Delivering for the Highlands

We promote Scotland with Scotland, working with local industry to grow the visitor economy.
Tourism has been on everyone’s lips across the Highlands in 2017; and that is a great place to be. There has never been such a high interest in tourism from residents, communities, businesses, visitors, media, politicians and every public sector body.

This really demonstrates that tourism is truly everyone’s businesses and that tourism in an industry like no other. It’s capable of creating jobs and growth across Scotland.

The current interest in tourism comes on the back of several years of sustained growth in visitor numbers, drawn by the continued appeal of our Highland scenery and landscapes, our culture and heritage.

It’s all about the people, and the place. But we’ve also seen a boost from film and TV exposure, most notably from the huge-ly-popular Outlander books and TV series, which have provided a welcome boost and prompted new products and tours to cater for this market.

The future is exciting for the Highlands, and I look forward to working closely with you as we unleash, and promote, the region’s full potential.

Chris Taylor
Regional Leadership Director
VisitScotland
Key stats for the Highlands

The E4 campaign featuring Highland content reached 12.3 million individuals across social media channels.

Visitscotland.com has facilitated a 507% increase in business referrals for the Highlands. This is a growth to 624,013 in 2017 from 102,738 from 2016.

£1,675,500 invested by us to events hosted in Highlands.

£40,000 of support from our Growth Fund during 2016/17.

Coovans spent 30 separate days spent in the Highlands on outreach during 2017.

£31,650 of support from Visitscotland Conference Bid Fund during 2016/17.
STRATEGIC ACTIVITY
The Highlands are a part of Scotland which is treasured and renowned worldwide. With everything visitors to Scotland seek to experience in abundance; breathtaking landscapes, mysterious lochs and mountains, a rich cultural heritage and a warm welcome. We promote the region’s assets through trade exhibitions, marketing and campaigns.

We support the industry’s national strategy – Tourism Scotland 2020 and work with businesses in the Highlands to grow the visitor economy, aligning with the Scottish Government’s four pillars of investment, internationalisation, innovation and inclusive growth. We are also committed to working closely with other public bodies, local communities and the local DMO’s to strengthen the Highland’s tourism appeal.

Investing in the digital capacity of Scotland’s tourism, our partnership with Digital Tourism Scotland aims to ensure that as visitors continue to explore new online platforms and opportunities when planning their journey to the region, businesses are equipped to meet demand with highly developed digital knowledge, capabilities and infrastructures.

Our Industry Relationship Managers provide a direct line of support for businesses, offering one-to-one surgeries on topics such as online book-ability and online reputation management.
INDUSTRY SUPPORT

One of our top priorities is to work alongside and support local businesses throughout Scotland’s tourism industry to embrace the opportunities we have to offer businesses.

Our Quality Assurance (QA) scheme is a useful promotional tool for highlighting the quality of your business to help attract customers. QA goes beyond the stars on your door, as businesses benefit from expert advice and support on a range of aspects of quality, including sustainability, accessibility and food and drink.

There is also an opportunity to engage with the VisitScotland Information Partner (VIP) programme. Businesses who sign up to this scheme commit to becoming a provider of key local and regional information and enhance the visitor’s experience while in the Highlands. Our unique partnership with NC500 shines a spotlight on businesses based along the route, supporting them as they continue to provide top-quality information provision to visitors to the region.

Across the region, there are currently more than 310 businesses – and growing - actively engaged and benefitting from being part of this scheme.

Our Industry Relationship Manager’s for the Highland region, Cassie McEwan, Pat Thow and Alan MacKenzie – all work closely with local businesses across the Highlands and can provide free tailored advice and support. They can be contacted on cassie.mcewan@visitscotland.com, pat.thow@visitscotland.com, or alan.mackenzie2@visitscotland.com.
HIDDEN IN THE HIGHLANDS
In Spring 2017 we delivered a campaign, tailored towards Scottish and English audiences, to inspire a break in the Highlands during the region’s shoulder seasons. The campaign, titled Hidden in the Highlands, included targeted social media advertising, an interactive e-book and a promotional film.

The campaign pivoted on five key actions - ‘SEE, FEEL, MEET, DO and EAT,’ encouraging viewers to discover each unique aspect of the Highlands experience.

The campaign was delivered successfully, generating 33,776 landings to our visitscotland.com landing page, 367,489 film views and 1,217,660 engagements across all channels.

Building on from the ‘Hidden in the Highlands’ campaign, we invited the UK’s No.1 travel bloggers, Hand Luggage Only, to visit the Highlands in September 2017. In working with high profile bloggers and social media influencers, the campaign again focused on boosting the profile of the Highlands to inspire visitors to visit in autumn, take part in outdoors activities and explore some less-known parts of the Highlands.

SCOTLAND IS NOW
A new global campaign – Scotland is Now (spring 2018 launch) - represents a confident, consistent and bold approach to brand marketing.

Working in partnership with Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Development International and Universities Scotland we will deliver a new brand for Scotland, positioning Scotland as a bold and positive country, rich in history and heritage but forging
forward in a more progressive and pioneering way. This will cover four pillars of activity – Visit, Live & Work, Study and Invest.

At the heart of this campaign is the message that Scotland is a country with the warmest of welcomes, challenging new thinking, creating new opportunities for study and jobs, supporting new industry and driving technology that embraces humanity across the world.

SCOTLAND: LIFE
Scotland: Life is an extension on the successes of our first global campaign, *Spirit of Scotland*. This unique project has seen global travel vloggers and Instagrammers experience the Spirit of Scotland through the eyes of the people that have made the country their home.

The American videography collective, Devin SuperTramp, visited the Highlands to film the iconic landscape and culture. Team Supertramp, who boast more than 4.8 million YouTube subscribers, had a once-in-a-lifetime, unique filming experience. This brought them to the Highlands to capture our natural beauty, famous castles and landscapes – in high definition – a film which has been viewed more than 250,000 times.

HIGHLANDS IN THE MEDIA
The hit TV series *Outlander* continues to grow its audiences from across the globe, and its direct association to the Highlands has brought great tourism opportunities. The impact of the storylines and the stunning Scottish scenery is clearly having a positive effect, with *Outlander* fans keen to visit locations from the show, as well as visit related historical attractions.

An innovative campaign designed to attract the millennial market to explore Scotland, was a partnership first with E4 and TripAdvisor. Six millennials journeyed across Scotland in a campervan to experience a range of unique and exciting activities, including afternoon tea on the Strathspey Railway. The 60 second episodes ended with giving viewers the opportunity to vote for what activity the group’s would do next using #ScotE4 - this reached 11.5 million Twitter, 365,569 users on Facebook and 480,206 users on Instagram during the campaign.
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