

#Edinburgh2050 – John Donnelly on promoting the capital



The next in a series of blog posts from thought leaders on the #Edinburgh2050 City Vision, Marketing Edinburgh Chief Executive John Donnelly tells us what Edinburgh needs to do in the future to compete on the global stage...

“I adore Edinburgh, from its rich culture and festivals to its stunning architecture and history. It’s a city you can easily walk around, enjoy its green open spaces and sample some of Scotland’s best food and drink. It’s a world class centre of learning, research and technology. All these things make my job, promoting Edinburgh as one of the best places in the world to live, work, invest, study and visit, very easy.

“Or at least that is what I get told.

“Edinburgh doesn’t need to be promoted, because it ‘sells itself’. The reality is very different. Edinburgh operates on a global stage and competes for business against many other successful UK, European and worldwide cities. This fierce environment demands that we have to continually improve if we even want to maintain our current position in this marketplace. The world isn’t sitting waiting to see what Edinburgh is going to do.

“It takes a lot of hard work, creativity and diplomacy to promote our city. Collaboration, particularly between public and private sector is critical. This is the primary role Marketing Edinburgh plays in our city’s development. Acting as a catalyst and facilitator, driving economic activity, it is our responsibility to showcase Edinburgh as an inspirational

destination to the rest of the UK and globally.

“One positive change I’ve noted is that across the city, is a sense at the moment that its organisations, businesses and the public sector are increasingly working together, genuinely collaborating and aligning themselves to common goals. It’s a message at the heart of the City Vision proposition, and a trend I hope continues over the next 30 years, building a more integrated approach in the city’s thinking and development.

“Through our work with leading international organisations such as European City Marketing and BestCities Global Alliance, Marketing Edinburgh is constantly learning best practice directly from the most forward-thinking and successful city destinations in the world. It’s my hope that by 2050, it will Edinburgh that is leading the way, recognised globally as one of the most influential centres of innovation and effective positive action.

“Personally, I would like Edinburgh to be the greatest city in Europe. And by great, I don’t mean the biggest or cleverest. It simply means all the things that sit under great, world-leading culture and education, strong employment, effective infrastructure, greater equality and fairer distribution of wealth.

“To improve, I believe that Edinburgh must be far more ambitious. Historically, it’s always been part of the nature and personality of the city, to somewhat play down or be modest about its strengths. While I’m not suggesting the city can change its DNA, or become something it’s not, a little ambition will go a long way in helping Edinburgh grow and develop, building a new found confidence in what it has to offer.

“The #Edinburgh2050 City Vision is a truly unique opportunity for its residents and businesses to have their say and make their opinion genuinely count. I applaud the City of Edinburgh

Council and Andrew Kerr for bringing this consultation to fruition.

“I’ve been working at Marketing Edinburgh for just over three years and in that time I’ve had countless discussions with people telling me what they would do to make Edinburgh a better place to live, work and visit. Well, this is the time to do something about it. Get involved, engage and contribute. This is your city and your chance to make it a place we are all proud to call home, for this generation and the next.”