CORK CITY : The Untapped Tourism Potential

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CORK CITY
The Untapped Tourism Potential

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TITLE
CORK CITY
The Untapped Tourism Potential

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Summary

This research focuses on Cork City and the attributes of the city, which possess the ability to enhance the tourism product, yet remain largely ignored. The study includes the opinions, perceptions and analysis of key figures in the local tourism industry. The study highlights the key promotional bodies representing Cork City as a tourism destination and their shortcomings.

The research delves into the initiatives and projects charged with enhancing the tourism product. The access providers are examined in terms of their significance and contribution to the local tourism market. The impact of the European Capital of Culture is analysed. Cork Harbour as a tourism entity and the complete lack of usage is identified.

The work provides an overview of Cork City, its competitive advantages and disadvantages in the tourism sphere, and the promotional bodies and product offerings that largely have not tapped into the city’s tourism potential.
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study involves an in depth examination of Cork City, from a tourism perspective. The main attractions and assets are highlighted. The access routes and the promotional bodies are examined. The under-exploited areas within the Cork City tourism sphere are analysed.

What drives a person into wanting to visit a particular place? Why do certain people travel to certain destinations? The answers and reasons behind such emotional stimuli are both complex and unique to the particular individual. Certainly psychology plays a major role in determining a persons actions along with such factors as: beliefs, prejudices, customs, perceptions and motivation; all key attributes together with such aspects as one’s culture, heritage and upbringing.

The aforementioned elements combine with the historical belief and an innate characteristic of humans- that of the will to travel- be adventurous; explore the foreign lands. History conjures up images of such pioneering personalities like Christopher Columbus, Tom Crean and Ferdinand Magellan, to name but a few. The Age of Exploration was followed by greed, as man battled for territorial supremacy, consequently travel became a key element in allowing such wars to occur.

As the means of travel advanced an industry was born, that of tourism. Tourism can be defined as,

“Tourism is the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, and activities during their stay-at these destinations; it includes movement for all purposes, as well as day visits or excursions”.

(Holloway and Taylor, 2006: 5)

This definition includes the following categories: visiting friends and relatives, business tourism, holidays and educational trips. The most popular category of tourist is the day-tripper, who travels outside his place of residence for a myriad of reasons but does not stay overnight. 90% of visits are made by this category of tourist.

Tourism as an industry flourished post WW11. A tourist was defined as,

“visitors who stay overnight at a destination”

(Middleton and Clarke, 2001: 4)

These visitors became viewed as a commodity worthy of targeting in obtaining a profit. Tourism was now being recognised as a major industry. An industry which essentially consists of a number of components working together to form a tourism product as a whole, including: hotels, restaurants, good access/transport infrastructure and entertainment facilities.
Certainly these facilities are pre-requisites in catering for tourism. However, tourists have different reasons for visiting a destination, reasons vary according to the: weather, climate, topography, culture, attractions or some other spectacular or fascinating phenomenon that attracts the senses of a human in a favourable and enticing manner.

It is within this context, focus is directed at the authors’ area of study. We can all distinguish major tourism attractions: Niagara Falls, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Eiffel Tower, all household names. However on a local level in Ireland, more specifically in Cork City, we have our very own tourism destination. Is this particular destination reaping the benefits of its potential?

Research will focus on the tourism authorities of Cork City and the work being undertaken by these bodies in the field of marketing. Cork City’s tourism product along with its competitive advantages and disadvantages will be examined. The impact of the European Capital of Culture Title 2005 bestowed on Cork, will be scrutinised. The Port of Cork together with Cork Airport will be observed and analysed in terms of importance and contribution to the tourism industry. The spotlight will be shed on Cork City’s renewal schemes such as ‘The Cork Main Drainage Scheme’ and the ‘Docklands Development Scheme’ in investigating such measures and their ultimate impact on enhancing the tourism product of Cork City.

In researching this particular area the researcher has undertaken substantial qualitative research. Leading personalities working in the various sectors of the Cork City tourism industry and relevant areas were interviewed. Probing questions were utilised to unearth the opinions of the interviewees and correlate the findings as a means to enforce a coherent and somewhat accurate deduction of the current status quo of tourism in Cork City.

1.2 Tourism in Ireland

"Tourism is a major feature of contemporary life and influences the economic, social and cultural fabric of almost every country worldwide" (Cronin and O’ Connor, 1993:1).

Tourism is a major contributor to the Irish exchequer. Tourism in Ireland has witnessed increased growth over the past thirty years. Between the period 1999-2003, the number of visitors arriving in Ireland increased by almost 5% to 6.4million. These visitors consisted mainly of European, British and North American tourists. In considering the importance of the tourism industry to Ireland, Wright (2003) questioned why the Department of Tourism is not an independent and separate department.

In 2007, the industry recorded its sixth consecutive year of growth with overseas visitor numbers reaching 7.7 million, a 4% increase on the 2006 figures. According to the Failte Ireland Annual Report 2007, tourism foreign exchange earnings increased to €4.9 billion in the same period. However, more Irish people are travelling abroad:
Last year also saw an increase in Irish residents traveling abroad, from 5.4 million in 2004 to 6.1 million last year. The increase, of 12.8 per cent, represented the largest year-on-year increase in the last five years.

(Gartland, 2006: 3)

According to the Chief Executive of Failte Ireland, Shaun Quinn:

visitors are satisfied with value for money provided by travel to Ireland, car hire and accommodation. While he accepts that according to Failte Ireland’s visitor attitude surveys, the cost of eating and drinking out are considered too high, 97 per cent of visitors surveyed said they would recommend Ireland to others.

(in Fitzgerald, 2005: 3)

This study examines an increasingly important market for the tourism industry in Ireland- the domestic market. According to the Central Statistics Office figures released in relation to Tourism in Ireland, during the period 2000-2005, some 39 million domestic trips involving an overnight stay away from home were taken and almost 139 million domestic nights were spent away from home. The annual number of domestic trips grew from just under 5.5 million in 2000 to almost 7.2 million in 2005, a growth of almost 1.7 million trips or 31%.

One in two Irish adults is taking at least one break in this country every year now

(Healy, 2007d :17).

However, the decline of the dollar, the price of a barrel of crude oil and the general weakening in global economies does indicate a more difficult year for 2009. This year is now expected to show a 3% decline in our visitor numbers to around 8.8 million people. According to Percival (2008), the knock-on effects will see a 4% fall in revenue to €4.7 billion. The previous year 2008 didn’t inspire much growth, its estimated that overseas visitor numbers to Ireland in 2008 will be down 3% on 2007, the first fall since 2001. Breaking that down, travel from mainland Europe will be down 2%, travel from Britain down 3% while the US market will have contracted by a daunting 12%. The one cheery note in all of this is the that visitors from ‘other areas’ is up 11%”. (Hearne, 2008b).

The domestic market is an essential market to Ireland. According to Domestic Tourism 2007, figures compiled by Failte Ireland, “In 2007, a total of 7.9 million trips were taken within the Republic by Irish residents, with an associated expenditure of €1.6 billion. This represents an increase of 9% on the number of domestic trips taken in 2006 while expenditure increased by 13%.

Tourism Ireland’s representative in New York, Joe Byrne acknowledges the difficult tourism climate but puts forth an optimistic side in determining the future, “There is business to be won, but it has to be won. Just wishing it to come to Ireland isn’t an
option and to fight for it means putting up great value and continuing to invest in marketing”

Despite such adverse factors such as: Terrorism, Foot and Mouth and the War in Iraq, the industry remains resilient.

1.3 Failte Ireland

The National Tourism Development Authority Act 2003, laid the foundation stones for the birth of a re-energised domestic tourism agency in Ireland, namely ‘Failte Ireland’.

Under the legislation, Failte Ireland will oversee and spearhead the development of the tourism industry in Ireland and has taken over the existing powers of Bord Failte and CERT.

(Wright and Linehan, 2004: pp.26-27)

This new institution was to become the National Tourism Development Authority with a primary objective of leading and advancing Ireland’s tourism product through the provision of practical and strategic support in a co-ordinated effort. An effort which according to some, should make more effective use of resources. Hearne (2006) criticised the authorities previous structure,

These authorities have long been fighting for a piece of the international pie, but the fact that marketing efforts were divided by seven meant that, on their own, they could have very little impact on their target markets.

(Hearne, 2006d :5)

Failte Ireland is a very proactive organisation and interacts continuously with those bodies working within the tourism industry, providing support and various initiatives to highlight and enhance both the industry returns and visitor numbers.

Failte Ireland has three primary fields of responsibility.

- Marketing and selling of the Irish tourism package to the domestic consumer, in an effort to increase the market share of the domestic market. Promotion is undertook in co-ordination with the development of the domestic tourism product.

- Increase the standards of the Training and H.R. function within the tourism industry, through investment in a training network of outreach centres and executive and management development programmes for the more advanced personnel.

- Innovation and enterprise development is encouraged and supported. Quality frameworks together with codes of best practice are promoted in an effort to introduce quality and best practices as core ingredients to the furthering of the industry. Failte Ireland aids the industry in terms of investment and in the area of tourism infrastructure as well.
1.4 Tourism Ireland Ltd.

Tourism Ireland Ltd. is responsible for the marketing of Ireland as an island to the international tourism market. This organisation was set up under the outlines of the Belfast Agreement of Good Friday 1998.

Tourism Ireland is funded by both the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government, in a jointed effort to promote Ireland internationally. Representatives are employed in key tourist markets providing a voice for the Irish travel trade as well as having offices in Ireland, Coleraine and Dublin.

Tourism Ireland works in conjunction with Failte Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board in undertaking destination marketing programmes, in a bid to increase consumer awareness of the island of Ireland. Paul O'Toole, Chief Executive, Tourism Ireland, states that:

Tourism Ireland will ensure that the marketing spend will be effectively invested in an integrated and seamless communication strategy to maximise all potential opportunities (in O'Mahony, 2001: 9)

Despite harmful external factors the overall intention is to increase tourism numbers and thereby increasing revenues for the Irish industry and aiding Northern Ireland in attaining its tourism potential which has been achieved to an extent; visitor numbers were up by 7.2% in 2003. The big markets which account for 84% of Ireland's total overseas market-North America, Great Britain, U.S.A, Canada, France and Germany will continuously be targeted. Segments in these markets will be identified to encourage the regional distribution of visitors, in such areas as golfing, sailing and importantly for Cork City-Urban Tourism.

1.5 South West Regional Tourism Development Board

In July 2006, five of the Regional Tourism Authorities (RTAs) merged with Failte Ireland. This merger effectively established a new Regional Development Directorate to incorporate all the regional duties and responsibilities of the organisation. The primary areas of operation of Failte Ireland's regions include: Business Development and Market and Product Development.

The South West Regional Tourism Authority is a key regional tourism board. The South West is a major tourism destination for Ireland, in the top three in terms of importance as a tourism destination, yet only 10% of staying visitors to the region spend time in Cork and surrounding areas. The general consensus is that Cork is not reaping the dividends from a tourism perspective and the city is lacking a coherent marketing strategy to boost its profile.

However, despite Cork's stature as the second city and the recipient of the European Capital of Culture Title and major Urban Renewal Schemes; the cold truth of the matter is that only a mere 10% of all visitors to the Cork/Kerry region spend time in Cork and its surrounding environment. There is a general sentiment that Cork does lack a major attraction to encourage visitors to the region and a more dedicated focus on Cork City rather than a more general regional promotion is the step forward in the
raising of the image and profile of Cork. Day visits account for 85% of all visitors to the greater Cork region. Certainly the Cork/Kerry region ranks highly. The region is the second most attractive destination amongst visitors.

1.5.1 Cork City

It can be argued that Cork City has benefited from the re-shaping of the Regional Tourism structure. Perhaps in the Cork/Kerry region, excessive emphasis was placed on the delights of West Cork and Kerry to the expense of the urban tourism destination that is Cork City.

Cork is a city twinned with many leading countries including Shanghai. Is the city reaping the full benefits of these twinning structures? According to Former U.C.C. President, Professor Gerard Wrixon,

*the civic twinning with Shanghai is an extremely positive development. Shanghai and Cork are both dynamic outward-looking second cities and it is very much in our interests to be twinned with this important centre of research and development*

(in Buttimer: 2005: 6)

The 2001 Census informs one that the greater Cork region has a population amounting to 250,000. 50% of this estimate can be apportioned to the city. Tourism statistics confirm that in 2003, Greater Cork drew approximately 3 million visitors (66% of these visitors went to Cork). In terms of category of visit, 85% of the visitors were day visitors and of the staying portion, 66% came from abroad. These visitors created 400 million euro for the local economy and generated almost 3000 jobs. Of these tourists, 70% arrived for the purpose of a holiday whilst 14% of visitors were VFR (Visiting Friends & Relatives) and 11% of visitors were generated by business conferences. The U.K. is a major market:

*six in every 10 foreign visitors come from the UK and they’re responsible for about half of all foreign tourist earnings*

(Hearne, 2005c: 9).

1.6 Research Focus of the Study

Former CEO of Cork-Kerry Tourism, Maura Moynihan, provides an outline of the beauty of Cork City.

*There is something for everyone to see and do in Cork. Like Venice, Cork City is built upon the water, and Cork centre is built on the island on the River Lee just upstream of Cork Harbour. It is a city of remarkable charm, and the visitor cannot fail to be captivated by its hilly streets, peaceful backwaters and inconsequential air. There are castles, gardens, great houses, national parks, heritage centres, museums and art galleries to visit all over Cork*”

(in Boland: 2004: 3)

Cork City is a city brimming with character and beauty, meandering river channels, small compact city centre and a hilly hinterland. Cork is a major festival city and is
the second largest city in Ireland. A mecca for shopping, culture and heritage. Cork is an important cultural centre. According to McKercher and Cros (2002: 1), as many as 240 million international journeys annually involve some element of cultural tourism.

Yet, is the city selling its charms to the wider audience? The short-stay market is a primary target audience for Cork City. Hearne (2006d) acknowledges the importance of the short-stay market.

While the headline numbers indicate a revival in tourist numbers over the last couple of years, trends in tourist behaviour have meant that this revival is heavily skewed towards urban centres. It's a by-product of modern life. Cash-rich, time poor holidaymakers no longer jack everything in for two weeks and hit the beach. Instead, they take a multiplicity of short breaks, and if you're only 48 hours off, the last thing you want to do is get into the car and drive.

(Herane, 2006d: 5)

This study will examine the workings of the relevant tourism authorities in promoting, marketing and developing Cork. The current structure will be examined.

Major initiatives such as the European Capital of Culture Title 2005, the Cork Main Drainage Scheme and the Docklands Development Scheme will be examined to assess their impact on the infrastructure and tourism product of Cork.

In undertaken this study primary attention was allotted to the perceptions of leading personalities working both directly and indirectly in the tourism industry in Cork. Representatives from core institutions in the local tourism category including: the Port of Cork, Cork Airport, Bus Eireann, Office of Public Works, Cork Chamber, and the Cork Marketing Partnership were interviewed.

Some twelve interviews were conducted

The chapter layout is as follows:

This chapter provides an insight into tourism in Ireland and the major national bodies responsible for promoting the island.

Chapter Two highlights the relevant literature examined with key information relevant to tourism in Cork City extracted.

Chapter Three illustrates the type of research used throughout the context of the study. Additionally the chapter examines the research methodology selected.

Chapter Four presents the findings obtained from the field research, which involved the interviewing of twelve key figures in the industry.

Chapter Five outlines the main findings from the study. Recommendations are offered as a template for further action/research.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter focuses on Cork City from a historical perspective and the various attractions offered by the city. Attention is drawn to the harbour, an outstanding natural resource and the marine aspect of the city. Local developments in the form of the Docklands Development and the Cork Area Strategic Development Plan are also examined.

2.1 Historical Background of Cork City

'A wide, beautiful valley, running form east to west, sheltered between lofty and grassy hills, along the crests of which are the groves and terraces of many pleasant villas; a silvery stream winding through the fields, now shadowed by the overhanging woods, and now emerging into the sunlight between sloping lawns and meadows; and, far down in the valley, tall spires and long tiers of grey houses on the shelving hillside-such was the first view I caught of Cork the beautiful'

(Hammond, 1994: 9)

The scene which William Bulfin depicts in 1907 is an appropriate introduction to any account of Cork, suggesting as it does the snug and compact character of the city. The Irish translation of the word Cork is *Corcaigh*, which means 'marsh'. It was on this very topography of swampy marshes that a city was born. Cork's geographical position led itself to a convenient inhabitant for the foreign traveler.

History informs us that in the late 7th century, the city was founded by a monk, named St. Finbarr, whom formed a monastic settlement around the area of present day St. Finbarres Cathedral. Others are more skeptical about this idea. According to O’Corrain (1985), the common belief is that Cork was founded on or about the beginning of the seventh century by St. Finbarr, a local saint who is said to have been born at Garranes near Templemartin about AD 560. This widely accepted ‘tradition’ has been questioned in recent times and it has been suggested that Finbarr has no real existence and is merely a local manifestation of the cult of St. Finnian (alias Finbarr) of Moville (Co. Down), one of the major saints of the early Irish church.

The monks were continuously raided by the Vikings between 822 and 952AD and were eventually conquered by the Vikings. Ward Lock’s, Red Guide rekindles the history of Cork,

"The monastery flourished for about two hundred years until it was raided by the Norse Vikings".

(Lock, 1947: 34)

The Vikings port was replaced by the Anglo-Normans, whom created a thriving walled town. Each people whom descended upon the city brought their own unique character to the city of Cork. In the 1180’s King John through the granting of a charter allotted Cork with the title and characteristics of a municipal city.
The influx of English colonists in the 16th and 17th century witnessed the growth of the city and further expansion. The Victorian and Georgian era altered the appearance of the city with the growth in large town houses and widened streets. The reclamation of the marshes became a priority in further expanding the city. The quays portray the merchant nature of the city,

*The quays of this city are very numerous (26), yet ships of heavy burthen load and discharge, by the means of lighters.*

(Smith 1815: 402).

The many quays, docks and warehouses situated at the east side of the city centre bear testimony to the city’s role in the Industrial Revolution.

“*Cork entered the nineteenth century as a European port ranked second only to Marseilles. It enjoyed a lucrative maritime trade in provisions drawn from its rich hinterland with such far-flung places such as the Middle East, the Americas, and Australia. It also served as the primary service and industrial centre for much of Southern Ireland*”

(Stack et al., 2004: 172).

This settlement in the valley sides of the River Lee has witnessed a sprawling out of residential areas on the suburbs of the city and in recent years the city has been the subject of a comprehensive urban renewal scheme to modernize the city’s appearance and elevate its character in tune with its European stature.

“*Perhaps the most important influence on the city’s development was and is the River Lee, which has witnessed the evolution of the city from monastic centre to cosmopolitan twenty-first-century city*”

(McCarthy, 2003:7)

### 2.1.1 Cork City

In an Economic Assessment of the contribution of tourism to Cork City and its hinterland Moloney and O’ Sullivan (2005) examine the tourist receipts and tourism related employment for the city and the rest of the metropolitan area:

*Tourist receipts amounted to €288 million for Cork City and €126m for the rest of the Metropolitan area. The sector is directly responsible for 1,774 full time equivalent jobs in Cork City.*

(Moloney and O’ Sullivan, 2005: 21)

*The importance of same day visitors is illustrated by the fact that there were 3,474,000 such trips in 2005. These same day visitors contributed €158 million to the local economy*

(Moloney, 2005: 15)

A key stimulus behind tourism in Cork is its many festivals-the Jazz festival, Choral festival and the Midsummer festival, to name but a few. Sullivan et al. (2005) reports that festivals are an integral part of the Cork tourism product. The ten major festivals held in the Cork City Area attract a total of 200,000 people. Approximately 60,000 of
these were from abroad and other parts of Ireland. They generated directly a total of €18 million in revenues for the area and €6.5m indirectly. These revenues supported 100 full time equivalent jobs.

Another strong supplier to the tourism market in Cork is the ever-growing cruise liner business.

Many features are amicable to the visitor. Hopkins (1992), conveys such features- its compactness, its friendliness and the strong character of its buildings and geography combine to make it a delightful spot. Cork City centre is the shopping hub of the South, with many top international stores occupying place in the main thoroughfares of the city. Furthermore future retail developments in the Academy St. area of the city will further enhance the retail potential.

"The Academy Street shopping centre, remains on course to open next Autumn. The major retail and residential development is set to transform Cork's city centre shopping area"

(Healy, 2008: 3)

Cork City has a vibrant night-life, with many nightclubs and live music sessions from an array of top-class entertainment venues, from the pubs and bars to the major concert venues of the Opera House and the Everyman Palace. There is an abundance of entertainment facilities, such as the bright multi-screen cinema. Cork is a city proud of its sport in the sphere of the local Gaelic sports of hurling and football, to soccer, basketball and tennis; with many events held on a weekly basis. Overall, Cork City is an ideal location for the ever-growing short-stay market. A market which is growing. Holiday patterns are changing favoring the short-stay market. A pattern recognized by ITIC Chairman Richard Bourke,

*the trend towards shorter breaks.*

(in Hearne, 2008a: 5)

Cork is known as the Culinary Capital of Ireland and is endowed with many fine restaurants, satisfying the most exotic taste buds. In the cosy, warm settings of the city, the cuisine varies from the traditional Irish cooking to more adventurous dishes from the Thai, Chinese, Indian and Italian recipes. Accommodation provision is varied to suit the various tastes and budgets of the customer, from the luxurious four-star hotel to a more budget friendly hostel.

