

top tips from tig

tourism!nnovation group PROMOTING INNOVATION ACROSS
THE SCOTTISH TOURISM INDUSTRY

www.tourisminnovation.com

1

FEBRUARY 2009

How to become a sustainable tourism business



Scotland offers breath-taking and unspoiled scenery, abundant wildlife and a rich diverse culture, which we know are amongst the top highlights for visitors. Sustainability should be on the agenda of all tourism operators. Think about the responsible use of this natural and cultural heritage.

TIG is encouraging tourism businesses to understand the economic, socio-cultural and physical benefits of operating with good environmental practices. There are basic levels of good environmental practice such as: using energy efficient lighting; switching equipment off and not just on standby; reduce, reuse and recycle.

But consider these **5 easy steps** to give you even more of a marketing advantage and at the same time, save you money.

1

Join the Green Tourism Business Scheme

...to show visitors how much you care about sustainability in Scotland.



The Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) is an accredited Quality Assurance scheme operated in Scotland by Green Business UK Ltd on behalf of VisitScotland. It is the largest and most successful environmental accreditation scheme for tourism businesses in Europe. Currently there are around 900 members in Scotland, and that number is set to increase considerably in the near future. GTBS was set up in order to help the tourism industry meet its commitment and objectives with regard to reducing their environmental impact. The scheme also seeks to save costs, improve efficiency and increase the marketing potential of members.

The GTBS accreditation operates at 3 levels: Gold (Excellence in Environmental Practice), Silver and Bronze (Good basic Environmental Practice).

Membership of the scheme requires an affordable fee based on business size; and offers an informative membership pack; an environmental visit, assessment and advice tailored to each business; information on grants, loans and other financial support; plaque and certificate for promotion purposes.

Benefits

- Reduces your environmental impact
- Identifies cost savings through efficiencies
- Improves your public image
- Offers a credible sustainable choice for consumers
- Clearly links Quality with the Environment

Green Tourism Business Scheme

No. 4 Atholl Place, Perth, PH1 5ND

Tel 01738 632162

gtbs@green-business.co.uk
www.green-business.co.uk

2

Contact the Business Environment Partnership

...to save on utility costs and develop an environmental management process for your business



The Business Environment Partnership (BEP) was established in 1998 to provide free and subsidised assistance with environmental management to small to medium sized businesses throughout Scotland.

BEP can help you by conducting a free environmental audit of your business and then give advice on the outcomes. They can also give you further guidance and support through their programme of 8-week vocational placements of Environmental Management graduates and undergraduates, who will help you to implement the recommendations and assess your environmental impacts, such as suggesting improvements in waste minimisation and recycling/ reducing your energy and water use.

Benefits

- Saving energy = saving money
- Expert guidance and advice
- An action plan to follow

Business Environment Partnership

42/3 Hardengreen Business Park,
Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 3NU

Tel 0131 561 6262

info@thebep.org.uk
www.thebep.org.uk

How to become a sustainable tourism business



3

Increase the length of your season ...to give visitors more of a reason to visit and to encourage others in your area to collaborate to do the same



If you normally close in the winter, consider the viability of staying open for at least one or two extra months. Many tourism businesses in Scotland have already taken the plunge and are now reaping the benefits for both their business and their community. Not all the benefits will

show directly on the bottom line. Think of the impact on staff loyalty and training, which could improve staff retention. Also consider the impact on your community and other local tourism operators if there was more to do and see in your area. Visitors will want to stay longer and spend more.

Can you work on a **collaborative** marketing initiative to help improve year-round tourism activity in your area? If this involves at least 2 other tourism businesses, you might be eligible for support from the VisitScotland Growth Fund, which can provide up to 50% / or a maximum of £65,000 towards your collaborative marketing project.

Benefits

- Better staff retention
- Gives opportunities for collaboration initiatives in your area
- Visitors will have more to do and see and so spend more
- Encourages other operators to do the same

Contact your VisitScotland network office and check-out http://www.visitscotland.org/marketing_opportunities_main/growthfund/about_the_fund.htm

4

Use local food ...to help reduce the 'food miles', benefit the local economy and give visitors the authentic experience they want



Recent surveys have shown that more than 70% of potential visitors to Scotland want to taste traditional dishes, regional specialties and fresh local produce.

Can you buy seasonal or year-round food from local food producers? Visitors respond well to being offered local foods, particularly when produced by traditional, often small-scale industries, that might be closely identified to the area – think of local cheese and ice cream, local fish landed by boats seen arriving in the harbour, soft fruits picked that day, or beef from cattle that visitors have seen from the roadside.

This means happy customers who enjoy the authenticity and provenance of local foods. And local food often allows flexibility for premium pricing, preserving your gross profit margin if costs are higher. Speak to these producers and investigate how they distribute their goods. Speak to your food wholesaler and ask for local foods – if you don't ask, you won't get...

