
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: **DEVELOPING THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK BRAND**

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Purpose

This paper seeks Board approval for changes in the way in which we promote, manage, and use the Cairngorms National Park Brand identity.

Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) Notes the work undertaken in developing the *'Make it Yours'* Campaign.
- b) Agrees to change the brand criteria to a code of conduct as outlined in the paper with the final wording to be agreed by Brand Development Group.
- c) Agrees to amending the Brand Identity Usage guidelines to allow end lines such as *'Make it Yours'* to be used close to the CNP Brand identity, and to delegate the final decision on such changes to the Brand Development Group; seeking professional advice as required.

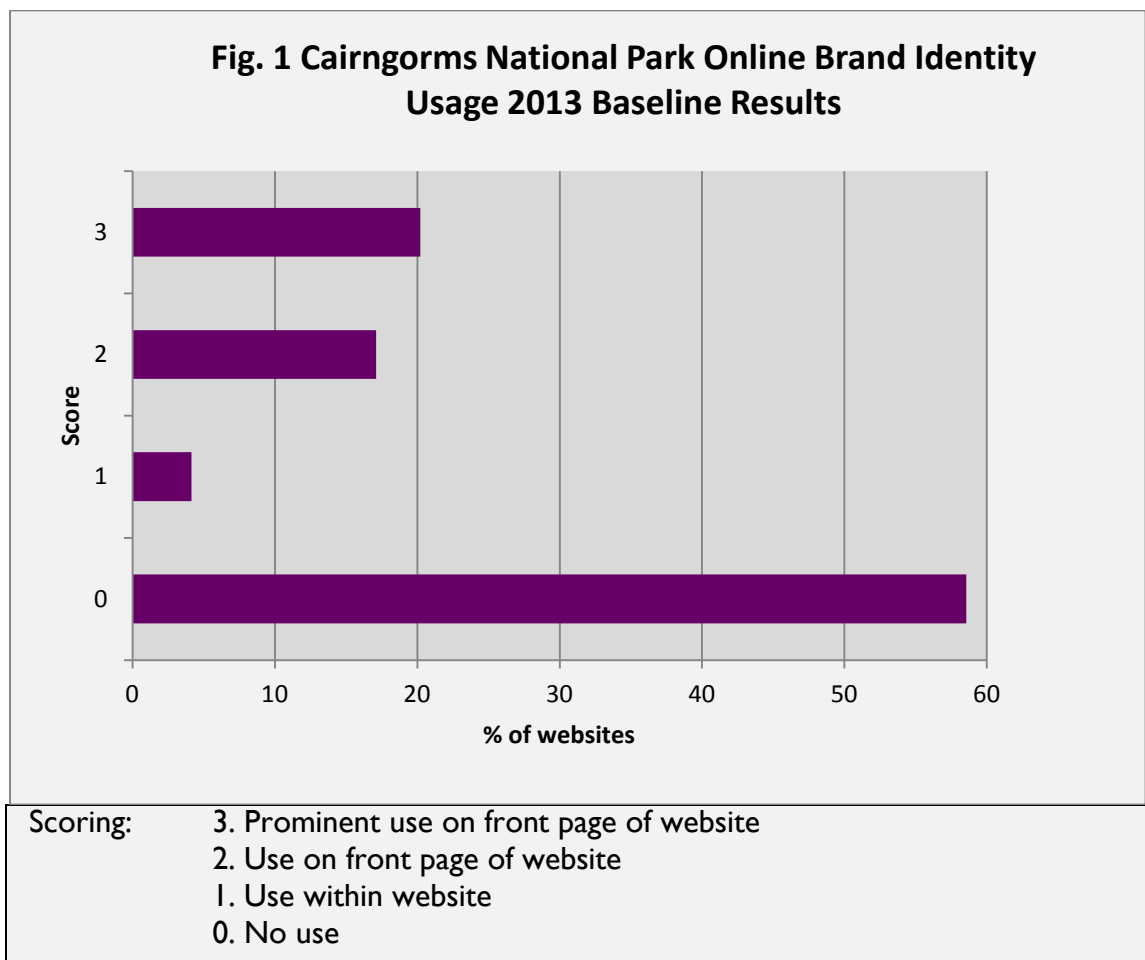
Executive Summary

To date development and use of the Cairngorms National Park Brand identity has been a success as measured by both uptake by partners and impact on visitors. However, uptake has slowed and recent research clearly suggests that many partners are not seeing the benefits of linking their experiences to the National Park. This paper sets out a series of measures designed to encourage partners to see the benefits of linking their activity to the National Park, to use the Brand identity, and to deliver high quality, sustainable and authentic experiences. These measures include a campaign explaining the benefits to partners, and simplifying the criteria for using the brand identity to a code of conduct. The opportunity to link the brand closer to the marketing end line *'Make it Yours'* is also presented. The risks of such changes are discussed. Success will be measured by both increased use of the brand identity and improved customer satisfaction.

DEVELOPING THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK BRAND - FOR DECISION

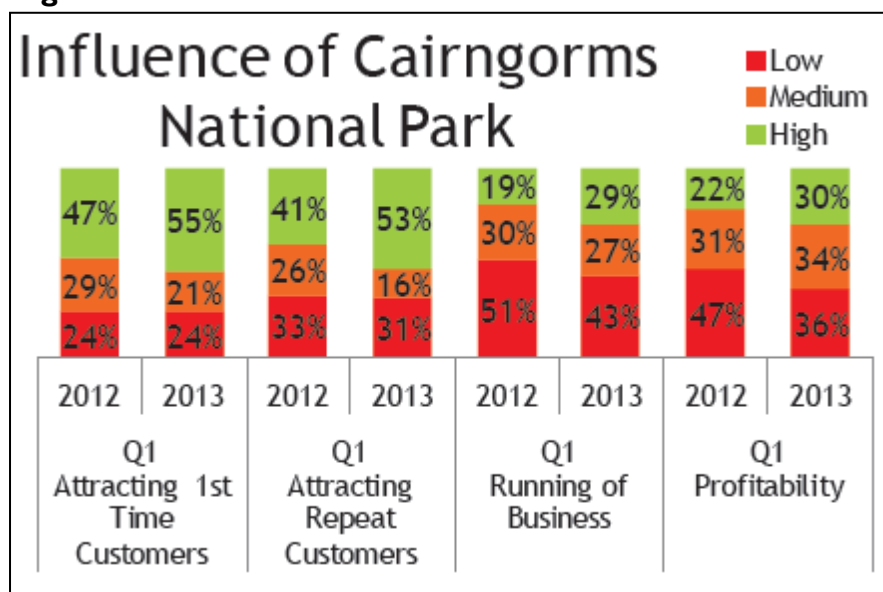
Background

