

Calls for more effort to sell island in non-finance sectors

GUERNSEY is not doing enough to sell itself outside the island as a business location in sectors away from finance, according to three local entrepreneurs.

Speaking at a small business seminar organised by the Chamber of Commerce at the B2B networking event, Jo Porritt from Crowd Media, Jo Stoddart from Quintessential Relocation Consultants, and former deputy Marc Laine, who now heads the Guernsey office of technology consultancy C5 Alliance, said that the island was falling behind Jersey in off-island promotion.

Mr Laine has complained previously about what he described as 'a distinct lack of any kind of central promotion', and has proposed developing a resource of a promotional agency along the lines of a hybrid between Guernsey Finance and Digital Jersey.

'At the moment there are little pockets of effort, but people involved are all very busy, there's a very small amount of time they can put forward,' he said.

'Commerce and Employment is looking at developing the digital space but only with a very thin slice of officer time.

'There is no full-time person anywhere promoting the [digital] sector's interest, either inward, outward facing or encouraging businesses to collaborate, and that's a big issue at the moment.

'The Guernsey Finance-Digital Jersey-style hybrid would be a good start, but I don't see us getting our act together because it's just disjointed at the moment.'



A panel of entrepreneurs at a recent Chamber of Commerce seminar discussed promoting the island in sectors other than finance. Left to right, Jo Porritt from Crowd Media, Marc Laine from C5 Alliance and Jo Stoddart from Quintessential Relocation Consultants.

(Picture by Steve Sarre, 5964795)

Ms Porritt said that she wanted to see a Digital Guernsey initiative pursued 'in terms of the infrastructure we have, the plans for small business, and for Guern-

sey as a jurisdiction to be recognised as a digital hub, because that would benefit everyone.

'There is sadly no current central hub

managing strategy driving it forward. There are individuals and businesses contributing a lot of time, but Jersey beats us hands down on this for now.'

She said that a promotional body would particularly help the creative sector to promote itself outside of the island. 'We have a wealth of talent here to be on a level playing field with the major cities and we shouldn't be limited, but there is only so much that small operators can do in promoting themselves. A body to represent and promote the sector would help it to be taken seriously and become a credible revenue stream for the island.'

Mrs Stoddart, whose business primarily looks after people moving to the island for business reasons, whether independently or with work through a housing licence, offered support for the States' new business-guernsey.gg website, which she said would help in some way.

'We all have a responsibility to spread the word ourselves, we need to work together as a community to do more about selling Guernsey to the outside world.

'But I still find it a bit sad that people hear about Guernsey through friends and family.

'I think we need to have a bit more of a cohesive strategy to go out and sell Guernsey plc to the outside world, when we have so much to offer.

'We really need to spread the message about what a fantastic place it is to do business.'