years for the business to become one that was truly purpose-driven, with change at the heart of its vision, and doing business in a better way for the benefit of the environment and the community.

Encouraging customer consolidation led to decreased deliveries helping both the environment and the retailer.

In 2015, Cotswold Fayre became one of the first companies in the UK to achieve certification by [B Corp](#). B Corps are for-profit companies that meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency.

Today, it represents more than 3,500 [products](#), 300 [brands](#), serve some 1,700 customers and 28 employees.

Structure

The organisation is set up as a limited company but with articles of association that have recently moved to a part employee ownership model within the business.

The business has moved from what was a very small hub in 1999 to a healthy distribution business for artisan products. As such, we have used this as an example of how a small initiative could develop into a larger, more commercial enterprise.

Governance

The development of Cotswold Fayre began with the provision of good artisan food products and the business built from there. The governance of the business was, from 2003 via a limited company structure.

While other case studies within the research has provided examples of regional brand initiatives, Cotswold Fayre, while identifying with a geographic area and its producers, moved to becoming a distribution business quickly, expanding its range and business to other areas.

Future Growth

The business has grown to a point that has allowed it to trade profitably with a large sales team dedicated to the promotion of artisan products.

Future growth may come from opportunities within the retail sector for a business that has predominantly been involved in food service.

Highlight Responses from Interview Respondents with regard to Regional and Local Brands

Co-ordination

The early co-ordination and drive for the development of initiatives was seen as critical to the success of the development of the case study brands.

All of the initiatives were driven by one person, supported by a governance structure that included a board or steering group in a supporting role.

There is almost inevitably a seed funding requirement for an initiative to start and development and once established, there is some subsidy from the public sector to supplement income from membership fees and other income generating activity.

Governance

The running of initiatives is supported by an overarching steering group or board.

While board members are supportive, they often have day jobs that require their full attention. It is therefore challenging to get engagement on occasions and therefore the role of food producers in the management of regional initiatives is often top level / strategic in nature.

Quality vs. Provenance

It was acknowledged by respondents that a regional brand could not guarantee product quality. Supporting awards such as Great Taste provided assurances of quality.

One respondent expressed the view that geographical based brands can be restrictive and a barrier to selling to a broader audience.

Authenticity however was seen as a key characteristic of a regional brand, as long as the scheme was credible with good governance and verification structures.

Brand Initiative Sustainability

It was acknowledged that without funding or diversification from purely running a regional or local branding scheme, the costs of management provide challenges to the longevity of the initiative.

All case studies are either considering or have moved into more commercial structures to increase income generation to support initiatives.