

Football Aid launches in Italy



Football Aid, the Edinburgh events management company that uniquely distributes all profits to charitable causes, has moved into Europe. This season, fans of U.C. Sampdoria and Genoa C.F.C. will 'live the dream' as their UK counterparts do. This move also creates a unique opportunity for Scottish businesses of all sizes to grow their own market and support a worthy cause.

Devised and launched in 2001 by Scottish businessman Craig Paterson as a completely different way to generate much needed funds for a wide variety of charitable causes, Football Aid has distributed in excess of £2m and has helped more than 14,000 supporters experience the thrill of a match day. The organisation has also, importantly, supported in excess of 200 worthy causes. Having successfully bid or purchased online for their position, supporters pull on their favourite shirt, walk down the tunnel to the sound of the crowd and play an adrenaline fuelled 90 minutes on the hallowed turf of the Club they support. Football Aid subsequently redistributes the profits to those charity/community project nominated by partner clubs.

David Dale, Chief Executive of the Edinburgh-based organisation, said: 'We have, in fact, some experience of working with our European colleagues. In partnership with FC Barcelona, we held a showcase event at the Nou Camp Stadium. The response was extraordinary however due to our limited resources, we had to focus on our UK partners at that time and we were unable to capitalise fully on developing a presence in the European market.'

Chairman and Founder Craig Paterson added 'Our long-term vision has always been to grow Football Aid around Europe. This move into Italy is a significant step in helping us achieve that goal. I believe that we are now well placed to offer a truly unique opportunity to organisations with an interest in developing and enhancing their European presence. We have ambitious plans to grow our own presence across Europe and we are well positioned for growth in the years ahead.'

This next step also creates a unique opportunity for Scottish businesses hoping to build awareness and grow in the Italian market. A view which is endorsed by Leandro Franchi, Solicitor and Honorary Consul of Italy in Scotland. 'I work closely with the Italian community in Scotland and have strong links with Italy. I am very supportive of Football Aid's aims to expand into Italy and it's wonderful to see a charitable Scottish organisation promote itself in Italy – a nation that loves football and has such a passion for the sport. I am sure that this initiative shall be enthusiastically received and will grow quickly and create new friendships. This will, in turn bring about commercial opportunities for businesses large and small seeking creative ways to access their markets and grow their brands in both countries.'

Many Italian football fans support clubs in the UK. One such supporter Michele Cammerere has played in Football Aid games at West Ham Utd, Derby County, and Heart of Midlothian. He had such an amazing experience and was so convinced of the aims of Football Aid that he together with a colleague (Davide Pizzocro) helped to facilitate a similar event in Italy in June 2013. Following the success of that match in Genova and coupled with incredible support from U.C. Sampdoria, Genoa C.F.C., Commune di Genova, Region Liguria, the decision was made to fully explore the expansion of Football Aid into Italy, starting in Genova.

David Dale continued: 'We are thrilled that we are now looking forward to our first season in Italy in 2014. We

believe that this will be the start of a long relationship and see us widening our reach even further in the years ahead.

'We believe we are able to offer a unique opportunity for businesses wishing to establish their brand or presence in the Italian market. By working together we will be able to create a great partnership opportunity in this high profile market.

'As a relatively small, Scottish organisation with an unrivalled reach across the football sector our priority will always be to work alongside those businesses that share our values and vision for helping the communities in which they operate.'

For further details on how to become involved with Football Aid in Italy, visit www.footballaid.com, e-mail: david.dale@footballaid.com, or call 0131 220 5999