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| HIGH LIFE HIGHLAND  REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS  13 December 2017 | AGENDA ITEM REPORT No HLH /17 |

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

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| **Summary** The purpose of this report is to provide a six monthly update on progress made in implementing the 2015-19 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, requesting 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 | The Marketing Plan update is contained in **Appendix A**. |
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| 3.2 | Media Clippings – an analysis of media clippings covering the period from 1/6/2017 to 30/11/2017 and which refer to HLH, HLH services or HLH involvement in wider issues shows that out of a total of 245, those considered positive numbered 165, neutral 52 and negative 28. Those assessed as negative were in the majority where HLH was linked to issues beyond its control such as late THC building contracts. |
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| **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 2017/18 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. |

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 29 November 2017

**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. | Where new staff take-up/change a post with HLH they are reminded of the Corporate branding guidelines as part of their induction. |
| 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. As a result, corporate branding has been introduced (or is in the process of installation) in the following key sites:   * Black Isle Leisure Centre * Fortrose Library; * Canal Parks (Highland Rugby Football Club).   Site branding is in the design stages for the following key developments/refurbishments:   * Ferrycroft Visitor Centre. Due for installation March 2018 * Ben Nevis Visitor Centre (BNVC); * Nairn Library * \*Inverness Ice Rink – (potential) * Botanics Directional signage |
| 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 continues to be used across the organisation under the guidance of the Marketing, PR & Communications (MPRC) Team. |
| Digital Communications | 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. | Structural changes in the website are being developed to allow for an overall better user experience. New initial themes are being developed to give a cleaner look and feel to the home pages.  The website is currently being reviewed with a view to finding a new supplier to provide support and development as an overall package. As part of the review the need for any bespoke functionality within the site will be examined to make sure it is still required.  More and more people are looking for engaging and compelling ways to get their information quickly. This will likely elicit a rise in the use of videos and other storytelling visuals.  Online booking for leisure has been introduced for Inverness Royal Academy including the new style of website theme. This includes a timetable for fitness classes which links through to the booking system allowing customers to secure their place.  This has been positively received by both customers and staff and has reduced queuing times on site, speeding the flow of traffic through the reception area at busy times. It is planned to roll out online booking with a phased approach across all leisure centres by the end of March 2018.    New themes introduced for:   * Strathpeffer Pavilion; * Ben Nevis Visitor Centre; * Inverness Royal Academy Sports Centre * Youth Work   New themes in development for:  - North Coast Leisure.  - New leisure themes as part of online booking roll out  - Poolewe Swimming pool  - \*Inverness Ice Rink – (potential) |
| 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. (an online survey platform that allows comprehensive reporting and data analysis) 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. | As a result of a proactive campaign to collect customer/member email addresses, the email marketing database is now reaching an audience of c.52K across leisure, library, visitor attraction and summer programme (SAP) databases.  Monthly e-mail campaigns are proving successful and recent promotions with partners like Run 4 It, Inverness Kart Raceway and Cotswold Outdoor have helped increase engagement levels.  E-mail databases are used to support promotional campaigns and are tailored to suit the targeted audience or demographic. For example only 22k email addresses were used to actively promote the Black Friday campaign targeting contacts without an active leisure membership. |
| 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 Ben 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 platforms in use by HLH are:   * Facebook; * Twitter; * YouTube;   Twitter is being rolled out across each service and has already been successfully introduced to Sport, Inverness Botanics , Archives and is planned for Libraries, Leisure and Youth over the coming months.  Other platforms currently under consideration:   * Instagram; and * Snapchat. |
| 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 continues to be used across highlifehighland.com and all associated websites.  Facebook Business Manager continues to be used to monitor user behaviours on this particular social media platform. |
