

# Sleat Tourism Group

An independent marketing consultant provided by Business Gateway helped Sleat Tourism Group identify and develop a new brand to underpin an ambitious community marketing campaign. The consultant held a series of intensive advisory sessions with group members in Skye in Spring 2010 during which time the new 'Visit Sleat' brand was defined and a brief drawn up for its implementation.

## **Picturesque peninsula**

Sleat Tourism Group is a collaboration of 25 local tourism operators formed to promote the picturesque peninsula, located at the south end of Skye and with a radius of just 17 miles. Visitor figures to the island have increased in recent years following the abolition of tolls on the Skye Bridge,

but businesses in Sleat feel their area has not benefited from the tourism upturn.



## **Visit Sleat brand**

Group co-ordinator Christine Jamieson explained: "We realised our traditional branding as 'The Garden of Skye' didn't totally reflect the message we wanted to get across. It sounded a bit tame and we felt it was off-putting to certain markets, particularly people who come to Skye looking for grand mountain scenery or those seeking outdoor adventure activities. Our adviser helped us better define what our brand should be trying to convey about Sleat." The adviser also assisted members in costing out the budget for the various strands of the branding campaign and reviewed the group's PR strategy.

## **Support advertising for new website**

Members were aware that a new website was fundamental to their marketing campaign and VisitSleat.org was launched in summer 2010. The consultant suggested promoting the site and publicising the domain name known through e-marketing and e-advertising. She also advised on search optimisation. During the advisory sessions, members decided to further advertise Sleat and the website via inserts in bedroom folders produced and distributed throughout the Highlands by Landmark Press. They also opted to complement this with leaflets in Landmark's racking scheme. The leaflets direct readers to the VisitSleat website and also give a map of the area with an accompanying directory listing of the peninsula's numerous attractions and activities. The consultant also suggested the group should work with the local authority to improve directional signage to Sleat and provide more interpretation panels on the peninsula.

### **Consultant able to give more objective steer**

Christine described the input of the independent marketing expert as crucial. She said: "We are all involved in marketing as individuals running our own separate businesses so it wasn't as if we were starting up as complete freshers. However, it was invaluable to have someone external to give us a more objective steer and a fresh perspective on what we were trying to achieve. That external perspective helped us focus on what we had to do."

### **Maintaining the link**

Sleat Tourism Group is maintaining its link with Business Gateway. The group hope to attend the VisitScotland Expo in Aberdeen in 2011 and plan to approach Business Gateway for advice on exhibition display materials.

### **Business Gateway says**

Business Gateway officer for Skye and Lochaber, Alistair Danter commented: "Business Gateway has a number of specialist consultants it can call on to provide clients with expert advice in a variety of fields. Sleat Tourism Group benefited greatly from this expertise and, as a result of the marketing guidance they received, members were able to access VisitScotland funds to take their promotion forward. Business Gateway support in this case has contributed towards a potential increase in turnover for the local tourism sector."

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