National Museums Scotland Partnership
Growth Fund Case Study

On the Trail of Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites
The campaign was a partnership between National Museums Scotland (NMS), Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Royal Collection Trust (RCT) and The National Trust for Scotland (NTS). NMS cares for collections of national and international importance. HES is the lead public body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland’s historic environment. RCT is the department of the Royal Household that cares for the Royal Collection. NTS are a conservation charity that protect Scotland’s natural, built and cultural heritage.

It was an £80,000 campaign, supported by a £40,000 Growth Fund grant with match funding from NMS, RCT and NTS. The campaign was UK-wide and designed to harness the appeal of the story of Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites, including the increased global interest sparked by the TV adaptation of Diana Gabaldon’s internationally acclaimed Outlander novels.

The campaign signposted 26 places to visit in Scotland where the story of Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites could be uncovered, including the National Museum of Scotland’s 2017 exhibition. It comprised a number of activities including: social media advertising, travel partner promotions, media partner promotions, video and eBook production, working with bloggers, travel trade engagement, Snapchat Geofilters, Z Cards and an interactive feature at Edinburgh Airport.

The key economic aims were to encourage people to visit different parts of Scotland and generate increased footfall and expenditure at the 26 sites.

The campaign has performed very well against all of its key performance indicators (KPIs). There were 20.5 million opportunities to see (target: 9.6m), 85,501 website visits (target: 24,150), 34,823 competition entries (target: 22,100), 15,541 opted-in names (target: 15,050), 3,535 Snapchat uses (target: 150), 274,821 video views (target: 650), 18,571 eBook views (target: 2,000), 10,526 blogger likes / shares (target: 100), 5 blogger articles (target: 5) and 21,399 Google clicks (target: 20,000). Due to the nature and scale of this campaign it was seen as one of the flagship projects for the 2017 Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology. The campaign also won the Marketing Award at the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions (ASVA) 2017 Awards and was a winner of three categories in the national IPM awards.

The media promotions worked well, including working with organisations that they had not previously been involved with. Whilst this approach was more time-consuming it was considered a more effective way to target potential visitors, through more editorial promotion rather than straightforward advertising.

An external marketing agency was also a key part of the project and fully integrated into the team, with areas of delegated responsibility and a project management role, in addition to creative campaign delivery.

There was a stronger focus on digital and less on print material than in previous campaigns reflecting the changing nature of visitor needs. The team did amend and flex parts of the campaign as it proceeded to reflect changes in planned partner promotions, and to focus more activity on aspects that were working well.
A very strong working relationship developed between the four partners throughout the campaign and their experience was such that they are all keen to work with each other again in the future. They held regular meetings during which they were able to build relationships and brainstorm ideas. It started as a marketing project but then spread wider within the partner organisations to include teams in the areas of learning & programmes, digital, curatorial, membership and retail. This made for a much more integrated campaign with teams across the partner organisations working together.

The profile and scale of the project meant that they were able to work with a variety of high-end restaurants, accommodation and transport providers across the whole of Scotland to create valuable prize packages, both for the overall VIP ‘six-night Jacobite Journey’ prize and individual bespoke channel partner prizes.

It was not possible to measure the ultimate economic impacts in terms of increased footfall and expenditure. However, there were some proxy measures that give an indication of the campaign’s impact such as 37% of visitors to the exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland being aware of the Jacobite Trail campaign. Additionally 30% of visitors were from overseas which was over double the proportion attracted to a previous comparator exhibition: Mary, Queen of Scots. Leaflet research conducted by HES reported the Jacobite Trail as a motivator to visit attractions. Partners also reported an increase in visitor numbers at participating Jacobite Trail attractions during the campaign period.

The Growth Fund provided investment that allowed development of a much larger-scale, multi-partner campaign. It allowed for innovation through the use of new forms of digital promotion such as Snapchat. Internationalisation was achieved in partnership with VisitScotland who promoted the campaign to key overseas markets. It also fostered inclusion through promoting a number of sites throughout various parts of Scotland, including a number of rural areas.

The Growth Fund grant was important in leveraging in support from partners, both in terms of funding and time input, and without it the campaign would have been much smaller in scale.

Working with VisitScotland (VS) on the campaign has given them a greater understanding of VS’s objectives, how they operate and VS’s close engagement allowed VS to spread the content further to include other Jacobite-related sites on the VS website. They received excellent support from the VS Growth Fund team, who were flexible in allowing them to modify activities during the campaign. Also, VS promoted the trail message to their most appropriate markets, including the Scottish diaspora markets with a genealogy / clan interest (i.e. US, Canada and Australia) as well as markets known to be highly engaged with Outlander (i.e. US, France and Germany).
The partners have decided to keep the website (www.jacobitetrail.co.uk) live for a further twelve months due to its popularity. They have amended the content of the eBook, to remove reference to the temporary exhibition and focussed on the permanent collection at the National Museum of Scotland, so that it can continue to be used in the future.

Other organisations in the tourism industry have been keen to learn from their experience and they have been asked to undertake presentations on a number of occasions setting out the campaign process and achievements. They have also acquired entries for mailing lists for the partners from those invited to opt-in through the competitions.

There is a much stronger relationship between the four main partners, including between similar departments in each, and they are discussing possible projects for the future e.g. potential opportunities related to the upcoming film on Mary Queen of Scots and an exhibition around the theme of Scottish identity. These stronger and supportive relationships will also ensure sharing of best practice and opportunities going forward beyond formal partnership project working.
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Royal Collection Trust
Louis Gabriel Blanchet (1705-72), Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, 1739. Courtesy of Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2018

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