Nevertheless, in spite of the aforementioned attractions, the city has to be effectively marketed and promoted in the relevant target market. As outlined in Failte Ireland-South West Operational Plan 2008, a primary objective for the body is to position the City of Cork as a major urban destination and a principle regional gateway.
2.1.2 Cork City’s Tourism Attractions

Marketing is the study of exchange processes especially those associated with the provision of goods and services. (Ross et al., 2001: 2)

The principles of marketing are key in every business and industry. It has been argued by many that Cork City does not market its product effectively, and is not benefiting as much as it could. Amongst the primary aspects making up the Cork City Tourism product are the visitor attractions listed below.

Saint Anne’s Church Shandon
Standing 37m tall, overlooking the city from its lofty perch on the north side of the city, the famous four-faced liar was built in 1722. Shandon is synonymous with Cork, embraced in many pictures, songs and poems of the city. Shandon is an iconic symbol of tourism in Cork. No trip is complete without ringing the famous bells of Shandon and climbing the steps to the top, to gaze and compliment the beauty of a modern European city.

The protruding tower is faced in cut-limestone in two sides and in red sandstone rubble on the north and east faced sides.

Shandon Craft Centre (Butter Exchange Museum)
Beholds the secrets of Cork’s agricultural past, situated in the restored Cork butter market. The market depicts the importance of butter exchange to the region in the nineteenth century. Pettit (1977) conveys the importance of the trade to the city.

From 1750 onwards Cork was rather dramatically winning a place in the economy of Ireland and of Europe as a major centre of the butter trade; farmers were bringing in their butter from the rich pasture lands of south Munster, while down at the quays ships were being loaded with firkins to be exported to Liverpool, Hamburg, Rotterdam and to Jamaica, Barbadoes, Carolina and Georgia (Pettit, 1977: 296)

St. Finbarres Cathedral
A cathedral of magnificent Gothic architecture with the foundation stones laid in 1865. The cathedral is located on the grounds of one of the first monastic settlements in Cork City. A brandished Golden Angel is perched on a tower, decorating the exterior appearance of the cathedral.

St Finbarre’s is a diocesan cathedral of the Church of Ireland. Distinguished English architect, William Burges, completed the overall design.

University College Cork
A famous educational institution in Cork since 1845, the campus contains some idyllic scenery, peaceful lower grounds and splendidly laid out gardens. Additionally, the University possess some beautiful Tudor Gothic style architecture including the
Quadrangle and the more modernly designed Glucksman Gallery and an amble environment conducive to the delights of any walker.

**Grand Parade Market (English Market)**

Opened in 1881, the Grand Parade market trades in fish, meat and fowl. The Grand Parade combined with the Prince’s Street market to offer a market of the standards evident today.

The 19th century fountain still elegantly occupies a place of distinguish today. This very fountain was in fact the main source of water supply for past generations. The stalls in the market offer a wide variety of fresh produce. Unquestionably, the market is a central haven of activity in the centre of Cork City.

*The Market has entered its fourth century in relatively healthy shape, having stubbornly survived revolution and war, fire and famine, depression and boom, changing tastes and intensifying competition, and a rapidly changing socio-economic, food and retail environment. It has undergone numerous changes in its external and internal appearance, its management and customer base, and in the nature and range of its fare, but it remains essentially what it always was: a food market serving the people of Cork.*

(O’ Drisceoil et al, 2005:7)

**Cork City Gaol**

This large imposing structure is symbolic of a harsh penal era of the bygone times. Magnificently preserved, the Gaol excellently illustrates 19th century prison life through audio-visual presentations and life-size characters providing a re-enactment of the prisoners’ life.

**Cork Public Museum**

Located in the heart of the picturesque Fitzgerald Park, (only a 10 minute walk from the city centre). The museum contains historical artifacts pertaining to Irish history. Exhibits include: early archaeological finds dating from the Bronze and Iron Age, remnants of Cork City’s medieval era. Emphasis is placed on items relating to the trades and crafts of Cork together with the proud lace making tradition exhibited in the wonderful collection of Yougal lace.

Cork’s contribution to the cause in fighting for Irish Independence is remembered through a large storage of 18th and 19th century documents and memorabilia.

**Cork Vision Centre**

Located in the site of former church, St. Peters in the North Main Street, the centre displays various exhibitions, which are constantly changing. Also on display is a large-scale model of Cork City. The centre is an ideal starting point for a tour of the city, allotting one with much relevant information. The centre plays a continuous video presentation on the attractions and history of Cork.
Crawford Art Gallery
Situated at Emmet Place, this gallery hosts many artistic depictions of human sculptures, paintings and decorative designs.

The older section of the building dates back to 1724 and was utilised as a Custom House. The building is composed of Dutch-style red brick. The sculpture gallery was constructed in 1884, a gallery which displays sculptures made by prominent Irish artists including: Jack B. Yeats, Sean Keating and James Barry.

Blackrock Castle Observatory- Corks Solar System Trail


The Blackrock Castle Observatory is a recent addition to the tourism product of Cork. The observatory is a result of the collaborative effort between the Cork Astronomy Club and ArtTrail, an effort that managed to create a national pioneering act-Irelands first Solar System Trail. A trail which leads from Patrick’s Bridge and travels along an itinerary which eventually leads to the observatory at the historic Blackrock Castle.

Along the trail, there is strategically placed markers of framed banners, each illustrating the right distance to scale locations dispersed along the orbital path. At the observatory, weather permitting, trial-riders can partake in observation sessions under the guidance of qualified researchers from the Cork Astronomy Club and the Cork Institute of Technology. The observatory contains:

- a gallery of cinema-sized, high-definition, digital video screens with proximity sensors allowing visitors to interact with the process of the evolution of the entire Universe and of life on Earth.

(Murray, 2009: 45)

The observatory is a magnificent facility, providing a great educational tool for learning about our wider environment and some intriguing spectacles to observe.

Cork Opera House

Following some initial design confusion, The Cork Opera House opened its doors on September 17th 1877. In 1993 plans were presented for the renovation of the building resulting in the contemporary design of today. The Opera House in Cork is the only purpose built Opera House in the country showing an exciting array of artistic performances.
2.2 Failte Ireland South West Tourism

In 2006, Failte Ireland South West was one of five new regional tourism development authorities instigated to revive the flagging fortunes of regional tourism. The shake-up witnessed the country been split into regions in an effort to overhaul Ireland’s tourist economy and allow the varying boards to develop localized initiatives under the umbrella of Failte Ireland. According to the then Tourism Minister, John O’Donoghue:

“This new tourism structure will allow a greater focus on the individual needs of each region at a national level and direct involvement for the regions in the development of national policy and tourism strategy. The functions and resources will be developed to encompass all key aspects of tourism development, including product innovation, enterprise support, training, marketing, infrastructure and the environmental management needs of tourism in the regions”.

(in Connolly, 2006:6.)

Outside of Dublin, Failte Ireland South West Tourism intend to position Cork and Kerry as the leading tourism region. Traditionally Cork hasn’t benefited greatly from regional visitor numbers, a fact acknowledged, by former Cork Kerry Tourism Chief Executive at a Parliamentary Debate, Moynihan stated. We face a challenge in that Cork city does not get its fair share of the tourism trade. Approximately one in ten visitors to the Cork-Kerry area travel to the city. It is a challenge for Cork-Kerry Tourism to market Cork city as a destination, particularly as a weekend destination, in its own right.

Direct attention will be shed on Cork City as the gateway to the region and as a major destination for both the short-stay market and the business travelers together with promoting the maritime heritage of the region. The business market is a lucrative market. According to Failte Ireland’s chief executive Shaun Quinn,

the business tourism market was significantly more lucrative than leisure travel, with business visitors spending on average 70 per cent more than other travelers.

(in Shoesmith, 2006:18)

2.2.1 Heritage Plan Actions 2008

Policy 8.20 of the Draft Cork City Development Plan states,

The City Council will seek to provide a series of themed trails, in particular walking trails that focus on historic parts of the city or other themes to guide and facilitate visitors.

Cork City Council in conjunction with the Heritage Council performed numerous studies and surveys into the existing heritage structure of the city, incorporating the
various trails and attractions. These actions intend to heighten the significance of our heritage and increase awareness. Such initiatives include:

**Museum Basic Training**
This is a joint effort between the Heritage Council, U.C.C. and the Cork City Council in providing training concerning Museum Basics. The course is available to those working or with an interest in the heritage sector and is designed with an underlying function to protect and conserve historical collections.

‘**Historic Ironwork of Cork City**’ booklet
A booklet composed by Cork City Council and the Heritage Council, which visually depicts various historically significant pieces of Ironwork throughout the city and provide the specific location of such work.

‘**Archaeology of Cork City**’ booklet
A book again produced by both the City and Heritage Council which targets both the tourist and the general public in promoting the extensive archaeological history of Cork.

**Built Heritage Awards Scheme**
Cork Marketing Partnership in association with Cork City Council developed this initiative to support the Heritage Category in the prestigious Cork City Better Buildings Awards Scheme.

2.3 **Urban Renewal Scheme**

Speaking on RTE Radio One’s flagship morning news programme, Morning Ireland. Top RTE broadcaster David Hanly, felt Cork had been left behind compared to other Irish cities:

“**Dereliction, shabbiness all around. Much though I love visiting the place and staying there, its been left behind**”.

(Smithwick, 2004:1).

Words that do suggest that Cork City was indeed in need of renewal. Additionally, McCullough (2004), describes lanes by comparison of what you might expect to find in Calcutta-dirty, damp, and smelling of urine and vomit. In response, chairman of the Cork Business Association, James O’ Sullivan while accepting the city centre was getting very tired looking, praised the work of the renewal schemes undertaken to enhance the city.

*This work is very important to the future development of Cork as a city that people want to live in, work in and visit and I believe that it will herald a new and dynamic era for the city that we will all benefit from.*

(in Murphy, 2002:pp 10-11)
The Cork City Urban Renewal Scheme orchestrated by Spanish Architect, Beth Gali, transformed the streetscapes of the city's main thoroughfares: Patrick Street, the Grand Parade and Oliver Plunkett Street. The work struck a harmonious chord between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

*Cork City Council's urban renewal plan has seen the entire length of St. Patrick's Street renewed with new paving, wider footpaths, less traffic, new lighting and landscaping.*

(Hayden, 2005:18)

The work included the widening of pedestrian paths and the repaving of the footpaths with continental brick structures. Modern lighting overstretches the paths, wide plazas are commonplace and the placement of banisters and seats provides a resting place for the weary shopper or just a spot to observe the world around us. Amenities such as the new bus shelters and litter bins further enhance the appearance of the urban district.

Cork City, the recipient of the European Capital of Culture title 2005, is a city occupied with many historical and cultural attractions, steeple project into the sky, admirable architectural buildings occupy prime place in the city and the River Lee flurries up the city channels to the open sea. The city is compact and easily accessible by foot. Under the Urban Renewal Scheme of 2004, the main city streets were refurbished and given a more modern, cosmopolitan appearance. Situated on the city's eastside are the extensive docks and quays, conveying Cork City's prominence as a major Irish seaport.

### 2.3.1 The Cork Main Drainage Scheme

In the early planning stages of the scheme it was declared:

*When the £120 m Main Drainage Scheme is completed not one drop of the city's sewage will again flow into the River Lee. For the first time in hundreds of years it will be clean.*

(Cavanagh, 1999: 14).

The Scheme will greatly enhance the water of Cork City and *it is expected to reach bathing standards*,

(Sheahan, 2000: 16)

The Cork Main Drainage Scheme was a major engineering feat and one of the biggest infrastructural schemes undertaken on a national basis. The scheme effectively involved the removal of all discharge from the city quays. The waste is moved down the harbour for treatment at the Carrigrenan plant. Project manager for the scheme, Dennis Duggan, said practically all the waste water produced in the city is now being treated at the new €70 million Carrigrenan Waste Water Treatment Plant". (Cronin 2005).

*"Prior to the Drainage Scheme, more than 13 million gallons of raw sewage and polluted water flowed into the River Lee and Lough Mahon, completely untreated".*

(Duggan, 2004:8)
The scheme was largely responsible for the reinstatement of the Cork Lee Swim, an event that dates back to the 1930's. According to Joe Donnelly, secretary of the Cork Masters Swimming Club, "the idea behind the relaunch of the swim is to highlight the improvement in the water quality of the river. Over the years, Cork's Main Drainage Scheme has brought a major clean-up". City Manager, Joe Gavin praises the water quality,

*the fact that the river is now clean enough for people to swim in is a clear indication of just how effective the scheme has been.*

(in Browne, 2005:15)

### 2.3.2 Cork City Docklands

*Cork Docklands comprises of 400 acres of land with four kilometers of waterfront all within a 20-minute walk from City Hall. There is potential for 7 million sq.ft. of non-residential development and for 10,000 units of residential development. This will provide for a residential population of 20,000 and 25,000 jobs.*

(Port of Cork Yearbook 2009/2010: 64)

The Docklands Development will revolutionise the appearance of the city quays and dock region. The destruction of the grey, bleak gloomy appearance can only be welcomed in enhancing the imagery of Cork City. The Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) and the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) identify the docklands as a priority investment area; an area which has the ability to harness the economic performance of the Greater Cork region.

The Docklands project proposes a complex of educational, residential, recreational and business project developments in an area of 420 acres. The docklands do intend to advance the vibrancy of the city, bringing residents and employment back into the city. Recommendations and ideas do put forth the development of a commercial leisure quarter as a positive move. Such a quarter would contain the addition of one or more 4 star plus hotels, restaurants, cafes and bars. The Port Quarter attains the potential to enhance river-side amenities. Planning consultant Barry Connolly of McCutcheon Mulcahy said an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) had been conducted as part of the planning application, and described Port Quarter as follows,

*A quality development for a catalyst site, which corresponds with the city's own Local Area Plan and outline for the site*. It includes public open space and a waterfront walk designed to tie in with the Council's aim for a riverside walk from the Mardyke in the west, to the Marine in the east."

(Barker, 2008:11)

Such features will greatly enhance the tourism product of Cork.

Certainly the Docklands Development is a long-term scheme. Much research and planning has been conducted under the Cork City Development Plan, the Cork Docklands Development Strategy and the North and South Docks LAPs. Essential to all planning is that the movement promotes the profile of Cork. Developments do earmark the region as a hub for business purposes.
The City Council and the Port of Cork Company worked collectively in devising proposals to relocate the existing port operations further down the harbour to Ringaskiddy, thereby freeing up the area east of the city centre for regeneration, however these proposal haven’t been approved.

The scheme is at its early stages and is devised between the North Docks Local Area Plan and the South Docks Local Plan. The plans envision the creation of a cultural quarter and the possibility of a marine museum. These plans will focus developments along the waterfront, extending the city’s boundaries.

2.4 Cork Harbour

Cork Harbour is one of the largest coastal water bodies in Ireland and the most industrialized estuary in the state (Johnson et al. 2002). Cork Harbour spans a considerable distance from the city quays to the outstretched mouth of the harbour at Roches Point. This natural harbour provides a sheltered environment with deep-water channels capable of accommodating shipping and boating activities.

Sweeney (2007: 3) states that, Cork Harbour is the second largest natural harbour in the world and Ireland’s second largest port. The harbour is a resource for a multitude of different occupiers. Cork harbour has a long tradition of recreation (Shields et al., 1997: 4). The waters of Cork harbour provide a great means for such recreational activity as boat racing and sailing leisure. The harbour’s structure shelters users from inclement weather conditions.

Cork Harbour is also important in terms of its military history. The area contains many man-made and natural features that give the harbour its unique and historic character (Cummins & O’ Donnell, 2005:3). The harbour entrance is flanked by Camden Fort on the west side of the harbour and Carlisle Fort to the east. These forts and other installations on Haulbowline Island, Spike Island and Rocky Island provide an insight into the British military presence that shaped the harbour until final withdrawal in1938. (Cummins and O’ Donnell, 2005: 3).

Tourism is not a primary activity in Cork harbour, many argue its overly industrial in nature, despite this assumption recreation is pursued extensively presently in the harbour waters. Cork does have an abundance of water-based activities in the form of deep sea angling, yachting and boating. Crosshaven is home to the oldest sailing club in the world ‘The Royal Cork Yacht Club’, established in 1720. The harbour hosts The International Deep Sea Angling Festival and the bi-annual Cork Week. The latter is one of the highlights of the Irish sailing calendar and is a significant economic contributor to the local economy. (Shields et al, 1997).

(Parkin and Randall, 2007) through a Scoping Study estimated the number of boats stored in Cork harbour at approximately 1945. For the carrying capacity exercise this number was applied to a usable water area of approximately 53km. In comparison, Chichester Harbour in the U.K. has 9014 recreational vessels stored within a sub-tidal area of approximately 30.74km. This comparison does convey that the issue of
overcrowding is not a matter for current users of the harbour, however caution has to be exercised in future developments.

One of Cork Week’s founder members, Donal McClement, supports the idea that Cork’s natural asset has remained largely under-exploited.

*Cork has a phenomenal natural resource that is being wasted due to the lack of support for marine facilities. I think local authorities are slowly beginning to realize that one of our best assets is certainly the underdeveloped.*

(Fitzpatrick, 2008: 15).

Mc Clement promotes the excellent sailing waters of Cork Harbour as being the best in Europe and argues that the expansion of marinas would generate increased tourism and money to the economy. According to McClement (2008), these marinas haven’t been built because of the infrastructure costs involved and they won’t be built until local government realizes the business they can generate. A recently conducted Failte Ireland study revealed that visitors to marine facilities in Ireland contribute approximately €80 to the local economy per boat per night.

In a European context, Ireland is far behind as regards the provision of such marine facilities. La Rochelle, a seafaring town in France possesses more marina berths than the whole of Ireland, with a population size of less than 100,000 people. Research performed by the British Marine Federation deduced that visiting boating vessels to British marinas added roughly stg£225 per night to the local economy in 2007.

Mc Clement asserts that this type of resource is crucial for the future of the Cork economy. In 2008, the harbour was full with practically no marina berths meaning that people that want to go boating simply are not accommodated. Marine facilities have to be improved to enhance the leisure potential of the harbour, the fact that there is only presently 24 coastal marinas developed around Ireland demonstrates the lack of national attention to this area.

Water recreation most definitely needs to be incorporated into the Cork City tourism product. Such recreation can act as the very pull factor, drawing people to a particular destination to engage in a specific activity. Cork harbour provides ample opportunities for such water-based recreation.

Cork Harbour is a magnificent natural harbour, which possesses significant cultural, defense, natural heritage and marine attractions. The outstretched waters need cohesive action in consolidating a rather fragmented tourism entity. There are varying demands on the harbour ranging from energy generation, cruise liner traffic, operational aspects, nature and environment, tourism and leisure. It has been realized that a framework or strategy is necessary to safeguard this unique resource. The establishment of the Cork Harbour Forum, a voluntary partnership body of all related stakeholders funded through an E.U. devised project CorePoint (Coastal Research and Policy Integration) accentuates the harbour focus.
The policy paper formulated by the Heritage Council (April: 2006) regarding conserving Ireland's maritime heritage supports the idea of heritage sustainability as a means of monitoring, planning and development submissions in marine related areas. Such measures are essential in preserving environmental and cultural features of the harbour.

The harbour bears witness to era's gone bye, remnants of war through the establishment of defensive fortifications spanning some 400 years are well preserved, strategically situated in various vantage points overlooking the harbour. Cork harbour is the home of the Irish Naval Service, established in 1945 and possesses the only purpose built 18th century dockyard in the whole of Ireland. The cultural heritage is amazing. The Cork Royal Yacht Club, is the first yacht club to be established in the world and is still operational today. The port witnessed mass emigration in the 19th and 20th century and was of course the last stop off point of the ill-fated White Star liner 'Titanic'.

The sights, the beauty and the natural heritage of the harbour is unquestionable, marooned in the center of the harbour is a famous prison, Spike Island, lying idle. Cork needs an iconic attraction! Does one need to look any further than its waters. An integrated approach is required in enhancing Cork City's marine resources. The waters do provide a definite attraction. The creation of a marine quarter should be achieved. A precinct possessing attractions such as a marine museum, a dock for boarding a ferry from the city quays traveling upriver, allowing one to embrace the beauty and the historical sites, linkages with islands and further attractions can only enhance the product. Let Cork City be the gateway to the harbour waters.

The number of cruise liners berthing in the harbour has risen from 18 in 2000 to 36 in 2006, bringing approximately 35,000 passengers into the area per year (C. Dineen, Port of Cork, pers. Comm).

The Port of Cork possesses ample facilities for cruise liner traffic. Cork Harbour's location makes it an attractive port of call for cruisers from the Baltic, Mediterranean and Caribbean as well as trans-Atlantic cruise traffic (Moloney and O' Sullivan, 2004:5). On arrival, up to two-thirds of the passengers embark on an organized full-day or half-day shore excursions by coach to the surrounding regions, including visits to Cork City, Midleton and further a field to Killarney, Co. Kerry (Moloney, 2004: 5). In 2003, 22,973 cruise ship passengers visited Cork Harbour, spending a total of 19.79 million euro. (Moloney and O' Sullivan 2004)

Cork Cruise, formed in 2008, is a good initiative in terms of capitalizing on the tourism potential of the cruise market. The group is a marketing organisation consisting of the Harbour and Cobh Chamber of Commerce and the Port of Cork Company. Cork Cruise works in collaboration will local tourist attractions and tour operators in providing a warm welcome to cruise passengers and offers information on places of interest. Cork Cruise consists of 30 members with two representatives going on board providing tourist information to the visitors.
2.4.1 Tourism/Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable Tourism means tourism which is economically viable but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the physical environment and the social fabric of the host community.

