

Submission title	Branding The Dell
Industry sector	Travel and Leisure
Client company	The Dell
Design consultancy	Good
Submission date	June 2017

For Publication

Branding The Dell





Executive Summary (227 words)

The Dell is a very special place. A stay here stays with you.

But, its identity was flat and its website was uninspiring and difficult. It looked like any other self-catering operation in a competitive part of the Scottish Highlands.

Since 2012, its owners Ross and Polly Cameron, have slowly improved the infrastructure. In 2015 they were ready for a relaunch and a drive for growth.

The Camerons wanted to sell the wonders of being situated in the stunning Cairngorm National Park along with the highlights of delightful Nethy Bridge.

It was our job to help them tell those tales.

This is an example of implementing design and marketing basics; letting the product speak for itself. We provided an objective approach, sending the right messages to the right groups at the right time. This helped portray a premium holiday destination; a class above the competition.

The overhauled and emotive brand identity roots the brand in its provenance. The new website showcases The Dell in all its quirky splendour with an improved user experience. Both aspects helped set the business on a growth path that's already proving successful. A virtuous circle of success and reinvestment in an evocative holiday destination and the highland community of Nethy Bridge.

SALES ARE UP
36%

AVERAGE PRICE INCREASE
22%
FOR ONE WEEK'S STAY

AVERAGE OCCUPANCY
RATES UP **7%**
FULL-TIME STAFF
HIRED **+3**

Ross and Polly with family
Owners of The Dell



THE CHALLENGE

Project Overview (681 words)



THE BRAND ITSELF FELT A BIT THIN AND DIDN'T REFLECT THE SENSE OF AUTHENTICITY AND PROVENANCE OF THE DELL

Previous brand identity The Dell of Abernethy



The Dell is a highland holiday destination in Nethy Bridge, next to Abernethy Forest in the Cairngorm National Park. The site itself is a collection of six self-catering cottages surrounding a renovated Georgian family house.

It's been run by the same family for three generations and is currently owned and run by Ross and Polly Cameron (Polly's Grandfather bought it in the 1960s) where they live and work on site with their two boys Harris and Woody.

It's an escapists' paradise: perfect for family breaks, romantic retreats, activity holidays, or to attend one of the workshop weekends. Within minutes of The Dell you can ski, hike, run, cycle, kayak, shoot, fish or fly!

Polly's unique sense of style and charm really comes through in the character of the place – inside and out. It's a special place, regardless of the time of year you visit.

Ross and Polly took over The Dell in 2012 and since then have been concentrating on getting the basics right. Renovations, improvements and infrastructure have been the recent priorities, but now they have grander ambitions: to create truly special getaway experiences.

The style and depth of experience at The Dell wasn't coming through in the

marketing material which was lagging behind a real-world encounter. The brand itself felt a bit thin and didn't reflect the sense of authenticity and provenance of The Dell. This was a problem as it's a very competitive market. This area of Scotland is a tourist honeypot and there are many self-catering properties and hotels available in the busier and better known Aviemore, just 10 minutes down the road. For example, The Hilton offers a recognisable and reasonably priced mainstream experience, close to Aviemore. The Dell needed to stand out and make a real statement about why it's such a great place to visit.

We worked objectively with Ross and Polly to help create a strategic approach to their brand and business. The key was in changing mindset and moving to a proactive and planned approach to their product and service. A Boston Matrix and SWOT Analysis helped reveal the high value areas and created a sense of focus that helped them see the wood from the trees.

One of the most important areas for consideration was the website. It's the single most important marketing tool and was holding the business and the brand back. Specifically, the booking system was poorly integrated which meant disproportionate administrative hours were spent finalising and confirming dates with customers.

Audiences

To meet our objectives, we identified four key target audience types that The Dell should actively sell and promote to.

- 01 Family Get Togethers**
Mature families with three generations. Likely Scottish with grown up kids. Milestone birthdays or other events.
- 02 Corporate Retreats**
Medium to large Scottish businesses, researched by staff, decision made by MD.
- 03 Special Occasions**
Weddings organised by 24-45-year-old women, to a large but strict budget. Birthdays and anniversaries: could be organised by recipient or as a gift.
- 04 Highland Explorers**
A wide demographic from 25-70 and may include smaller children.

Our messaging to these four distinct groups was shaped around themes of:

- **Quality**
- **Escape**
- **Location**
- **Provenance**

With patient reputation building, this would help us premiumise over time and move beyond other competitors in the market.

This focus was important so that we could avoid/discourage other groups like stag or hen parties, or other 'low value' accommodation types.



