

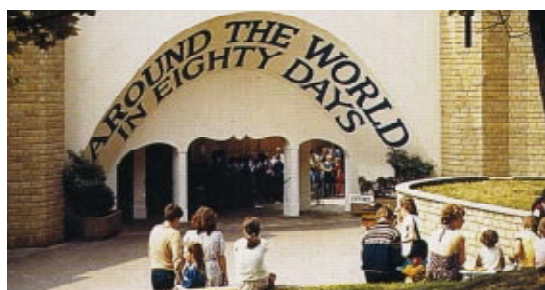


TH13TEEN Case Study

Alton Towers Resort Background

The UK's most famous leisure park

Situated in Staffordshire, Alton Towers Resort is the most visited theme park in the UK. With tons of terrific rides, entertaining live shows, weird and wonderful costume characters and an abundance of fun packed activities, Alton Towers Resort offers something for people of all ages! In addition to the theme park, Alton Towers Resort is also the only short break destination in the UK with two themed world class hotels, an award winning conference centre, a spa, Europe's largest Waterpark and extraordinary golf!



The birth of the modern theme park

The earliest evidence of Alton Towers Resort acting as a leisure site for public enjoyment dates back to the 1830s! People would come to marvel at the magnificent house and gardens. The site continued to develop and from the 1880s there were grand fêtes and fireworks, in the 1950s and 1960s there were fairgrounds and in the 70s there were beauty pageants.



It wasn't until the early 1980s that the decision was made to create a modern theme park on the historic grounds of Alton Towers Resort. The ambition to develop the UK's favourite theme park resulted in the launch of the Corkscrew - Britain's first double loop rollercoaster! During this period there was rapid expansion and the introduction of crowd-pulling attractions, such as the Log Flume, which was the largest in the world at that time!

By the mid 1980s the inevitable comparisons were being made to Disney. Despite economic recession, Alton Towers Resort was prospering and in the late 1980s became the most popular 'payed for' tourist attraction in Britain.



Ongoing growth and development

Despite historic success, Alton Towers Resort has continued to invest millions into developing the resort and rides in order to remain competitive and to meet the needs and wants of its customers.

Investments since 1990:



1992

Runaway Mine Train & Haunted House (now Duel Live)



1993

Land of Make Believe (now Cloud Cuckoo Land)



1994

Nemesis and Toyland Tours (now Charlie and the Chocolate Factory)



1996

Alton Towers Resort Hotel

1998

Oblivion



2002

Air

2003

Splash Landings Hotel and Cariba Creek Water Park



2004

Spinball Whizzer



2006

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and Peugeot Driving School



2007

Extraordinary Golf



2008

Mutiny Bay



2009

Sharkbait Reef by SEALIFE



THIRTEEN



Target market

Alton Towers Resort aims to offer something for all ages! To target its rides and marketing communications effectively, it segments audiences into distinct groups.

2010 Target Audiences:

Primary target market - Thrill seekers:

- 16-24 age range.
- Within this age group, there are sub groups:
 - 16 year old at school
 - 19 year old at university
 - 24 year old starting work.
- This market is looking for fun and escapism from their work or studies.



Secondary target market - Families:

- 25-54 age range, with children 10-15 years.
- The core of this audience is financially comfortable, living in good sized homes in city suburbs.
- Family time is extremely important to them and they organise days out and family holidays.

Between 2006-2009 investments into rides and marketing was focussed on the family audience which is evident in the rides that were launched during this period. In 2010, the objective is to attract new thrill seekers without alienating families and retaining the number of families that visit the park.



THIRTEEN



Products and services

Alton Towers Resort's main products are the rides. They aim to provide rides and adventures for kids and adults of all ages and sizes. Below are some examples of rides that are offered.

Oblivion



The world's first vertical drop roller coaster! This ride starts with a slow climb to the top where it stops, holding riders at a 45 degree angle, before plummeting vertically to the ground, reaching speeds of 69mph!

Congo River Rapids



This ride splashes through the rapid torrents of the River Congo. Passing through waterfalls and swirling waves, riders are lucky to escape dry!

Charlie & the Chocolate Factory



This ride goes on a journey through the fantabulous chocolate factory, meeting characters and watching shows along the way. The big finale is a 3D tour of the factory in a glass elevator which judders as it flies around and 'smashes' through the roof of the factory.

Nemesis



Meet your Nemesis! This intense ride twists and turns over rivers of blood and rock, reaching G-forces greater than a space shuttle launch. The ride is 45 seconds of sheer, intense thrill.