(Swarbrooke, 1999: 13)

Tourism is now one of the global engines of economic development (WTO 2004) and a fundamental component of many nations Gross National Product (GNP) (McCool et al. 1998: 2). Although the industry is not dissimilar to any other in that it is susceptible to the vagaries of the global economy, it has experienced continued growth over the last decade (Christ et al. 2003; McCool & Lime 2001; Dunne & Leslie 2000: 2). Every year, more people are in motion than ever before in history (WTO 2004).

On the other hand, tourism and recreational activities are primary contributors to environmental degradation. The author has highlighted the need to exploit the potential of Cork Harbour. However, any proposals put forward for Cork harbour have to be feasible in terms of present facilities, scope and amenities and steps have to be taken to avoid surplus business actions guided by greed. Cork’s amazing natural asset can’t be exploited to the degree of depletion. Sustainable tourism is the key.

2.4.2 Maritime Museum

Cork City’s growth and strength has always lied in its waters, more specifically its magnificent harbour. The marine aspect has occupied a large degree in the lives of Cork people, with many people emigrating from the quay walls in search of a better life, on board such magnificent ships as the Innisfallen. Despite one or two token efforts, there is no real solid maritime emblem representing the city of Cork.

Cork Harbour is one of the largest natural harbours’ in the world and has long been renowned as a defensive feature of paramount importance in protecting the city of Cork and the British Isles to a larger degree. Defensive fortifications located in the harbour lay testimony to this occurrence. Yet this historical treasure is not being incorporated into the Cork City tourism product from a historical, educational, cultural or leisure perspective. Spike Island and Haulbowline possess attributes worthy of visitor attraction designation. Chairman of Spike Heritage Committee Michael Martin highlights the tourism potential and the history of the 18th century military fort and draws parallels with similar attractions throughout the world.

"The former prison on Alcatraz which attracts more than 1.2 million visitors each year, is just one example. Another one would be Robben Island in South Africa where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned. Since it opened as a tourist attraction in 1999, more than 250,000 people visit it each year”

Indeed a scope study compiled on behalf of the Irish Naval Service and The Heritage Council of Ireland earmarked the naval grounds as a possible location for a maritime, or naval museum.

Davina Tully's *Audit of Maritime Collections (2006)* conveyed that there is substantial maritime resources spanning from artifacts to technical knowledge, kept sustained and preserved by the merits and passions of the owner. In Ireland, there is a need for a national maritime museum and Cork City seems the qualified recipient of such an asset considering its history and the city is the home to both the naval and merchant navy training centres.

While Cork City has undergone some major renewal and investment projects in recent years in improving the structure in terms of accommodation and food as well as the road and streetscape, it is generally agreed that the city lacks an iconic attraction. However, increased usage of the harbour upriver and a dedicated marine museum within the precinct of the city/harbour would tremendously augment the current product offerings and result in an increase in visitor numbers to the city region.

### 2.4.3 Benefits of a Maritime Museum

There is no major cultural facility focused on Ireland's coastal waters, nor there is no naval historical museum. The Audit of Maritime Collections compiled by, Tully (2006) highlights the need for a dedicated fully equipped national marine museum reflecting on regional variations. Reports have hinted at specific locations in Haulbowline, this may well be the focal point in a ferry trip of the harbour.

Equally, with the Docklands Development promising to upgrade the appearance and features of the city's docks, the placing of a museum along the city's very quays would be a welcome initiative.

Cork's rich maritime culture is easy to trace with links to world renowned liners—the *Lusitania* and *Titanic*, the defense heritage, the Irish Navy, shipwrecks and lighthouses. On the environmental and physical front, Cork possesses an abundance of marine birds and mammals, geology and scenery, marine eco-systems and foreshore and tidal margin eco-systems. Such a facility could also act as an educational tool for local schools promoting maritime heritage.

### 2.5 Access

Access is a vital component in the overall success of a tourism destination. An efficient access mode in terms of air, land and sea is imperative. Cork is well advanced in this sphere with a new airport terminal building, a large natural harbour, improved rail connectivity and the planned completion of the M/N8 Dublin to Cork route in 2010, creating a route of motorway standard.
2.5.1 Roads

Under the National Development Plan of 2004, substantial investment was placed on improving the road infrastructure in and around Cork. In 2004, non-national roads in Cork were allocated 47.5 million euro in funding. June 2004 witnessed the commencement of the N22 Ballincollig Bypass, a development which effectively reduces journey time between Cork and Killarney by as much as 30 minutes.

2.5.2 Cork Airport

Cork Airport is perhaps the most influential access node for visitors to the South West region. Aviation travel is quick, convenient and cheap and is the preferred choice of many in contemporary society.

Numbers have been increasing steadily at the airport, reaching a record 3.2 million passengers in 2007, unprecedented in the history of Cork Airport. This number represented a 6% increase on the 2006 throughput. The business market has significantly contributed to this success, “1 in 4 of those traveling through Cork do so for business purposes” (Cork Airport Scheduled Passenger Tracking Survey).

*Business travel has increased substantially through Cork airport. In 2000 business passengers accounted for approximately 29% of total passengers, which amounts to 655,000 passengers. This has increased from approximately 433,000 in 1995*

(Moloney et al. 1996:31-2)

According to O’ Leary et al. (1996); as the major airport in south Munster, Cork Airport generates a considerable amount of economic activity in its catchment area. The Airport’s presence plays a major role in aiding the establishment of industry in the area by providing an important access point for business people and a gateway to foreign markets for actual and potential exporters from the region.

The State Airport Act of 2004, laid the foundations for Cork Airport to become independent and begin operations debt free. This scenario did not materialize and this debt issue is an impediment for long-term planning in the airport.

There is a significant number of flight options to and from the airport, however improvements can still be realized. Eleven airlines catered for 2.8 million passengers on 42 scheduled routes over the year 2007, while the remaining 0.4 million passengers were accommodated by charter flights. Passenger numbers are projected to double by 2020 and forecasts of numbers up to 15 million are envisioned by 2040. A special Local Area Plan for Cork Airport is being designed to cater for this projected growth and expansion.

Throughput for the first 9 months of 2008 illustrate a further increase, totaling 2.6 million, a 5% increase over the same time for the previous year. However, the airport does face a number of challenges in the current economic slowdown, high oil prices and waning consumer confidence:
Sustained high oil prices will mean big rises in the price of air travel.

(Me Bride, 2008: 3.)

2.5.3 Port of Cork

The formal institution of the Harbour Commissioners in 1820 was constituted under Act of Parliament. This very port witnessed mass emigration, yet industrial development has always been a primary objective, indeed Cork was the first port in Ireland to establish a planning and development department. Additionally:

"the port of Cork was the first port in the State to be awarded the Eco-Ports-Port Environmental Review System (PERS) certificate, a European standard of best practice developed for the environmental management of ports. This underscored the company’s dedication to sustaining the quality of the environment of Cork harbour",

(Kelly, 2008:15)

"Cork has had a long tradition of mercantile activity. Over the centuries the city’s natural amenities, the river and the harbour, made an ideal setting for industry and trade"

(Barry 1995:9).

According to Ferguson (2007: 129), the key ports around Ireland play a fundamental role in the conduct and accomplishments of the Irish economy. They handle a significant and increasing proportion of the volume of trade traveling by sea. The Port of Cork is a major economic contributor to the South West region. Primarily in the industrial sphere, however a lucrative cruise ship liner business exists, hosting an unprecedented number of 41 cruise ships in 2007, these leviathans brought 50,000 visitors to the south west region contributing €30 million to the sector. According to Keating, We have invested almost €5.6 million in the cruise business over the past six years. We’ve extended our berth in Cobh and we can now take the Independence of the Seas type vessels and we are delighted with that. Our investment is showing a return. (Healy, 2009: 7). A key issue raised by Keating is:

‘Sustaining business growth at a time when predictions suggest lower levels of economic activity in the Irish economy’,

(O’ Keeffe, 2008:26)
2.5.4 Cork Swansea Ferry

A company spokesperson commenting on the discontinuation of the service:

"It has been demonstrated that the service is an imperative for the south west region bringing in hundreds of thousands of visitors. It is ironic that it has had to be suspended at a time when the market indicators suggest an upturn in ferry travel."

(McMahon 2007:1)

The Cork Swansea ferry service was first launched in May 1969. In 1987, Swansea-Cork Car Ferries Limited was established by Cork County Council, Cork Corporation and Kerry County Council, in conjunction with West Glamorgan County Council and Swansea City Council. The first ferry, Celtic Pride arrived in Cork Harbour on April 13, 1987. In August 2006, following a decision to sell its vessel serving the Cork Swansea route, the MV Superferry, Swansea Cork ferries announced it would end its scheduled service serving the route.

The service which was axed on October 7, 2006, carries on average 100,000 passengers, 30,000 cars and between 6,000 and 8,000 freight units during its March to October season each year."

(Walsh, 2008: 12)

Since the seizure of this ferry service, businesses in the Cork/Kerry region claim that trade has declined by as much as 50%, costing the south west region an estimated €37 million a year. Hickey (2008) claims that the loss of the ferry, two years ago, is reckoned to be costing the region millions of euro worth of business, especially this year when there is a dramatic downturn in visitor numbers. However, according to County Mayor Noel Harrington, an optimistic viewpoint regarding the reinstatement of the service can be adopted, almost 85% of the required funding has been guaranteed and four appropriate vessels have been pinpointed-any one of which could be used on the route, Harrington further adds,

the ferry link was established in 1987 and was responsible for bringing 2,850,000 passengers and 700,000 cars into Cork.

(in Bagnall 2008: 10).

These figures illustrate the importance of the ferry service to the tourism and economic life of the region. Plans are afoot and progressive for the renewal of the service,

The cost of re-establishing the route is estimated at €12 million and it's believed more than €10 m has already been guaranteed.

(Bagnell 2008: 2)
2.6 Festivals

Cork City has long been recognized as a festival city, holding some major international festivals annually. The capacity of the city to cater for such events has aptly been illustrated in our past-1991 witnessed 700,000 people descend on the city for the Tall Ships, 1998 saw the Naval Review and Maritime festival and in the same year, the major international cycling tournament, ‘Le Tour De France’, attracted many visitors into the city.

Amongst the many key festivals held in the city is the following:

**Cork International Choral Festival**
Since its humble beginnings in 1954, the Cork International Choral Festival has grown in stature over the years and is now a major festival for showcasing the talents of both national and international amateur choirs.

It is a world leading choral festival presenting an array of exciting events including: a Celebration of Church Music. Composers in the Classroom scheme and County concerts.

**International Film Festivals**
A festival which showcases the talents and characteristics of locals involved in the film industry, as well as highlighting the international classics through the featuring of the short film programme, feature films and documentaries.

**Cork Folk Festival**
Commonly named ‘The Friendly Festival’, since its inception in 1979 the festival has strongly established it-self as the leading folk festival in the country. A celebration of our rich cultural heritage in the music, song and dance category.

The festival is much revered by musicians and audiences alike, providing an extensive range of live folk music of the national and international genre.

**Guinness Jazz Festival**
A massive calendar event for the jazz enthusiast and a major contributor to the economy of the Cork City region. The event attracts approximately 40,000 visitors annually to the city each October. Some 1,000 musicians from 30 countries play in venues all over the greater Cork City area during the four-day event.

Artistic Director of the festival, Jack Mc Gouran, highlights the increasing importance of the internet in attracting people to the festival:

*Jazz tourism has taken off over the last year or two because of the internet. People key in the word ‘jazz’ to a search engine, discover a great festival in Cork and book the trip online.*

(Horgan 2006)
Midsummer Arts Festival

A nationally popular arts festival. The event takes place for 10 days in June. A festival which includes entertainment for all the family in the sphere of music, dance, picnics, circuses and theatre.

Ocean to City Boat Race

Born out of the Cork 2005 programme, Ocean to City is a spectacular event, a mecca for the competitive rower, being the largest race of its kind in Ireland.

In its inauguration in 2005, the race catered for 500 rowers racing over a course of 15 nautical miles, which stretched the whole length of the harbour from Crosshaven to the entrance point of the harbour at Roche's Point and back into the city quays. Boats date from the older generation Currachs to modern day kayaks. The inaugural trophy was competed for between crews from ten different nationalities.

The rowing armada offers an amazing sight from the varying villages dispersed along the harbour waters. To complement the atmosphere and add to the carnival spirit, this now annual race incorporates various visual entertainment.

2.7 European Capital of Culture Title 2005

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, Mr. John O'Donoghue, welcomed the Capital of Culture event as an opportunity to further stimulate tourism in the region.

"2005, the year in which Cork has been chosen as European Capital of Culture, is an unparalleled opportunity to give added impetus to the promotion of tourism in the city and region"  

(O' Donoghue, 2005)

According to Palmer and Rae (2004), the European Capitals of Culture initiative was originally set up to celebrate European cultural diversity in 1985. A list of EU member states responsible for nominating European Capitals of Culture was identified for the period 2005-2019 and Ireland had that responsibility in 2005. Some researchers are now arguing that the event is losing sight of its original aims and that city-branding, image creation and tourism revenue generation have come to assume precedence (Richards and Wilson 2004, Evans 2005). Several researchers have noted (Bailey et al. 2004, Garcia 2005, Quinn 2005), the task of documenting and analyzing economic legacies has far outweighed the interest shown in cultural outcomes.

Support and primary funding for the event was obtained by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Cork City Council. €13.6 million was provided by these bodies for the purposes of startup funding. Through the Culture 2000 scheme, the European Union contributed €500,000 and a further €7 million was generated as income from sponsorship and other means. Funding however was limited enough in comparison to our European counterparts,
what can our city contribute with a paltry budget? Glasgow had £40million sterling to spend when they had the honour: we have less than €15million.

(Cotter, 2003: 8).

Cork 2005's primary objectives: was to celebrate the renewal of the city centre, to rekindle our spirit of community, to embrace our culture and demonstrate a contemporary European city. Culture does attract a lot of attention in tourism. According to research conducted by CERT, over one third of tourist arrivals into the European Community are made up of cultural tourists. The programme of events was wide-ranging and incorporated most elements of the city's culture from: Music, Sports, Dance, Food, Visual Arts, New Media Projects, Literature, Architecture and Theaters. Both European contemporary and locally sourced creative work were incorporated into the programme. A programme which entailed 5,000 events, in excess of 8,000 participating artists and 100 projects. These events dramatically increased the number of people visiting Cork City:

Over 350,000 extra people have come to Cork in the first three months

(Lynch, 2005: 26)

These events did significantly contribute to the local economy, there is no doubt that the unprecedented levels of activity within the cultural sector alone also generated a significant boost for the economy (Moloney 2006). Although Cork was the smallest European city to be selected for the title, its programme of events more than matched up to the European scale.

Many of the major cultural projects involved in the make-up of the annual programme did contain a very definite European dimension, events such as: Cork 2005 Translations Series, Enlargement and Relocation and Caucus are indicative of this embodiment. Cultural events were linked to the creative artists-the performers, poets, visual artists and architects. The personal and intricate nature of culture was conveyed through the eyes and actions of the artists, the film director explanations and the collective community, in the form of seminars and demonstrations. Cork is a city famous for its music, culture and literature ingenuity:

Cork was always an excellent city with a dense and intelligent cultural life, with its own theatre companies, orchestras, publishers and daily radio stations and newspapers

(McCarthy, 2005:10)

On January 8th 2005, the opening celebrations began as 100,000 people descended on the city for a spectacular official opening ceremony.

City Manager, Joe Gavin while addressing the City Council commented on the success of the event

It is clear from the returns that Cork 2005 was an outstanding economic success and greatly exceeded what we might have reasonably expected. The extra €90 million earned in 2005 was the immediate economic return, but Cork 2005 has laid
foundations for continuing benefits into the future. We must now build on these foundations.

(in Barry, 2006:8).

Meanwhile the City Council were disappointed with the level of financial input from the city’s business community, in particular the hotel sector whom greatly benefited from the event. Councillor Mick Barry aptly sums up the general feeling:

There are not too many budding Medicis among the merchant princes of Cork.

(in English, 2006:10).

2.8 Cork Marketing Partnership

This public-private partnership is an innovative step in aligning the interests of key stakeholders in effectively targeting, resourcing and developing measures to improve the image of Cork City as a destination and attract the attention of potential markets through the collective selling and promotion of the city’s product.

The Cork Marketing Partnership is comprised of key bodies including: the Port of Cork, Cork Chamber, Cork City Council, Cork Airport, Failte Ireland South West, Irish Hotel Federation (Cork branch), Cork County Council and Cork Business Association. These groups through a jointed effort intend to highlight Cork City as a premier centre for business investment and promote the city’s tourism attributes to the wider audience and generally convey Cork City as a progressive European city.

Historically Cork City hasn’t benefited from marketing. The Cork Marketing Partnership will strategically market the city with primary attention heeded to attracting Business Tourism, which typically involves a shorter stay in the destination. “Business trips had an average length of stay of 2.8 nights compared with 4.4 nights for holidays” (CSO-Domestic Tourism In Ireland). In 2007, the first year of operations, the Cork Convention Bureau was established as a means to heighten both national and international demand for the business tourism product of the city. Incentive travel, business meetings and conferences are the main target, the bureau is selling Cork City as an ideal destination for such purposes.

Amongst the initiatives undertaken by the partnership is the beginnings of a Cork Portal Website, the Christmas Marketing campaigns in conjunction with the Cork City Council; a delightful campaign was run in 2008, converting the Bishop Lucey Park into a park of Christmas dreams, designed by Peter Kelly of Weddings by Franc. The park was beautifully adorned with Christmas festive decorations and lighting. The Grand Parade was transformed into an open-air market selling locally produced food and craft’s,

The new plaza in the Parade will be transformed into a festive atmosphere of food and craft stalls with numerous activities for young and old.

(Kirwan, 2008: 24).

the atmosphere was embellished with artists performing open-air concerts. The
atmosphere was amiable and enlightening for the weary shopper and attractive for the outside visitor.

These steps combined with the Cork City Cares and Economic Marketing project further embrace the steps taken to improve Cork's image. The dedicated website 'Come to Cork' offers a history into the city and outlines activities and attractions that can be pursued ranging from the many festivals, family and kids entertainment incorporating the arts and culture of the city.

Cork Marketing Partnership is striving to amalgamate the collective effort of key bodies in the local economic sphere in providing a unified effort in strategically marketing Cork City to central target markets and project Cork City as a compelling regional brand.

2.9 The Cork Area Strategic Plan

The Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001-2020 was a comprehensive plan created by Cork City Council and Cork County Council on 22 October 2001. The intention of the plan is to provide a vision, strategy and framework that will enable Cork to become more forceful and conspicuous on the global economic sector, as well as enhancing the cultural and social fabric.

Under Policy 5.2 of the plan emphasis is placed on 5 key areas in advancing the city's tourism product,

*The city plan focuses on the development and marketing of the City as a place synonymous with culture and the arts and outlines 5 key strands to help develop Cork's potential as an urban tourism destination, namely development of new accommodation within the city, the development and enhancement of new and existing visitor attractions, enhancement of the City's public realm, better integration of Shandon and the South Parish into the City Centre and development of an integrated tourism strategy.*

(CASP, 2001: 5.2)

Much work has been invested in achieving these strands including the development of hotel accommodation in Lapps Quay and Lancaster Quay; the provision of the new Glucksman Gallery, the extension of the city museum and the establishment of the School of Music has greatly improved the cultural and tourism infrastructure. The Urban Renewal Schemes has enhanced the public realm.

This plan has much strategic intent in terms of advancing the city by building on past initiatives and exploiting the potential provided by the international spotlight of the European Capital of Culture 2005 and the magnificent environmental features of Cork, most notably Cork Harbour. This plan provides the template for the regeneration of the city through such schemes as the Docklands Development.

Importantly the plan accentuates the importance of the protection of isolated areas including the outer Cork Harbour. The plan promotes a Coastal Zone Management Plan, which can only be beneficial to tourism.
A key mission is “to enhance the environmental quality and landscape setting of the Cork City Region, minimizing impact on ecologically sensitive areas and on built heritage and cultural landscapes.”

Tourism is recognized as a key economic generator in the plan and occupies an important role whereby measures are outlined to improve such features as visitor attractions and accommodation in a bid to progress the current product. The elements of culture, entertainment and shopping are mooted as primary contributory factors to enhancing the ‘urban experience’ of the city.

The plan appreciates the attributes of Cork Harbour and how these characteristics aren’t being maximized from a tourism perspective. A degree of energy is dispensed on elevating the harbour’s position as a premier leisure sailing destination. The document through its guidelines on the protection of the natural and built heritage and cultural attributes and the highlighting of the tourism potential of Spike Island hints at the plans overall drive to improve the tourism offer of Cork.

2.9.1 Draft Cork City Development Plan 2009-2015

Policy 8 of the draft is concerned with Arts, Culture and Tourism. The City Council’s recognition of the importance of tourism as a contributor to the economy of Cork is identified, as well as the vast potential that remains untapped.

*Cork City contains a high quality natural heritage of landscape, and a significant man-made heritage of buildings, culture and industrial past which have the potential to attract visitors. Developing the potential that exists offers a significant opportunity for increased expenditure, economic development and job creation in Cork City.*

(Cork City Development Plan, 2009: 8.14)

Cork City is largely a cultural destination and a regional base for tourism in the region. The City Council embrace this income aligned of course in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner. Cork City has an extensive base of natural and man-made attractions, combined with the city’s industrial past and culture, the council outlines the potential gains from effective preservation and utilization of these elements which can ultimately increase economic activity and employment levels.

