

CIPR Case Studies
Excellence Awards 2010: Publication
Campaign: London Borough of Camden Communications
Team – Camden Summer University Prospectus 2009



Introduction

Camden's Summer University (CSU) has become an established and popular programme in the local calendar marking its 11th birthday in 2009. Each year the council aims to attract more young people to participate in one or more of the 80 plus courses on offer. A key marketing tool is the CSU prospectus.

Aims

CSU actions two outcomes in Camden's corporate plan and communications strategy - a safe Camden that is part of our world city, by offering diversionary activity and a connected Camden community where people lead active healthy lives. It also supports two objectives in Camden's children and young people's plan enabling young people to learn and achieve, and to stop children being involved in bullying, antisocial behaviour and crime.

The purpose of the CSU prospectus is to maximize take-up amongst the target group – young people between the ages of 13 to 19 extending to 25 for those with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDDs) in the borough. It also aims to improve residents' perceptions about activities and provision for children and young people.

The communications plan for the CSU had these objectives for the prospectus:

- That CSU courses would be well publicised and that take-up of the courses would be 100%.
- To consult young people about the design of the prospectus and gain an approval rating of 85%.
- That the prospectus should highlight courses with accreditation in the design format and result in a take-up of 150 young people gaining accreditation. (Accreditation gives students formal and externally assessed acknowledgement of their success recognised by employers, universities and colleges).
- That at least 50% of young people attending CSU would say they found out about the activities from the prospectus.

How the publication meets the needs of the target audience.

The positive feedback and evaluations from the 2007 and 2008 CSU brochures prospectuses drove informed and influenced the 2009 design and copy content. Comments, approvals and recommendations were incorporated into the 2009 brief.

Inspired by the 2008 publication, two student illustrators created the initial cover design - an energetic mix of Manga illustration, photos and bold, bright colours. The result was a visual message conveying fun, action and vitality. A group of six young people – called peer motivators - also helped shape the artwork which was given finishing touches by Camden Design, the council's in-house design unit (Objective 2).

Young people are used to quick, direct information both in words and images. Strong colours identified each of the six main course subject headings with the web address and hotline telephone number on every double page. This created an easy signpost for contacts. Course descriptions were kept concise and bite-size with just enough information to stimulate interest. New and accredited courses were highlighted in the design detail (Objective 3).

A pull-out course application form was clearly differentiated from the body of the brochure in a black and white lighter weight paper. The format was clear and uncluttered including simple evaluation questions about the design and ease of use of the prospectus.

Cost implications reduced the number of pages from the previous year. Listings increased from two to three per page but without losing clarity.

Both the design and the contents were pitched at just the right note for the target audience.

Evaluation

The prospectus included a pull-out application form, which ended with three simple questions to evaluate the effectiveness of the publication. Readers were asked to rate the overall design, the cover design, and whether it was easy to read.

The results far exceeded the objective of an 85 per cent approval rating.

Out of the hundreds responding:

- 100% rated both the overall design and cover design either good or very good. (Objective 2 target 85%)
- Nearly 100% found the prospectus either very easy or easy to read.
- Over 90% gave it a good to excellent rating using a score of 1 to 10.
- 64% found out about the summer university through the prospectus – either independently or were given it at school (Objective 4 target 50%)

Independent evaluators Summer University London gave the 2008 prospectus a very favourable 7.60 score compared to the London-wide average of 6.03. It was rated excellent for convincing readers 'that courses are innovative and high quality', and for 'evidence that young people are involved in delivery.' Assessors also commended the brochure for its 'very effective' cover and the 'simple but friendly and appropriately colourful' layout.

They also recommended improvements which were incorporated into the design brief for the 2009 prospectus.

As one of a mix of marketing channels the CSU brochure helped to ensure that the courses were well publicised and take-up was the optimum 100%

A total of 951 students enrolled for 2351 places with 80% completing their individual courses (Objective 1).

Design and creativity – what makes your publication stand out?

The signature image, which was central to the marketing mix, was immediately eye-catching with young people wearing street-style fashions involved in popular youth activities such as music, rap, dance and photography. It created an uplifting feeling of buzz and activity with the yellow backdrop giving a bright, summer feel. It gave the correct impression that there was a wide choice of enjoyable, creative and healthy things to do and learn in Camden during the summer break.

The high approval ratings and the successful take-up rate (above) are proof of its effectiveness.

Costs

The summer university prospectus is in the £0 to £100k category.

By targeting our distribution we reduced our print run from 17,000 to 15,000 in 2009. We also reduced the size from 56pp to 48pp.

As a result the 2009 prospectus cost £7,641 (£10,560, 2008) saving £2191.



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