Objectives

The overriding objective was to develop an evolved brand platform for growth, allowing for continued (and increased) investment in the business.

The brand evolution and digital work took place during 2015, with a view to relaunch in October 2015.

Budget

We struck a reciprocal deal with Ross and Polly for this project. We would work on the planning, brand development and website to a value of £25K and they would offset this as accommodation costs for our annual company conference over the coming years.

- 01 Increase prices by up to 15%
- 02 Increase occupancy rates by 10%
- 03 Host more 'high margin' events (e.g. weddings)
- 04 Save up to 50% of booking administration time
- 05 Create a more coherent booking process for our customers

Brand development



Outline of Design Solution (351 words)

The previous Dell identity and website were looking quite dated. Although they carried a simple and authentic feel, there was a danger that it looked a little too 'niche' which we felt was holding the business back.

The website, The Dell's main marketing touchpoint, was lacking in really selling the depth of The Dell experience which is vital in convincing our target groups to consider it as a venue for a high value event such as a wedding or family reunion.

Our first task was to get to a Simple Truth for The Dell: an organising thought that powers the whole business. For Ross and Polly, who are so often caught up in the maelstrom of running things, this brutal simplicity of thought is a vital shortcut helping them to make easy decisions on a day-to-day basis.

The challenge was how to find a language that sums up how special a place The Dell is...

"Made at The Dell" was felt to carry all the appropriate sentiment we wanted to communicate. In fact, it's the embodiment of Ross and Polly themselves as "makers": whether that's Polly's upcycling of furniture, Ross and his DIY or their combined love of creating in the kitchen. It didn't need to be consumer facing in the final execution – we just needed to find a way to articulate it graphically.

Brand language development

NEW ADVENTURES
GREAT FOOD
BIG SMILES
OLD JOKES
BELLY LAUGHS
FRIENDS FOR LIFE
THEY'RE ALL MADE AT THE DELL



Outline of Design Solution

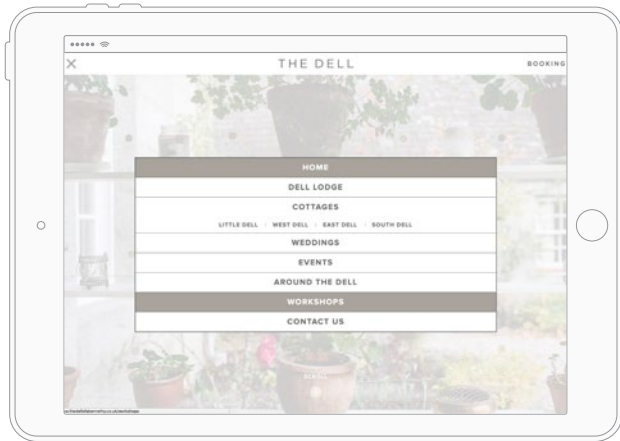
The obvious starting place was to create an iconic marque. We chose the beautiful Oak tree (with swing) that stands proudly in The Dell's gardens to sum up everything that makes the place special: authenticity, provenance and family. (It was planted by Polly's grandfather in the 1960s when he bought the house).

The identity was created in the spirit of a maker's marque which had the flexibility to be extended and repurposed for other things at The Dell such as labels or tags.

Top right: Marque development, showcasing the flexibility of The Dell's iconic Oak Tree

