Scotland has an international reputation for its natural heritage, scenery, landscape and wildlife, as well as its cultural heritage. By celebrating our natural and cultural heritage we have an opportunity to position Scotland as a must return destination as well...
The benefits of promoting the natural and cultural attractions you have in your area include:

• Helping to promote your local area and highlight what makes your area/region special
• Enhancing your customers’ visit, encouraging recommendations and return visits
• Encouraging longer stays as customers find out all there is to do in their area. However, it’s important to review the information you have regularly to make sure it is well presented and relevant for the time of year. As an accommodation provider, good information on your website can encourage potential guests to stay longer.
• Tapping into new markets by appealing to visitors with a special interest in specific aspects of natural and cultural heritage
• Supporting and developing the variety and quality of activities your destination/area has to offer, especially when working in partnership with other local businesses.

The most recent visitor survey shows that for more than half of all visitors to Scotland highlight the scenery and landscape as their top reason for visiting and almost a third come to learn about Scotland’s history and culture.

As key factors in making Scotland an attractive and successful tourism destination, it is in every business’s interest not only to protect the natural and cultural heritage, but also to promote it to your customers in an engaging way. Most visitors may want to enjoy a range of activities as part of their experience of Scotland. Some visitors may come with a very specialist interest, e.g. bird watching or to attend a traditional music festival. You can provide tailored information for customers with different levels of interest, as appropriate.

• Know your local area:
When running a successful business, it can be difficult to make the time to regularly enjoy your local countryside, watch the wildlife or visit local cultural attractions, but an up-to-date knowledge of what is available for your customers can be invaluable. If you employ staff, you can organise familiarisation trips with attractions, activity providers and local events, so they can talk about them first hand and promote those opportunities more effectively.

• Information, information, information:
Many businesses will already provide information to customers before and during their stay about what they can see and do in their area. However, it’s important to review the information you have regularly to make sure it is well presented and relevant for the time of year. As an accommodation provider, good information on your website can encourage potential guests to stay longer.

Not sure where to start?
To find out what your local area has to offer contact your local VisitScotland Information Centre or visit the VisitScotland website.
Natural attractions and activities

Scotland has an outstanding natural environment with a diverse range of habitats and wildlife to be enjoyed all year round. With 73% of visitors stating that nature and wildlife is an important aspect of their trip to Scotland, it’s clear this is a key tourism asset. (VisitScotland Visitor Survey 2011).

Promoting the natural attractions and wildlife in the area will be particularly appropriate to businesses in more rural areas, where wildlife is frequently easy to access. However, even city centre businesses can promote their local parks and gardens, waterways and natural attractions that are easily accessible in the area.

Provide your visitors with:

- Information on local wildlife and the best viewing points, appropriate for the time of year
- Information on local ranger services and events, like guided walks and talks
- Information on local wildlife groups that welcome visitors on field excursions
- A nature diary or notice board where your visitors can write what they have seen while visiting; you can also add any sightings of your own to get it started
- Binoculars customers can use on site or can borrow when going for walks in the area
- Information to engage the whole family, like I-spy self-guided walks with a quiz
- Promote responsible wildlife viewing; See WildScotland for more information.

Wildlife in your back yard:

If you have grounds as part of your site why not bring the wildlife to you with bird boxes and bat boxes, a log pile, or wildlife friendly planting, for example. Managing your grounds for wildlife can boost bio-diversity and maintain and create new habitats.

For holiday parks and businesses with large grounds, this can be a great opportunity to create an interesting area to explore for visitors.

Make sure you tell your customers about what you are doing and have some relevant information on site and on your website.

For some information on where to start go to Wild about Gardens.
Scotland’s natural environment, its hills, rivers, and coast, is used for more than simply tranquil pastimes, providing ideal territory for the adrenaline junkie or outdoor explorer.

Scotland offers the opportunity to ski, climb, paddle, sail and cycle in the pursuit of adventure and provides an exhilarating day out for your visitors.

Encourage activity-loving visitors to your business by:

- Providing amenities to wash off bikes and boots and a place to dry outdoor clothes
- Providing a safe and secure place to lock up bikes and equipment
- Having good hot shower facilities
- Providing a fact file of all local outdoor activities
- Providing a list of tips and ideas of things to do when it rains
- Joining VisitScotland’s Walkers and Cyclists Welcome schemes.

For more information on how to get involved in the Activity tourism market in Scotland check out the Tourism Intelligence Scotland guides.

### Activities

### Keeping safe

You can also help visitors to be safe by providing information on:

- Local weather conditions and forecasts
- Difficulty of walking/cycling trails and expected time to complete
- Potentially dangerous features on trails and paths
- Location of shelter or amenities
- Routes suitable for people with young children and buggies, or motorised wheelchairs
- The Scottish Outdoor Access Code and Responsible Wildlife Watching so they know their rights and responsibilities.
Scotland has a rich and diverse cultural heritage. With an eclectic range of theatre and dance, the world’s festival capital, outstanding summer music festivals, blockbuster movie locations, breathtaking art and architecture and a captivating literary history – Scotland has a truly thriving arts and culture scene.

You can help your visitors find out more about Scotland’s rich history and cultural offering to help ensure they enjoy an authentic experience. By doing so, your business can help preserve local traditions and keep identities alive and sustainable by promoting them to your visitors.

Be proud of your local identity and help your visitors have a fulfilling experience by:

- Providing information on local cultural attractions
- Letting visitors know where they can hear live traditional music
- Providing information on local heritage trails
- Actively promoting cultural events and festivals
- Displaying or providing information on local crafts and crafts people.

Do remember, providing relevant information about attractions and events in your area not only during a visitor’s stay, but before they arrive, can help them plan their visit and potentially extend their stay.

As an accommodation provider looking to attract new customers, especially in the shoulder season, why not create a package for your guests around an event or particular attraction or work with local crafts people in your area? For example linking with local festivals by providing a weekend of traditional music or developing a special itinerary dedicated to whisky.
National events and themes:

Are there any major events in your area that you can tie into like sporting or cultural events? Use any tools available in your marketing, such as logos and images, to attract potential visitors.

Or have a special promotion around a theme like St. Andrew’s day or Burns Night, which can help boost business off season.

For marketing toolkits around major events and theme years see VisitScotland’s Industry website.

Further information

Tourism Intelligence Scotland Guides on events and festivals, wildlife tourism, mountain biking, sailing and other adventure activities

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in your area

SNH – Simple Pleasures

Scottish Outdoor Access Code

WildScotland – Scottish Wildlife and Adventure Tourism Association

Scottish Wildlife Trust

John Muir Trust

EventScotland

VisitScotland

The List

Craft Scotland

Creative Scotland
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