

Scotland Stands Tall in the Global Meetings Market



[CONFERENCE



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Hans H Rissmann OBE, CEO of EICC

**Edinburgh International Conference Centre's
CEO talks about presenting Scotland as a
place to meet.**



Seldom have I encountered any resistance to the idea of bringing a corporate, association or government meeting to Scotland. Our country does a great job of selling itself. Perhaps it's the natural and built environment of world heritage status that attracts our customers, or it may be our enduring reputation as a nation for internationalism, invention, education and hospitality.

Scotland sells well and events want to be associated with our country's unique set of brand values.

The global business tourism marketplace sees a perfect blend of tradition and modernity in Scotland. Clients find their place in history here and are ready to take a stake in our future through events that span the arts, commerce, technology and sciences.

Today, we talk easily with global life science companies as our country hosts 640 organisations in the sector, employing 32,000 people and worth £3.1 bn to the Scottish economy.

Of course our meetings and events facilities have to be world class to compete. Scotland's three largest cities, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow offer high quality space in the form of the Aberdeen Exhibition and

Conference Centre (AECC), the capital city's Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) and Glasgow's Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC).

Global trade body ICCA, in its revered world rankings, places Edinburgh and Glasgow second and third, respectively, behind London in the UK, by number of international association meetings, and both sit comfortably within the top 50 city destinations in the world.

For evidence that there is a venue for every event click on the Convention Scotland website where more than 650 can be found via the bespoke search engine.

The effects of the global economic downturn may still be with us but international meeting planners membership organisation, MPI is confident looking forward. In its FutureWatch 2011 study it found the number of meetings being planned by organisations is trending up 8 per cent year-on-year, number of delegates per meeting is set to rise by 2 per cent and, on average spend per meeting, a five percentage points increase is forecast.

These are important statistics, especially for EICC as we work towards the opening of our expansion space in spring 2013.

The same MPI study highlights that events technology, the ability to demonstrate return on investment and strategic meetings management will be key industry variables going forward. Our new expansion space will be amongst the most technology advanced in the world. With its unique moving floor, the multi-purpose Lennox Suite can be transformed from flat floored exhibition to tiered arena, with a rake the height of a London bus, in a fraction of the industry standard strike and build time.

At EICC, customer service and total quality management is critical to our business. Since being accredited in 2003, we have embedded the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) business excellence model into our practices, along with six other quality standards, and we use this approach when delivering events for our clients. More recently, in July 2011, the EICC was highly commended in the EFQM's Sustainability Good Practice Competition.

Truly, Scotland stands tall in the global meetings market.

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Turnberry Evolving in Difficult Economic Times

Caroline Lambie

Many hotels and the hospitality industry as a whole are facing difficult times. Turnberry Resort, Scotland, like many others, has had to adapt to the ongoing challenges in the economic climate. New General Manager Jordi Tarrida explains how the hotels' strategy includes moving into different market sectors.



Nestled on the rugged Ayrshire coastline, Turnberry, A Luxury Collection Resort, Scotland is a five star resort where you can enjoy sophisticated accommodation, world class championship golf, revitalising spa treatments and thrilling outdoor pursuits in a truly beautiful 800 acre estate.

A year after opening in 1906 it established itself as luxury social and sporting venue and today the resort offers 150 sumptuous rooms and 8 self-catering apartments. The recent downturn has affected key markets in hospitality and Jordi Tarrida explains how the hotel and resort can move into other areas to deal with the shortfall.

“The economy has naturally affected the traditional meeting and golf getaways in recent years. Corporate companies are more accountable to their activities; therefore we have seen a significant decline in corporate golf days coming to the resort.

“Since re-opening following refurbishment through 2008 – 2009, it was evident that the resort was re-entering a marketplace where the strength from business groups previously at the resort, due to tough economic times, was no longer there. Back in 2007 groups accounted for almost 40 per cent of our business into the resort.”

Tarrida continues to explain how Turnberry’s strategy has evolved: “We have created a new strategy of partner acquisition events with other complementing luxury brands such as Bentley and William Grants. We have also had new partnership events, such as a fashion show with high end brands including Polo Ralph Lauren, Lime Blue Diamond Store, Yvette Jelfs and Belinda Robertson Cashmere.

