

**MINUTES OF THE TOURISM FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE
MARKETING IMPLEMENTATION GROUP MEETING,
THURSDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2007, 10.00-12.00
NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND,
28 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINBURGH**

Present:

Ian Gardner (Chair)	National Trust for Scotland
Eddie Brogan	Scottish Enterprise
Pierre Masson	Moray Council / SLAED
David Smythe	Assoc of Scotland's Self-Caterers (ASSC)
Nesta Gilland	Scottish Equestrian Association
Pam Jeffs	VisitScotland.com
Linda Dalglish	Scottish Seabird Centre
Gwen Raez	VisitScotland
Richard Arnott)
Chris Taylor) Scottish Government
Mary Ward)

Apologies:

Ian Limond	JAC Travel
Kenneth Clark	Scottish Enterprise: SDI
Marco Truffelli	VisitScotland.com
Glen Bennett	EAE
John Strachan	Maximillion Events
Helen Campbell	VisitScotland
Rebecca Hamilton	Historic Scotland

1. Welcome and Introductions to new members

1.1 The Chair offered the above apologies and thanked everyone for attending. He also introduced two new members, namely Linda Dalglish and Nesta Gilland and members conducted round the table introductions.

2. Scene Setting

2.1 The Chair began by setting the scene for today's meeting. There would be a presentation by Gwen Raez on domestic marketing. Gwen had replaced Helen who was unfortunately absent through illness. Discussion would follow around the presentation and this would be lead into further discussion around things that could be done that fit around the draft Action Plan. The meeting would conclude with any other business and the date of the next meeting.

2.2 The Chair summarised the work of the Tourism Framework For Change (TFFC) and how the Marketing Group's work fitted into the bigger TFFC strategy. He stated the benefits in bringing in people from different areas of the industry at relevant stages of the group's

work and how to make best use of their ideas, experience and talents. The other TFFC Implementation groups involved are:-

- Marketing Intelligence and Innovation;
- Corporate Scotland Infrastructure (CSI);
- Sustainable Tourism Partnership (STP);
- Customer Experience Implementation; and
- The TFFC Monitoring Group – which oversees all the implementation groups' work.

2.3 The Chair explained that the Marketing group's work is split into four categories, namely:-

- international marketing,
- domestic marketing and Northern Ireland
- e-commerce and IT; and
- business tourism and events.

2.4 Today's focus would be on domestic marketing and NI. In addition there would be discussion on the Action Plan, actions and targets from the TFFC and what the group could do to influence how the targets are met.

3. **Presentation on Domestic Marketing**

3.1 A copy of today's presentation had been sent round to members prior to today's meeting and copies were available on request. The Chair introduced Gwen.

4. **Discussion on the Presentation**

4.1 Following the presentation the discussion centred on segmentation, with emphasis on 'people' rather than 'product'. There was a feeling that the work of the TFFC was effective in reaching out to industry people rather than the latter trying to follow an independent course. It was suggested that one way to evaluate customer behaviour and future intention could be the use of a loyalty ladder.

4.2 Segmentation was seen as a futuristic tool using digital processes which were beneficial and cost effective as bespoke work for individuals could be created. It was expected that there would be a positive return in order to make the investment worthwhile. It was also felt that a key driver was to use customer information.

4.3 It was suggested that within the self-catering industry there was a disconnect with what the TFFC is doing and that the industry did not understand the rationale behind it. Furthermore, it was felt that communication was a problem within the tourism industry in general. One example given was that the VS Quality Assurance (QA) scheme should be better promoted. Some areas such as Scottish Borders, Dumfries & Galloway and Aberdeen felt left out of the advertising. There was the realisation that communication had been a problem but it was also acknowledged that it is better in some areas than others. However, smaller businesses often did not appear to have a link / relationship within these communication processes and this should be addressed by all parties.

Action: Industry-wide communication processes to be reviewed.

4.4 It was felt that VisitScotland did marketing really well and considered that customers' views were very important in addition to what businesses wanted /required. This had been an education process and an enormous amount of research was done to make sure it worked. However, there was the feeling that businesses could be more proactive in this area and they needed to take charge of marketing themselves. It was felt that businesses needed to have a 'membership of belonging' and any business that felt they had been left out needed to be brought back in.

4.5 On the whole, communication was seen as a big challenge which could always be improved upon. While local businesses can do their own marketing it can be difficult to get some businesses (such as small-scale accommodation providers) involved as they feel this takes too much time out of their working day. It was suggested that local-level industry ambassadors would be useful in helping businesses improve their marketing activities.

