



Loch Ness: a case study for growth

● ● ● Top quality businesses, innovative marketing ideas, ambitious plans for world recognition and a Hollywood movie: just some of the things happening in Loch Ness that are helping it to play an important role in achieving the shared industry ambition for growth.

Key drivers necessary for growth including quality, tourism businesses working together and marketing are all in evidence.

In terms of quality, the Loch Ness Exhibition Centre has been awarded five star visitor attraction status by VisitScotland, making it the third five star attraction in the area, alongside Jacobite Cruises and Urquhart Castle.

Robbie Bremner, Managing Director of the Loch Ness Exhibition Centre, is delighted with the grading. He said: "This is a great achievement and it is testament to the hard work and training our staff have all put into the Centre over the last 18 months, particularly in terms of the rebranding and the quality of service we provide. We are committed to ensuring that visitors to Loch Ness will experience the very best quality of product and service."

Businesses in the Loch Ness area are also showing how important it is to work together to achieve growth. Destination Loch Ness, a group of some of Loch Ness' biggest organisations, has initiated the area's bid for United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage status.

If successful Loch Ness will join famous icons such as the Great Barrier

Reef, the Vatican and Scotland's very own St Kilda and Edinburgh's Old Town.

Chairman of Destination Loch Ness, Graham Ambrose, is already canvassing support for the bid from Scots, both in the UK and abroad. He said: "Loch Ness is a landscape of great beauty, variety and moods and that's why it's loved by so many. Securing World Heritage status will increase awareness of Loch Ness and its environs across the world."

Marketing is also crucial for growth. Loch Ness was a major feature of activity at Tartan Week in New York earlier this year. Making the most of new technology to generate a buzz about Scotland, VisitScotland created a fun video for YouTube, featuring a Loch Ness Monster-take on Justin Timberlake's hit single *Sexy Back*. The 'Nessieback' clip, which cost nothing to

make, has been seen by over 100,000 potential visitors worldwide.

Loch Ness is also featuring on the big screen in a Hollywood movie about a mythical monster. *The Water Horse – Legend of the Deep* is due for release at the end of the year in the USA and early in 2008 for the UK and other countries. The film was partly shot in Argyll and the Highlands.

VisitScotland will work with Sony Pictures Entertainment on the back of the new fantasy family film. This is the second time VisitScotland has teamed up with Sony. The last collaboration resulted in £10 million worth of publicity for Scotland following the global *The Da Vinci Code* phenomenon last year.

Jenni Steele, VisitScotland's film tourism project manager, said: "With film tourism and 'set-jetting' trends on the increase, it's important that we use films to further increase awareness of Scotland and show the actual locations and tourism products on offer to those audiences. We know from research that one in five people is influenced to visit a destination because they have seen it on film or on TV, so there's a huge audience out there to tap into."

- For more information on the Loch Ness Exhibition Centre visit www.lochness.com
- To see the Nessieback video log onto www.youtube.com and search for 'Nessieback'
- To see *The Water Horse – Legend of the Deep* trailer and find out more about the film, log on to www.sonypictures.com and click on the Coming Soon section.
- To find out about how you can play your part in achieving growth for Scottish tourism go to www.visitscotland.org/tourism_prospectus.htm

