



CATEGORY: BEST PUBLICATION (16)

REGION: NORTH EAST ENGLAND

- **Strategy**

Northumbria University's strategic communications goal was to eliminate stodge and formality and to deliver an **irresistibly glossy, feature-packed 'accessory'** for prospective students, rather than an institutional tome. Following focus groups and market testing the University delivered Britain's only suite of 'high street magazine' print-and-online prospectuses. This was a direct response to what prospective applicants told us they were looking for.

- **Implementation Step-by-Step**

1. Concept work booked with Northumbria University in-house designers. **April 2009.**
2. Three designers looking at alternative styles for the front end, clusters and profiles.
3. Publications Team researched and benchmarked other prospectuses and commercial magazines. **June 2009.**
4. Send out a Summer survey seeking prospective student opinions on content, style, imagery. **July 2009.**
5. First concepts in. Met with University-wide staff from Corporate Communications, Design, Marketing, Schools Marketing, International Office, Student Services, Return to Learning, the Students' Union and Sport Northumbria to gather feedback.
6. Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive with Executive Group and Director, Corporate Communications agree final concept. **October 2009.**
7. Initial work presented to Executive. **November 2009.**
8. Request for new information on courses/facilities sent out. December 2009.
9. Commissioning and staging photography. **February 2010.**
10. Copywriting. **March 2010.**
11. First proof stage. **April 2010.**
12. Sign off. **May 2010.**
13. Delivery. **May 2010.**



- **Creativity – what makes the campaign stand out?**
 1. Key elements? **Originality and Authenticity:** The editorial tone-of-voice was agreed not by the gowned or the besuited, but by Northumbria’s own student journalists.
 2. Impeccable photographic values: stock shots were banned. The people seen throughout this publication – students and staff – are **one hundred percent ‘Northumbria’**. Slickly styled, self-contained advertisements for student support services.
 3. Consistent focus on our target audience – bright, media savvy, articulate, aspirational people.
 4. Bespoke versions were produced for International students, Postgraduate students, Part-Time students. There was even a version in Mandarin!

- **Evaluation and Measurement, Cost-Effectiveness and Final Results against Objectives**
 1. Exponential growth in web traffic.
 2. Sustained growth in applications – Northumbria University remains in the UK Top 10 (with greater than 3000 applications) for application growth.
 3. The 2009/10 cycle saw Northumbria University outperforming its peers, with a growth of 5.4% compared to figures of 2.2% and 1.5% for main competitors and the sector.
 4. A significant decline in reliance on ‘clearing’ to fill places.
 5. A sharp rise in the number of higher-calibre applicants, as reported by Times Higher Education, November 2009.
 6. Total cost under £70,000.
 7. In-house design and fulfilment.

In order to manage costs Corporate Communications reduced the print run of the publication from 70000 to 55000 – saving almost £24,000. Research into likely demand was undertaken before deciding to reduce the print runs, to ensure that there would be no need for an expensive reprint. Reducing the print runs saved on storage costs. Money-saving ideas included the reduction of paper weight, page numbers and using digital print rather than litho. Finally:

An electronic version of the prospectus was provided, and proved highly effective:



<http://view.hiddendigital.com/?userpath=00000481/00013865/00050443/>