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| HIGH LIFE HIGHLAND  REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS  2 December 2015 | AGENDA ITEM REPORT No HLH /15 |

## **MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE - Report by Chief Executive**

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| **Summary** The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress made in implementing the Marketing and Communications Plan.  It is recommended that Directors comment on and note the update. |

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| **1.** | **Business Plan Contribution** |
| 1.1 | This report supports the highlighted Business Outcomes from the High Life Highland (HLH) Business Plan:   1. **To advance sustainable growth and financial sustainability** 2. Deliver the Service Delivery Contract with THC 3. **Improving staff satisfaction** 4. **Improving customer satisfaction** 5. **A positive company image** 6. **Services designed around customers and through market opportunities** 7. Sustain a good health and safety performance 8. **A trusted partner** |
| **2.** | **Background** |
| 2.1 | The Board approved the 2015-19 Marketing and Communications Plan for HLH on 18 June 2015. At the Board meeting on 2 October 2013, Directors requested an update on progress in implementing the actions outlined in the Plan on a six monthly basis. The purpose of this report is to provide that update. |
| **3.** | **Marketing and Communications Plan Update** |
| 3.1 | **Appendix A** contains the Marketing Plan update. |
| **4.** | **Implications** |
| 4.1  4.2  4.3  4.4 | Resource Implications – the resources associated with the delivery of the Marketing and Communications Plan have been approved within the 2014/15 budget.  Legal Implications – there are no new legal implications associated with this report.  Equality Implications – there are no new equality issues associated with this report.  Risk Implications – there are no new risks associated with this report. |

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| **Recommendation** It is recommended that Directors comment on and note the update. |

Signature:

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 16 November 2015

**Appendix A – Marketing Plan Update**

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| **Tactic** | **Action** | **Update** |
| Branding | Uniform   1. Ensure the company brand and logo is represented across the HLH staff and volunteer uniform range. 2. Develop appropriate applications of the brand to any new promotional give-aways. | The HLH brand is being applied consistently across the full range of uniform and appropriately on promotional material. |
| Induction and role model behaviour   1. Contribute to any updates of the company induction process as required. 2. Demonstrate role model behaviour to peers and staff. 3. Develop role model behaviours in teams and as part of staff appraisals. 4. Positively challenge individuals and situations where role model behaviour isn’t being displayed. 5. Invest time in supporting and developing staff. 6. Address poor performance. | Through the HLH staff induction process all new staff are made aware of the branding guidelines. Any changes to brand requirements are communicated to all staff as they arise. |
| Site branding   1. Identify opportunities to roll out the use of company branded signage across all HLH facilities. 2. Work with the Estates Manager to apply company branding to sites receiving capital investment. | Site branding is considered on a case by case basis to ensure consistent application.  Sites receiving capital investment are prioritised to compliment completion dates and work being carried out. |
| Marketing toolkit   1. Ensure consistent and appropriate use of the marketing toolkit. 2. Identify new templates required and apply the brand appropriately. | The marketing toolkit is being used consistently across the business and new templates are introduced where appropriate for new products or venues. |
| Digital Communications | Strategy   1. Manage the work of the Digital Communications Graduate to achieve the stated business objectives. 2. Provide feedback to Scot Grad and HIE as required. 3. Work with the Graduate to develop a Digital Communications Strategy for the company. | The Digital Communications Graduate post has helped to accelerate digital projects including the roll out of Twitter to IMAG, HFM and Archives with an increased audience as a direct result.  Digital communications strategy is in the final stages of development including social media content planning and development. |
| Website   1. Liaise with the ICT team to co-ordinate the development of the new company website. 2. Liaise with all HLH services to agree the functionality and content required for each service. 3. Manage the contract with the supplier to ensure that the website is developed on time, within budget and to the specification required. 4. Monitor the implementation of the website to ensure that it meets customer needs and arrange for any updates or changes as required. 5. Monitor the content management of the website by each service. | Web development - full width theme rendering on all devices, phone, tablet desktop etc. Cookies opt in across the site to meet European regulations. Full width libraries theme introducing an image led design to improve the customer journey – in keeping with customer service excellence standards. Develop leisure theme to include bookings and standardised timetables.  Online shop for Archives service went live in November.  Generic booking system being developed to allow active schools and other services to take online bookings.  A bespoke booking system was introduced for the Summer Activity programme this year with positive comments received through the customer survey:-  “Booking and paying online was 100% better than last year, keep it up!” |
| Email marketing   1. Ensure that all service staff are proactively encouraging customers to give permission for their email addresses to be added to our databases. 2. Segment groups of customers relevant to individual promotions. 3. Send specific campaign information to segmented customer markets. 4. Devise online surveys using ‘Survey Gizmo’ as required to gain customer feedback. 5. Analyse the feedback and act on the findings. 6. Ensure customers are informed of our response to their feedback. 7. Use ‘Mailchimp’ to enable customers to sign up for a range of HLH information. 8. Ensure the information is sent to those requesting it. | Email marketing is now reaching an audience of 26,674 across Leisure, Library, Visitor Attraction and Summer Activity Programme (SAP) databases.  Monthly messaging specific to the audience i.e. Leisure is proving successful with above industry average opening rate and click through.  Survey Gizmo was used to gain feedback from SAP customers with 188 surveys completed and where possible suggested improvements are being put in place for 2016. |
| Social media   1. Determine which sites are most beneficial to post to and when to post to them. 2. Decide how large the social media presence should be. 3. Identify the right metrics to use to measure progress towards social media goals 4. Set out how and why to engage current and potential customers online. 5. Set up and manage the company’s Facebook presence. 6. Set up and manage the company’s Twitter presence. 7. Arrange for the integration of a YOUTUBE channel into the website. 8. Assess FLICKR, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine and WhatsApp to determine which channel is the most appropriate for HLH customer engagement. 9. Set up and manage the use of Trip Advisor in Highland Folk Museum, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Inverness Botanic Gardens, Ferrycroft Visitor Centre and Glen Nevis Visitor Centre. 10. Devise social media plans for each individual platform. 11. Ensure the ongoing adherence to the company’s social media policy by all HLH staff. | The main Social media elements are Facebook, Twitter and You Tube which are fully integrated into the HLH website. Our digital communications strategy will play an increasingly important role in how we communicate with our target audiences, as over 80% of Highlanders use the internet on a regular basis (Office for National Statistics, 2015).  Our digital platforms and channels will be used to provide rich content for our existing and new audiences, creating and nurturing an engaged community in order to maximise any associated revenue opportunities |
| Analytics   1. Use Google Analytics to monitor the performance of variables such as advertising and campaign performance, audience characteristics and behaviour, sales leads and conversion. 2. Use Facebook user insights to monitor the success of campaigns through the following: 3. monthly fan size growth; 4. the average number of likes or comments; 5. unlikes and attrition rate; 6. demographics; 7. page views; 8. mentions. 9. Develop the use of Hootsuite Pro to establish who is reading, responding to and reposting HLH social media traffic. | Google analytics allow us to gain an understanding of how visitors use our website. We can determine where our website works well and where we need to improve the customer experience. This can be as simple as viewing which pages have the highest bounce rate (and therefore, drive users away from our website), through to content analysis, so that we understand what type of content and which pages users engage with the most, on our website. Our aim is to offer the best possible user experience at all times. |