| 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. | The press service is now operated internally using existing staffing resources to monitor any coverage of HLH in the media and/or online. The new system continues to monitor:   * Publication; * Reporter/Journalist; * Number of clippings; * Page coverage (in ¼ pages); * Positive/Negative/Neutral.   The above information is presented to Senior Management in the format of a weekly Media Bulletin.  A member of the MPRC Team has also been made available to attend any meetings held by Principal Managers in order to ensure a consistent message and understanding of projects to/from the Service. |
| 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. | There remains a focus on the use of cost-effective, targeted advertising using social media. |
| 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. | The Black Friday Promotion and Christmas Cracker promotions are being and were supported by targeted social media campaigns. |
| Events and exhibitions | 1. Identify key events at which HLH services can be showcased. 2. Create, maintain and manage the distribution of an event toolkit that can be used indoors and outside. 3. Develop a range of promotional giveaways that can be distributed at events and as part of individual campaigns. | The Strathpeffer Art Fair was held at the Spa Pavilion during November in partnership with the local community group.  845 people attended which resulted in total sales of £11,695.8.  HLH received 30% of sales and hanging fees which resulted in an income of £5448.19 before staff costs. |
| 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. | All staff continue to be encouraged to use the HLH Marketing Tool kit.  The following collateral has been created using the brand guidelines and toolkit:   * High Life Card development * Inverness Castle Viewpoint; * Strathpeffer Pavilion. |
| 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. | Black Friday Promotion  Black Friday discounting was offered to prospective and existing customers to purchase Highlife memberships on Friday 24th November only as part of an online promotion.  The initial offer made available was for 10 individual and 10 family memberships for £150/ and £250 respectively. These proved extremely popular and were sold out within 3 minutes. Thereafter a discounted rate of £199 and £299 applied throughout the day from until 9pm.  Marketing campaign included the following:-  Email – To all contacts without an active leisure membership - ~22K contacts  Social Media – ~200 posts on all leisure pages and selected other Facebook pages supported by posts on the HLH twitter feed.  Outcomes   * 69 Memberships sold * 10 x £250 Family * 10 x £150 Individual * 34 x £299 Family * 15 x £199 Individual * Revenue - £17,151   A Christmas cracker promotion has been developed as an added value campaign across High Life Highland with 6 quality prizes on offer which will be promoted through email and social media channels in the build up to Christmas from the beginning of December. Each prize will have an entry period of three days on social media and the website with the final prize being an annual Highlife membership on 18th December.  Survey Gizmo continues to be used for obtaining internal/external feedback and facilitating promotions  The ‘Digital First’ ethos continues to be implemented across all services. |
| 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 has continued to be increased. The MPRC Team has also identified an additional approved photographer to be utilised at HLH events/activities and for press calls. |
| 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. | The MPRC team continue to work with colleagues across the services to identify press and media opportunities. |
| 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. | Partnership and sponsorship opportunities are being used to best advantage and have contributed positively to the overall package for the Christmas Cracker promotion being run during December.  Partners   * Cotswold Outdoor value £250 * Inverness Kart Raceway value £210 * Run 4 It £100 |
| 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. | In line with the ‘Digital First’ ethos – print has been kept to a minimum during this period. |
| 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. | An online membership cancellation survey launched over the summer as part of a market-research process to identify the reason(s) that individuals cancel their High Life Memberships.  The information from this system will be co-managed by the MPRC Team and the central High Life Team. |
| Inverness Castle Project | 1. The project’s vision is of Inverness Castle becoming an international quality visitor attraction that celebrates the spirit of the Highlands past, present and future: its creativity, well-being, culture, heritage and natural environment; attract new and returning visitors to the area; is embraced by the people of the Highlands; and inspires all to visit other parts of the Highlands. | The position of Marketing Officer aligned to the Inverness Castle project has been successfully recruited for and will sit as part of the MPRC team. The post is fully paid for by the capital redevelopment project for the wider castle regeneration project via THC.  The successful candidate was Alison Bell who joins HLH from SNH and will start on 8th January 2018. |