4.6 It was suggested that some areas / messages were being promoted better than others. The discussion looked at the importance of how organisations and sectors market their own areas and how it fitted in with what VisitScotland is doing. It is fundamental that organisations fit in with the right segmentation group. Gwen explained that VisitScotland's Business Relationship Managers (BRMs) are in the process of pulling forms together now for businesses to target the right audiences. It was imperative to get people to buy into something that will fit in for them and be something that is appropriate for businesses.

Action: VS to update at next meeting.

4.7 The Chair asked if VisitScotland found that BRMs' feedback is a two way thing and how does VisitScotland keep up with it? Gwen explained that BRMs do provide feedback but this could be better, for instance, there is business information given but not much information about innovation. Formal feedback would be available through the QA scheme although with attractions this is done every 2 years. The QA face-to-face contact with businesses could also be better utilised. There is a case for increasing advisory contact. Gwen felt that marketing had been taken out of this and moved to BRMs, perhaps there was a case for having this moved back into QA.

Action: VS to consider in more detail and update at next meeting

4.8 The discussion moved to the issue of getting market intelligence out to the industry (as covered in TFFC). Recent initiatives and resources had been very well received by the industry. For example, the Tourism Intelligence Scotland (TIS) Walking Tourism resource which has received positive feedback - as well as almost 2,700 postcard responses to the competition. There is a latent demand for intelligence and information to be presented in a clear and easy to master format. The next resource guide on the UK Segmentation Marketing is due in Spring 2008 and will help tease out what some of the implications are for the industry.

Action: Any members/organisations not already on the mailing list to contact TIS and request to be included in future publications / updates etc.

4.9 The next issued discussed was the remit of BRMs. Gwen explained that primarily BRMs deal with businesses over the telephone as it was felt that something was lost if they used only e-mail. There were different levels of business customers. Communications with large organisations tended to be face-to-face and small businesses who worked with VisitScotland generally had a good understanding and good communications with them.

Face-to-face communication with organisations is available on request. Gwen explained that there was a review taking place on how the VS Industry Engagement Team is working, with changes forthcoming in early 2008. It was also acknowledged that contact is a two-way thing and that businesses should be aware of who their respective BRM is to contact as and when required.

Action: VS to keep members informed of any developments on the role / remit of BRMs.

4.10 It was felt that opposition around the TFFC was generally manageable and that it was important to use organisations' key individuals. As there are a lot of changes Action Plans should focus on the key themes and core messages, and information and communication tools should be used to get the key messages out at all levels. It was felt more work is needed to look at the communications brand, what it means and, to push segmentation and the overseas market. Tremendous opportunities exist to do this already and it is important to make best use of established routes.

4.11 Within the Group's Action Plan, VisitScotland will work with transport operators, such as GNER. Gwen explained that VisitScotland had been trying to work successfully with GNER for 2 years although this hadn't always been easy. VisitScotland were also looking at working with EasyJet to promote Scotland from their hub airports. Generally, airlines were more challenging as they tended to focus on promoting city breaks – as opposed to promoting countries.

4.12 VisitScotland were also looking at doing a car hire message with AVIS (although one difficulty is that EasyJet have links with Hertz). Other companies under consideration were StenaLine, and Aer Lingus – although discussions can take as long as 2-3 years to develop fully. VisitScotland were also trying to promote GNER Inverness / Aberdeen routes - not just Glasgow / Edinburgh ones. An attempt had also been made to work with Virgin Trains but this had not materialised. Another issue to consider was the carbon footprint impact. It was important to get the balance right with green issues and airlines.

4.13 The discussion moved to having bespoke products. There was the possibility of having an itinerary of products to hand, such as an information guide – on what to see and where to go - in hired cars. However, it was debated that the UK market needs to be careful with packaging as some organisation are already doing this themselves (i.e generating marketing income and working in partnership with other businesses) and we do not want to duplicate or interfere with partnership initiatives already operating.

4.14 The discussion moved to VisitScotland.com. There was a sense that organisations can do cross-selling although there is still a disconnect with VisitScotland.com. Navigation on the VS.com site could be challenging as so much information is available on it but there are issues on where to find relevant information. VisitScotland.com is looking at this and changes will be introduced in due course. There will be two parts on the website that can be accessed such as, an on-line shop for booking accommodation and a directory listing. Members felt the website should have an increase in marketing and a decrease in the booking element.

Action: VS.com to keep members updated of developments.