*The development plan views the maintenance of Cork’s built heritage as vital to the forward planning of the city. Cork has a rich and varied streetscape of 18th and 19th century buildings which the plan sees as important to keeping the city’s character. It is intended that future policy development will emphasis the retention of historic buildings and encourage their refurbishment.*

(Forsythe, 2004:pp.20-21)

Amongst the primary objectives outlined in the Draft plan is encouraging and enhancing tourism in the support for the development of a large-scale conference
centre in the South Docks Local Area Plan. Focus is concentrating on enhancing the rich history and heritage of the city through the initiation of guided heritage walk tours highlighting historically significant districts of the city. Themed trails of historical significance would most definitely enhance the product offerings.

The plan recognizes the importance of accommodation in the provision of a tourism product. The renovation and upgrading of existing accommodation will be supported and further additions are welcomed in increasing the selection range and quality of accommodation, at suitable locations.

Opening hours has long been a negative feature of tourism in Cork City. This lack of access to facilities is an area in which the plan endeavors to address. This combined with the improved distribution of relevant signage to areas, attractions or buildings of tourism value is being developed in a bid to improve the image and visitor friendliness of Cork City.

The objectives outlined in this draft plan do prioritize areas of significance and the joint effort of all relevant stakeholders and participants in the industry together with the City Council is a pre-requisite in achieving these developmental steps.
Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 The Philosophy of Research Design

Research design is key in structuring the various components of the research. According to Burns and Bush (2003: 7), research is the process of designing, gathering, analyzing, and reporting information. Research involves the extensive study of books, documents, journals, opinions and other material in order to solve a problem or obtain a conclusion.

Carson et al. claims that research often requires a balance between a structured approach (where research is a logical, sequential, step-by-step process following a clear plan and protocol), and an unstructured approach (where research may evolve, emerge and develop as it progresses (Carson et al. 2001: 12)

Qualitative research is the research method utilised in this study. This study concerns the questioning of prominent figures involved in the Cork City Tourism and related industry. Semi-structured interviews were used as a means of extracting opinions. A relatively open framework was adopted which allowed for an open, frank two-way communication process. In conducting such research, attention was focused on utilising ones own intuition, in correlating a multitude of reasoning's.

In the third edition of A Dictionary of Epidemiology, John M. Last (1995) defines research design as the procedures and methods predetermined by an investigator, to be adhered to in conducting a research project, the research design forms a template for the writing of the study. Research design forms a frame of reference coupled with underlying assumptions regarding the study.

3.2 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research is an overall term to describe the work researchers do in formulating their interpretations of the subjects of their studies and giving representations of these interpretations in order to add to a body of knowledge. (Baker, 2007: 157). Denzin and Lincoln describe qualitative research as a field of inquiry, that crosscuts disciplines and subject matters (1994: 1). Qualitative research is more focused on the comprehension of human behaviour and the underlying reasoning which is responsible for such behaviour. Rather that just the what, where and when, this discipline examines the why and how of the decision-making process requiring smaller more detailed samples rather than a broader random sample.

Qualitative research was a pioneering social science that diminished in significance as a discipline over the years and was eventually confined as a discipline of sociology. Qualitative differs from quantitative in that sampling is purposive rather than randomly selected, the researcher occupies a more central role, requiring a reflection
of their role in the research process and data analysis differs considerably in that data needs to be organized and consistent themes need to be established.

British physician-psychologist William Stephenson conceived the Qualitative methodology in 1935, as a means to determine the subjectivity associated with any particular situation. Qualitative methodology combines the strength of both qualitative and quantitative research traditions (Dennis and Goldberg, 1996: 103-166), and in other respects provides a bridge between the two (Sell & Brown, 1984: 79-87).

Myers (2000), states that for those who are not familiar with qualitative methodology may be surprised by the sheer volume of data and the detailed level of analysis that results even when the research is confined to a small number of subjects

Qualitative methods of research consist of three main elements of data collection, including: Interactive Interviewing, Written descriptions by participants and observation. Qualitative methods permit the researcher to examine in depth the relevant case without the obscurity of previous generalized results.

A significant amount of negative comments have been attributed to the usage of Qualitative Research methods, including researcher bias and questionings regarding the reliability of the findings. Qualitative research has been branded ‘unscientific’, lacking scientific rigor. The research is soft, gathered through personal impressions and anecdote, the findings are strongly influenced by researcher bias. It is also argued that qualitative methods due to the personal interpretation by the researcher nullifies its reproducibility, as well as been criticized for generalizability, generating too large an amount of detail on a particular area.

Stake (1980) defends qualitative methods from the accusations of generalization, claiming,

*qualitative methodology is rebuked because studies are often difficult to replicate. Future researchers may not have access to the same subjects and if other subjects are used, results may differ. Subjects (respondents) may openly communicate with one researcher and remain distant with others. The aim, then, is on producing research that can inform and enhance readers understandings.*

(Stake, 1980:70)

Qualitative research builds on the merits of quantitative research in gaining an insight into a person's beliefs, motivations, attitudes and aspirations. Qualitative methodology was used by the author in analyzing unstructured information.
3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 The Long Interview
Kvale (1996) claims that the qualitative research interview seeks to describe the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say. The Long Interview is a key instrument in the qualitative methodology. McCracken, promotes the long interview, as the method of choice when cultural categories, assumptions, and themes are objects of investigation, and when total immersion in the studies scene is impractical or impossible (McCracken, 1988:5)

In formulating a template of questions to utilise as a guide in the interviewing process, the data collected in the Literature Review stage was examined to unearth both the unconscious and conscious assumptions of the varying authors. Following self-examination a questionnaire was designed, following the General interview guide approach with the same questions utilised for all individual interviewees. This approach ensured the required general areas of information were collected from each particular interviewee, providing a coherent and focused approach, however freedom to alter from the designated questions was allowed in an effort to obtain information possessing the ability to further contribute to the findings.

Questions are the key in any interview. Following the determination of the interview purposes and the relevant research and interviewee selection, an Interview Guide was compiled, including all questions and possible probes to utilise in the interview. This guide was the blueprint in seeking the desired information. Qualitative interviews vary in nature and type. The author adopted an open-ended, loose structured interview approach, which allowed for the meandering of the interviewee in gauging the varying opinions.

The author pinpointed twelve prominent characters involved through varying degrees in the tourism sector in Cork City. All requested kindly participated in the Interview process.

3.3.2 Sampling

This area of the research process required gathering a sample of individuals containing the ability to contribute opinions of interest in formulating an analysis of accurate proportions. For the purpose of the study, a sample of twelve participants was deemed necessary.

3.4 The Components of Research

3.4.1 Information Access

All information gathered for the purposes of the study was arranged through direct contact. Potential sources selected for the purposes of interview were contacted via the communication mediums of: letter, telephone and electronic mail.
The research focus was outlined through initial contact and when the messages were returned appointment dates were set and contact details were exchanged for the purposes of the interview.

3.4.2 The Interview

The interview offers the interviewee such a wealth of knowledge, its very nature allows for so much more information than just the mere word; reactions, non-verbal communication and tone all contribute to the meaning of any particular expression.

Prior to the beginning of the interview, fitful conversation was engaged in to act as an ice-breaker and encourage a more amiable and open discussion. The authors work in the tourism industry combined with the research provided ease of conversation. Interviews should not overrun a fifty-minute time span as general interest can wane at this stage.

Permission was requested for the use of a Dictaphone with a number of interviewees in order to accurately transcribe verbatim the opinions and beliefs expressed by the interviewee. Of course the interviewee was allotted the decision to refuse, such a denial was not experienced. The Dictaphone was used in conjunction with note-taking in order to highlight pertinent points to accentuate in the study area.

Interviewing as a research technique does require a lot of effort in the formulation of questions, structuring the interview, arranging a date, time and venue with the interviewee combined with much travel. However, the interview provided an abundance of rich information from vastly experienced individuals whom reflected on issues utilising a well of personal knowledge, attained through years of experience. The request by the author to directly quote the opinions of these leading characters was welcomed by all interviewees.

3.5 Analysis of Data

In qualitative research the input of the researcher is key, as it is the researchers conceptualization of the issue coupled with the data obtained from research which effectively paints the results and output of the research.

Strauss and Corbin coined the term ‘grounded theory’ in highlighting the investigators reliance on theory derived from varying research sources in producing accurate insights, understanding and coherent guides. A researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind (unless his or her purpose is to elaborate and extend existing theory). Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge form the data. Theory derived form data is more likely to resemble the ‘reality’ than in theory derived by putting together a series of concepts based on experience or solely through speculation (Strauss and Cobin, 1998).

Seidal (1998) created a useful model in explaining the basis of qualitative data analysis, this model was utilized by the author throughout the analysis of relevant research. The model consists of 3 parts: Noticing, Collecting and Thinking about interesting things. These parts are interlinked and cyclical. For example while
thinking about things you notice further things and collect them. The process is analogous of a jigsaw puzzle, data of interest is assigned a 'code' based on a specific theme, which effectively breaks large chunks of data into fragments.

Codes were designated to particular pieces of data, which thereby became sorting and collection devices. According to Kelle and Seidal (1995), codes are differentiated in two basic ways; they can act as, objective, transparent representations of facts or they are heuristic tools to enable further investigation and discovery.

The codes possessed a dual function as a collection point for pertinent data and as code labels to decipher the perceived happenings. Additionally, deeper meanings in the data can be obtained from the information referenced in the codes.

Finally the varying codes and variables were linked, which correlated the vast empirical information pertaining to the literature review and the interviews themselves.

3.6 Summary

The information obtained in furnishing the authors findings was gained from the adoption of qualitative research methodologies, which involved interviewing twelve leading figures with an input in Cork City Tourism. Seidel’s model for data analysis was adhered too in establishing the findings and results outlined in the succeeding chapter.
Chapter 4

Research Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to analyze the main findings encountered in the research and study. As stated in Chapter 3, qualitative research methods were employed in unearthing the finding’s. The primary tool utilised was the interview. Interview Guide questions were formulated following an analysis of the key concepts identified in the Literature Review phase. These same questions were put forth to all twelve interviewees in compiling a body of information to analyze in developing the relevant findings. Direct quotation of the interviewees is utilized in expressing the varying opinions.

4.2 Cork City: Tourism Product

*The major product is the city it-self, its shops, galleries, theatres, streets, museums, pubs. Cork has had a teeming commercial life since the 1400s. The bustle of the city, its Southern energy, has been noted by writers from Holingshed in the 1400s to Michael Mac Liammoir in the 1960’s. This energy will always be in Cork, its in the people, in the streets etc.*

Thomas McCarthy
Assistant Director of Cork 2005

The research notes the differing opinions relating to the primary factors that constitute the tourism product of Cork City. Varied opinions are held on what essentially are the major components that consist of Cork City’s tourism product. The Literature Review study highlighted the primary attractions and developmental schemes that will enhance the retail aspects of the city. Healy (2008) pointed at the developments in Academy Street as initiatives that will transform Cork city centre shopping. Conor Healy, of the Cork Chamber of Commerce, suggests shopping is a strong component of the city’s tourism product and envisions Cork becoming the retail hub of the South, attracting people from all over Munster instead of the traditional shopping destination that is Dublin.

Adrian Gregan, of the Cork Institute of Technology, argues that in terms of a definition of tourism, that Cork City doesn’t actually have a product, rather it has products that you utilise, drawing on the economics theory of derived demand a scenario is presented:

*I don’t actually want to buy medicine, what I actually want to buy is wellness. To get wellness I have to buy medicine, because I’m in Cork, I’ll go shopping or I’ll use a restaurant rather than I came to Cork to go shopping and use a restaurant.*

Adrian Gregan
Head of Tourism, Cork institute of Technology
Food, culture and heritage were characteristics reiterated by many as fundamental features in Cork City’s product mix. Boland (2004) realized that the city is essentially a short break market. Moynihan (in Boland: 2004) attributed the growth in this market with the corresponding increase in the number of cities with direct air access into Cork. It was identified that Cork City is a short-break destination and it is a platform to other areas in the region. Conor Healy, of the Cork Chamber, acknowledges the current tourism product is limited enough, in putting forth the idea, that if you were to ask people in Cork, ‘What are the top 10 things to in Cork?’, replies would be inconsistent and not forceful. Healy accentuated the lack of an iconic attraction while acknowledging that more joint product development is needed. Healy suggests that there is a lack of a very strong core tourism product. The recently vacated Beamish brewery is attracting attention from local tourism affiliated groups. Honorary secretary of the Cork heritage group, Mick Murphy states, “We firmly believe the brewery could be a successful tourism project for both the company and the region” (Healy, 2009: 6). Ann Cronin of the Cork Convention Bureau, cites the need for more indoor activities particularly with the Irish climate.

Pat Keohane of Cork Airport, argues that the tourism product of Cork is varied:

> One has to look at the tourism product of Cork City in a particular context. Cork as a city is missing an internationally recognized iconic attraction, similar to something like the Eden project, in Devon, Cornwall. What the city has, it is not exploiting, particularly in the context of harbour/water related activities, the overall development of the harbour could be a major asset for Cork, incorporating the history of Spike Island, the affiliation to the Titanic and the general heritage.

**Pat Keohane**  
Chief Executive, Cork Airport

The research notes that the product needs improvements in certain areas. The product does have areas in need of improvement that could enhance the overall product and tourists’ experience:

> “Signpost the bloody place! Get into the mindset of a complete stranger. Have historical notices and signs in English, Irish, French and Chinese. Absolutely essential! Stop thinking provincially. Always have locally born staff at Front of House. Only recently I was in a very expensive hotel in Cork when an obviously wealthy and educated American couple approached the desk and asked if there was anything to see in Cork? The receptionist said ‘Ah...ah...ah...No. I was so FURIOUS I went up the reception and demanded a sheet of paper and a pencil. I wrote down SIX ESSENTIAL sights in Cork City that this couple should experience: The Canova Casts, The English Market, The City Museum or The City Gaol, the view of Cork at night from Audley Place, The Lough, the Marina Walk. I happened to be back in that hotel that evening and I met this couple. They were thrilled and overjoyed by what they’d seen in Cork”.

**Thomas McCarthy**  
Assistant Director of Cork 2005
Tom O'Driscoll of the Cork Marketing partnership, cites the opening hours of the city centre businesses as a major area that needs to be addressed. Drawing on a personal encounter, O’Driscoll recalls walking around the city centre on an August evening (2008), and the whole city was closed with the exception of a few pubs and restaurants. In contrast, in a similar time period, O’Driscoll was in Killarney and everything was opened: bookshops, ice-cream parlours, restaurants, music shops; Killarney was opened for business. Joe Fitzgerald, of Bus Eireann, argues for better marketing, focusing on the city’s wonderful facilities to bring people in, citing more festivals and an increased number of festivals as such measures.

This study examines the varying opinions and literature relevant to the tourism offerings’ of Cork City. This research can report that the city is well endowed with tourism amenities, however lack of a major attraction and a failure to provide simple measures such as signposts and extended opening hours is impacting upon the city tourism product.

4.2.1 Competitive Advantages

The research examines the various competitive advantages that allot Cork City with a particular advantage. The compactness, size, ease of access, heritage, the walkability, architecture, the feel, the atmosphere of the city are all buzz words recalled in reflecting on the city’s advantages. According to Joe Fitzgerald of Bus Eireann, the topography is a major attractive feature-highlighting the harbour, the second largest natural harbour in the world after Sydney. Fitzgerald suggested Cork City is a focal point for the touring of the South West region and highlighted the outstanding tourism infrastructure of the city. According to Fitzgerald, access is another major plus for Cork City with particular emphasis placed on the rail network to Dublin every hour, and the connectivity of Cork with the rest of Ireland in terms of access by bus. Fitzgerald argues that although the urban renewal projects and particularly the widening of the footpaths on Patrick Street have done a marvelous job in enhancing the aesthetics of the city, the sheer volume of traffic utilizing Patrick Street as a main thoroughfare is criticized as being ridiculous and detracting from the comfortable, personalized feel. The designation of Patrick Street as a national road path under the National Roads Authority network is ridiculed. Fitzgerald proposes the pedestrianizing of Patrick Street with sole use being granted to taxis and buses.

According to Thomas McCarthy of the Cork 2005 committee, the main advantages are as follows:

"It is a hugely attractive city, almost entirely hidden from its visitors. There should be a route always available to taxi drivers etc, a key route as beautiful as the route around Killarneys lakes. I remember in 2005 taking four different Ambassadors, as well as writers like Seamus Heaney and Claudio Magris across the hills of Cork. They were absolutely astounded by the views of Cork, its immense and unique beauty, as seen from Audley Place, Lovers Walk, Montenotte, Sundays Well, Patricks Hill. The Lough. Seamus Heaney, for example, was astonished by the birdlife of the Lough and by its literary associations with the fiction of Daniel Corkery. Cork’s major advantage is its facilities (you can seat over 7000 people to festive events on any night
in Cork), its food heritage, its musical and theatre heritage, its airport, its station, its superbly complex Bus-Routes served very well by Bus Eireann. It’s major disadvantage is its lack of advocacy at National level and the disgraceful loss of its Swansea Ferry service.

Thomas McCarthy
Assistant Director Cork 2005.

4.2.2 Competitive Disadvantages

This study examined the disadvantages of the city, which are leading to an overall loss in the potential to increase market share. Browne (2007), highlighted the potential of Cork to develop the marine heritage of the harbour, through the development of Spike Island and a Marine Museum. Tully (2006) concurs with Browne and promotes the idea that Cork is a primary candidate for a national Marine Museum. Tully accentuates the maritime history and facilities including the historic harbour and the Irish Naval base, as primary reasons for the designation. Tim O’ Sullivan of the Cork Titanic Society, pointed at the lack of a development of a maritime product as a major disadvantage:

“I have for long witnessed the mass emigration from this harbour, watched vessels loading and unloading goods and admired the spectacular cruise vessels that enter our historical harbour. I co-founded and am a member of a voluntary organization, The Cork Titanic Society, whereby promoting marine heritage is just one of our duties. We have unsuccessfully campaigned for a marine museum for Cork city for numerous years, the effort will continue. In the meantime, the society is currently fundraising for a commemorative stone for all people lost at sea, a plaque which will be located near our waters. Cork needs to become more aware of its heritage and convey the marine history not only to tourists but to its own people. We’ll continue to promote these marine aspects.”

Tim O’ Sullivan
Chairman, Cork Titanic Society

The study observes how market representation is contributing to the list of disadvantages pertaining to Cork City. Conor Healy of the Chamber of Commerce, identifies lack of awareness and lack of profile as to what Cork has to offer as major disadvantages, claiming traditionally Cork City wouldn’t have been viewed as a tourism destination, suggesting that people merely passed through the city en route to West Cork, East Cork or Kerry. However, Healy pinpoints the European Capital of Culture Event 2005 as a platform that focused people’s attention on Cork city as a city-break destination and further adds that this potential needs to be Marketed and profiled. Adrian Gregan of the Cork Institute of Technology, describes the city’s representation in one single word, ‘bland’, lacking an image, a brand and a wow factor.

Weather and price particularly in the context of hotel accommodation are stressed as disadvantages. Brendan Keating of the Port of Cork Company, blames the city’s
shortcomings on its historical interest in trade, as a means of explaining the lack of awareness of the tourism industry as a key economic driver:

"Its disadvantages would primarily be a lack of appreciation of the business opportunities in the mindset of the business people of Cork around tourism. Compare and contrast this with places like Galway, or places like Killarney where tourism is the bread and butter of the city, where it is the core economic engines of the city. It is not that in Cork. Cork has a strong tradition of trade associated with the port. It has a very strong pharmaceutical, I.T., and manufacturing base. Up until now it hasn't had the need to have a focus on tourism. That's changing however and as the city grows there is a need to sustain higher levels of economic activity, we do need to concentrate on businesses such as tourism"

Brendan Keating.
Chief Executive, Port of Cork.

An interesting point raised in the study was the failure of the tourism authorities to capitalize on past events and initiatives. Dave McCarthy of the Cork City Council, further hints at the city tourism official's failure to capitalize on major international events to highlight the positive attributes of the region, particularly the European Capital of Culture and the Le Tour De France cycling race. This combined with a lack of promotion of the city's attractions, usage of the harbour and the lack of a conference centre to accommodate both the local people in terms of concerts and musical plays is having a detrimental impact on the city:

"The biggest disadvantage is our conference centre because you have kids from Cork traveling all over Europe to concerts, as well as Dublin and yet there is no such facility in Cork".

Dave McCarthy
Councillor, Cork City Council

This research observed the main disadvantages of Cork City. Literature conveys Cork’s vast marine heritage, yet there is no dedicated marine tourism facility, a major disadvantage as voiced by O’ Sullivan of The Cork Titanic Society. The failure to possess a large-scale mixed-use venue was blamed as another major impediment

4.3 Promotional Bodies

Before the varying promotional bodies are examined, the author focuses on the following question; Is Cork City sold as a short-stay destination or is it in fact merely a transitory component of a wider package?

Moloney (2005), illustrates the importance of the short-stay and same-day visitors to the city, with 3,474,000 such trips in 2005. Conor Healy, of the Cork Chamber, suggests we have no option but to sell Cork city as a short-stay destination, claiming there is potential there to feed out to the local region. Heame (2008) reports that the short-stay market is the key trend in contemporary tourism. Brendan Keating, of the Port of Cork Company, agrees that we are primarily a short-stay destination but underlines the importance of the business market which more than likely eclipses the weekend leisure traveler:
“You can’t ignore the fact that there is a volume of business tourists in the city not to be underestimated. Even of greater significance to Cork than the weekend business or the short-stay visitors.”

Brendan Keating
Chief Executive, Port of Cork Company

Hilliary Creedon of Failte Ireland-South West, affirms the aforementioned opinion, stating its twofold that:

Cork City is promoted as a short-stay destination and used as a platform to the rest of the region as well.

