

Edinburgh digital marketing company gets Queen's Award for Industry

Chasing the Holy Grail of Direct Bookings for Hotels – avoiding bookings from sites such as Expedia – has paid dividends for Edinburgh-based specialist hospitality marketing agency 80 Days who have been awarded a Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade.

80 Days now also has offices in London, Dubai and Marbella.

"When hotels take a booking from an on-line company like Trivago or Trip Adviser, 20% of their income is lost," explains company founder Mark Forrester. "This of course makes profits dramatically more difficult to achieve.

"We specialise in making user-friendly and easy to navigate websites but that is only the first step. We then create persuasive and powerful on-line marketing campaigns to influence consumers to book direct. Our success in achieving this goal has led to our growth world wide and higher profits for the hotels we represent.

"Nearly 60% of our revenue comes from overseas," states Forrester. "We set ourselves the target of being able to do our work as fluently in every market we serve as we can in the UK. We now have native speakers in eight languages including Arabic. "A Queen's Award is not something that just arrives. It takes the work and dedication of the whole team to achieve. It reflects very favourably upon the company and is recognised

around the world.”

Mr Forrester said that the company had focussed on growth coming from recommendation. “We are not a business that offers our customers the earth but doesn’t deliver much,” he noted. “We are incredibly careful not to talk ourselves up too much and rely on our reputation for delivery against each client’s specific objectives. Our export performance is a tribute to the strong and stable team we have been able to create which from start up now stands at 48, operating out of South Charlotte Street, Edinburgh, Kings Cross, London plus regional offices in Dubai and Marbella.

“We take the time to learn about every one of our clients so that we can build their on-line presence to deliver exactly the right message to exactly the right audience. That means designing websites that not only work smoothly but also reflect the qualities of each hotel. The digital marketing campaigns have to be more like a sniper’s rifle shot than a gamekeeper’s shotgun. Every direct booking we achieve brings more profits to our customers.”

The Queen’s Award can be displayed for up to five years and, being from Her Majesty, is regarded as one of the most exclusive and prestigious awards for a UK company to win. It will be presented by the Lord Lieutenant of the County and members of the 80 Days team will be invited to Buckingham Palace for an Award Winners Reception in June.