| Press and public relations | 1. Maintain a close working relationship with THC’s Press and Communications team. 2. Work with Heads of Service and Principal Managers to identify opportunities to actively place stories and features in publications in support of HLH service activities and achievements. 3. Engage and manage the services of a media monitoring company to maintain a library of press and media coverage and to evaluate the success of HLH PR activity. | A good working relationship is established with THC press and communications team and follows the media protocol agreed in 2011. Opportunities to provide stories to the media are identified by Principal Managers and Heads of Service on a regular basis and clippings are provided at Board meetings. Cision provide the press clipping service for the company. |
| Advertising | 1. Assess advertising opportunities on a case by case basis to ensure that any advertising spend delivers value for money. 2. Minimise the use of traditional display advertising that is not carefully targeted or easily measured. | Advertising is evaluated on a case by case basis with print advertising being kept to a minimum for specific awareness projects like the new High Life Highland card development. |
| Direct marketing and mailing | 1. Establish databases of key customer groups. 2. Maximise on the use of electronic communication to these direct markets. 3. Identify occasions that would benefit from door drop marketing. 4. Designate the geographic area for the campaign and arrange for leaflets to be delivered. | Door drop marketing was implemented as part of the overall campaign to good effect for the Invergordon Leisure Centre open day earlier this year.  Most databases are held electronically and with the exception of High Life membership price increase notices customers are contacted via email marketing through Mailchimp. |
| Events and exhibitions | 1. Identify key events at which HLH services can be showcased. 2. As a minimum ensure an HLH presence at the following events: 3. Race for Life 4. Black Isle Show 5. Belladrum 6. Create, maintain and manage the distribution of an event toolkit that can be used indoors and outside. 7. Develop a range of promotional giveaways that can be distributed at events and as part of individual campaigns. | Events and exhibitions are an important brand awareness exercise, developing partnerships with other organisations like Race for Life and Belladrum has proved successful so far and other events are being added to the calendar e.g. The Moy Show. |
| Marketing toolkit | 1. Ensure all HLH staff are using the following marketing toolkit: 2. Poster 3. Newsletter 4. Certificate 5. Notice 6. Leaflet 7. Timetable 8. Activity booking form 9. Powerpoint slide 10. Presentation pack cover 11. Identify additional templates that may be required and arrange for their design and addition to the toolkit. | An electronic ‘marketing toolkit’ has been developed for use by all staff across the Company to ensure consistency of logo and brand presentation on locally produced posters, leaflets, timetables and other regularly used promotional items. Other collateral is produced around promotions for example the Summer Activity Programme to include Facebook and Twitter headers to be used on company social media feeds and website. |
| Membership marketing and sales promotions | 1. Develop membership marketing and sales promotions for the following as required: 2. New services (for example digital newspapers) 3. Pilot initiatives (for example Love to Swim) 4. Special projects (for example You Time); 5. Existing services (for example researching your family history). 6. Maximise on the use of email, social media and direct marketing in each promotion. 7. Work with the HIE appointed consultant to design and host a marketing seminar with SMT for the purposes of identifying key actions to develop the High Life membership scheme and to increase sales. 8. Update the High Life work streams document to reflect the outcome of the seminar. 9. Oversee the implementation of the work streams. 10. Review the outcomes and monitor sales levels in response to the actions implemented. | The new High Life Highland card development is in progress with key actions messages and HLH deliverables identified. A staff training programme is being prepared.  A pilot for promotional work will focus initially in Caithness to coincide with capital investment in the area has been agreed, concept visuals and messaging are being developed to support the roll out. |
| Photography | 1. Build and manage the bank of high quality photographic images which communicate the company’s key messages and which will be used to promote HLH services across all media. | The bank of images held by the Company is updated regularly for use in newsletters, social media, media releases and the website. This now includes video which is used on the website and social media. |
| Newspapers, television and radio | 1. Maintain proactive working contact will all local newspapers, radio stations and television stations. 2. Identify opportunities to engage with the relevant media contacts as part of individual campaigns or promotions. | Working relationships are established with written and broadcast press to ensure the best depth of coverage for HLH across all main media outlets.  We are currently finalising a contract with the main local commercial broadcaster MFR for promotion on their breakfast show. |
| Sponsorship, advertising and contra deals | 1. Identify opportunities to secure partnerships with third party and commercial organisations to progress sponsorship, advertising and contra deal packages. 2. Maintain an overview of the activity of all HLH staff to ensure that they are operating within the company’s policy and guidelines for sponsorship, advertising and contra deals. 3. Manage the relationship with the marketing departments of companies with whom sponsorship, advertising and contra deal agreements have been reached to ensure that the terms of the agreements are realised. | HLH will seek to build and develop profitable partnerships at all levels. The Company employs a creative approach to sponsorship, advertising and contra deals, formulating reciprocal packages where appropriate opportunities arise.  e.g. Harry Fairbairn BMW Pool Car. |
| Print | 1. Encourage all HLH staff to minimise the use of printed promotional material. 2. Identify opportunities to maximise the use of digital communications. 3. Work with the Finance Manager and service staff to further reduce the costs of managed print. 4. Focus any spend on managed print in support of increasing customers numbers at the company’s visitor attractions and on increasing High Life membership sales. | An increasing focus on the use of digital communication for the purposes of communicating with existing and potential customers is helping to reduce the volume of printed material produced.  While the use of digital communication is being maximized some printed promotional items are still required at Visitor Attractions for itemssuch as guidebooks and bedroom pack collateral. |
| Research | 1. Identify research that would provide key data to inform the development of specific marketing and sales activities to increase High Life membership sales, increase visitor numbers at HLH tourism centres and enhance service delivery. 2. Determine the most appropriate and cost effective method to undertake the research. 3. Complete the research, analyse the findings and act on the results. 4. Work with the HIE Specialist Advisor to complete the Price Sensitivity analysis of High Life. 5. Use the findings of the report to inform future price change recommendations. | Survey Gizmo has been utilised to research customers’ views who have participated in specific opportunities for example You Time, Summer Activity Programme and Libraries customer surveys. Price sensitivity report complete and will be used to inform future price change recommendations. |