Hilliary Creedon
Regional Tourism Development Officer, Failte Ireland-Southwest Region.

Adrian Gregan, of the Cork Institute of Technology, argues that Cork City is not sold as a short-stay destination, rather its sold as a commercial destination. Reciting examples with relevance to the Coach Tour business, Gregan argues that Cork lost out significantly due to its business tourism mind frame. Coach Tour operators demanded a weekday night and a weekend night, however Cork City on a large-scale could not accommodate the weekday night due to the business tourism and this combined with the proximity to Killarney affected business:

“I think Cork City is sold as a commercial destination, I’m particularly conscious of the considerable commercial business from Monday to Thursday, weekends are seen as coincidental on top of that. If you get it, you get it”

Adrian Gregan.
Head of Tourism Studies, Cork Institute of Technology

In terms of Cork as a transitory component, views are varied.

“No it is not a transitory tourist experience, though there are many powerfully placed tourist figures, both regionally and nationally, who would like to get people away from Cork city as quickly as possible. These people think Cork has enough business already and that any new business should be transferred to the bog and the mountain B&B. I disagree totally. Cork is a destination all of its own. Even in the year when Cork was EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE it was not mentioned as a priority by the authorities operating abroad. I find that very interesting.

Thomas McCarthy
Assistant Director Cork 2005

Conor Healy, of the Cork Chamber, disagrees with the notion that Cork City is merely a transitory component, instead claiming that it’s the lack of Cork City’s ability to attract the short-stay market. Drawing a comparison from an Irish city perspective, Healy outlines the success of Dublin in exploiting this short-stay/weekend market. Tom O’ Driscoll, of the Cork Marketing Partnership, claims that the problem is that the vast majority of people don’t even transit through the city anymore with the much
improved road infrastructure, detracting people from city access through the provision of ring roads providing direct access to Kerry and West Cork, by-passing Cork City it-self.

Ann Cronin, of the Cork Convention Bureau, agrees that Cork is a transitory component of a wider package that entails people utilising the city as a hub maybe for a day, stay a night or maybe not even, and travel on to Kinsale, Killarney, Midleton; at the expense of city centre business. Hillary Creedon, of Failte Ireland denies that Cork City is a transitory location, stating Cork City it is a destination in it-self.

While Joe Fitzgerald of Bus Eireann, suggests that this phenomenon is a trait of Irish Tourism for many people:

"You 'll always get that, if it 's Wednesday where in Killarney. Thursday in Connemara. You get these people who do a whistle stop tour of Ireland."

Joe Fitzgerald
Area Manager, Bus Eireann.

The study has found that despite the varying opinions of the interviewees the short-stay market is a major market for Cork City. Moloney (2005), highlights the economic importance of the short-stay, same day visitors whom undertook 3,474,000 trips in 2008 and contributed €158m to the local economy. In terms of answering the question of whether Cork City is a short-stay or transitory destination, the study furnished impressive economic figures created by the same-day visitor. Figures that can be further enhanced in promoting Cork City as a short-stay destination.

4.3.1 Promotion

O’Mahony (2001) examines Tourism Ireland’s ambition to better promote Ireland as a holiday destination for international visitors with the allocation of €76 million in funding over a three year period. O’Mahony (2001), highlights the intent of the Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland, Peter O’ Toole and he’s ambition to maximize the marketing budget in an effort to exploit all potential opportunities. This unification of one Tourism representation together with the streamlined regional tourism development authorities was expected to enhance clarity. However ambiguity still exists in Cork City amongst a few.

The research examines the opinions of the interviewees in relation to who has the primary responsibility to promote Cork City. Varying opinions were received regarding who is responsible for the promotion and marketing of Cork. The majority of interviewee responses placed the mantle of authority on the state tourism board, Failte Ireland South West, Tourism Ireland, Cork City Marketing Partnership and Cork City Council. Evelyn Coleman of the OPW, claims that the bulk of responsibility for promoting Cork City as a tourism destination lies with the Cork City Council:
"The Cork City Council plays a very important role in the upkeep and promotion of the city. Much maintenance work has been pursued in recent years such as the urban renewal and drainage schemes which have greatly enhanced the presentation of the city. The Council in conjunction with Failte Ireland are key figures in promoting the City.

Evelyn Coleman
Office of Public Works

The study examines the role of individual bodies in promoting their own business. Adrian Gregan, of the Cork Institute of Technology, disagrees with the notion of relying on such bodies and advocates the idea that it is the responsibility of: Cork hotels, Cork guesthouses, Cork restaurants and so on. The author Adrian Bull, highlighted this idea of lack of recognition amongst many that ones business is actually in the tourism industry, which is an issue. People working in restaurants, are working in the restaurant business or the food business. Gregan heeded attention to this issue of tourism businesses knowing whether they are actually in the tourism business. A second issue recognized by Gregan is the 'Free Rider Effect':

If someone else goes off and markets the place, don’t I get a ride in that for nothing, there is no way to lock into only the people that paid for the scheme get the business. In any case, the business that comes in on the scheme, displaces other business which means I get it anyway.

Gregan argues that there is a particular attitude amongst individual businesses that its Failte Ireland/Tourism Ireland’s job to get people for their business, while actually at best its Failte Ireland/Tourism Ireland’s job to get people into the region, its up to you to get them to stay with you:

I would apply that analogy to the responsibility for Cork. It is in fact the individual industry but I think it needs the leadership from an organization. Otherwise it won’t happen, it needs co-ordination dragging it together. There is good people out there doing good work but their motivation is self-interest.

Adrian Gregan.
Head of Tourism Studies, Cork Institute of Technology.

In terms of promotional bodies, the research suggest there is a lack of clarity regarding who has the primary responsibility to market the city, emphasis is placed on varying groups. Individual tourism businesses lack of recognition of their overall involvement in the industry is cited as a problem

4.3.2 Failte Ireland South West

The study highlights the criticisms directed at Failte Ireland. The primary domestic government/tourism agency is Failte Ireland. Hearne (2006) criticized the previous structure of the regional tourism development authorities, claiming that the authorities have long been fighting for a piece of the international pie, but the fact that marketing efforts were divided by seven meant that, on their own, they could have very little impact on their target markets. Hearne (2006), hinted that the new super-regions will be more effective in the pooling of resources.
Failte Ireland South West is one of these super-regions. In analyzing their role as regards promoting Cork City, Conor Healy, of the Cork Chamber, evokes a poor media profile of the organization, in which RTE (national broadcasting network) conducted a visit to the regional tourism office in Cork, seeking information and they were handled quite badly, which was broadcast on national airways. Healy, suggests there was a lot of criticism directed towards the organization by tourism-related businesses in terms of their role regarding Cork City tourism development. Healy acknowledges there has been improvements in the focus, yet this overall focus on Cork City is hindered by the very structure of Failte Ireland South West:

_I would say its not where it should be on the basis that a lot of it is around the structures. Failte Ireland in the region here has Cork and Kerry as its region, the difficulty for Cork City in that mix is that you got Kerry, which has a readily identifiable tourism product as such, a traditional tourism type product, you have West Cork which has its own identity as well, their two products are rural products based around the scenery and activities. The message that we’d be putting out is that Cork City’s model is part of a different mix, it’s a different tourism product, its more about your short-break, city break, it should be based more around the entertainment and activities in the city, that type of thing tied in with shopping and retail. It needs a specific, separate and different marketing campaign, marketing focus and marketing expertise to see benefits and I think we still haven’t seen that developed to the stage that it should be_

Conor Healy  
Chief Executive, Cork Chamber of Commerce

Niamh Twomey, of the Cork City Council, acknowledges the work of Failte Ireland in the dual partnership of Cork City Council and Failte Ireland in coordinating future projects for the benefit of tourism in Cork City, with particular emphasis on heritage trails and certain themes-Tales of Cork is one theme, Medieval Cork is another. Ann Cronin, of the Cork Convention Bureau, claims that Failte Ireland’s role is more of a developmental rather than a promotional role.

In contrast, Brendan Keating of the Port of Cork Company, places Cork City Council to the forefront of the marketing development and promotion of Cork:

_Failte Ireland South West are a body which is primarily interested in tourism development in the region, however they are in my view secondary to the role which the local authorities has to play and as time goes on, I can see the local authorities playing a much more forceful and effective role in tourism promotion for their particular areas because they are the people who have an obligation to respond on a local basis, in that context I think the local authorities have a strong role to play._

Brendan Keating  
Chief Executive, Port of Cork Company.

Tom O’ Driscoll, of Cork Marketing Partnership, highlights the City Council’s increased awareness of the need to market Cork City, in particular as a separate entity and reckons this is beginning to happen now with money being pumped into tourism for Cork City, accentuating the marketing of Cork City as a short stay destination. O’ Driscoll was of the opinion that the structure of the then Cork/Kerry tourism board
was not more specifically targeting Cork City’s tourism potential; blaming this lack of exposure on the Cork/Kerry board’s regional focus:

_The reality is that we were been eclipsed by Kerry. If you got any brochure, you’d see the lakes of Killarney, the mountains, the Ring of Kerry and a picture of St. Finbarres Cathedral on the back inside cover. That summed up how we were pushed into second place. Kerry is such a magnet for tourists._

Tom O’ Driscoll  
Board Director, Cork Marketing Partnership.

However O’ Driscoll does recognize the advancements in this particular area in recent years with special brochures placing emphasis on Cork city, the ‘Come to Cork’ campaign, meaning Cork City and the surrounding 20 mile ring-Blarney, Kinsale would be packaged with that.

Additionally, Conor Healy, of the Cork Chamber, accepts that promotional material such as brochures and web material are now differentiating Cork City, nevertheless these improvements haven’t translated into the level of development necessary. Healy cites the lack of publications relating to the top 10 things to do in Cork City, located in any front office in a hotel or other tourism entity as a flaw of the tourism authority, in not producing that type of documentation, arguing that such material is available for a lot of the regions be it in Kerry or West Cork. Healy adds more of a coordinated and leadership role needs to be adopted by the state agency.

Hilliary Creedon of Failte Ireland, acknowledges that there is particular areas in need of improvement, which are identified in the Failte Ireland three year developmental strategy, whereby issues are highlighted for promotion. Creedon further added, that by working collectively with industry and relevant stakeholders, these issues will be addressed effectively. Failte Ireland South West (previously Cork/Kerry) tourism has encountered a lot of negativity in the past regarding its lack of focus on Cork City and this was apparent throughout the author’s study. Much of this lack of attention is attributed to the structure involved.

In terms of Failte Ireland South West promoting Cork City solely as an individual entity, expectations vary. Adrian Gregan, of the Cork Institute of Technology, acknowledges that the authority has a brief for the province-which is Cork and Kerry, and developing the product in Cork and Kerry which effectively means it cannot support Cork City above the rest of the County or above anywhere else in Kerry. Gregan argues that this is something poorly understood by people in the industry:

_Most of the people in retail believe they do not have any business in tourism and do not support Failte Ireland in terms of funds or fees. What they expect from Failte Ireland, the body, is to know how many people came into their restaurant. That is not their job. Their job if I could put it in a different context is a little like Kinsale. Kinsale has a tourism bureau who go out and market Kinsale, not the individual businesses in Kinsale and the principle is if we get them into Kinsale, everybody will benefit. In a way, Failte Ireland goes off to angling competitions-it promotes the two counties and that’s its job. The link between that and an individual getting business_
out of it is a little bit unclear but their job really is development and overall promotion.

Adrian Gregan
Tourism & Hospitality Studies, Cork Institute of Technology

Gregan further identifies areas of potential overlap, citing a disjoint between the organizations' local job as a promotion board, then Failte Ireland's job nationally as a tourism promotion board and then Tourism Ireland's job as an international tourism promotion board. This coupled with the deduction of staff in pursuing the following employment roles: administration, retail and booking services depletes the available resources utilized primarily for promotion.

This study did encounter much criticism directed at the effectiveness of Failte Ireland as a regional tourism development authority. Much of the blame is attributed to the structure and an over emphasis by the board on Kerry, at the expense of Cork City. Additionally a lack of understanding of the role, function and objectives of Failte Ireland South West was encountered.

4.3.3 Cork Marketing Partnership

The research observes the role and work of the marketing partnership. The Cork Marketing Partnership is an initiative aimed at increasing the awareness of Cork City. The partnership has undertook some innovative measures. Kirwn (2008) applauded the Christmas Campaign held in the city centre. Some believe the partnership is merely interested in the business market as a whole. Niamh Twomey, of the Cork City Council, states that the partnership are more focused on business promotion and that particular perspective, developing initiatives to enhance the appearance of business provisions in the city, with a brief relating to such projects as the Better Buildings Award Scheme, also encouraging outside business to use Cork City as a venue for concerts and meetings. Twomey, argues that the partnership would have more of business brief than a tourism brief. Then again, business tourism is a valuable resource to Cork City.

In examining the potential of the Cork Marketing Partnership, Adrian Gregan, accepts it is a good first move but believes two things will hamper it. One being the available funds for marketing.

"I'd question has the partnership enough money and think of it this way, the island of Jersey spends more money in marketing Jersey in London than all of Ireland does. It's a little bit like Daz and Ariel on television. If Daz is on 15 times a night and Ariel is on once, Daz wins. Its that kind of analogy."

Adrian Gregan
Head of Tourism Studies, Cork Institute of Technology

The second issue raised by Gregan, is the competitive environment that Cork City is marketing it-self against. Ease of travel has allowed one to hop on a plane to Prague, there are places one will go now, quite simply because they can, whereas 10 years ago, this was not possible. Cork is fighting this pressure.
"I can leave Dublin or Shannon and I can be somewhere, I can be in Cardiff for the weekend, I can be in Paris for the weekend, I can be in Barcelona for the weekend, quite often cheaper than I'd get a train down from Dublin."

Adrian Gregan
Head of Tourism Studies, Cork Institute of Technology

Tom O’ Driscoll, of the Cork Marketing Partnership applauds the Christmas Campaign (2008) as an excellent initiative and a genuine attempt to attract visitors into the city centre over the Christmas period and agrees that indeed, it did strike a chord and attract attention to the city centre. In stating that, O’ Driscoll did comment on the lack of money possessed by the partnership and stressed it is largely a meeting of minds cajoling other people. It is not the marketing agency for the city.

In terms of business tourism, Ann Cronin, of the Cork Convention Bureau claims the Convention Bureau (an initiative formulated by the partnership) is largely the only organization promoting that particular area. Stating that there is other group’s for consumer and leisure marketing, including accommodation providers actively promoting their area. The Convention Bureau has the remit purely for business tourism. Cronin asserts that the city has different groupings’ promoting different areas and claims that these groupings should be on a collective forum rather than a fragmented effort. The partnership is an initiative representing stakeholders from hotels, City and County Councils, the Airport and the Chamber, working collectively under one umbrella to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

A finding from this study is that while the Cork Marketing Partnership is applauded for its efforts, in pushing Failte Ireland into developing innovative campaigns, good steps for an organization which is essentially voluntary. There is an overbearing opinion that the partnership is not enough. A more general focus in attracting ALL visitors to the region is the ideal situation.

4.3.4 Conference Centre

This research notes the intention of the Cork City Council to attain a conference centre through its outlines on the Draft Cork City Development Plan. Policy 8.11 of the Draft Cork City Development Plan declares the Council’s intention to attain a cultural convention/conference centre as part of the South Docks Local Area Plan. Adrian Gregan, of the Cork Institute of Technology, would be skeptical of plans being mooted by certain bodies and hoteliers in pushing the Cork Marketing Partnership for the development of a major conference centre in Cork city. Gregan is of the opinion that there is not a sufficient amount of major conferences to make such a facility practical. In reviewing the current structure, Gregan mentioned the teacher’s conference every Easter, in either Galway, Killarney, Waterford or somewhere and estimated that there is probably a dozen or more of these conferences every year in Ireland. Gregan points out that the major conferences such as the International Medical Conference will always select Dublin over Cork. Concluding this topic of discussion, Gregan questioned Cork City’s ability to carry another conference centre of the capacity of The O2 in Dublin.
Regarding the questioning of does Cork City need a major Conference Centre? Brendan Keating, of the Port of Cork Company, was interestingly of the opinion that usage should be maximized regarding present resources, placing particular emphasis on the City Hall. The capabilities of the City Hall as a venue have been conveyed through its ability to accommodate 3,500 people for the Congress of Credit Unions of Ireland.

Ann Cronin, of the Cork Convention Bureau, is of an opposing view and believes an event centre is of paramount importance in attracting larger association markets and commercial bodies to Cork City, stating that well up to 200 people can be accommodated, however when figures increase over this quota one begins to encounter restrictions from non-hotel venues. Cronin argues that Cork City does not have the capacity for the larger conferences:

_Its not just about sitting 800 people in a room, there is the question of where do you feed the 800 people, break-out rooms, exhibition space. Its fine to use the City Hall, however expecting one to go over and use the Imperial and the Clarion hotel, that’s not going to work, that will only work if it has to come here. If they have a choice, there is the alternative of the Belfast’s and Galway who have the capacity._

Ann Cronin
Business Development Manager, Cork Convention Bureau.

4.3.5 Promotional Bodies Effectiveness

This study examines the opinions of the interviewees in relation to how effective the existing promotional bodies are in promoting Cork City.(in Boland: 2004) Former Chief Executive of the Cork/Kerry Region, Maura Moynihan, commented on Cork City largely losing out in the region. Moynihan claims, despite the strength of the tourist sector Cork City accounts for only approximately 10% of the overall tourist activity in the Cork/Kerry region. This opinion does still persist, with regard to Failte Ireland.

Thomas McCarthy, of the Cork 2005 committee, was doubtful in his opinion regarding effectiveness, then again he did suggest best use has been made of available resources. Further claiming, it’s a matter of prioritizing available resources or finding entirely new resources. Conor Healy, of the Cork Chamber, suggests the promotion of the city has improved, yet more of a focus on the city is required, in stating many promotional campaigns run by Failte Ireland are still very vast. Healy applauds the Cork City Marketing Partnership for its Christmas Marketing campaigns, strong festival campaigns run in partnership with Failte Ireland but not led by them, it was more led by the Marketing Partnership. Further acclaim is directed at the Cork Convention Bureau in promoting business tourism, again an initiative that transpired through the Cork Marketing Partnership, its supported by Failte Ireland, but again wasn’t led by them, although they came on board and supported it. To an extent, Healy argues that the industry has been doing it for it-self and has been bringing on board Failte Ireland; whereas it could be argued it should be the other way around. Failte Ireland should be leading and bringing people on board.
Pat Keohane of Cork Airport, does agree that there has been discrepancies in the past and the likes of Killarney reaped the dividends in the South-West region. However Keohane acknowledges improvements are being made:

*The amalgamation of the city stakeholders in the formation of the Cork Marketing Partnership is a positive movement. The group together with the Convention bureau, have specific goals and objectives for Cork city, particularly the vision of attaining a Conference Centre is been much sought for by this group.*

Pat Keohane  
Chief Executive, Cork Airport

In questioning the effectiveness of tourism promotional bodies, Adrian Gregan, of the Cork Institute of Technology, claims that in general, data doesn’t distinguish between the different categories of visitors and tourists and the reasons why they are visiting a particular region. More than half of the National Tourism figure is here for other reasons rather than holidays. Gregan states:

*It wasn’t the marketing or promotional effort of Failte Ireland that brought visitors here, it was the fact that they were here for business or their brother lives here. When we begin to challenge effectiveness, you begin to say to the Irish Tourist Board, No! We didn’t have 5 million visitors, we had 2.5 million holidaymakers*

Further analysis can be directed at such factors as ethnic origins in determining the propensity for a visitor to be here in the first place.

*It’s a completely different set of motivations from going to Prague or going to the Canaries, effective job is something I would set up for questioning in that since of the word. On the basis that tourism is counting as somebody 24 hours away from their home, therefore if your staying in Cork, a Cork hotel or B & B overnight, your effectively counted as a tourist but actually you’re here because Pfizer is here not because its Cork.*

Adrian Gregan  
Head of Tourism Studies, CI.T.

The area of cultural tourism was highlighted in this study as an area of vast potential for Cork City. Evelyn Coleman of the OPW, promotes the idea of focusing on cultural advertising. According to McKercher and Cros (2002), as many as 240 million international journeys annually involve some element of cultural tourism:

*There is much scope to extend the current product offerings. Increased emphasis should be placed on cultural advertising and focus on our magnificent cultural attributes: including the Crawford Gallery, Vision Centre and the City Museum. Cork City could be developed more as a cultural destination and rather than seeking a catch-all approach this focus on the culture would be a far more effective niche.*

Evelyn Coleman,  
Office of Public Works
Tom O’Driscoll, of Cork Marketing Partnership, acknowledged the structure of the Marketing Partnership in pulling the different stakeholders together around one table, claiming much improvements have been made. However emphasis is placed on private sector involvement, reiterating Gregans ‘Free Rider Effect’, O’ Driscoll warns that the private sector can’t leave it merely to these agencies and public bodies to conduct all promotional efforts. Urban tourism needs a collective effort especially in Cork City who are ranking in at number 3 or 4 behind Dublin and Galway as a year round city-break destination.

Ann Cronin, of the Cork Convention Bureau, outlines that the current structure is only in the evolutionary stages or just beginning; considering that the Marketing Partnership has only been in existence for 2 years. Cronin understands that the structures has to grow and develop further, but asserts that huge investment has been made in the tourism product, with Cork possessing significant bedrooms in the city centre and county.