4.15 It was felt that VS.com call-centre staff often did not know much about local (especially more rural) areas which was not helpful to customers seeking information on local products, transport etc. Pam explained that temporary staff had been taken on last summer

that had had previous experience working with VisitScotland.com. and their core call-centre staff are now more au fait with local information. In addition the organisation arranged for people to come in and give presentations to its staff in order to increase their knowledge base across various areas. Conversely, VisitScotland.com's staff also went out to organisations. A complete review has been carried out although this may not be finalised until early 2008.

4.16 The discussion then moved to the Challenge Fund which focussed on the UK market. Gwen explained that the Fund to date had been very successful with many small businesses working together for the first time. Consultation is currently being carried out with businesses to review improvements for the next round, which is anticipated to launch in early 2008.

4.17 Eddie briefed the Group on the development work which identified what the needs of industry are. It was felt important to have investment in industry with focus on innovation as well as encouraging fresh and interesting ideas, and inspiration could also be drawn from other countries. Eddie referred to the Tourism Innovation Development Awards (TIDA) scheme and how this could dovetail better with the Challenge Fund. The former's remit is on skills changing and there is a New Skills Agency which focuses on individuals advice on training.

4.18 Eddie went on to explain that Scottish Enterprise (SEnt) will still retain the business skills focus along with marketing and e-commerce, although a lot of this will still have to be looked at in full. He discussed other SEnt issues within the UK market and confirmed they will continue to have a strong product focus aimed at the following areas: food, golf tourism, walking and whisky; as well as destination based. This focus works on a holistic approach e.g. businesses need to work together to complement what VisitScotland is trying to do.

5. Action Plan – things that could be done that fit around the Action Plan

5.1 The discussion moved to communication and how organisations could communicate to best effect. One option could involve using BRMs and Quality Assurance (QA) more efficiently. There was also the possibility of signposting each others' services and this would be visited by the Group in the future.

5.2 It was felt that information provision for visiting tourists was still important and Tourist Information Centres (TICs) still played an important role. Gwen advised that VisitScotland was looking at encouraging more people to use TICs through its new segmentation driven relationship marketing programme. And there is an ongoing project to improve information provision to visitors using modern technology, both within TICs and other relevant information points– such as installing plasma TVs. It was argued that face-to-face contact was important so a balance should be struck on the level of communication between people and via technology based tools – mobile phones, iPOD downloads etc.

5.3 Pierre suggested the need to better communicate the Homecoming 2009 event should be included for future consideration by the group. Richard explained that this is now being managed by EventScotland who are currently working up plans for the Homecoming. VisitScotland will begin to promote the event more fully in the coming months. It was suggested that Paul Bush from EventScotland could be invited to let the Group know about the plans at a future stage. **Action: Event Scotland to update members on developments.**

5.4 Still on the theme of communication, Linda felt that blogging was a massive resource and, in essence, it was a 'global guest book' which provided dialogue and word of mouth promotion that could be used very effectively to promote good service, excellent products etc. There are however concerns over corporate ownership of such sites which businesses need to be aware of.

5.5 There is an increase in PR and the challenge for national titles needs to be newsworthy. The VisitScotland team is working with journalists on this. There also needs to be a new awareness within the industry.

5.6 The National Trust for Scotland (NTS) arranged a media visit for London-based writers. GNER transport and accommodation providers did a package with VisitScotland which was a big success with the journalists and had huge coverage for a limited outlay. This example revealed the importance of knowing which tool is best for which segment. The group suggested widening membership to match industry to particular segments.

Action: Chair to consider

5.7 The Chair summarised the group's discussion and asked if members could let the group know if anything was missed:

- communication / industry engagement;
- how VisitScotland keep up-to-date;
- two-way communication with industry;
- Quality Assurance with industry;
- TIS Resource Guides;
- strong links with marketing and business engagement;
- role for the group to feed into Groups Trade Associations / Transport (GNER) EasyJet – more information to customers to access right places;
- VisitScotland.com. – navigation marketing focus and awareness. Make people more aware of changes within VisitScotland.com;
- Challenge Fund consultation link with TIDA – skills and marketing skills through SEnt - signposting what each agency does;
- TICs – marketing role especially segmentation; and
- Blogging – feedback from website.

6. AOB

6.1 The date of the next meeting would be in December*. The timing would be the same and the venue is to be confirmed. More information would be fed out in advance of the next meeting.

* *Meeting rearranged for 16 January 2008.*

**Scottish Government: Tourism Unit
December 2007**