



Destination Leaders Programme Case Studies



DLP Case Study: The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

DLP Case Study: The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, Nancy Riach

The Student

Nancy Riach is Partnerships and Development Manager for The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo and works with a diverse range of stakeholders, from the Tattoo audience, viewers and supporters to the media, defence and tourism, as well as culture and the arts on a global level. Nancy's remit is to work on a strategic level to help ensure a sustainable future for the Tattoo and to ensure it retains diverse audiences. Nancy worked in arts and stage management, events, and marketing and PR before joining the Tattoo in September 2011.

The Organisation

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo began in 1950 as part of the Edinburgh International Festival as an event that was created, first and foremost, to support the Services and Arts charities. Today it plays a central role in the Edinburgh summer festivals and each year runs for 25 shows throughout August. 220,000 people see the Show live each year with a further 100 – 300 million seeing it on television across the world. The Tattoo is an iconic event on a Scottish, UK, European and Global level. The 90 minute show set against the backdrop of Edinburgh Castle provides breath-taking performances from the Pipes and Drums of the Scottish Regiments and military and civilian performers from elsewhere in the UK and around the world. The cast includes 1000 – 1200 performers with up to 200 technical and support staff.

The Tattoo is an institution, representing potential for partnership with specific interest from Tourism, Defence, Foreign Affairs, Business and Commerce and Culture, Heritage and the Arts. It brings around £77-100M in to the economy each year as a cornerstone of the Scottish and British tourism industry and is engaged in diverse business activities in order to ensure future sustainability. These include taking the Tattoo to other global sites every two years, (travel to Australia scheduled for 2016) music licensing, use of stands and being a production partner for other events, working as a large scale production company and developing projects such as The Piper's Trail to harness global performance talent, excite and enthuse young people in schools and safeguard the future and heritage of piping, in order to prevent the diminishing number of pipe bands and musicians with these skills around the world.

Nancy's Story

In this case study Nancy shares her experience of the Destination Leaders programme and the impact that the course has had on her, both personally, in terms of her understanding of her own place within the tourism sector, and professionally, particularly with regard to how the DLP experience has led to developments in internationalisation and reaching global audiences for the Tattoo. Nancy has also identified ways in which the Tattoo can contribute to and support Group project work for DLP Year 2 students.

Reasons for participating in the Destination Leaders Programme

I wanted to improve my leadership skills; I needed the reinforcement of being able to lead people through things. I wasn't sure what DLP was, but I wanted to make sure that the Tattoo was considered to be an important part of the tourism sector, particularly in the first year of the Destination Leaders programme. The programme timing for me in this role was really fantastic, but also the Tattoo itself was getting more involved in tourism. The producer David Allfrey had just come on board as Festival and Events Champion of the Scottish Tourism Alliance, and The Tattoo was becoming a more integrated player in a lot of the tourism organisations; it just felt like the right time for these reasons. Personally, I wanted to understand the tourism sector better, improve my leadership skills and gain "tourism credentials" – that is, that I could say that "I'm part of the tourism make-up of Edinburgh and Scotland."

Programme Expectations Prior to Starting the Course

As it was the first time the Destination Leaders programme had run, I don't think any of us knew what to expect, but there was a real sense of bravery from the first cohort. We all felt we were stepping into something we believed would be useful although we weren't exactly sure what it would deliver for us, and I think everybody was in that boat.

Course Impact: Personal and Professional

Taking part in the programme meant an amazing amount of learning, information and then understanding and processing it. It has also created wider connections and enabled conversations which have led to opportunities and activities – the benefit of having a room full of motivated and committed people together. There were a lot of key learnings from other destinations and other industry people, which allowed you to look at what you do, some of which provided some real food for thought. Some of it made you realise that there's a lot of good stuff going on in your own destination and focused on how to improve it.

From this point of view, you went in not knowing what to expect and always came out at the end of the day feeling that your destination had so much potential, just not quite sure what to do about it and as the course went on the “what to do about it” became much clearer, with some really, really strong thoughts coming out from our entire group. The programme gave me what I like to call “destination thinking” which I consider really important: a sense of business thinking but also the business which you represent, your individual contribution to the organisation –you take this with you wherever you go.