1. As previously discussed with the Board (July 2012 and March 2013), brand awareness amongst visitors is high, with 44% of visitors able to describe the brand identity without any prompting, and 82% of visitors aware that they were in a National Park (2010).
2. Initial uptake by partners was good with nearly 300 approved applications. However, in recent years the rate of uptake has slowed dramatically and the results of online research indicate that many Brand 'holders' do not use the identity on their website (this is an indicator we don't have information about how brand is used in other ways): see Fig.1 below.



3. The CBP Business Barometer has consistently indicated that businesses consider that being in the National Park is good for attracting visitors but that the National Park is not good for profitability or greatly influences how their business is run. However, the most recent results suggest that more businesses are recognising a positive influence on profitability. See Fig 2.

Figure 2 Extract from CBP Business Barometer



4. The 2010 Visitor Survey also indicated some areas where visitor satisfaction is relatively low, and there is increasing anecdotal evidence that visitors expectations of quality are increasing.
5. CBP consultation with businesses and the experience of CNPA staff regularly using the brand identity has identified three barriers to greater uptake and prominent use of the CNP brand identity:
 - a) Lack of clear explanation of the 'business benefit' to encourage use of the brand identity and deliver the 'brand promise'.
 - b) Complex, challenging and inequitable brand criteria that vary considerably across sectors.
 - c) Lack of flexibility in use of the brand identity restricting the ability of some partners to use the image to support their own identities.
6. The challenge we face is one of re-invigorating partners to both use the Brand identity and encouraging them to deliver high quality, sustainable and authentic Cairngorms experiences. At the same time we need to maintain the strength, quality and reputation of the Cairngorms National Park brand as a key asset.
7. Changes to the brand identity and the criteria for use rest with the Board.

