

Region: North East

Category: 10 – best use of media relations

Title: Launch of Temenos

Entrant: Cool Blue Brand Communications

Client: Tees Valley Unlimited

Background

Temenos is the first in a series of art works commissioned for the Tees Valley by Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU).

The 'Tees Valley Giants' designed by world-renowned duo, artist Anish Kapoor and structural designer Cecil Balmond. The five sculptures will form the world's biggest public art initiative and put Tees Valley firmly on the art tourist map.

The Giants were commissioned before the recession and are to be paid for by specialist art funding and private sector investment, with small amounts coming from local authorities

Public art is traditionally (initially at least) received negatively by members of the public who seem to believe that funds have been directed away from schools hospitals etc.

TVU wanted to use media relations as the most cost effective way of getting blanket coverage for the project to raise the profile and status of the area and to demonstrate the positive impact such an art work could have on the wider world's perceptions of the area to resident and stakeholders.

Objectives

- To gain local, regional, national and international coverage
- To communicate key messages about the Tees Valley
- To give key messages about the funding of the Giants and demonstrate value for money
- To minimise the usual negative coverage of public art

Strategy

- Our aim was to build anticipation of the launch locally by using the regional media at all stages of the construction.
- We wanted to ensure that journalists from key sectors such as art, engineering, architecture, regeneration, as well as national media actually attended the launch rather than covering from their desks in London.
- We wanted to gain blanket positive coverage in newsprint, broadcast and online
- To plan a launch event with a wow factor
- We brought in one of our close PR associates who ah worked with us on several occasions, arts specialist Alan Sykes

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Implementation

The launch event created a real buzz not least in the form of the helicopter we hired to fly the media over the sculpture we took up journalists from Sky News, The Times, The Guardian and The Independent, BBC Radio 4's Front Row to regional ITV and BBC crews and scores of trade and specialist writers. Over a period of a few hours we took almost 100 people up to see the sculpture from above.

The footage was shown that evening on national and regional TV and photos were used in scores of publications.

We also used our relationship with the regional media to run a photography competition and to promote and distribute the resulting postcards featuring the winning photos.

We also held a taxi driver briefing to get the cab drivers on board and make sure they informed visitors to the town about Temenos and its positive impact on the town. We identified a taxi driver 'star' who acted as an ambassador – and was interviewed on BBC breakfast news, BBC 24 – and was spotted by his pal watching in Sydney, Australia!

We invited art specialist media to follow the construction process and CNN International took up the offer producing a half hour film about Anish. Cool Blue co-ordinated and hosted CNN during filming and supplied additional film footage etc for inclusion.

A DVD was commissioned along with time lapse photography which captured the excitement of the build proves and built anticipation for the launch. This was given to media and featured on many websites and was used in part by regional TV.

Creativity

The launch of Temenos took place at a difficult time for TVU with Government cuts expected. It was vital the organisation was not seen to be wasting money or using it badly. Cool Blue took on the challenge of making sure the launch was a worthwhile event by ensuring the media conference was a sea of TV cameras and alive with the arms of national news and specialist writers asking questions.

We know journalists love looking at things from different angles so decided to hire a helicopter. An investment that proved incredibly successful – we had almost 20 people on the 8am from London – generating some fantastic coverage.

We decided to briefings explaining the funding all regional media were fully supportive – there was no negative coverage of TVU or the sculpture regionally.

The photographs from the public competition were put onto 110,000 postcards that were issued with the local papers The Evening Gazette and The Journal for people to send to friends and relatives across the world – spreading positive messages about the Tees Valley.

Evaluation and measurement

The campaign was evaluated by traditional AVE and ROI measurements. A key message evaluation to show the positive/negative balance was also carried out.

Our microsite had 3,768 hits from 34 countries. The Flickr group has 208 user-submitted photos and the photography competition attracted around 150 entries

Cost-effectiveness

With £6,655,011.48 worth of coverage and 303,602, 139, and ROI of 208:1 and figures of 57 per cent positive; 37 per cent neutral and six per cent negative - we believe the cost effectiveness of the campaign speaks for itself!

Results and final results against objectives

The huge amount of coverage is evidenced here – the vast majority giving positive key messages about the Tees Valley and its ambition. Along with the lack of negative coverage TVU was delighted with all of the outcomes which showed not only the value of the art project but also the launch event itself.

The vast majority of the coverage was positive or neutral (although some of the art critics weren't so keen on the finished sculpture!) and vox pops showed that the people of the area had taken Temenos to their hearts.

Cool Blue and Alan gained massive coverage regionally, nationally and internationally including CNN International, BBC News 24, BBC national breakfast news, Sky News, BBC Radio 4's Front Row, BBC Radio3, The Times, The Telegraph, The Independent, The Guardian, The Financial Times, The Observer, Blueprint, Regeneration and Renewal, Architect's Journal, New Start, the Telegraph of India, Art Spread International, Elle Decoration, The Journal, The Evening Gazette, regional BBC and TTTV, Living North, BBC Radio Tees, TFM Radio, Darlington and Stockton Times and scores of web based reports . .to name but a few!

PR value of £6,655,011.48

Opportunities to see 303,602, 139

ROI of 208:1

Budget – band B