“In order to provide total flexibility for our customers we have embarked on a strategy to “create new events, where events no longer exist”. Companies can buy into pre-existing events at Turnberry



Turnberry, A Luxury Collection Resort, Scotland

with a lower price point, so rather than paying for a golf day for 40 people, they can take part in corporate and leisure days that we have created ourselves.

The corporate groups market is unlikely to pick up again very quickly so how does Tarrida think that Turnberry will evolve to deal with such a significant shortfall and capture new markets?

Tarrida continued: With the decline in the corporate group market looking unlikely to change for the time being, Turnberry is looking to new areas of business. One example is the Association market, a segment that Turnberry has identified with potential, especially during the winter months as Turnberry’s rate structure allows for more flexibility.

Brought over from the Arabella Golf & Spa Resort in Mallorca, Tarrida hopes to bring a fresh perspective to Turnberry from his international experience within the hospitality industry. Tarrida’s experience working with the European market and his contacts complement Turnberry’s new sector marketing strategy.

“Currently, Turnberry attracts very different market sectors than in Spain. For Turnberry the core market is

northern America. They are drawn to play our iconic Scottish links golf courses. The key emerging markets for the resort are Europe, the Middle East and, to a certain extent, China and South America. My experience and contacts in the European segment will be instrumental in forming our strategy in this area. When I was in Spain the indication was that the European market was interested in Scottish golfing destinations as long as the travel infrastructure was in place.”

Turnberry is also developing a strong foothold as a five star family resort.

“Looking ahead, there are plans to further develop the outdoor activities at Turnberry, which include our extensive child friendly farm facilities and a variety of other activities to appeal more to the family market, whilst simultaneously maintaining and improving the facilities available to our corporate and incentive market.

The future for Turnberry is strong, with the strategies in place to ensure that new emerging markets are tapped into to plug the gap in restrictions in the international economy.



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Beautiful Experience

Caroline Lambie

We speak to Stephen Carter OBE, Managing Director Cameron House on Loch Lomond and ask him what makes the luxury resort unique and about his hopes for the future.





Cameron House on Loch Lomond is a five star resort located on the banks of Loch Lomond, with mountain views across the loch to the breathtaking Ben Lomond.

Just 30 minutes from Glasgow, with Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park on its doorstep, the resort offers beauty, luxury and tranquillity combined with friendly Scottish service and a variety of ways to enjoy your stay. Cameron House offers a wide range of outdoor activities including sailing, fishing, quad biking, mountain biking, clay pigeon shooting, archery, falconry and tennis.

Stephen Carter OBE, Managing Director of the resort said: "Our setting on the banks of Loch Lomond is something very special. We are Scotland's only five star resort to have an accessible body of water on our doorstep suitable for such a wide variety of sport and leisure activities. From a relaxing cruise with private picnic on one of the small islands, or a tour of the area on Loch Lomond's sea plane, to kayaking and rib-boating, or even swimming, there is bound to be something to suit every guest."

He continued: "Our 18-hole Carrick Championship Golf Course is also a popular draw to visitors and hugely

important to us in both the UK and international markets, particularly the US and Europe, but increasingly from new and emerging markets too. The Carrick is unique. The only golf course in Scotland where you play nine holes in the Highlands and nine in the Lowlands and with a backdrop of the Loch and Ben Lomond, it is very special."

As well as working on attracting international markets Carter ensures that growth continues with the local market sector. The resort has a strong staff engagement that ensures that workforce retention is sustained.

Carter said: "I am very proud of Cameron House and our extremely dedicated, hard-working team. To make a hotel a success, it has to interact positively with its local community. This has, and will always, remain at the heart of our business growth strategy. Community involvement should come

from those in charge right down to the people who work part-time at the hotel. Something we are very proud of is the fact 90 per cent of our workforce at Cameron House live within a 20 mile radius. The Scots are the best in the world when it comes to hospitality. When it's genuine and heartfelt it's a level of hospitality you'd be hard pressed to find anywhere else in the world.

We have a dynamic, forward-thinking management team, who manage to balance creativity with great business acumen. 2011 has so far been a strong year for us in terms of occupancy and with new appointments, including General Manager John Keating who has joined us from Sandals Emerald Bay in the Bahamas, I feel we have the right people in place to take Cameron House from strength to strength over the coming months and years."

CAMERON HOUSE



ON LOCH LOMOND

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