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## Robert Hanley

### Communications and Promotions Officer, and Content and Strategy Coordinator

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**Royal  
Geographical  
Society**

with IBG

Advancing geography  
and geographical learning



**Job title:** Communications and Promotions Officer, and Content and Strategy Coordinator

**Organisation:** Sustrans Scotland and My Green world

**Location:** Edinburgh, UK

#### How did you get to where you are now?

I worked in sales roles following the completion of my degree (call centres, travel agencies and recruitment) to fund my work / internships in conservation. I studied ocelot densities in Peru, worked on a kangaroo study in Australia, and mist trapped birds in both of these countries. I also worked with turtles in Malaysia, was hired for three months to study Iberian lynx in Portugal through a reintroduction programme.

#### Was there anything particularly useful that helped you get into this role?

My background knowledge of conservation and sustainability issues were an important factor in me securing my roles. Additionally, networking through LinkedIn and former colleagues helped me get a leg-in when interviewing for the positions. For my work in My Green World, it is important to keep on top of current affairs and trends in conservation. I have upskilled by undertaking a

carnivore management course in Norway along with a free massive online open course (MOOC) run by IUCN on African Parks and Protected Areas.

Otherwise, the best training to help me in my current role has been the rigorous sales training I have undertaken throughout the years and the training in the relevant CRM's that I need to use on a daily basis. GIS at university was helpful throughout my time with RSPB Scotland and I used it to map the proximity of reserves to partner organisations to encourage donations.

#### What do you do as part of your role?

In my role in Sustrans Scotland, I assist with all aspects of communication and promotion of the organisation's work to promote sustainable transport and active travel to a range of audiences, including key stakeholders, the public, volunteers and supporters.

I manage the social media output and generate content, including press releases, to raise awareness of the organisation whilst coordinating, organising and running events.

In my time with My Green World, a charity I help part-time, I co-manage digital communication channels (social media and website content) and create original online content to raise awareness of local and global environmental issues. As well as this, I use my communications skills to increase the search engine optimisation (SEO) of the company to maximise revenue and online traffic.

As a smaller organisation, I regularly liaise with the CEO to look inside and outside the company for opportunities to grow the business and increase market share while staying true to the founding goals.

#### What skills and characteristics do you need for this role, apart from geographical knowledge?

Communication and adaptability are key to my roles. Being able to constantly adapt to new,

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unexpected challenges is paramount in the dynamic environment that I work in. It is also important to have a leadership ability when organising events.

Additionally, building rapport with stakeholders, both internally and externally, is crucial to my role and I would not be able to gain information from relevant parties without having good workplace relationships in place.

**Do you get to travel for your role?**

Yes – across the UK for training courses and across Scotland to cover different stories.

**What are the opportunities for career progression? Where might you be in five years' time?**

There is the chance to progress in the field of communications or PR. Until recently I was hoping to pursue a career in conservation research, however I am now looking seriously into this as a career choice given the enjoyment I get out of it and the stability it offers compared to a conservation career. Therefore, within five years, I hope to be in a more senior role in communications and PR, ideally working for a wildlife or environmental organisation.

**What advice would you give to someone wanting to go in to this career?**

Don't disregard your communication and other transferrable skills, as they will put you in good stead for a plethora of jobs when leaving university. If you don't end up in a role specifically related to geography or your degree, aim to work in one that will still give you professional experience and help bolster your CV for the time when that dream job comes along.

**Why did you choose geography? Why should others choose geography?**

I thought that it would be a good degree for me to keep my options open and could offer a career in either conservation or something else interesting and engaging.