

Brand experts seek Comfort in US deal

City specialists hope to tie up six-figure pay day

By **JIM STANTON**
Deputy Business Editor

CAPITAL brand development specialists the Edinburgh Consultancy has been appointed by US drinks giant Brown-Forman to conduct a feasibility study for a £4 million Southern Comfort visitor centre in New Orleans.

If the project gets the go-ahead, it will give the New Town firm a "six-figure" pay day and could double its five-strong workforce, its managing partner Ian Buxton said.

Significantly, with Brown-Forman - which also owns Jack Daniels whisky - rarely commissioning such work outside the US, the contract is a key stepping stone to the huge US brand development market, Mr Buxton added.

The firm is now preparing design concepts to present to the Kentucky-based wine and spirit group and is

- **Feasibility study on £4m visitor centre**
- **If deal goes ahead workforce will double**
- **Consultancy chief 'confident' of deal**

confident of landing the design contract.

"I'm confident Brown-Forman will like our ideas and if the project goes ahead it will mean us taking on more staff in the project management side," Mr Buxton said.

"It will also help us break into the US market which could have very healthy knock-on effects in terms of turnover and our credibility in the huge US market."

Mr Buxton, a former marketing director for Glenmorangie, said landing the work for the study from the giant corporation, which has a turnover of £1 billion a year, was a

great accolade for the firm.

"US companies wanting this type of work seldom look outside the US, and if they do it normally goes to a London company," he said.

Last year the Edinburgh Consultancy designed and built the £2m World of Whisky, the Dewar's "brand experience" visitor centre at Aberfeldy and it has worked with Bacardi Corporation.

It was also responsible for two of Scotland's most successful temporary exhibitions of recent years - the Star Trek exhibition at Edinburgh's City Art Centre in 1995 and the James Bond exhibition in Glasgow in 1998. Mr Buxton said representatives from Brown-Forman had come to see the World of Whisky on the back of the popularity of Dewar's White Label whisky in the US - and were impressed with what they saw.

"They had visited a number of wine and whisky centres in Scotland and Europe. They liked the World of Whisky then later sent their team over for a second look," said Mr Buxton. Mr Buxton was then invited to the US to look over a few possible prop-

erties for the centre prior to submitting his company's design ideas.

Brown-Forman has recently opened a £3m Jack Daniels visitor centre and is seeking to do likewise with the iconic Southern Comfort brand in New Orleans.

Excited

Mr Buxton said: "This appointment caps an exceptional year for the consultancy. We're excited and delighted to have the opportunity to work in this demanding marketplace with such an internationally-renowned brand and client."

Southern Comfort's vice president Steven Satim, said: "The Southern Comfort Centre Experience" would be a major investment in this important brand.

"We selected the Edinburgh Consultancy for this feasibility study following an international review on the basis of their outstanding appreciation of consumer needs and brand communication, applied to the very specific requirements of a public space that will be educational, entertaining and involving."

In the news...

"Quality is no longer enough," says Ian Buxton

As we move into the global "experience economy" consumers are going to value memorable experiences - and the brands that deliver these for them - as never before. Delivering and differentiating these experiences will be the key to sustained competitive advantage, in a market that regards simple product quality as an absolute given.

We like to think our work in this field as, for example, at Dewar's World of Whisky, represents some of the best cutting-edge practice in experiential marketing. Flatteringly, the media seem to think so too and we're delighted to reproduce some of our recent press and web coverage.

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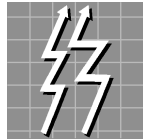
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Edinburgh Consultancy to Examine Feasibility of Southern Comfort

Management consultants and brand development specialists The Edinburgh Consultancy has been appointed by Brown-Forman Corporation, a leading US wine and spirits company, to conduct a feasibility study for its proposed Southern Comfort Center Experience in New Orleans, La. If approved, the project would be a flagship visitor and trade center designed to promote the history of the internationally popular Southern Comfort brand liquor. It is believed that Southern Comfort was first introduced in 1885 in New Orleans by barman M W Heron.

The Edinburgh Consultancy will prepare strategic design concepts for the consumer experience and work with locally appointed architects to develop potential design elements for the Southern Comfort center.



Enterprise in Scotland

The Edinburgh Consultancy

MANAGEMENT consultants and brand development specialists, the Edinburgh Consultancy, has been appointed to conduct a feasibility study for the Southern Comfort brand in New Orleans, Louisiana, by leading USA wine and spirits company Brown-Forman Corp.

If approved, the project is to be a flagship visitor and trade centre promoting the education and knowledge of the Southern Comfort brand.

Southern Comfort experience

Brand development specialist The Edinburgh Consultancy has been appointed by US wine and spirits company Brown-Forman Corporation to conduct a feasibility study for a Southern Comfort brand experience in New Orleans.

If approved, the project will become a visitor centre to promote the Southern Comfort brand.

The consultancy will prepare strategic design concepts for the "experience" and hopes to work with locally appointed architects.

Southern Comfort vice president and global marketing director Steven Sarfin says: "The Southern Comfort Centre would be a major investment in the brand. We selected the Edinburgh Consultancy after an international review."

News Digest Scotland

THE Edinburgh

Consultancy has become the only Scottish company to be shortlisted for Group Travel Awards 2001's "Best New Attraction" for their work on Dewar's World of Whisky in Aberfeldy.

BUSINESS BRIEFING EC an attraction at annual awards

THE Edinburgh Consultancy, a leading international brand development group, has been nominated as the only Scottish contender in the annual Group Travel Awards 2001, to be held in London.

Readers of Group Travel magazine - the UK's top title for group business - have nominated eight attractions for their flagship award, Best New Attraction, including the EC-designed Dewar's World of Whisky in Aberfeldy, Perthshire.

The EC's Ian Buxton said: "We're delighted to have got this far and to be recognised on a national stage. Simply to be nominated is an award on its own."

travel

...how can you turn the mixing of barley, yeast and water with a history lesson into an interesting day out?

The answer, as Walt Disney discovered years ago, is to create edutainment. And at Dewar's World of Whisky at Aberfeldy, hi-tech wizardry is used to take the visitor through an entertaining and educational journey.

It starts in the street, near the main auditorium, where illuminated perspex stepping stones sunk into the floor tell the Dewar's story. The time capsules are set at 50-year intervals and through newspaper adverts, whisky labels and other props a picture starts to emerge of a company that was going places.

The journey is self-guided and at the beginning you are handed an audio unit, an instrument that looks like a giant mobile phone. If you want to know more



FINE SPIRITS: the plush surroundings of Dewar's World of Whisky.

about an exhibit such as the *Monarch of the Glen*, a painting that hangs in the library, enter its special number on the keypad and a commentary will tell you everything about its place among the Dewars.

The journey is hands-on and interactive and one where you are encouraged to open drawers and sift through "private" accounts and order forms. Unless it is in your nature to

snoop around people's private property, you will feel like an industrial spy, such is the reality of the experience.

For Aberfeldy it is an attraction from which the community will surely benefit. And for visitors it is a likely candidate on the must visit list. Entry for an adult costs £3.95 and as you exit into the shop it is, I understand, the only place in the UK where you can get a bottle of Dewar's White Label...