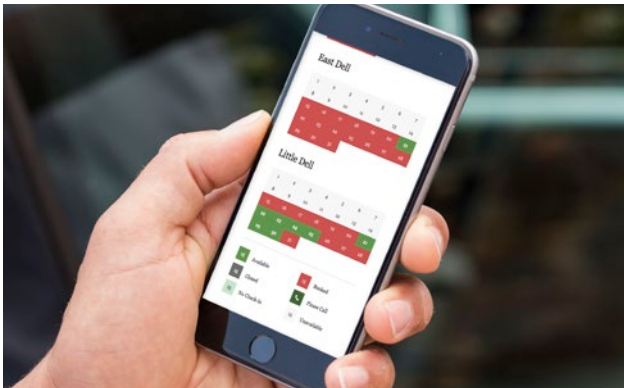
Bottom: Simplified brand marque lock up





Outline of Design Solution

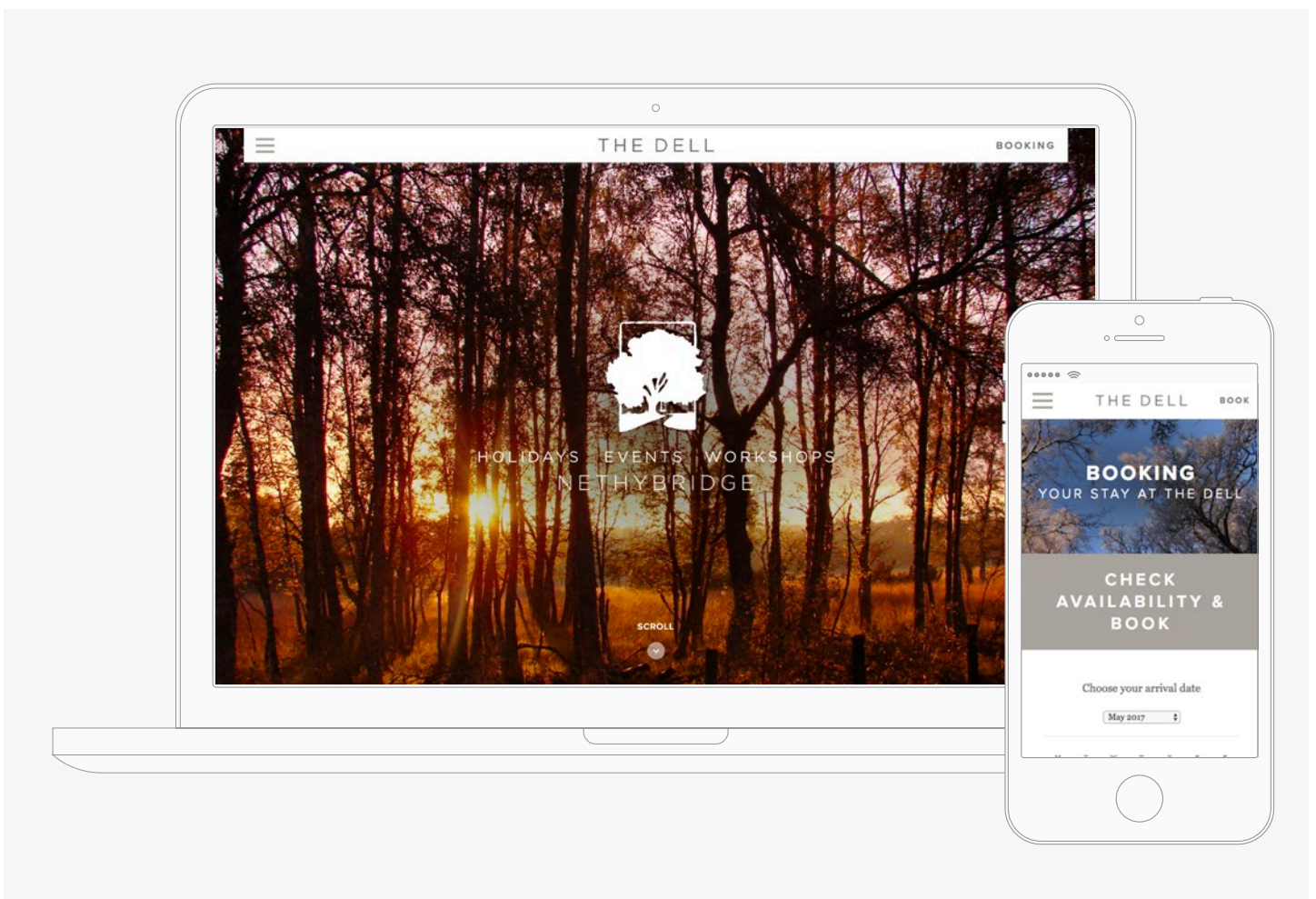
The website was reimagined and redesigned to help sell a deeper experience of The Dell, but also to streamline the booking process. Separate sections were created to appeal to our target groups and a new booking engine now makes the buying process more intuitive.



Top Left: The new website features sections targeted to our specific audience groups

Mid Left: A new, streamlined booking process has reduced admin time by 9hrs per week

Bottom: Fully responsive website has made site navigation easier on mobile devices



Summary
of Results
(451 words)



£80,700	Pre-launch
£110,000	Post-launch
Variance: £29,000, +36%	
Contributes to the objective of creating a more coherent booking process	

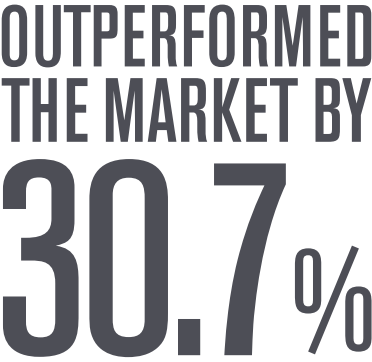
Trading Periods

The Dell relaunched in Oct 2015.