This research can report that the marketing of Cork City as a destination in it-self is at an embryonic stage. The regional tourism development authorities traditionally marketed Cork as part of the regional tourism campaigns. The advent of the Marketing Partnership and the Cork Convention Bureau is creating more of an emphasis solely on Cork City. However, it is too early to comment on the success rates of these groups.

4.3.6 Marketing Representation

Ross et al. (2001) defines the basic principle of marketing. Many believe Cork City is not benefiting from marketing. The primary reason is that Cork City is not exploiting its potential.

Thomas McCarthy, of the Cork 2005 committee, examines the history of the city, particularly the Edwardian era and highlights the importance of our natural assets at the time. Assets which are largely ignored today in promotional tools. In terms of branding, a defined strategy cannot be identified.

I’m not aware of any clear branding and branding strategy for Cork City. It is interesting to look at the printed archives, resources available in brochures, gazettes, Trade Directories published between 1903 and 1914-at that Edwardian era there was a much finer appreciation of the value of Cork city and harbour as an attractive tourist destination. For some reason or other, ignorance, lack of historical knowledge, etc. that sense of Cork has almost disappeared from available literature. It is utterly absent from the front desk of every Cork hotel.

Thomas McCarthy
Assistant Director of Cork 2005

The study can report that efforts are being undertaken to create a more defined brand, representative of Cork. Conor Healy, of the Cork Chamber, acknowledges that marketing activities and representation was historically conducted individually by separate organizations conveying their own vision and image of Cork city. The Cork
Marketing Partnership is a forum representative of eight organizations, agreeing on one single strategy and addressing the disjointed effort of the past. The body is working towards a more defined brand, representative of Cork, explaining that there now presently is a logo and a ‘Come to Cork’.com website, coordinating the efforts of the stakeholders. Healy does suggest that an awful lot more in terms of marketing Cork is necessary and increased effort is required in properly defining and marketing the brand; funding is raised as an impediment to this goal.

A significant finding emerging from this study is the complete lack of marketing representation of Cork City to the wider audience. Niamh Twomey, of the Cork City Council, questions the strength of the present brand while Ann Cronin, of the Cork Convention Bureau, argues that there is too much branding, literature and advertising by various groups, claiming it needs to be consolidated into a clear message. The Cork Convention work on the ‘Come to Cork’ we’ve been expecting you, while Failte Ireland would be promoting the consumer market with Discover Cork as their identity. Cronin outlines the various objectives with Failte Ireland working with the people and the product, to enhance the experience, aimed at the consumer, while the convention endeavors to make it easier for people to do business, focusing on economic development and investment, there is a spin-off effect. Cronin states that the perfect scenario would be one message communicated.

### 4.4 ACCESS

This research analyses the whole area of access, Conor Healy, of the Cork Chamber, conveys concern regarding the volatility of the airline business in the current climate. Reflecting on the period 2005-to present, the industry has witnessed huge fluctuations in the airlines. Healy cites a number of links to various cities across Europe and the airlines for whatever reasons, (normally outside of their own control) change their routes or change their schedules and suddenly the flights to or from Cork are pulled.

In terms of the access markets providing the most potential for Cork, Healy advocates the idea that the U.K. should clearly be a market that Cork strongly targets. Factors such a proximity, English-speaking and various similarities were married up with the greatest number of routes into and out of Cork and the U.K. is the primary contributor. Access into Paris, Schipol in Amsterdam, Germany were also mentioned in terms of maintaining strong links in these key markets. Nonetheless, Healy believes that from the tourism market perspective and that city-break market, that the U.K. has a lot to offer that hasn’t been exploited.

#### 4.4.1 Cork Airport

A matter that was consistently raised throughout the research, regarding Cork Airport pertained to its current debt situation. This study has found that the burden of the debt issue is stifling focus on the important issues of increased routes and increased airlines operating out of the airport. Thomas McCarthy, of the Cork 2005 committee, in his analysis pinpoints particular routes which possess vast potential for Cork city.
We need to have the AIRPORT DEBT completely written off so that the Airport authorities can make use of every penny that is earned on a year by year basis. The Airport authority, for example, should be given money to develop new air routes between New York Cork and Atlanta/Toronto and Cork; there are huge historic links between these places and Cork as well as a critical mass of population. In the years ahead we will really have to knuckle down and replenish, re-energise, re-educate and revive the slackened networks between Cork and North America. I also think they should look seriously at routes like Cork-Cape Town and Cork-Shanghai. There are forty million people in Shanghai waiting to be enthralled by Cork. I think there should be huge efforts to develop banking, cultural and technological links between Cork and Shanghai.

Thomas McCarthy
Assistant Director, Cork 2005.

According to Adrian Gregan, of the Cork Institute of Technology, the airport is operating quite well but is burdened by the debt issue and the separation from Dublin Airport Authority. Gregan, believes the urgent is dominating the important. The important should be to build routes, build airlines, build transport rather than trying to find €100 million to pay off the debt or the legalities of separating out. Additionally, Gregan emphasizes that the driver out of Cork should be the destinations that are feeding into Cork. Gregan, hints that Cork Airport Marketing is far more focused on taking the plane out of Cork rather than having planes coming in here from other places on which our people move out on. Gregan, further observes that there is quite a limited choice of places one can go to out of Cork, with the routes being advertised only being there on Tuesday or its only there on a Saturday presuming that one is coming for a week, which promotes a West Cork holiday rather than a city break.

This study has found that aviation competition is a major determinant in attracting people into the region. Tom O’Driscoll, of the Cork Marketing, Partnership supports Gregan’s observation. O’Driscoll, reflecting on the fares war between EasyJet and Ryanair ascertains that such competition was excellent for inward traffic. Such airlines as EasyJet, BMI Baby, Ryanair were flooding the market. However this competition has decreased, hence inward numbers are affected. In agreement with Gregan; O’Driscoll, does comment on the number of routes bringing people out of the country, arguing that in return Cork will not receive many tourists from such destinations as Lanzarote, Nice or Malaga. Again O’Driscoll, comments on the routes to Poland and is skeptical of the idea of these flights enhancing visitor numbers to the region claiming the flights merely serve a functional purpose in flying migrant workers back home.

Aer Lingus have a substantial number of routes out of Cork, however O’Driscoll, argues that apart from maybe Munich, Amsterdam and Berlin, a lot of those routes are ‘bucket and shovel’ routes-meaning flying local people out of the country on their holidays abroad. O’Driscoll, stresses that we need to gain access to markets like Northern Italy, more German cities and more French cities, where you can bring in tourists. Inward routes are lacking. However, if an American route with maybe Continental or Delta coming in from JFK or New York could transpire; this occurrence would have the potential to reel people in and even if those people were going onwards to somewhere else in Ireland, they would almost certainly spend their first and last night in Cork city, being near the airport.
An interesting observation arising from this study is that Cork Airport is lacking routes possessing the potential to bring a large amount of people into the region. Many flights are merely serving to return the home market from their destination. This is an area that needs further examination.

4.4.2 Port of Cork-Cruise Liners

This research notes the importance of the Port of Cork, from a tourism perspective. The Port of Cork Company is much applauded for its continual increase in massive liners docking in Cork Harbour each year. This Cruise Liner business contributes a significant amount to the local economy and many of the interviewees displayed an appreciation and an awareness of this business and commented on the Port’s success in this arena. O’ Keeffe (2008), highlights the significance of the cruise business, with 41 ships bringing 50,000 visitors to the South West region. These visitors contributed €30 million to the region.

*The Harbour Commissioners, or whatever new designation they have, is one of the smartest, outward-looking outfits at work on Cork’s behalf. I would pour huge public relations resources into that outfit. They’d use it brilliantly for Cork and for its harbour area.*

Thomas McCarthy  
Assistant Director, Cork 2005

Tom O’ Driscoll, of the Cork Marketing Partnership, praises the facilities in the harbour, which does allow these liners to visit and accentuates the deficiencies in both Dublin and Galway in that respect. In terms of visitors off the liners, O’ Driscoll, emphasizes the current pressures regarding price and accessibility of Cork City’s attractions particularly on a Sunday.

In relation to the movement of the Port of Cork’s industrial activities to the lower harbour, O’ Driscoll, was of the opinion that this would enhance tourism in the city.

“*Most progressive cities have got their big container ships down river, they don’t come up to the quays in many of the European and British cities. There is no doubt that if movement occurs we would have the docklands, a waterfront right down along the marina, waterfront extending right down the city, one won’t be looking at dirty ships. Over in Swansea, which Cork is twinned with, there is beautiful marinas with old ships. Similarly Liverpool is another city that has marketed its docklands*”

Tom O’ Driscoll  
Director, Cork Marketing Partnership
4.4.3 Cork-Swansea Ferry

Arising from the study of the Port of Cork, inadvertently the issue of reinstating the Cork-Swansea Ferry link was evoked Walsh (2008) reported that the Cork Swansea ferry link was a service which transported an estimated 100,000 passengers, 30,000 cars and approximately 6,000-8,000 freight units each year in the March to October season, a significant contributor and a major loss to the region indeed.

The study has found that the loss of the service was detrimental to the local economy. According to Adrian Gregan of the Cork Institute of Technology, the loss of the ferry was significant considering its ‘Avenue Effect’. A theory which applies that when the ferry arrives in Cork, one will go into the city, get their bearings, might stay a day before traveling onwards. Essentially Cork city due to its location becomes part of the attraction and benefits from the visitors, unlike the people arriving in Rosslare whom travel straight on to Connemara or Kerry. Nonetheless, Gregan comments that Cork-Swansea is only one route and it’s applying the U.K. market, a market with declining significance in this country, in 2007 expenditure by residents from Other Europe exceeded expenditure by residents of Great Britain for the first time (CSO Statistical Yearbook of Ireland 2008) the problem in Gregan’s view is, Why aren’t there a dozen destinations feeding into Cork? Gregan, attributes a shift in travel patterns to this occurrence, water means a longer trip with people bringing their cars, while the quicker and often more convenient option of flying into the destination and renting a car is available.

4.4.4 Cork Harbour: Leisure Potential

This study acknowledges the vast leisure potential of Cork Harbour. Conor Healy of the Cork Chamber, agrees that the harbour does provide an abundance of opportunities to augment the tourism product offerings but accepts that a product hasn’t been developed. Facilities are not in place to accommodate many water-based leisure pursuits. Fitzpatrick (2008), highlights the lack of marinas and proper facilities to accommodate the leisure market. Healy, suggests that there is not enough marinas and channels need to be reserved for such purposes, these elements are ignored. According to Healy, the harbour is primarily serving industrial purposes rather than tourism purposes.

Niamh Twomey, of the Cork City Council, agrees that the harbour is not being utilized to its maximum and draws attention to the unique heritage of the harbour,

“the maritime history of the city combined with the cultural history, military history and industrial history, its all evident in the harbour”.

Niamh Twomey
Heritage Officer, Cork City Council

Adrian Gregan, of the Cork Institute of Technology, views the two elements of the Port; obviously the shipping access and secondly the port as a leisure port primarily. Commenting on the phenomenon that one can’t leave Cork city and do a half-day tour of the harbour, (with the exception of maybe a high-powered speedboat), one can’t do the family tour with the accompanying commentary. Gregan, highlights the lack of
such a ferry for tourism purposes and the deficiency of leisure craft for the size of the harbour.

An interesting analogy is evoked in this study. Gregan, draws a comparison between Cork and Sydney harbour-structurally the same, approximately the same volume of water, sheltered by a narrow entrance and naturally the weather is different. Sydney is renowned for its well-developed harbour and attractions. In contrast, Cork Harbour’s major attractions including: Spike Island, Roche’s Point, Fort Camden, Fort Carlisle have never been developed neither has the history associated with Drake’s Cove. Gregan, pinpoints the location presently behind the Port of Cork building, (the Bonded Warehouses) as an area offering enormous tourism development opportunities concerning the maritime connections in Cork, the food history or maybe international transport in Cork.

The research acknowledges the impact of the harbour towns in capitalizing on the harbour tourism product. Tom O’ Driscoll, of the Cork Marketing Partnership, acknowledges the Queenstown experience, based in Cobh as a benefit but noted more leisure use of the harbour in terms of boating is needed while commenting that we are hamstrung by the weather. Attention was drawn to the Cork Week, a sailing event in its second year of operations, an event which reinforces the idea that the city needs to be tied in with towns such as: Cobh, Kinsale, Crosshaven in an integrated tourism product. Comparisons were drawn to Lake Garda, in Italy whereby, O’ Driscoll, proposes operating a similar scheme, albeit on a smaller scale involving a ferry operating up the harbour and stop-off at the various harbour towns, offering a hop-on hop-off tour.

The research reports that a lack of harbour development from a tourism perspective is attributed to the city’s history as an industrial city with Fords, Dunlops, Verolme Dockyard etc and a failure to see Cork as a tourist city, a factor which has left Cork City behind but now efforts are being made to position and brand Cork as a tourism city and follow the same template as Galway and Kilkenny in re-branding the city.

Brendan Keating, of the Port of Cork Company, is aware of the major asset the Port of Cork is to the local economy, when pressed by the author as regarding the tourism potential and is the region reaping dividends, Keating while acknowledging its huge contribution conceded that there is room for improvement.

“There is significant additional benefits to be realized from a tourism perspective around the harbour. We have the very successful cruise business, we have 54 cruise vessels, 51 in 2008, we have 54 booked for 2009, that will bring approximately 90,000 visitors, that’s a very significant contributor to the economy and we have the linkage with Brittany Ferries, Roscoff-Cork. But at the same time then, there is the potential to exploit even further the leisure aspects of the harbour, which the Port of Cork is now looking at to see how it can contribute towards that”.

Brendan Keating
Chief Executive, Port of Cork Company

The research observes the role and contribution of the Port of Cork Company to the harbour. According to Keating, the Port of Cork’s core business is the provision of
infrastructure and land for goods and passengers, in performing their role the Port does lend support and sponsored Cork Week in recognition of the importance of the event. Keating further states, that leisure travel is welcomed by the Port once the shipping fairways are properly managed, that the traffic is managed in a safe and efficient way and that nobody is in danger as a consequence of the level of activity.

4.5 European Capital of Culture 2005

This research observes the publicity generated by the event. An event that shed the international spotlight on Cork City. According to Lynch (2005), over 350,000 extra people have come to Cork in the first three months of 2005. Undoubtedly, the event attracted a substantial amount of people to Cork for a myriad of reasons.

In accordance with Thomas McCarthy’s opinion, the city benefited enormously from the attention and numbers of people visiting the city in 2005. McCarthy further states that the accolade bestowed on the city will remain forever as a testimony to the culture of Cork:

The EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE had a prodigious effect on Cork tourist business. The number of visitors increased massively. Millions upon millions came into the city. The opening ceremonies were covered in daily newspapers from London to India. I think the designation is only waiting to be exploiting again. Glasgow didn’t really benefit from the designation until about ten years after the event. My own feeling is that Cork will see a EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE effect for years and years. It is likely because of the bad feelings generated by our programming activity in 2003-2005, that sense of elitism (utterly unfounded), we won’t get a complete buy-in to the Designation by Cork-based bourgeois operators and entrenched social elites for another two or three years. But Cork will always be a EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE. Once designated, always designated. It is a ribbon Cork wears forever.

Thomas McCarthy
Assistant Director, Cork 2005.

The study notes the varying opinions held by many regarding the effective usage of the title in enhancing the city. In Conor Healy’s opinion, the city didn’t maximize the full potential of the event, however, Healy, believes it has exposed the opportunities that do exist and reckons that if one is to go ten years on from 2005, at around 2015, looking back one will comment that 2005 was the catalyst that resulted in a lot of change which helped in moving forward. Healy, believes the event did expose the city’s limitation and acted as a booster to increase our potential.

From a local tourism perspective, Niamh Twomey, of the Cork City Council, asserts that the cultural event certainly made a big difference in local peoples perception and access to local culture. Arguing that prior to the event, there would have been a degree of intimidation by certain people in visiting an art gallery, whereas when the arts came out on to the streets and the mass of people engaged with it and developed a sense of ownership of the arts, they were not intimidated by the art anymore.
Additionally, Twomey, states the Capital of Culture 2005 event set a precedence in having outdoor events and outdoor performances.

Tom O’ Driscoll, agrees with McCarthy in the increased number of visitors to the city for the purposes of AGM’s, conferences and business meetings and contributes a degree of this increase to access-with aviation competition, particularly the fares war between EasyJet and Ryanair. O’ Driscoll, complements the spectacular opening while questioning the years programme of events and the recognition in Europe that Cork was indeed the European Capital of Culture designate for 2005. However, the programme had to be modest concerning the limited budget. Cotter (2003) draws a comparison in budgets; Glasgow received £40 million sterling for the event, while Cork received a paltry €15 million, hence the organizers were limited in their exploits.

Joe Fitzgerald of Bus Eireann, agrees that there was an extra buzz factor around the city in 2005, yet four years on Fitzgerald comments that it is difficult to see a lasting spin-off with the exception of the Marquee outdoor concerts and the establishment of the Cork Marketing Partnership. Fitzgerald, argues that there is a recognition now that you have to market the city.

The study notes that there was a certain degree of negativity towards the success of the event. Adrian Gregan of the Cork Institute of Technology, adopts a rather negative view of the success of the European Capital of Culture for Cork city, citing the resignation of the event director and a limited budget as indicators of the events potential:

_I would have to say they never really embraced the scope of it. I think the budget they allocated to it was just so minimum and what they provided was the repackaged stuff that would have happened anyway._

The strategy of using events such as the European Capitals of Culture as a means of distinguishing the cultural diversity of cities can lead, in reality, to a ‘reproduction of sameness’ or to a process of ‘serial monotony (Richards and Wilson 2004).

_I would nearly argue that it was as close to being the worst participant of all the cities that have been in the City of Culture. I don’t think it got good press for it, I don’t think it got any benefit out of it. I thought it was pathetic._

Adrian Gregan
Head of Tourism Department, C.I.T.
4.6 The Cork Main Drainage Scheme

The research notes the much improved water quality of Cork Harbour as a result of the Cork Main Drainage Scheme. A scheme that has greatly enhanced our water quality and the general aesthetics of the city waters. Sheahan (2000) outlines the cleanliness of the water, which has now reached bathing standards. Browne, concurs with Sheahan (2000) in stating that the fact that people can now swim in the Lee again is a testimony to the Drainage Scheme.

Has this major improvement enhanced water-based activities and the tourism potential of the city? The research furnished varying opinions. According to Thomas McCarthy, the scheme certainly has improved usage of the waters with the beginnings of a harbour-side café culture together with the Lee Swim and the Ocean to City Boatrace cited as primary indicators of these improvements.

Conor Healy of the Cork Chamber, believes that for those whom normally would use the water even prior to the scheme, (the rowing clubs, swimming groups and sailors pursuing leisure activities) that the conditions are now much better. Healy, doesn’t agree that there has been an upsurge in water-based activities resulting from the scheme. Tom O’ Driscoll of the Cork Marketing Partnership, reiterates the opinions of Healy in terms of usage by present users and explains how it was reported to himself by somebody having a meal in Jury’s Hotel, overlooking the Southern channel of the River Lee and there was a sighting of a seal, this sighting reinforces the improved water quality as prior to the scheme the river was dead, no fish there just a polluted sewer pipe. O’ Driscoll, emphasizes that the Lee Swim and the Ocean to City Boat race would not have been possible prior to the drainage scheme.

Brendan Keating, of the Port of Cork Company, emphasizes the environmental gain of the scheme, an imperative element in the development of sustainable tourism. Keating is emphatic in his views on the positive environmental impacts of the scheme:

"Untreated discharge going into the river at various different points, you can see how the quality of the water has improved dramatically. The fact that you can have boating activities, there is a complete elimination in the upper harbour of untreated effluence. The effluence now discharged from Cork city is all treated at the Carrignenan waste water treatment site. Huge environmental gain and a huge environmental dividend for Cork. In my view it has had a dramatic positive impact"

Brendan Keating
Chief Executive, Port of Cork Company

The study notes the lack of leisure boating activity in the harbour. According to Gregan, the amount of leisure boat activity that takes place in the harbour is negligible; commenting that the way the city has developed around the harbour has been quite poor, the weather doesn’t help he further adds. In contrasting Cork to Sydney and Falmouth Harbour, the harbour is lacking indeed and questions the level of boating activities in the harbour.
4.7 Price: Is Ireland Overpriced

This research can report that there is particular categories of the tourism product which do lead to dissatisfaction as regards price. According to Fitzgerald (2005), visitors are satisfied with value for money provided by travel to Ireland, in areas such as car hire and accommodation. However, the Failte Ireland Visitor Attitude Survey does convey that the cost of eating out and drinking out are considered too high.

This study notes that in an extremely competitive global market, industry and business have to maintain that edge and competitiveness in terms of price without endangering quality. It can be argued that the issue of price is a key determinant in many a persons discreitional decision to purchase. Opinions regarding price are mixed and varied regarding the Irish industry. (in Horgan 2005) Dr. Angela Wright, speaking in national terms does agree that Ireland is an expensive tourism destination, yet argues that there is a market that will pay for this opulence and quality, particularly the North American market,

“When it comes to tourists visiting our country, part of our target market is the high spend end. The spend per head of American tourists is vital for the tourism sector”.

(in Horgan, 2005: 2)

Thomas McCarthy of the Cork 2005 committee, draws an interesting analogy between tourism and an artisan cheeses in his idea that Cork isn’t a cheap destination and shouldn’t be sold as such, as this would undermine its reputation and associated features.

“It is not a cheap destination. It should never be sold as such. Tourism is like a local artisan cheese, slightly dearer but brilliant to consume. That should be everyone’s attitude. I would hate to see Cork hotel’s racing to the bottom. Disaster, that. Humiliating at every level, cultural, social, political.”