Taking part has strengthened the Tattoo's relationship with Edinburgh Airport in particular and we can now exchange and feed knowledge and information for the benefit of both organisations and the wider destination of Edinburgh. Just understanding this particular landscape better made me feel rooted in the sector, and as a partnership manager, actually realising some of the partnerships which hadn't been so obvious prior to starting the course, particularly at an international level, was incredibly useful.

From a personal development perspective, the programme helped me refocus on who we are in our organisation, what we bring to the organisation, and our connections within the industry.

Course Impact: Organisation/Destination – Learning Outcomes

A clear example of how Nancy has applied her learning from the Destination Leaders programme is:

Developing an International Strategy and Reaching Global Audiences

Nancy explains, “The access to lots of speakers and other destinations and examples: one of the key ones for me was actually Chris Buckingham who spoke to us at our residential weekend in St. Andrews. Chris was originally involved in the setting up of the very first Destination Leaders programme for Melbourne, Australia, talking about how it was set up and how Melbourne works as an events capital of the world - and how this was a strategic decision for the destination to make it an accessible place. At this point the Tattoo was looking at its offshore programme, including travelling to Australia, and we were considering some different destinations there. Listening to Chris Buckingham allowed me to pick up some contacts and understand how Melbourne operated as a destination, inspiring me to research and develop Melbourne as one of the Australian destinations the Tattoo looked at.

The outcome of this is that we’re going to take the Tattoo to Melbourne in February 2016, which is a fundamental decision for the business – the understanding of what the city of Melbourne had to offer was incredibly important in making this decision.”

Nancy continues, “The internationalisation and our relationship with Edinburgh Airport – where people are coming from, where should they be coming from, and where Scottish people are travelling to, all of which routes through the airport - really matched our audience demographic and our wider reach. Where the Tattoo brings acts from became clearer and more important than just what the Tattoo was doing. Around that, the building of relationships through the Global Scots network and Scottish Development International, we’re now at a point where we have trialled some activity in Australia but we’re now rolling out a project with the support of Scottish Enterprise and SDI to create an international strategy for growth for the Tattoo which is something we’ll share with all key partners so we can leverage the opportunities.

We’re creating hubs for ourselves in various markets including India, China, Australia and the Gulf and other places which are key markets for us as well as for Edinburgh and for Scotland, establishing a one-stop shop across all of our five pillars (Tourism, Defence, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Investment, and Heritage, Culture and the Arts) so that people understand what we’re trying to achieve and how that actually feeds into the bigger picture.”

Course Impact: Organisation/Destination – Learning Outcomes continued

Nancy says: “I think a lot of this has come from the Destination Leaders programme, the wider thinking, the wider view, understanding better what people do and actually knowing who to talk to, to be able to take things forward, so this has been of great benefit. In addition, it’s been great to be involved with the second year of DLP and see some of the group projects they are doing. The Tattoo is working on activity in China and so we’ve been able to support one of the DLP Year 2 projects whose focus is on China. I’ve encouraged some people to take part who are on the DLP course in Year 2 and it’s been interesting to be involved in some of the projects they’re working on. It’s interesting to see our wider impact, which is the outcome of DLP Year 2 also benefitting from DLP Year 1’s involvement, which ultimately helps even more, and comes back to the strength of the DLP network.”

Conclusion

Nancy reiterates, “Taking part in the Destination Leaders Programme can help you gain confidence, improve your networking and your network and help you understand your place within the world. It helps you to see the bigger picture and think at destination level, outside your own business. As a result, perhaps you can realise your potential more easily, understand business relationships better and articulate better what it is your business is trying to achieve – in the Tattoo’s case, understanding and articulating our international strategy, for example.

The experience has given me the confidence to pick up the phone to people in my network and a broader understanding of the value of that network. The programme has already enabled me to use my professional networks to support others and to assist with information and advice for some of the Year 2 DLP projects, such as advising on the Chinese market.”

Further Information/Links

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo: www.edintattoo.co.uk

Scottish Enterprise: www.scottish-enterprise.com

DLP Case Study Videos: <http://bit.ly/1okkX9Q>

