

SC10 20/05

CIPR Scotland PRide Awards 2010

Category 20: Best Event

The Launch of the Edinburgh Festivals' Summer Season

Submitted by VisitScotland

Overview

In May 2010, VisitScotland partnered with the Edinburgh Festivals and the Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance (DEMA) to create a new media event to engage with a valuable, target audience and encourage them to visit Edinburgh in the summer of 2010.

The event was a particularly momentous occasion as it was the first time ever that all eight of the internationally renowned summer festivals joined forces for a high-profile launch of the summer season.

The timing of the event was paramount to reaching and influencing the target audience in their spontaneous holiday-making decisions.

The launch was a great success. Key highlights included the appearance of host film star Richard E Grant, a never before seen clip of the Edinburgh International Film Festival 2010's opening premiere, an exclusive set from international DJ Calvin Harris and the securing of impactful media coverage, including an interview on BBC's The One Show and a full page feature in OK! Magazine.

Aim of event

- ✓ Engage with a key consumer audience who are motivated by celebrities, events and festivals, and lifestyle/entertainment news.
- ✓ Engage with media beyond the travel press, particularly lifestyle and entertainment magazines, columns and features.
- ✓ Generate press coverage that positively highlights the Edinburgh Summer Festivals and encourages audience to visit Edinburgh in 2010.
- ✓ Provide networking opportunities for Edinburgh Summer Festivals and VisitScotland.
- ✓ Provide the Edinburgh Festivals with the legacy of a great event platform on which they could build in future years to further engage with this valuable visitor audience.

Targeting the audience

VisitScotland has carried out significant research to identify audiences that offer the best potential for increasing the volume and value of domestic tourism to Scotland. One of the key audiences identified were couples aged 25 to 45 who:

- like to attend festivals as part of their holiday experience.
- are influenced by celebrities.
- don't read travel pages to plan a holiday, but do:
 - Read women's magazines and general lifestyle and entertainment media.
 - Watch populist TV programmes, such as the One Show.
 - Listen to commercial radio.

Research also showed that this audience make spontaneous holiday making decisions, however if VisitScotland waited until the Edinburgh festivals were taking place to generate this coverage, it would be too late to impact on their decisions.

With this in mind, VisitScotland decided to create a high-profile media event in London in May 2010 that:

- Focused on Scotland's most valuable and appealing festivals, the Edinburgh Summer Festivals.
- Brought all eight of Edinburgh's summer festivals together for the first time.
- Built VisitScotland and the Edinburgh Festivals' relationships with lifestyle and entertainment media.
- Created new and impactful working partnerships for the festivals with A-list talent.

Implementation and Creativity

Partnerships

This event could not have happened without support from Festivals Edinburgh, the umbrella body for Edinburgh's year long programme of 12 events and festivals. The success of the launch was testament to teamwork between Festivals Edinburgh and VisitScotland, with sponsorship from Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance.

Event concept

The event concept focused on:

- An early evening reception held in Bond, a new venue close to the media hub of London to catch people when leaving work.
- A guest list of:
 - media representatives from the key UK national print and broadcast media titles; and
 - newsworthy celebrities with a connection or interest in the Edinburgh summer festivals.

Event format

- Red carpet arrivals with colourful bagpipers welcoming guests to draw attention to the event.
- Media photography in front of Edinburgh Festivals branded media board at the entrance.
- An evening of entertainment hosted by Richard E Grant, with acts that have appeared at the Edinburgh Festivals.
- Audio visual material played on large screens throughout the venue including:
 - montage of sound-bites from famous Festival ambassadors eg Alan Cumming and Have I Got News For You star, Ian Hislop.
 - an exclusive clip of the Illusionist, the opening film premiere for the 2010 Edinburgh International Film Festival.
- Scottish themed canapés and cocktails.

Evaluation and measurement

- Despite competition from a Leicester Square Film premiere, a major Louis Vuitton launch and another celebrity party on the same street in Soho, over 200 guests attended the event including:
 - Representatives from 50 top UK national titles including national newspapers, celebrity lifestyle magazines and radio stations.
 - Celebrities such as Richard E Grant, Hollywood star Britt Ekland, Holby City actor and Strictly Come Dancing winner Tom Chambers, TV presenter Zoe Salmon and Annie Lennox's daughter Tali Lennox.
- The event immediately resulted in 26 pieces of print, online & social media, highlights including:
 - TV: BBC's The One Show & Channel 4's Five O'Clock Show
 - Print: Daily Express, Daily Mail, The Scotsman
 - Radio: XFM, LBC, Classic FM, Gold FM

- Celebrity titles: OK!, Closer Online, Sunday Mirror Celebs on Sunday
The value of this coverage far outweighs the budget invested.
- Many titles have requested further information on the festivals for publication in July/August.
- Following the event, Britt Ekland signed up as a Michael Powell Award judge at the Edinburgh International Film Festival and attended its opening night premiere.

Feedback

“The launch event was fantastic, it had everything: an A list celeb, a great atmosphere....”
Edward Gleave, Showbiz reporter, Daily Star Sunday

“The Edinburgh festivals launch was organised with efficiency and professionalism. I have been to lots of events in London where there is confusion over the time of artists’ arrivals and interview access. However, at this event I knew that I could interview Richard E Grant and Calvin Harris, who both turned up on time. While we were waiting we enjoyed delicious Scottish themed canapés and the Visit Scotland PRs kept coming over to check that we were happy. More events should be organised like this!”
Zoe Griffin, Showbiz Reporter

“I had an excellent time at the Edinburgh Festivals London event. Not only did it provide an insight into the Festivals that greatly aided my piece, it also gave me the opportunity to talk to the legendary Richard E Grant. Having Calvin Harris DJ put the cherry on the cake.”
Anisa Kadri, Closer

“What a night! I've rarely been to such a well organised, enjoyable launch event!”
Jon Ford, Red Bull Culture Wing