Thomas McCarthy
Assistant Director, Cork 2005.

The study notes that economic factors have influenced the issue of Price. Although, Conor Healy of the Cork Chamber, acknowledges the industry, in particular restaurants have been accused in the past to some extent of exorbitant pricing, Healy, reckons the situation is currently rebalancing itself. In terms of Cork, Healy suggest that premium pricing in the tourism industry has never been a issue, however nationally falls into the opposite category, while also suggesting that the pricing was very much driven by the way the economy was going:

Overpricing was driven by the way the economy was going, everything was increasing, there was minimum wage increases, a whole range of things that was
forcing up price, this had a knock-on impact. I’d say the current economic situation will rebalance that and we will see our-selves being a lot more competitive.

Conor Healy
Chief Executive, Cork Chamber of Commerce

Dave McCarthy, of Cork City Council, is highly critical of Price as a factor in the Irish Tourism Industry, claiming that we as a nation have priced our-selves out of the market. McCarthy, draws a comparison between Irish and Spanish restaurants and further adds that one is paying five times the amount for such items and highlights another observation of a popular restaurant in Cork city which is normally a hive of activity. On passing the restaurant one particular evening over the Christmas (2008), the restaurant was empty, a state which D. McCarty blames on overpricing. Total expenditure on Domestic Travel was down by just over 5% to €322.2m from the corresponding period in 2007. (C.S.O.:Household Travel Survey Q2 2008)

4.8 Domestic Market

“The number of Domestic trips taken by Irish residents fell by 5.8% to 1,867,000 in Q2 2008 from the 1,983,000 recorded in Q2 2007. Total nights fell by almost 9% to 5,380,000 with those spent on Business trips falling the most by nearly 19% to 3888,000 from Q2 2007.” (C.S.O.:Household Travel Survey Q2 2008).

The study notes the deteriorating economic conditions and the consequences of reduced international visitors. With the current economic climate, which is experiencing a recession, visitor numbers both internationally and nationally will decrease. It places greater emphasis on more effective Pricing structures and effectiveness in attaining numbers. The domestic market is a major source of income for the Irish Tourism Industry and resources have to be directed at targeting that market. Thomas McCarthy, of the Cork 2005 committee, underlines the importance of the domestic market, claiming this market provides 365 days of business a year:

Local market is 365 days of business a year. It is always worth doing business locally, particularly conference and commercial business. The astonishing thing is this: Cork still lacks a truly huge hotel and it lacks a truly HUGE conference facility. These will have to come.

Thomas McCarthy
Assistant Director, Cork 2005

According to Conor Healy, of the Cork Chamber, Cork city has benefited as much as it could from domestic tourism, accentuating that with the current economic climate more of a focus on the domestic market is essential. Healy raises interesting points regarding Cork’s stature as a domestic destination:

You ask 100 people not from Cork who are planning a weekend, next weekend for example, how many of them are seriously considering coming to Cork city for the weekend as opposed to going to Dublin, Kilkenny, Galway or Killarney. I think we’d be coming in after those and as the second city that’s not where we should be. We should be up there competing and fighting in the tourist mind for mind share. That’s a
reflection on the focus we put on marketing. The positive end of the spectrum is if you talk to people who do come and spend some time here, typically they're quite impressed and will come back and tell more people. It's about getting people in, getting word of mouth, getting a reputation built up as a tourism location. That's important.

Conor Healy
Chief Executive, Cork Chamber of Commerce

This study acknowledges that Cork City is not benefiting as much as it could from the domestic market. Tom O’Driscoll, of the Cork Marketing Partnership, agrees that we have achieved a certain degree of success domestically. Although he does comment on the scarcity of Dublin, Sligo, Athlone or Northern accents in the city. Therefore, while acknowledging attempts are being made, we aren’t there yet, stating the city has to re-position itself. O’Driscoll is encouraged by the progress being achieved by the Marketing Partnership.

Cork Marketing is definitely attracting shoppers from the outer Munster region with better roads in and around the city, pulling in people from South Tipperary, South Limerick and all of Co. Kerry.

Tom O’Driscoll
Director, Cork Marketing Partnership

Ann Cronin, of the Cork Convention Bureau, comments on the domestic sphere being the largest market for Ireland in general. Cronin, questions why many organizations invest significant resources into finding business abroad in such locations as America, while in fact 60-70% of the source of business is sitting in your doorstep. Healy (2007), reinforces this statement, claiming that one in two Irish adults is taking at least one break in this country every year now. Dave McCarthy, of the Cork City Council, while questioned on the topic of domestic tourism observed that a significant number of Cork people travel around the country for festivities or whatever else reason, but McCarthy questions is this business reciprocated, implying a lack of attention of Cork city by the rest of the country.

Adrian Gregan, of the Cork Institute of Technology, interestingly delves into the mind frame, perception and selection process of Irish people when choosing to holiday at home or abroad.

“There is a flaw in the way people think and it is that, ‘Sure you could go to Spain cheaper than you could holiday in Ireland’. Yet, invariably what I do not hear them doing is comparing actual like with like. So we are prepared to spend €350 each to share an apartment in Puerto Del somewhere in Spain in a crap apartment and put up with it because that’s Spain and you get the sun, sea and sand. If I want to go on holidays in Ireland, I want to stay in Parknasilla. I wonder why it’s going to cost us a grand each. For the price of two people going to the Canaries, you get a very good 6 people house in Dingle. It’s not the same. The comparison that people make it is not like with like. When we stay in Ireland, we think we should stay in 5 star hotels on our holidays and be full board. When we go to Spain we put up with apartments or when
we take a rented house in Dingle or Kinsale, it doesn't have the sand and sea and late night pubs. Somewhere the comparison isn't reasonable”.

Adrian Gregan
Head of Tourism Department, C.I.T.

Another area highlighted by Gregan is the ease of access, and the travel pattern that exists today, whereby people can jet off to exotic locations and Irish destinations are being compromised by this factor. Gartland (2006) claims that 2005 witnessed an increase in Irish residents traveling abroad, from 5.4 million in 2004 to 6.1 million in 2005. The increase of 12.8 per cent, represented the largest year-on-year increase in the last five years.

4.9 Docklands Development

The research acknowledges the vast potential of the Docklands Development in enhancing the appeal of Cork City. According to Barker (2008), the Scheme will incorporate a development on 400 acres of land, providing much open space. As well as a waterfront walk designed to tie in with the Council’s aim for a riverside walk from the Mardyke in the west, to the Marina in the east.

Conor Healy of Cork Chamber, acknowledges that part of the docklands plan envisions that the development would have a tourism element centered around a possible marine-themed museum or focused on the industrial heritage of the city relating to the major operators such as Ford’s and Dunlops. To a larger extent though, Healy, argues that the overall benefits from the project will be the increased level of people drawn to the city as a direct result of the development:

*What potentially the docklands could do at a broader level is direct more focus on Cork as a business location which has the propensity to bring more people in and out of Cork and generate more of an awareness of what Cork is all about. I think there will be a knock-on effect from that.*

Conor Healy
Chief Executive, Cork Chamber of Commerce

Tom O’ Driscoll, of the Cork Marketing Partnership, emphatically agrees that the Docklands Development beholds huge potential for the city. O’ Driscoll, reinforces his opinion by highlighting Barcelona as an example of a city that enhanced the docklands and effectively the perception changed from that of an industrial city, to that of an outward looking, contemporary tourism destination. Brendan Keating’s opinion regarding the docklands is dominated by the theory that the docklands must stimulate the economy:

*What the docklands must do first and foremost is act as an engine for economic growth, everything else is secondary beyond that. If there is a need for shopping, it
should be second tier shopping as distinct from a comparison type shopping. Economic activity and feed the region from an economic perspective.

Brendan Keating
Chief Executive, Port of Cork Company

Hilliary Creedon of Failte Ireland, agrees that the harbour will provide many extra people to the region particularly in the context of business tourism. Creedon claims that the Docklands Development will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the harbour and lead to an increased awareness of this wonderful asset:

_The docklands proposals do provide great potential for the city from a business tourism point of view, particularly if we attain an event centre. The harbour will be regenerated which will effectively increase peoples usage and appreciation of the harbour._

Hilliary Creedon
Regional Tourism Development Officer, Failte Ireland

Adrian Gregan, of the Cork Institute of Technology, regards most of the development as being more centered around educational infrastructure, office development and residential development. Gregan, reckons a marina will be put in place quite simply because the developments will have water frontage. Gregan, argues that tourism is not a fundamental issue in the development, and suggests it may be the other way around, that it is an extension of the normal life of the city centre.

Thomas McCarthy, of the Cork 2005 committee, holds high aspirations relating to the potential and usage of the harbour varying from a major banking operation to an international film studio complex.

_It is a very long-term project, maybe a fifty year project. It certainly needs a major activity or two. Maybe a casino and entertainment strip along Monaghan Road! Or maybe not! How about a European or even a Chinese banking operation, a European HQ for such an organization as well as boutique hotels and a HUGE conference centre/hotel complex. I look out on the Docklands everyday from my house at the top of Lovers Walk in Montenotte. I hang an original drawing of the Fordson manufacturing compulsory purchase act of 1917 on my library wall as well as a picture of the Cork Race Track. I have prodigious dreams that one day that space will be ablaze with lights, with entertainment, with culture and creative industries. Perhaps an international film complex even bigger than Ardmore in Wicklow. All of these things are possible. But the future must come from both tourism and creative industries._

Thomas McCarthy
Assistant Director, Cork 2005
Chapter 5

Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This area of study is an examination of Cork City, the tourism product presently offered by Cork City and highlights areas of tourism that are under-exploited in the city. The core body of work is reinforced by the opinions and analysis of twelve people, who’s position and experience within the industry and related industry, allot them the authority to offer valued input in the context of the current area of study. These interviewees included the Chief Executive of the Port of Cork Company, Cork Chamber and Cork Airport. The study utilizes the perceptions and analysis of these leading figures in the Cork City Tourism Industry in providing a valuable observation. The subsequent conclusions were drawn from the author’s study of relevant tourism literature and the data accumulated from the author’s field research.

5.2 Review of Main Findings

This research project provides an examination and an insight into Cork City in terms of its current tourism product and areas of development that have not been exploited in enhancing Cork city’s attractiveness as a tourism destination. In terms of the larger competitive macro environment, the competitive advantages and disadvantages are evaluated in an attempt to highlight areas of weakness and potential opportunities.

The varying bodies promoting the city are reviewed, opinions and input are gathered in appraising their effectiveness in promoting Cork City as a tourism destination and as an entity in its own right. The marketing of Cork City was extensively reviewed in terms of advertising, literature and branding.

Agreeably access is a primary component for any tourist destination. Access types, routes, scheduling, quality, and options are critical together with the transport infrastructure. Leading figures in the road, air and sea transport industry are interviewed in connection with a general appraisal of the service provided by: Cork Airport, Bus Eireann and the Port of Cork; primary engines in the attraction of visitors to the region.

Cork harbour is the second largest natural harbour in the world. Research was conducted extensively into this area to examine is the full potential being utilized in increasing usage and leisure activities in the harbour. The cultural event of 2005, ‘The European Capital of Culture’ is studied in terms of its impact in 2005 and the spin-off from the title.

A major engineering scheme from not only a local but national context, the Cork Main Drainage Scheme is researched. A scheme, which greatly enhanced the water quality of the Lee, but did the scheme increase water-based leisure activities? Price as an issue is examined, are we too expensive? With the downturn in international visitors due to a myriad of external factors, has the targeting of the domestic market
reaped dividends for the local tourism industry is another issue addressed and portrayed in the findings.

5.2.1 Cork City: Competitive Advantages

The research results center on certain predominant themes. The size of the city meaning everything in the city is of walking distance was one central theme, access is another major advantage cited. History- the vast and rich history of the city has allotted the area with historical remnants coupled with an ambience, heritage and cultural identity. “The compactness, size, ease of access, heritage, the walkability, architecture, the feel and the atmosphere of the city are all buzz words recalled in reflecting on the city’s advantages” (Chapter 4: 40).

The recently completed Urban Renewal Schemes has very much enhanced the appearance of the city and the widened footpaths and streetscapes favor the walker and allot a personalized feel to the city. Major events that have graced the city’s shore including the: European Capital of Culture Title, Le Tour De France and the Tall Ships Races were accentuated for their role in exposing the city to the wider international audience, as well as showcasing Cork’s ability to accommodate such events.

The Cork Main Drainage Scheme and Cork Harbour in general were outlined as major advantages for the city. The Drainage Scheme effectively removed all discharge from the city’s waters, greatly enhancing water quality and the appearance of the River Lee. The harbour due to its geographical size and capability was an entity earmarked for future development.

5.2.2 Competitive Disadvantages

A disadvantage not just for Cork City but for the whole of Ireland is the current ease of access to foreign exotic destinations. In the increasingly competitive global tourism environment, Cork City is positioning itself against major cities such as: Paris, Barcelona, London and Venice. This occurrence does create a negative effect, particularly for the domestic market. Weather and climate is another component underlined for its adverse impact on many outdoor leisure pursuits and those seeking the sun.

Another disadvantage borne by the city is the lack of a truly recognized international attraction. Cork city has no iconic attraction in the same regard as the Eiffel Tower is to Paris, the Leaning Tower is to Pisa and the Colosseum is to Rome; there again one does not expect such a feature in Cork City. It is largely argued that we possess such natural and architectural heritage, such as the harbour, St. Finbarres Cathedral and a vast array of splendidly designed churches that may well in their own right be termed iconic in terms of richness of style.

A major disadvantage raised on Cork City’s behalf in terms of tourism is the city’s historical failure to recognize the city as a tourism city, “lack of awareness and lack of profile as to what Cork has to offer is a major disadvantage”(Chapter 4: 41) hence the failure to provide facilities such as slipways and marinas for the harbour and a general lack of a dedicated and cohesive effort to promote the city by the relevant bodies.
Facilities such as a large-scale, multi-purpose event centre with the capacity to hold large business meetings, concerts and indoor performances has been missing, as well as a truly large hotel.

Additionally, the physical connections to Cork city’s major attractions such as Shandon drastically need to be improved. The improvement of pedestrian connections to tourism attractions needs to be prioritized; measures such as improved signage and tourist information boards need to be strategically located to increase the tourists awareness of the city’s attractions. In an overall context, Cork city’s disadvantages are driven by the city itself, something which can be rectified.

5.2.3 Short-Stay or Transitory Destination

The research does suggest that all one really can expect from Cork City as a destination is the short-stay weekend, city-break market. As outlined in Chapter 4, “Cork City is promoted as a short-stay destination and used as a platform to the rest of the region as well” (Chapter 4 : 43). In the vast majority of cases, visitors are drawn to Cork City for a specific event or activity such as VFR, attending a wedding, attending a festival. In the mind frame of many people, cities such as Galway, Killarney, Kilkenny are destinations that merit a visit in terms of attractiveness and things to do. However, Cork City in itself does not complement that mind frame and although major improvements are being made in attracting visitors to the city on weekends (Cork City being marketed as a short-stay destination), business tourism is still very much to the forefront of tourism providers income.

Historically, Cork hasn’t been marketed individually as a destination in its own right and it is suggested that the city itself cannot accommodate tourists for 2-3 days by itself, thus, to enhance its potential as a short-stay destination, increased efforts should be invested in incorporating the city product with the various recognized attractions in a 20 mile radius namely: The Midleton Distillery, The Queenstown Story in Cobh, Kinsale and Blarney Castle. These destinations must be packaged together to enhance Cork city’s potential as a short-stay destination.

In terms of Cork City acting as a transitory component in a wider package, opinions are mixed. Certainly, the city is a regional hub for those traveling on to rural areas of Cork, in the North, West, East and South or on to Co. Kerry. People arrive in Cork, get their bearings and travel on. Others argue Cork City is not even a transitory component, that people arrive in the airport and port and through the improved road infrastructure travel straight on to West Cork or Kerry, completely bypassing the city.

Certainly, Cork City is being marketed as a short-stay destination. Historically, the city hasn’t marketed itself as a tourism entity in itself to a large extent and that image and profile hasn’t helped the city to benefit from tourism. However, major catch up is being pursued to rectify this perception and develop Cork city as a short-stay destination considering its well-developed facilities to support tourism.
5.2.4 Failte Ireland South West

The regional tourism authority was subjected to a lot of criticism throughout this study. Many working within the tourism business blame Failte Ireland South West (previously Cork /Kerry Tourism) for the lack of business, there again many people hold misguided perceptions as regards the role of the tourism body. It is argued that the primary role of the body is that of a developmental and promotional role, attract people into the region rather than attracting people to a particular tourism establishment. There is a misbelief and misdirected opinion in the wider industry in understanding the role of Failte Ireland South West.

However, from a historical context and based on the regional structure of Cork city, it is generally agreed that Cork city didn’t benefit from much of the regional tourism bodies promotional activities based primarily on the simple fact that the structure of the authority was focused on the regional rather than specifically promoting the city. This regional advertising and promotion entailed a significant degree of promotion of the more rural based product, depicting images of the mountains, the lakes, the green scenic beauty and activities based around outdoor pursuits—walking, cycling etc. While the body did provide an enticing picture of the region, it was a picture that favored the Kerrys’ and West Cork, hence, Cork city did suffer.

People view promotional material and form a picture in that context of how a region should be, the problem for Cork city in this context was it did not fit the picture for many of these visitors and this phenomenon is largely blamed on the predominant promotional material of the regional tourism development authority.

There is an agreed consensus, that attention is being heeded to this scenario and more focus is being directed at Cork City as a destination in itself through the focus on such features as our heritage, culture and people. Failte Ireland South West is now portraying Cork city as a short-stay city break destination. As already outlined in Chapter 4 Cork City is promoted as a short-stay destination.

5.2.5 Cork Marketing Partnership

A group born out of the need to specifically promote and develop Cork city as a tourism destination. The regional tourism authority didn’t inspire confidence in many in terms of the city and this partnership has renewed a new since of confidence. The European Capital of Culture event conveyed the vast opportunities of the city as a destination in its own right and the partnership evolved after this event.

Effectively the partnership has united the major stakeholders involved in the tourism industry in Cork and County and provided a forum to develop marketing and promotional campaigns with a distinctive unified message rather than the fragmented effort which was the case prior to the establishment of the partnership.

Funding is an issue highlighted that may well impact on the success and effectiveness of the initiatives pursued by the group. Although it is agreed that the organization is a good stepping stone and an improvement on the focus specifically on the city, it is
effectively however, merely a stepping stone and not a dedicated marketing group established solely for the purpose of promoting Cork city.

Another issue raised regarding the Cork Convention Bureau, an initiative of the partnership is the marketing focus on the larger business conference type market rather than the small-scale leisure travelers, suggesting a bias in the targeting and marketing and promotional efforts. “Cork City is sold as a commercial destination” (Chapter 4: 48) It is generally agreed that the Cork Marketing Partnership is an improvement but it is not the answer to Cork City’s overall promotional needs. As outlined in Chapter 4, “its not the marketing agency for the city”. (Chapter 4: 49)

5.2.6 Promotional Bodies Effectiveness

The promotional bodies that do promote Cork city as a destination, promote the city on an individual basis and promotes their own material deemed relevant in terms of effectively selling the city to the outsider. The trouble with this fragmented promotional effort is a lack of coherent and unified message communicating a single strong portrayal of Cork city.

This structure needs to be addressed and preferably amalgamated into one promotional unit that pulls together with some level of authority. Presently the situation presents the City Council trying to do one thing, the County Council trying to something else, Failte Ireland trying to do their thing in their remit and Cork Marketing Partnership pursuing their efforts.

A single dedicated group should be established and begin a process of annual audits and benchmarking to measure the city’s performance against competition. Additionally the tourism assets of the city need to be constantly evaluated in both the national and international context to stimulate the continuous development of the relevant product, utilising international best practice as a means to benchmark. Therefore, an annual benchmarking programme could be established to measure the city’s performance with relevance to other international cities of a similar profile, and formulate responses based on these results.

A matter raised as compounding the effectives of the present bodies is the lack of resources invested in promotional activities by the private sector in creating initiatives to enhance the city as a whole. Chapter 4 highlighted the need for all bodies including the private sector to work together in enhancing the urban tourism product of Cork City. Much blame is directed at the private sector’s lack of involvement, “the private sector can’t leave it merely to these agencies and public bodies to conduct all promotional efforts (Chapter 4 : 52). Such promotion is for the better of Cork city as a whole rather than merely promoting a single establishment. This failure to participate in such efforts due to a number of possible reasons subdues the relevant marketing budget, depleting resources which ultimately impacts on the effectiveness of the promotional organization. The failure of many in the private sector to support in funding the Christmas lights in the city centre highlights this reluctance in contributing to elements which intend to enhance the city for all. There is a patent lack of coordination.
5.2.7 Marketing Representation

Traditionally, Cork City hasn’t been greatly represented in terms of Marketing. Marketing as a discipline entails 4 crucial P’s-Price, Product, Place and Promotion. Irrespective of the other three, Cork city hasn’t effectively promoted itself as a tourism destination, this can largely be attributed to a failure to position the city’s features as a tourism attraction in the mind frame of the required market. A leading tourism figure commented in Chapter 4, “I’m not aware of any clear brand and branding strategy for Cork City” (Chapter 4: 52). This illustrates the complete failure to develop influential advertising and a failure to create a strong brand.