Benefits

- Gives flexibility for premium pricing
- Helps reduce the 'food miles' which benefits your local area
- Gives visitors the authenticity they want so they are attracted to your business

An excellent resource for everything to do with locally sourced food is the new Tourism Foodkit from Food Tourism Scotland. www.foodtourismScotland.com

Shirley Spear, of the multi-award winning Three Chimneys in Skye, is one of a number of leading restaurateurs to back the new Tourism Foodkit. *"If you serve food to customers this Foodkit is for you! The Tourism Foodkit website is a brilliant kitchen tool for professionals to have on hand. Sourcing fresh ingredients locally and finding distribution channels that work to the advantage of everyone involved has been one of the hardest aspects the industry has had to deal with in the past."*

How to become a sustainable tourism business



5

Reduce your Transport Impacts ...to be a responsible operator in Scotland and encourage a reduction in carbon footprint

How do your visitors and staff travel to your organisation, and can you encourage the use of public or shared transport? Visitors might be more likely to use public transport to reach you, if you offered to pick them up from the local train station or ferry. This can give you an opportunity to demonstrate care for visitors with a personal touch which people love. Perhaps you could consider joining up with other local operators to do this.

Perhaps visitors would consider leaving the car at home, if you offered to put them in touch with local public transport services? Or you could promote local cycle hire, or walking routes that start from your front door. Consider adding the link to the public transport travel planner to your website. www.transportdirect.info

Think about your staff too – could you facilitate a car pooling arrangement that was perhaps incentivised? Can you encourage them to use a bicycle for their journey – at least in summer? Some operators also organise a coach that is geared to appropriate shift patterns.

Sustrans is UK's leading sustainable transport charity. Their aim is to encourage people to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment through practical, innovative ways of dealing with the transport challenges that affect us all. For more information check out the Sustrans web site www.sustrans.org.uk

Benefits

- Gives you an opportunity for better local collaboration
- Provides opportunities to give the 'personal touch' to visitors
- Promotes better health and motivation for staff
- Benefits your local area

For more information

There are many organisations providing advice (and in some cases grants) including:

Business Environment Partnership
www.thebep.org.uk



Business Environment Partnership
42/3 Hardengreen Business Park, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 3NU
Tel 0131 561 6262
info@thebep.org.uk
www.thebep.org.uk

Hospitable Climates
(N.B. Dedicated to the hospitality sector)
www.instituteofhospitality.org



Hospitable Climates (HC) was an energy efficiency agreement between the Institute of Hospitality and the Government. Unfortunately the HC programme is no longer operating as the funding has concluded, but the outcomes of the project, the hospitality energy analysis tool HEAT Online and the Energy Efficiency map showing energy efficient hotels and guesthouses can be accessed via the Hospitable Climates legacy site: www.hospitableclimates.co.uk.

Further information on environmental and energy efficiency issues for hospitality and tourism businesses can be accessed via the new Business Climate pages on the Institute of Hospitality website: http://www.instituteofhospitality.org/info_services/business_climate

How to become a sustainable tourism business

For more information

The Carbon Trust
www.carbontrust.co.uk



The Carbon Trust works with UK business and public sector to cut emissions of carbon dioxide and reduce climate change. It is an independent, not-for-profit company set up and funded by DEFRA, the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Executive and Invest Northern Ireland.

The Carbon Trust provides the following services to help businesses and the public sector save significant amounts of money on their energy bills:

- A freephone helpline, 0800 58 57 94, offering free information and practical energy saving advice.
- Energy Saving advice through an interactive website and publications (www.thecarbontrust.co.uk/energy).
- A free review of a business' energy use (which may include a site visit)
- Interest-free Energy Efficiency Loans – loans between £5,000 and £100,000 are available for small and medium-sized companies in England and Wales where energy makes up a significant part of operating costs.
- Design Advice including expert advice and free independent site energy assessments for new build and refurbishment projects with a floor area of 500m² or above.
- Research and development support, incubator services and venture capital, to support the development of low carbon technologies.
- The administration of the Enhanced Capital Allowance (ECA) Scheme – this is a tax relief that can deliver a significant cash flow boost and shorten the payback period on capital investment on the provision of designated energy-saving plant and machinery. You can check to see if your energy saving equipment qualifies for the ECA scheme by visiting www.eca.gov.uk/energy.

The Energy Saving Trust
(N.B. Useful for operators with vehicles.)
www.est.org.uk



The EST is a non-profit organisation, funded by government and the private sector with 2 main goals: to achieve the sustainable use of energy, and to cut CO2 emissions. They work with households, business and the public sector:

encouraging a more efficient use of energy

- stimulating the demand and supply of cleaner fuelled vehicles
- promoting the use of small-scale renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind.

They also have a focus on community based energy initiatives.

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/welcome/>

Envirowise
(Focus is on waste minimisation)
www.envirowise.gov.uk/scotland



Free, independent, confidential advice and support on practical ways to increase profits, minimise waste and reduce environmental impact. Government funded.

There is a free advice line: **Advice Line on 0800 585794.**

<http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/about>, which includes Scottish case studies.