

# Hotels must embrace technology to attract more visitors

Expedia Group held a summit in Edinburgh yesterday and the conclusion after the event is that Scotland's hoteliers must be urged to further embrace technology and industry collaboration in order to attract greater numbers of international visitors and extend the booking season. Speakers from VisitScotland, Marketing Edinburgh and the Edinburgh Hotels Association joined representatives from Expedia Group, the world's travel platform, to explore how the industry can better work together to boost demand in Scotland, demonstrating the importance of the Edinburgh market for Expedia Group.

The Edinburgh Partner Summit, which took place at The Playfair Library at Old College, highlighted why extending the peak season for Scottish hoteliers is integral to driving visitor numbers, particularly amongst international travellers. Collaboration was another key theme, with major industry players agreeing that it is essential to the success of increasing tourist demand into Scotland.



Irene Roberts

Panellist Irene Roberts, Expedia Group's Director of Market Management, UK and Ireland, who is from Edinburgh, highlighted how hoteliers can leverage the power of technology to maximise booking potential and revenue all year round.

She was joined by expert panellists Linda McAllister, Senior Manager, Quality and Business Advice for VisitScotland, Paul Wakefield, Head of Marketing & Partnerships for Marketing Edinburgh and Ronald Little, member of Edinburgh Hotel Association & General Manager for the DoubleTree Hilton City Centre.



The panellists offered exclusive industry insights and regionalised learnings, with Paul Wakefield commenting that the biggest challenge Edinburgh faced was a “how it positions itself during the off season” and that by focussing on the city’s rich, here-all-year cultural offering, the industry can drive demand in non-peak months.

“Travellers like it when a city puts its arms around a visitor for the whole experience, that’s what we need to do in Edinburgh”, he said.

Linda McAllister predicted that personalisation of travel will be the biggest watch out trend for the industry, stating that “the attractiveness of the destination will prevail, the challenge will be how to personalise that experience.”

Ronald said the summit was “a fantastic platform on which to discuss technology’s role in solving these pain points, as well as proving Expedia Group’s positive commitment to working collaboratively with the industry in Scotland”.

The summit comes after Expedia Group and VisitScotland announced a new collaborative alliance earlier this month, aiming to drive travel demand through supporting Scotland's hoteliers with data driven insights and guidance on best practice.

Irene Roberts commented: "We're delighted to have welcomed Scottish hoteliers to our annual Edinburgh Partner Summit. Our new alliance with VisitScotland aims to build on the recent growth we've seen in the country and drive even greater demand all year round, particularly from valuable international visitors who tend to spend more during their visit, book further in advance and stay longer. It's important for us to continue engaging with the local industry to debate the current challenges facing the industry and how we can overcome them together, as we did at this year's summit."