Certainly today there is promotional tools and brands. Failte Ireland’s ‘Discover Cork’ campaign, the Cork City Marketing Partnership body, the Cork Convention Bureau use the ‘Come to Cork’ website as a promotional tool to attract people to come to Cork combined with leaflets, maps, brochures and other promotional literature. However, there is no single clear message or a single strong brand in promoting Cork. This disjointed and fragmented structure again dilutes the effectiveness of promotion. Attractions of significance in the city such as Shandon or St. Finbarres Cathedral have been mooted as possible visual representatives of a new brand in promoting Cork city as a tourism destination.

Although changes have occurred in the focus of the regional tourism board, the historical regional tourism marketing was heavily criticized as a more rural based, more activity and adventure based. Highlighting a different product in a different market. Whereas, Cork city required a different type of marketing communicating a different message to a different market, treated completely different to the marketing of rural Cork or Kerry. “Cork City’s model is part of a different mix, it’s a different tourism product” (Chapter 4: 46).

The areas of marketing, packaging and branding with a specific focus on the city were cited as primary areas of improvement in bettering Cork city.

5.2.8 Cork Airport

Cork Airport has been experiencing consecutive increases in passenger numbers over the previous number of years to the unprecedented numbers recorded in 2008 of 3.2 million passengers. A new terminal has allotted the airport with vast potential to cater for even further increases of up to 5 million passengers a year.

The airport was applauded in terms of its infrastructure and facilities, however there is certain question marks regarding the flights and the schedules operated by the airport. Connectivity to major European hubs such as: London Heathrow, Charles De Gaulle in Paris and Schiphol in Amsterdam were outlined as a major competitive advantage, however a substantial amount of the flights departing from Cork Airport seem to favor the outbound rather than the inbound market-effectively transporting local people to the destinations and back, a term coined as ‘bucket and shovel’ routes. A phenomenon which doesn’t add much in terms of tourism revenue. “Cork Airport Marketing is far more focused on taking the plane out of Cork rather than having planes coming in here from other places on which our people move out on” (Chapter
Greater emphasis needs to be directed at destinations such as Germany and Northern Italy, continuously strive for the transatlantic routes in areas such as New York and Atlanta/Toronto, areas with huge historic links and a population with much affiliation to Ireland.

Additionally, the flight offerings to Eastern Europe are to a large extent acting as a transport medium to migrant workers going home. Emphasis on key markets with a potential and propensity to actually travel to Cork was highlighted. It has been claimed that the current structure under the control of Dublin Airport Authority combined with the controversy of who will fund the €100 million debt has detracted the Cork Airport Authority from the important issue of attracting airlines and routes to the airport and to the urgent issues at hand.

5.2.9 Port of Cork

The Port of Cork was greatly applauded as a forward looking and modern organization committed to reaping the potential of the port. Acclaim was allotted for the excellent infrastructural provision, maintenance and upkeep. The primary business base of the port would be more so based around the industrial rather than a tourism perspective. However, the tourism dimension is very valuable and significant to the local economy.

In terms of a ferry service, the Port serves Brittany Ferries on the Cork-Roscoff route and in 2007 the Cork Swansea ferry service was lost, a devastating blow to the local economy. “The cork Swansea ferry link was a service which transported an estimated 100,000 passengers, 30,000 cars and approximately 6,000-8,000 freight units each year” (Chapter 4 : 56). This ferry link loss was a huge negative, a sentiment echoed by many of the interviewees. Nevertheless, proposals are in place for the reinstatement of this valuable Cork link. In spite of this, certain people would argue why don’t we have more ferry service operators operating out of the harbour. Is the harbour being sold as a ferry destination or more focused on industrial purposes?

Nevertheless, the Port of Cork is doing a magnificent job in increasing the number of Cruise Liners gracing the harbour shores on an annual basis. An estimate of 54 cruise vessels is expected in 2009 bringing in an excess of 90,000 passengers and crew ashore. This in it-self is a major economic boost and is a testimony to the Port’s endeavors to increase the harbour’s potential.

5.2.10 Cork Harbour

As discussed in Chapter 4, the harbour as an asset needs to be noticed and developed into the tourism product offerings of Cork City. The resounding feedback relating to Cork Harbour was the complete lack of usage and awareness of this amazing natural resource as an asset to incorporate into the wider tourism product offering. The water is often a key attraction to a destination in itself. Reflections on cities such as Venice, evoke visual imagery of boats meandering around narrow channels. Sydney evokes an image of the harbour, a hive of activity, the iconic Opera House and the bustling waters carrying leisure boats up and down the harbour. Similarly Copenhagen is a destination that has capitalized on its waters.
Again much of the blame for this lack of appreciation of the harbour is blamed on Cork city’s industrial past, this over emphasis on this sector is clearly evident in the infrastructure provision of the harbour and the lack of facilities such as slipways, marinas in place for leisure purposes. “The harbour is primarily serving industrial purposes rather than tourism purposes” (Chapter 4 : 56). The main contingency was not so much the general usage of the harbour which serves the merchant ships and cruise liners proficiently, it is the sheer lack of leisure usage for the purposes of day tours boating vessels touring the harbour, particularly from the city quays, which currently has no such operator. Nevertheless, there is several small-scale operators providing tours of the harbour, yet their position is down harbour. It is deemed a fragmented effort.

Cork city considering its maritime history should most definitely have a marine-themed product to enhance the current features. The lack of a vessel in providing proper facilities and commentary for the purposes of a tour which can adequately accommodate and inform visitors/tourists to the city is cited as a serious detrimental feature to the tourism potential of Cork city.

Suggestions were highlighted whereby the harbour could be utilized as a means of providing a packaged marine based product. Operating from the city, one could witness the remnants of military history in the form of Fort Camden, Fort Carlisle and the Martello towers at Haulbowline and Cobh standing testimony to an era gone bye. Additionally, visits could be incorporated to Cobh, visit the Queenstown story, visit the Naval base at Haulbowline and the possibility that Spike Island or even the docklands region of the city would possess a marine museum. Using a touring bus as a platform to connect people to our historical marine based attributes was promoted as an excellent method to enhance the tourism and maritime heritage.

5.2.11 European Capital of Culture 2005

The national average increase in visitor number for 2005 was 7%, Cork experienced a growth rate of 38%in the same period with 4,243,000 (<1,127,000 in 2003) people visiting the Greater Cork region generating €414 million. Much of this success can be attributed to the Cork 2005 events and further demonstrated how a unified marketing effort of the city could generate extra revenue, visitor numbers and increase the city’s profile.

Opinions are mixed regarding the success of the event. Certainly 2005 was a very good year for the tourism business particularly the hotel industry. Many attribute this occurrence to the fares war and increased competition in the aviation industry forcing prices down. Undoubtedly, the event did shed the international spotlight on the city, hence the vast majority of significant conferences, business meetings and so forth did allot business to the city.

The programme of activities has been labelled the repackaging of events that would have happened in Cork in 2005 anyway. There was a general consensus that the programme of events did not entice or attract enough attention quite simply due to its bland nature. As identified by some of those interviewed, it is believed the event
didn’t maximize its potential. “I would have to say they never really embraced the scope of it” (Chapter 4 : 59) The opening and closing ceremonies were an exception to this ideology, in that many commented on the spectacular visual appeal of the events. This bringing of the acts to the street is cited as a contributory element in attracting the home market to the arts in general. In fairness to the European Capital of Culture committee, although the significance and impact of the activities were questioned, there is indeed a disparity in terms of the budget allocated to the group which did of course impact on the extent of the year’s activities. Cotter (2003) argued what can Cork City contribute with a paltry budget? Glasgow had £40 million sterling to spend when they had the honour, Cork City has less than €15 million.

Meanwhile many within the tourism industry claim the event was a great marketing tool in promoting Cork City considering its status as a European Capital of Culture, a major accolade in the European sphere. Certain experts comment that the event provided the catalyst for the city to focus specifically on Cork City, in that 2005 highlighted the city’s vast tourism potential. Many argue it is with the gift of hindsight that one will comment on the significance of Cork 2005 in kick starting many projects.

Many projects have been instigated by the event, the most notable spin-off is the establishment of the Cork City Marketing Partnership and its body the Cork Convention Bureau in promoting Cork city. It is believed that maybe while not maximizing its potential in 2005, the event did provide initiatives and preferential focus on Cork city which would not have occurred only for the larger international glare shed on the city in 2005 compliments of the European Capital of Culture Title.

5.2.12 Cork Main Drainage Scheme

A major engineering feat which effectively removed all the discharge from the city’s water down in the direction of lower harbour, allotting the river channels of Cork with a much better quality of water. The aesthetic appeal has unquestionably improved as a result of the scheme and it has dramatically enhanced the environmental dimension and to an extent increased water-based activities.

Has the Cork Main Drainage Scheme greatly enhanced the tourism potential and increased water-based activities of the city’s waters? Certainly many argue it has increased activity in the form of the reinstated Cork Lee Swim which would not have been possible prior to the scheme and the Ocean to City Boat race, as well “as improving the usage of the waters with the beginnings of a harbour side café culture”, (Chapter 4: 60).

While it is suggested that the current environment is much more comfortable for the seasoned user-the rowing clubs, leisure sailors etc. it has not had any great bearing on the tourism dimension in terms of increased boating activity. While the Scheme was largely conducted out of necessity for health and environment reasons, it is put forth that no real great potential has being exploited in terms of tourism based leisure-boat crafts traveling up and down the river with the exception of the aforementioned boat race and Lee Swim which in them-selves wouldn’t significantly impact on tourism figures in the city.
5.2.13 Price: Is Ireland Overpriced

The predominant response regarding the issue of price is that certainly Ireland as a destination is over-priced. Recent evolutions such as the creation of the single European currency has provided a transparent medium for analyzing variances regarding price in European countries and Ireland does rank up towards the top in terms of high prices. The feedback received from our foreign visitors and various feedback surveys conducted by both Failte Ireland and The Port of Cork Company highlight price and value for money as an issue in Ireland. Fitzgerald (2005), provides analysis which informs us that visitors are dissatisfied with the high prices associated with eating out and drinking out in Ireland.

Certain people argue that Ireland was never sold as a cheap destination and in doing so this would undermine the quality of the product. Traditionally, examination of tourism and revenue figures in relation to tourists visiting Ireland convey a very lucrative market in particular the North American market. McCarthy suggest that Ireland as a destination is like an artisan cheese basically implying you pay for what you get.

However, markets such as the North American market have declined radically over the last number of years due to a combination of factors including: terrorism, war, and world economic factors. Hence, travel patterns and visitor categories are changing and there seems to be an upsurge in dissatisfaction in relation to value for money and the expensive nature of the destination, a factor which wasn’t a major issue in the Celtic Tiger era.

In an increasingly competitive environment, Ireland will have no choice but to become more competitive regarding Price. Examples were illustrated in the research, whereby tourism businesses in particular restaurants were experiencing radical declines in business, a factor predominately contributed to over-pricing. The current economic recession and invariable downturn in tourism figures will forcefully impact upon a rectification of the price issue, out of necessity and survival.

5.2.14 Domestic Market

According to the research undertook in Chapter 4, the domestic market is very important, representing 365 days of business. The domestic market does contribute significantly to tourism numbers. In 2006, Irish people spent an estimated €1.3 billion on domestic trips, up 9% on 2005.

However, the growing trend in the domestic market is to holiday abroad and experience the sun, sea, and sand element or merely a city of historical or cultural significance, than to holiday at home which can be less exciting, more mundane and lacking a degree of interest. This level of thinking was aided by the costs of international travel. The advent of low cost airlines such as Ryanair dramatically impacted on the price associated with traveling abroad. This reduction has obviously spurred international travel much to the expense of the domestic market.
Coupled with this occurrence is the perception associated with traveling at home and abroad. If one is to holiday at home there is a greater expectancy in terms of exclusivity in terms of luxurious accommodation and dining style. Yet if one is to visit a sun holiday resort in Spain, the expectancy is reduced and one is prepared to holiday in some cheap apartment to avail of the sun and other attractive features the destination has to offer. “The comparison that people make it is not like with like” (Chapter 4 : 63). There is a flaw in the contrast and this is where the price issue does affect the Irish Tourism Industry in terms of the domestic market potential.

However, the domestic market is a key market for Ireland and does add notable income to the industry. Yet, the ease of international travel is a major impediment to further benefit.

5.2.15 Docklands Development

The Docklands Development is a long-term project which promises to transform the visual appearance and structure of the city’s docklands. A development which possess the capability to transfixed Cork city’s attention on its waters rather than merely ignoring the docks for industrial purposes. It will extend the city centre boundary and enhance the landscape and structure of Cork city.

The Dockland’s Development provides an excellent opportunity for the city to exploit existing resources and create new attractions. There is scope to develop a number of visitor attractions in the docklands precinct. The natural asset of the River Lee must be harnessed and the potential for increasing marine based activities should be increased.

Will tourism benefit from the development? Many argue tourism provision does not form an integral place in the docklands provision with more of an emphasis on the retail and residential areas. Proposals are in place for a possible hotel. A waterfront is mooted as an asset in appreciating and allotting more attention and focus on the harbour region. Although tourism may well be supplementary in terms of involvement, the key issue is that more people will be drawn to the city as a result of the Docklands Development which will inadvertently benefit tourism in the area.

A more significant function of the development proposed by many is the ability to generate increased economic activity in the area, which will subsequently impact upon areas such as tourism.
5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

The body of study illustrated the historical shortcomings of the relevant promotional bodies representing Cork City. The Regional Tourism Development Authority has traditionally favored the more rural activity based message rather than focusing on the short-stay, city break type message. This misguided effort has adversely impacted upon Cork City as a destination and the matter is presently being addressed by the tourism board with specific campaigns highlighting the city’s attributes. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the Regional Tourism Development Authority has a regional focus and Cork City does not occupy any preferential treatment in that since.

Likewise, Cork Marketing Partnership, although an innovative movement is not a direct marketing agency for Cork City. Many argue that the Partnership and the Convention Bureau are merely focusing on the business traveler rather than the overall target market. Hence the lack of a dedicated agency to market and promote Cork City has been highlighted. Many claim that Cork city can never be effectively marketed or promoted without the establishment of a dedicated international marketing agency committed solely to promoting Cork City as its brief. This is an area the author would suggest for further research in an effort to enhance Cork City’s tourism potential.

The issue of marketing and the city’s representation on both the national and international sphere has been emphasized. Cork City is represented in the marketing sphere by the Cork Marketing Partnership, Failte Ireland South West, and various tourism establishments highlighting their own vision and ideas deemed significant in enhancing Cork city. This disjointed effort does not convey a uniform and strong message for Cork City. The idea of introducing a dedicated marketing agency for Cork City does support this notion of creating a single strong brand or emblem representing Cork City as a tourism destination, which will effectively unite all resources and convey a single strong image and message for the city. This area of marketing should also be examined.

Cork City is a city steeped in marine heritage and tradition. Yet, the city lacks a dedicated marine museum, an injustice to the tourism product of Cork City. There is a minor display of marine exhibits located in the Bessboro Museum at Blackrock, however this is nothing on the scale that the city deserves. The development of the docklands along with the vacation of the historical Beamish and Crawford building on the South Main Street, Cork, provides an ideal opportunity for the establishment of a maritime museum in exploiting the city’s marine heritage and culture. An area that merits further research.

Cork Harbour is an amenity that possess the capability to be a major tourism attraction in it-self, yet amazingly remains largely under-exploited in terms of its tourism potential. Cork City needs the establishment of a day-tours boating vessel operating from the quays of Cork City, bringing people up harbour to view the various attractions and maybe form a link with Cobh, Haulbowline, Crosshaven and Spike Island as stop-off points along the tour itinerary. This magnificent harbour possesses rich military artifacts and fortifications and amazing scenery and the lack of usage is truly undermining the product offerings of Cork City. The area of tourism
and Cork marine heritage provides the context to establish a marine based product, this area deems further research in enhancing the city’s potential.

5.4 Conclusions

This study is an examination of Cork City as a tourism destination and highlights the areas which the city is essentially under-exploiting in enhancing the city’s potential. The study draws attention to the events, promotional bodies and activities as well as the assets that possess the ability to impact on the local tourism industry. Semi-structured interviews were organized with twelve leading personalities working within the industry, the data obtained from these figures was analyzed in Chapter 4. This qualitative method of research furnished findings that can be utilised in evaluating the under-exploited tourism potential of Cork city.

The findings of the study suggest that Cork City has not benefited greatly from the marketing of the state tourism board in the past due to an over emphasis on the ever popular Co. Kerry and rural Cork, more so than the city-break destination type message that needs to be portrayed for Cork City. Focus is being more specific today in relation to Cork City, however the lack of a strong single brand, single advertising agency promoting Cork City is identified as a key weakness in the marketing efforts relating to Cork City.

The study highlighted the lack of appreciation of Cork City as a marine city. No marine themed museum, no tourism based leisure craft operating from the city quays. A predominant usage of the harbour for industrial purposes with the exception of a few small-scale boat and ferry operators lower down harbour. The study concludes that Cork Harbour is largely under-exploited, from a tourism perspective.

The focus examined the European Capital of Culture event 2005 and highlighted the positive spin off’s from the event with an increased emphasis on outdoor performances evident in the continuation of the Cork: Live at the Marquee festival and the establishment of the Cork Marketing Partnership as an initiative born out of the events success in marketing Cork.

The study conveyed the significant advantages of the city in its culture, heritage, music, history, maritime element, access, walkability and contemporary elements. The lack of a major concert venue is mooted as a major disadvantage, as is the issue of price. Cork Airport was deemed to be more focused on outward rather than inbound visitors.

The study examined the Cork Main Drainage Scheme and its contribution to renewing the Cork Lee Swim and the Ocean to Sea Boat race. However a lack of leisure exploitation was highlighted. The domestic market was examined in terms of contribution to the tourism industry and the ease and costs of international airline travel were accentuated as adverse factors to domestic gain.

In conclusion, the study was revealing in its exposure of the city’s inadequacies in utilising what is available. From the imposing towers of Shandon to the architecturally intricate building of St. Finbarres Cathedral, to the flowing waters of
Cork Harbour, lies a product. A tourism product which is gifted with the infrastructure, the size, the attractions, culture, heritage and natural assets to be a major tourism destination. However, it is not the city’s beauty and attractions that are the cause of this occurrence; it is the people, the people leading the city in terms of promoting, developing and selling the city. It is these people who form the inadequacies, not Cork City. The city has had major engineering schemes in the form of the Drainage Scheme in enhancing the city’s waters, has had major international festivals and events including the European Capital of Culture, the second largest natural harbour in the world, yet the potential is under-exploited. The essence of our product lies in our waters.

 Appropriately this study will finish with the ideas of a famous Cork son, that of Jack Lynch. McNamara (1981) captures the thinking of Mr. Lynch in a reflective mood of his home city. Lynch states,

“An early Cork historian wrote:
‘Limerick was,
Dublin is
Cork will be-
The greatest city of the three’.

But it is unfair to make comparisons with other cities. It is not enough for us to provide for what is wanting in Cork Past; we must plan and, in planning, plan with vision building for Cork Future.

Jack Lynch
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Commissioned by: Cork City Council and Cork County Council.


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## Appendix A: List of Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Evelyn Coleman</td>
<td>Tourism Officer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Office of Public Works</td>
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<td>2. Ann Cronin</td>
<td>Business Development Manager</td>
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<td>Cork Convention Bureau</td>
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<td>3. Joe Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Area Manager</td>
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<td>Bus Eireann</td>
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<td>4. Adrian Gregan</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td>Tourism &amp; Hospitality Studies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cork Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>5. Conor Healy</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
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<td>Cork Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<td>6. Brendan Keating</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
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<td>Port of Cork Company</td>
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<td>7. Pat Keohane</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
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<td>Cork Airport</td>
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<td>8. Dave McCarthy</td>
<td>Councillor</td>
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<td>Cork City Council</td>
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<td>9. Thomas McCarthy</td>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
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<td>Cork 2005</td>
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<td>10. Tom O’ Driscoll</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<td>Cork Marketing Partnership</td>
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<td>11. Tim O’ Sullivan</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
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<td>Cork Titanic Society</td>
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<td>12. Niamh Twomey</td>
<td>Heritage Officer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cork City Council</td>
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Appendix B
The Interview Guide

• Are the current tourism/marketing authorities doing an effective job in promoting Cork City as a tourism destination?

• Who has the primary responsibility to develop, promote and market Cork?

• Is the current promotional structure effective?

• Is there a clear marketing representation of Cork City, in terms of Branding, Literature and Advertising?

• What is Cork City’s major competitive advantage?

• What is Cork City’s major competitive disadvantages?

• What does Cork City offer, what is the major tourism product?

• Is the current product sufficient?

• How can we enhance the tourism product of Cork?

• The Port of Cork, a major asset to Cork. Are we reaping dividends from a tourism perspective?

• The harbour is one of the largest natural harbours in the world, are we exploiting its potential?

• Did Cork reap the benefits of the international spotlight shed on the city through the European Capital of Culture Title?

• Did the Cork Main Drainage Scheme enhance water-based activities in the city?

• Are the current Regional Tourism Authorities understaffed?
• Why are tourists attracted to Cork, in your opinion?

• Does Cork City possess enough characteristics to satisfy tourists expectations?

• Is Ireland in general over-priced?

• Is there a lack of interest amongst relevant tourism bodies in exploiting the charms of Cork City?

• With the downturn in international visitors through a myriad of external factors, has the targeting of the domestic market reaped dividends for the local tourism industry?

• Is Cork City merely sold as a short-stay destination?

• Is Cork City merely a transitory component of a wider package?

• Does Cork City in it-self possess enough characteristics to be a more popular tourism destination?

• The Docklands Development Scheme-should this work inspire more recreational, shopping and other tourism amenities for Cork City?

These are a list of the general questions. Further questions varied according to the individual being interviewed.