Overcoming the Barriers to Brand Use and Improving Visitor Experience

Make it Yours Campaign

8. CBP is developing a 'Make it Yours' campaign to encourage businesses to understand the benefits of linking their services and products to the National Park, and to encourage businesses to be able to provide inspirational information to visitors about the National Park.

9. Delivering this work with other non business partners is identified in our communications planning as a priority for us in 2014/15, as one of three key campaigns that we need to promote across CNP.
10. The 'Make it Yours' campaign deliver by CBP will also help to align business messages with core brand promises. The campaign:
 - a) Promotes the benefits to businesses of linking to National Park including the use of the Brand identity.
 - b) Encourages business to help deliver the overall brand promise of the National Park: *authentic, welcoming, thoughtful, spirited, inspirational, impassioned, astounding, and revitalising*
 - c) Encourages businesses to communicate about the special qualities of the National Park and how visitors can responsibly enjoy the area – to make the most of those outstanding and unique features of the Cairngorms.
 - d) Encourages business to use the CNP Brand identity as a clear visual link with the National Park
11. Support materials are being produced that promote the benefits of being a business within the National Park and provide an inspiring summary of the outstanding qualities of the area, and access to a pool of shared resources such as photographs.
12. CBP will launch the 'Make it Yours' campaign at the business conference on 7th November, and integrate the campaign into business engagement events.
13. This autumn/winter CBP will deliver four 'Make it Yours Quiz Night' events across the Park in; Ballater, Blair Atholl, Tomintoul and Aviemore as one element of the 'Make it Yours' campaign. These events are designed to be a fun and engaging way of delivering a campaign to partners who are reluctant to be 'talked at'. They will follow the very successful quiz format piloted earlier this year.
14. The CBP and CNPA boards will be asked to act as 'Make it Yours' Ambassadors along with respected local operators to help increase the reach and awareness of the 'Make it Yours' Campaign. CBP will provide support for people taking on the ambassadors' role.
15. CNPA will use the 'Make it Yours' content to encourage a range of other partners including communities, larger NGO's and education groups to link their experiences to the National Park. We will also encourage partners to collaborate and share best practice in developing the brand, through the delivery of the brand promise and use of the brand identity.

Changing the Brand Criteria

16. Our experience with administering the use of the brand identity and direct discussion with business has clearly indicated that the complexity and inequity of the current criteria are a barrier to uptake. Tourism businesses need to have both up to date Visit Scotland and Green Tourism Business accreditation while other sectors have self certified quality assurance and a self declared environmental statement. The current scheme appears unfair to many potential partners.
17. Following discussion with the Brand Development Group and the Sustainable Tourism Forum we consider that developing a single, simplified **brand charter** for

use by all sectors will encourage greater uptake of the brand identity. This would replace the existing criteria.

18. The key parts of this charter would be covered by CBP members' charter so that CBP members would automatically be able to use the brand identity as long as they met the proposed charter in full. This will make it easier for CBP to sell the benefit to members of being in the National Park. Note: it is **not** being proposed that being a member of CBP is a requirement for using the brand and the brand will be available for use by partner willing to agree to the brand charter. The key elements of the draft charter are contained in Annex I.

Connecting People with the Brand Identity

19. CBP developed a marketing framework for the National Park and the strapline 'Make it Yours'. This is being used in all Park-wide marketing material and CBP now consider that the CNP brand will be more effective if the image can be closely associated with the words 'Make it Yours'. The current Brand Identity Usage guideline used by the CBP and CNPA on all promotional material is quite specific regarding placement of the 'Make it Yours'. Such a change will require a re-draft of the guidelines. This will be carried out jointly between the CBP and CNPA. An example of how a revised brand identity **may** look is attached (Fig3).
20. If approved the use of the Brand identity with 'Make it Yours' would primarily be used in materials marketing the National Park. Individual partners would still continue to use the current image.