The Pre-launch period is Oct 2014 – Oct 2015.

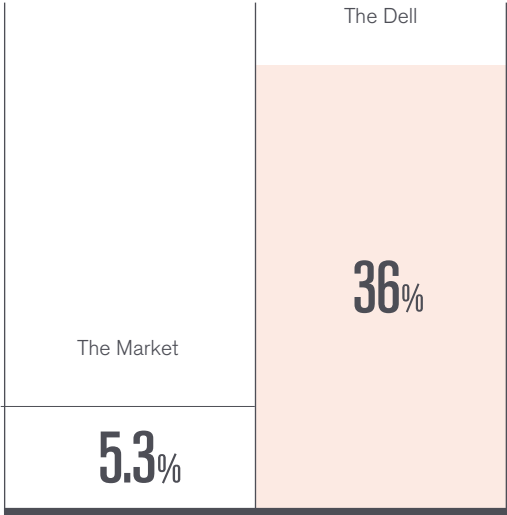
The Post-launch period is Nov 2015 – Nov 2016.

This covers two full year trading cycles.



The Tourist market in Scotland grew by 5.3% from 2014 to 2015

Source:
Scotland: The Key Focus on Tourism 2014 & 2105 (Visit Scotland)



All figures from The Dell unless otherwise stated



The website's updated booking system is more efficient than the previous system.

Time dedicated to booking admin (hours per week)



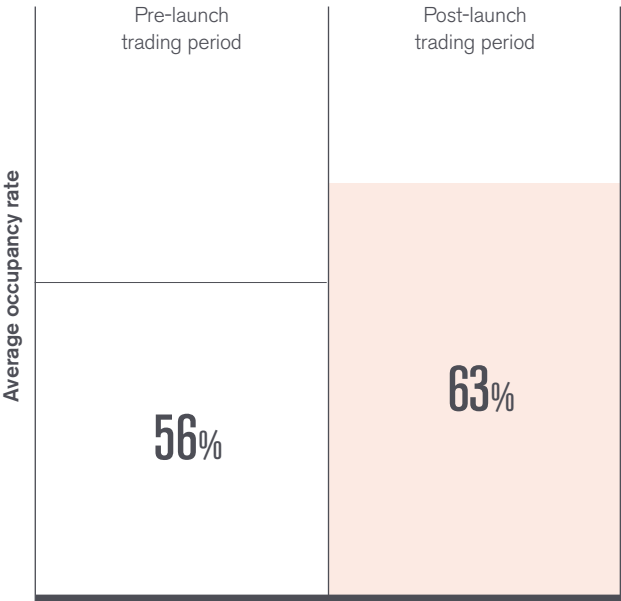
This exceeds the objective of cutting admin time by 50%

Summary
of Results

AVERAGE OCCUPANCY
RATES UP

7%
▲

AN INCREASE OF
547 BED
NIGHTS



Meets with the objective of increasing occupancy rates by up to 10%

Trading Periods

The Dell relaunched
in Oct 2015.

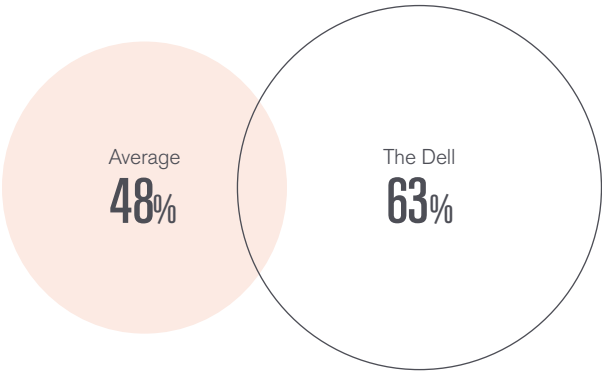
The Pre-launch period
is Oct 2014 – Oct 2015.

The Post-launch period
is Nov 2015 – Nov 2016.

This covers two full
year trading cycles.

