

Region: North East

Category: 1- Corporate and business communications

Title: 'Est 1834' - Medical School's 175th Anniversary

Entrant: Cool Blue Brand Communications

Client: Newcastle University

Background

To mark its 175th anniversary the faculty of Medical Sciences wanted to develop a campaign to create regional awareness of the School and its contribution to the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Newcastle upon Tyne and the north east of England. The campaign also had to fit within the University's overarching aim of being a 'civic' university i.e. one which does tangible good in the community in which it exists.

Objective

To make the Medical School, its positive achievements and its contribution to the north east region, highly visible to key stakeholders* through a consistent and appropriate ten month community engagement campaign.

*The client's key stakeholders were identified as: the general public, alumni, students, staff, medical partners and media.

NB: We could not include any of the day-to-day scientific/medical breakthrough news releases/stories which were all handled by the University's press office.

Strategy

Our strategy was to develop the following:

- A strong brand identity with which to badge all campaign activity.
- An exciting, creative and diverse range of engagement events and activities to appeal to the key stakeholders.
- A campaign that would work to assist the University's Alumni Relations Office to raise funds.

Implementation and Creativity

Campaign Identity

The development of the '1834' campaign identity was to be applied to all materials giving coherency to the campaign activities.

The following promotional collateral was also produced to assist in the achievement of the campaign objectives:

City signage

Posters and street signage displayed in major public spaces such as Central Station, St James' Boulevard (one of the main routes in and out of the city) and Northumberland Street (the main pedestrian shopping street).

Medical School Signage

A range of floor decals and window vinyls noting key medical research breakthroughs in the School's history were designed and displayed throughout the University.

Microsite

A campaign microsite was designed to host all campaign information including a history of the School, profiles of famous alumni and key academics, information on the positive health impacts that the School makes to the region, information on economic performance, awards and the campaign's event calendar.

'True Facts' booklet - key facts and figures

A short guide to the highlights of the Medical School's long and successful history was designed for use with media and general public and distributed at all events.

Anniversary Media Pack

A folder branded with the campaign logo and containing a CD with high resolution images, editor's notes and the True Facts was prepared for journalists.

Media Campaign

To achieve consistent in-depth coverage of the campaign activities a range of editorial (non-fee paying) media partnerships were brokered with the editorial teams at the BBC and NCJ Media - which owns both of Newcastle upon Tyne's daily newspapers.

Media launch

A special four minute BBC TV feature on the Medical School was brokered by Cool Blue. We arranged access to training wards, consultants and patients who had all experienced the great work of the Medical School. The resulting film contained all of the campaign's key messages and created a high quality, high profile launch to the campaign.

The film was shown during the BBC's breakfast, lunch and evening news programmes throughout the launch day.

A fun photo opportunity at the Medical School was also delivered for the print media.

Events

The events were designed to deliver both high visibility of the Medical School via media relations opportunities and face-to-face interactions with key stakeholders.

Each event was carefully considered for its ability to achieve the campaign objectives.

'Pharmacy' – sponsorship of Damien Hirst exhibition at The Baltic

The Medical School sponsored the Pharmacy exhibition which was The Baltic's programming highlight of 2009, generating around 230,000 visits and a schools education programme involving 4,000 local school students and resulting in media coverage for the Medical School to the value of £110,000.

A key stakeholders' preview was hosted by the gallery director for the Medical School's investors, alumni and top students. More than 200 alumni and investors attended the event which helped generate a significant sum in financial pledges for future Medical School activities. Key investors and alumni praised the Medical School for taking such a creative approach to generating appropriate awareness of its achievements.

'Pictures of Health' – public photography competition

A photographic competition was launched with the north east's leading daily newspaper, The Journal. Readers were asked to contribute their own photographs to epitomise the phrase 'a picture of health'.

The resulting news features and stories resulted in a wealth of reputation raising coverage for the Medical School.

The winners had their work displayed in the north east's leading gallery, The Baltic, and were invited, along with their family, to a special celebratory event along with key stakeholders, alumni and investors. Following the event there was a further tangible spike in fundraising/investment activity.

'A Stroll Through Time' – a walking history of the Medical School

The Medical School has been sited at seven locations throughout the city during its 175 year history. To highlight its history Cool Blue suggested creating a walking tour and map to show its previous locations.

To launch the tour we recruited medical students to act as 'tour guides' for the media and for key stakeholders – alumni and investors – who were also invited to take the tour. The result was a further spike in fundraising.

'Making a Difference' – case studies on Medical School trained doctors who have made a significant difference to health in the region

We produced a series of case studies on the work of the Medical School for use by the regional media. These case studies were designed to enhance the School's reputation by demonstrating how its work in training community GPs and doctors has resulted in many day-to-day benefits for the general public of the north east. The community focus was well received by a wide range of medical partners.

Cost-effectiveness

Calculating the value of media coverage achieved throughout the campaign period, against the overall cost of the campaign, a return on investment of 76:1 was achieved.

Measurements and evaluation

Throughout all activity we ensured that the key objectives were kept in mind: to raise the reputation of the Medical School and to assist fundraising efforts.

The ten month programme of activity resulted in:

- Significant funds raised for student research as a result of the campaign.
- 4,709,000 opportunities for stakeholders to see/hear about the Medical School's successes significantly enhanced the School's reputation.
- Coverage was achieved amounting to £922,000 of advertising value equivalent.
- Over 86,000 face-to-face engagement opportunities were created through the events programme where participants learned about the Medical School's positive contribution to the region's health.
- The favourability of media coverage throughout the campaign was evaluated as 98% 'favourable' (from possible neutral or negative options).
- Key messages were used in 92% of coverage.
- Links to the anniversary website were used in 53% of coverage.
- Photography/images were used in 87% of coverage.
- An excellent range of materials has been created detailing the history and achievements of the Medical School creating an enduring legacy from the campaign which will be useful to the School's ongoing promotional and fundraising work.

Testimonial – Martin Cox, Business Development Manager, Newcastle Medical School

"We chose Cool Blue to work on our 175th anniversary campaign due to their ability to combine fresh and innovative ideas with an understanding of the history and background to the issues we were trying to address.

"The service we have had from Cool Blue has been excellent – always able to respond to requests and suggestions; always bouncing new ideas around and creating an impressive and intelligent campaign which has significantly raised the profile of the medical school with its stakeholders."

Budget

Category B £11 - £50k