Fig 3: Closer linking with 'Make it Yours'



21. In reviewing the Brand Identity Usage guidelines we will also take the opportunity to look again at how the brand identity is used consistently in:-
 - a) Private sector businesses marketing
 - b) CBP marketing
 - c) Public Agency marketing
 - d) Public Agency advisory services
22. We can also see potential opportunities to link the brand identity more closely to specific words or actions in ways that strengthen its reach and impact. This might include words like 'volunteering' or 'supporting' and could help position the brand and its identity as something which people can actively support or get involved with.

While these applications would be exceptional we would like the delegated authority to the Brand Development Group to sanction the use of these designs through re-drafting the Brand De.

Discussion on Benefits and Risks of proposed changes

23. Delivering a 'Make it Yours' campaign clearly promoting the benefits of linking experiences and products to the National Park, and simplifying the use of the Brand through a single cross sector charter, will reduce two of the barriers identified and lead to both greater uptake and prominent use of the brand identity.
24. If agreed the timing of this change is excellent coinciding with an increase in how businesses view the National Parks impact on profitability.
25. Relaxing the strict design criteria to allow a limited number of agreed designs bringing words and phrases close to the image will strengthen people's connection with the National Park.
26. However, these changes have associated risks:
 - a) Relaxing the criteria for use will dilute the brand if it becomes associated with poor quality, unsustainable experiences and products. This concern was expressed by some members of both Sustainable Tourism Forum and Brand Development Group.
 - b) To comply with our current risk register we need be confident that we 'ensure appropriate criteria are in place for assessment of brand use applications and monitoring of use. Ensure adequate staff in place to undertake essential brand management activities.' We need to be confident that collectively both we and the CBP have enough resources to encourage partners to both use the brand identity correctly and deliver quality, sustainable and authentic experiences.
 - c) Relaxing the criteria for use may alienate those current brand users who meet the current 'higher' standards; notably those businesses that are VisitScotland quality assured and have Green Tourism Business Award.
 - d) Failure to deliver a high quality, consistent and effective 'Make it Yours' campaign to a large number of businesses and other sectors will undermine the proposed changes.
 - e) Changing the design criteria for a brand always risks 'diluting' a strong well recognised image. The proposed changes marginally infringe the current design guidelines but we still need to be confident that we are not diminishing the brand identity.
27. Our experience to date is that partners using the brand identity are those that wish to deliver high quality experiences and products. We have had no complaints about a brand user 'bringing the National Park into disrepute'. This is also the experience in the Yorkshire Dales National Park where use of the brand identity is linked to a simple code of conduct.
28. Both CNPA and CBP are committed to maintaining the brand and will continue to work with partners to maintain the quality and support them to deliver high quality, sustainable and authentic experiences. The proposed charter also still allows us to prevent partners from using the brand or withdraw its use. We consider that

working collaboratively with CBP we can manage and mitigate the risks of damaging the brand through association with poor quality.

29. We will clearly communicate changes to the brand criteria with existing users. However, we do anticipate some concerns being raised by a small number of businesses clearly positioning themselves as being 'green'. We will contact these businesses individually to explain the change if agreed.
30. We consider that a successful 'Make it Yours' campaign will develop a group of partners who see the benefits of linking their experiences and products with the National Park and will want to ensure the brand is maintained. These unofficial 'brand ambassadors' should in time also ensure the quality of the brand amongst fellow users.
31. After nine years of increasing use the CNP brand identity is a strong visual image and we consider that relaxing the design criteria does not pose a significant risk. The proposed changes maintain the integrity of the original design and simply add words, a little bit more closely than the current guidelines allow, encouraging people to associate experiences with the National Park. Nevertheless, we consider that it is worth seeking professional advice on these small design changes.