OUTPERFORMING
THE SCOTTISH
AVERAGE BY

15%
▲



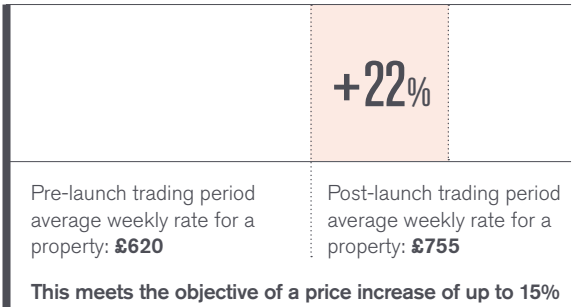
The Scottish Average for
Occupancy for Self-Catering
Properties is 48%

Source: **Scotland: The Key
Focus on Tourism 2014 &
2105 (Visit Scotland)**

All figures from The Dell
unless otherwise stated

AVERAGE PRICE INCREASE

22%
FOR ONE
WEEK'S STAY




This meets the objective of a price increase of up to 15%

Summary
of Results

FULL-TIME
STAFF
HIRED
+3

Three full time staff hired to live on site and help with increased demand.

30%  UPLIFT ON
HIGHER MARGIN
BUSINESS

Post-launch has seen an improvement on the type of customer at The Dell. More higher value custom in large scale weddings, corporate groups and music festivals.

This meets the objective of increasing higher margin events

Digital Data

The digital data is drawn from the following period:

Pre-launch period

5th July 2015 –
31st Oct 2015

Post-launch period

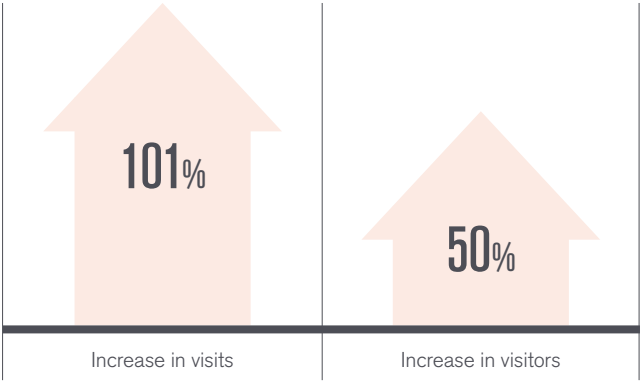
15th July 2016 –
31st Oct 2016

This is because Google Analytics were not optimised on the site prior to 15th July 2015.

WEB TRAFFIC UP

There has been a **101%** increase in visits to the site and an increase of visitors of **50%**. This has been the result of building more search terms and improving related links into the new site.

Source:
*The Dell Website,
Google Analytics*



All figures from The Dell unless otherwise stated

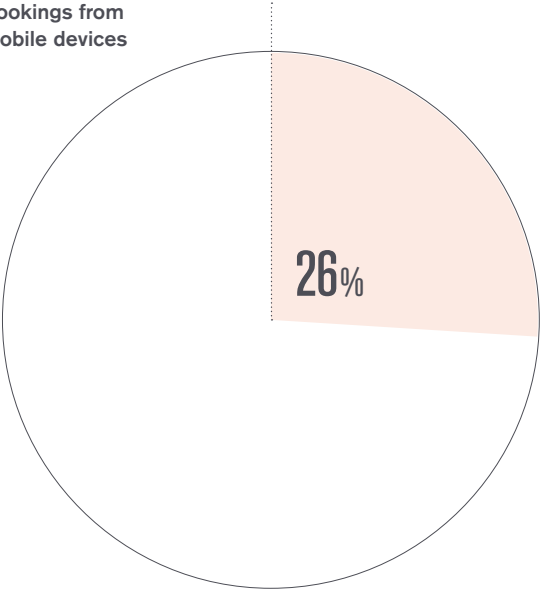
MOBILE

The new responsive site has seen mobile traffic increase by **147%** and **26%** of all bookings came from a mobile device.

147%
INCREASE IN
MOBILE TRAFFIC

Source:
*The Dell Website,
Google Analytics*

Bookings from
mobile devices



Summary of Results

Trip Advisor customer feedback

“THE DELL, THE PLACE TO
PLEASE ALL OF THE PEOPLE
ALL OF THE TIME.”

“WOW. JUST PERFECT.”

“LITTLE PLACE OF MAGIC.”

Research Resources

TAll data relating to The Dell has been supplied by Ross and Polly Cameron of The Dell. (Including Google Analytics).

All other data quoted comes from Visit Scotland.

Scotland: The Key Focus on Tourism 2014 & 2015

Other Influencing Factors

The Dell has no marketing budget. Everything is done by Polly and her entire effort is built around the website and her social media effort through Instagram and Facebook. So, other than the brand evolution and updated website, there has been no incremental marketing activity for The Dell in the pre v's post periods.

All the brand and digital consultation and execution was handled by Good in an integrated capacity.

Contacts

Agency Contact:

Chris Lumsden
Partner
chris@wearegood.com

Client Contact:

Polly Cameron
Owner
dellofabernethy@gmail.com