Runaway Mine Train



Riders climb aboard the Runaway Mine Train which twists and turns along its tracks and through tunnels, getting faster and faster!

Peugeot Driving School



At the driving school, kids learn to drive by racing around a quirky circuit, observing signs, going through bubble wash, and passing the melting lollipop lady.

THIRTEEN



New for 2010 - TH13TEEN

TH13TEEN is the ultimate rollercoaster – every theme park ride you have ever dreamt about all in one! After two years in development and £15million invested in groundbreaking technology, Alton Towers Resort launched TH13TEEN in March 2010.

Thrilling experience...

TH13TEEN takes riders on a gruelling journey through The Dark Forest, where they battle the overwhelming force of the woods through a series of twists, turns and rapid reversing, before free falling into the unknown.

TH13TEEN was built on an unearthed ancient burial site in an area of the unexplored Dark Forest Woodland. Riders that brave the forest will face an unknown horror that has been unleashed from the ancient crypt.

Thrilling design...

World famous coaster and thrill consultants collaborated to design and develop TH13TEEN which combines more theme park technology than ever before. TH13TEEN's ground-breaking technology gives it world first status. By combining ultimate elements of physical and psychological fear, TH13TEEN is labelled as a 'psychoaster'! It's also the world's first free fall drop coaster!

Thrilling name...

Alton Towers Resort continuously raises the bar in terms of devising ground-breaking names for its attractions. The name TH13TEEN captures the essence of the ride experience and is also the first rollercoaster in the world to be named after a number.



TH13TEEN



Market research

Alton Towers Resort invests heavily in market research to keep in touch with its audiences' needs and to inform the ongoing development of any new rides.

To research the ultimate roller coaster, Alton Towers Resort firstly conducted research to find out what its customers want and expect from 'thrill' rides. It then used the findings of this research as criteria to test a range of ride concepts. The techniques that Alton Towers Resort used were:

Qualitative:

- **8 groups on park:**
 - One group of parents with at least one child between 8 and 12
 - Two groups of 11 and 12 years old children (one boy and one girl group)
 - Two groups of 8 and 9 years old children (one boy and one girl group)
 - One group of 14/15 year olds, one group of 21/22 year olds and one group of 23/25 year olds - all mixed sex
- **4 groups off park:**
 - Current visitors - visited once or more in the last 12 months, 16/17 year olds, female
 - Lapsed visitors - not visited for 3 years, 21/22 years olds, male
 - Current visitors - visited once or more in the last 12 months, 21/22 year olds, female
 - Lapsed visitors - not visited for 3 years, 16/17 year olds, male
- **8 depth interviews:**
 - 4 interviews, 14/15 year olds (2 female, 2 male)
 - 4 interviews, 18/19 year olds (2 female, 2 male)



Quantitative:

- **Online interviews (250)**
- **16 to 24 year olds**

THIRTEEN



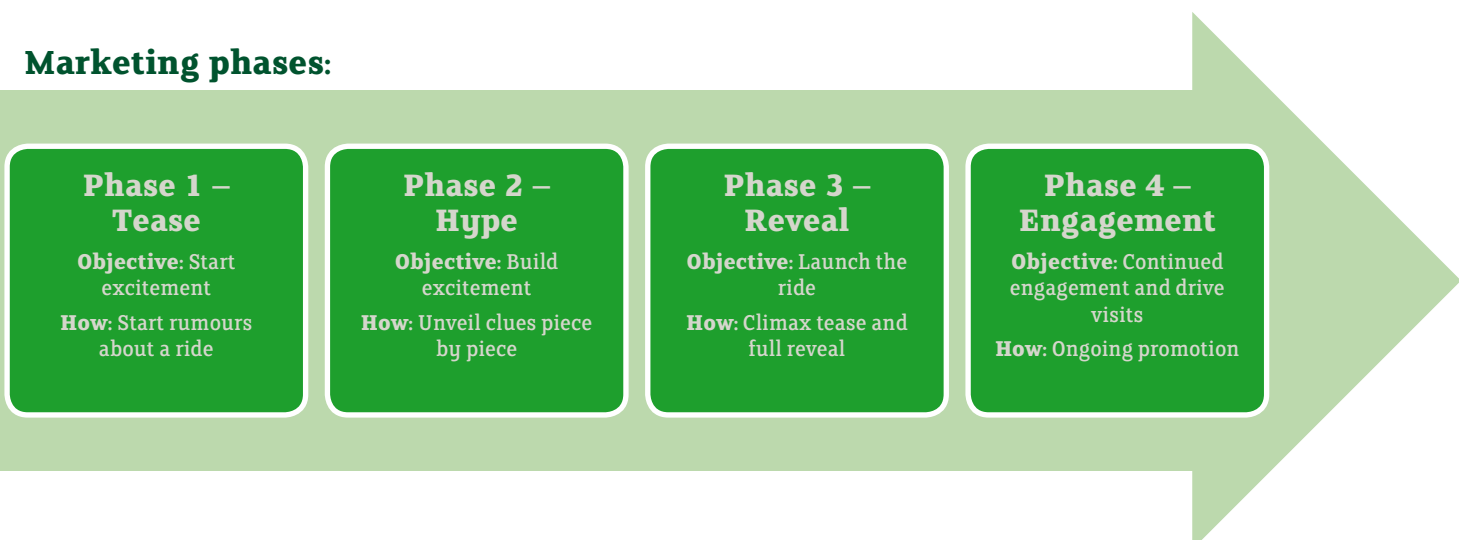
Marketing

The excitement created by marketing a new ride is as important as the thrill of the ride itself! Alton Towers Resort invests in new rides to attract new crowds and it is the role of marketing to make people want to visit the resort to try the ride.

Launching TH13TEEN

Alton Towers Resort launched TH13TEEN across four phases. By dripping the marketing across phases, it helped to create a sense of mystery, 'talkability' and tease, before the grand reveal and experience of the ride.

Marketing phases:



Phase 1 – Tease

Objective: Start excitement

How: Start rumours about a ride

Phase 2 – Hype

Objective: Build excitement

How: Unveil clues piece by piece

Phase 3 – Reveal

Objective: Launch the ride

How: Climax tease and full reveal

Phase 4 – Engagement

Objective: Continued engagement and drive visits

How: Ongoing promotion

Phases 1 and 2

Promotional activity	Information resources
Press releases were sent to national media announcing the hire of security to protect Secret Weapon 6 (codename).	Press release 1
Fake names were announced and images of the ride arriving were unveiled to stimulate rumours and discussion.	PowerPoint slides
Alex Reid launched Bootcamp which invited people to apply to compete for the 'World's Ultimate Job' – to be the first people to ride the ultimate ride.	PowerPoint slides
Websites (flickr, youtube, facebook and discussion forums) were used to promote bootcamp and to stimulate rumours about SW6 online.	PowerPoint slides
TH13TEEN microsite was launched. The site linked to facebook and flickr.	PowerPoint slides



Phases 3 and 4

Promotional activity	Information resources
Blipverts launched for two weeks before the full TV advert. They were short, high intensity adverts aired in short commercial breaks.	PowerPoint slides Video 1
Full 30 sec TV advert was aired to a mass audience during programmes such as Britain's Got Talent and Ant and Dec's Push The Button.	PowerPoint slides Video 2
Media and celebrity launch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • press releases were sent to national media to reveal and launch the ride • celebrities were invited to try the ride • GMTV first ride and reveal of the freefall drop • Bootcamp first ride. 	Press release 2
TH13TEEN merchandise was produced to drive sales and to build awareness through the product branding.	PowerPoint slides
TH13TEEN was also given prominence in Alton Towers Resort marketing to families, for example, on their radio advert.	Audio 1

Evaluating the thrill factor

Once the campaign is launched, it is vital that Alton Towers Resort evaluates the marketing to ensure the objectives are achieved and that the ride lives up to the 'hype'.

One evaluation method is exit interviews using a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) which ask customers short questions as they leave the ride. The advantage of using a PDA is that the information can be processed immediately, giving an instant snapshot of performance. This enables Alton Towers Resort to quickly respond to feedback, always aiming to increase the scores.

Below shows the questions they are asked and the results after the first weekend that the ride was launched.

Question	Results
What was their awareness of TH13TEEN before visiting the theme park?	93.4% pre-arrival awareness - TV adverts (35%), alton Towers.com (31%), TV coverage (30%), Word of mouth (17%), facebook (10%)
Was TH13TEEN their key driver for visiting Alton Towers Resort?	41% said TH13TEEN was key driver, 25% said it was part of the reason
How would they rate their experience?	89% were either very satisfied or satisfied. Only 5.4% were disappointed
How would they rate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme • Special effects • Coaster section • Freefall drop • Overall ride 	8/10 8/10 8/10 9/10 8/10