Recommendations

32. **In view of the need to further develop the Cairngorms National Park Brand we recommend that the Board:**
 - a) **Notes the work undertaken in developing the 'Make it Yours' Campaign.**
 - b) **Agrees to change the brand criteria to a code of conduct as outlined in the paper with the final wording to be agreed by Brand Development Group.**
 - c) **Agrees to amending the Brand Identity Usage guidelines to allow end lines such as 'Make it Yours' to be used close to the CNP Brand identity, and to delegate the final decision on such changes to the Brand Development Group; seeking professional advice as required.**

Indicators of Success

33. The following are suggested as indicators:
 - a) 80-100 delegates attending 'Make it Yours' quiz night in year 1.
 - b) Brand uptake - 25% (75 applicants) increase in uptake in year 1.
 - c) Brand use on websites – 50% using it on front page in year 1 and 60% in year 2.
 - d) Business barometer- improved influence of CNP on Running a Business up from 56% (High and medium) at end of year 1.
 - e) Business barometer- improved influence of CNP on profitability up from 64% (high and medium) at the end of year 1.
 - f) Visitor survey 2015 (relative to 2010 outputs) - increased awareness of being in the National Park up from 82%.
 - g) Visitor survey 2015 (relative to 2010 outputs) - increased ability to describe the Brand identity up from 44%.

- h) Visitor survey 2015 (relative to 210 outputs) – closer alignment to brand promise in answer to the question ‘*what they felt the logo conveyed*’.
- i) Visitor survey 2015 (relative to 2010 outputs) – increased customer satisfaction across the range of facilities visited.

Financial and Staff Implications

34. The work outlined will incur additional CNPA staff time in implementation and expenditure on design and branding advice within existing budgets. Simplification of brand criteria will, in a relatively short time, reduce staff time on processing applications creating more time to support brand users and ensure quality of use. Supporting brand users and the ‘*Make it Yours*’ programme can be undertaken within existing approved budgets.

Presentational and Stakeholder Implications

35. As previously discussed there may be some current brand users who feel that this is a drop in standards and dilution of brand identity but consultation so far has indicated that most partners regard it as sensible evolution in the development of the brand.

Next Steps

36. If approved:
- a) We will finalise the brand charter and design criteria for launch at the business conference in November.
 - b) We will communicate changes to all existing brand holders
 - c) CBP will complete work on ‘*Make it Yours*’ support materials and run four ‘quiz nights’
 - d) We will work with CBP to develop the roll of ambassadors in our respective boards.
 - e) We will plan and deliver the roll out of ‘*Make it Yours*’ to a wider range of non-business partners.
 - f) We will bring a paper to the Board in December on proposals for branded merchandising at which time we can provide a progress update.

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Annex I Key Elements of a Brand Charter

What is expected of you (business, organisation or event). We expect you:

1. To be a business, organisation or event within the Cairngorms National Park.
2. To be a business, organisation or event that meets current legislative and licensing requirements for the sector(s) within which you operate.
3. To be registered with a quality assurance scheme appropriate for the sector, if one exists. If you are not a member of such a scheme seek that within one year you will have made some visible move to join such a scheme or have sought to attend business or sector development events or training seminars.
4. To respect the special nature of the area and carry out your business, event or activity in ways that sustain and improve the environment.
5. To work to improve the customer experience and enhance the reputation of the area as a place to live, visit, look after and to do business.
6. To, where possible, purchase supplies and services from local, sustainable sources.
7. To follow the Brand Identity Usage guidelines when using the Cairngorms National Park brand identity.
8. **Not** to use the Cairngorms National Park brand identity for merchandising (sale goods that incorporate the brand identity into their designs such as branded pencils, T-shirts etc).
9. **Not** to use the Cairngorms National Park brand identity in ways that damages the reputation of the area, or brings it in to disrepute.

CNPA own the copyright on the Cairngorms National Park Brand identity and in the unlikely event that; you bring the area into disrepute, miss-use the brand identity or use it for merchandising, they reserve the right to not let you use the image.