

Category: 20. Best Event
Title of Entry: World Cup in a Warehouse – Hoults Yard
Entrant: O Communications
Client: Hoults Yard

1 Background

In a city with more than 300 million square ft of available office space, Hoults Yard in Byker, Newcastle, faces considerable competition to attract new tenants.

Hoults Yard is an up-and-coming creative industries hub which, from the outset, has branded itself very differently from the rest of the region's office space.

The revamped pottery buildings are made up of some 400 media professionals and are home to a wealth of talent from the region's creative, digital and cultural sector.

While the creative community of Newcastle know all about the yard, there is still a communications job to be done with the rest of the business community to showcase the workspace, which is in a vibrant and historic setting but also happens to be located in Byker - an area of high unemployment and social exclusion.

O Communications proposed that a great way to reach out to the business community would be for Hoults to host 'World Cup in a Warehouse' - an event for 500 of the region's movers and shakers to watch the only England World Cup game during work hours – England vs Slovenia on June 23 2010 at 3pm.

Through strategic sponsorship this event would bring in a very different crowd to the yard. Whilst also headlining as a high quality networking event, the relaxed social atmosphere would leave attendees with a great impression of the yard and how it's transformed over the last few years.

2 Objectives and target audiences

The **main aims** for the event were to:

- Create an elite networking event for the North East's movers and shakers.
- Raise awareness of Hoult's Yard within the wider business community - not just arts/creative.
- Generate pre/post media coverage for the event.

Our **target audiences** were:

- Members of the regional business community - leading entrepreneurial companies such as legal firms and accountants.
- Existing Hoult's Yard tenants.
- The regional media.

3 Design and creativity

The warehouse is 3,000 sq ft of empty, non carpeted space. Although this was billed as a warehouse, we also needed to ensure the attendees felt it was a high quality event.

This was achieved through the event management, catering, live music, the 16ft screen, a video message from former Prime Minister **Tony Blair** and the calibre of attendees.

Red, blue and white lighting was set up inside the warehouse to help create atmosphere for the game and raised terracing was erected around the back of the room to ensure all spectators could see the large screen.

Along with the bar areas there was also a stage for the live band - **Glastonbury regulars and London Marathon roadside performers The Baghdaddies**.

As a key objective was to create a media storm around the event, we also had to ensure there were some great vantage points for all media.

The sponsors - UBS Wealth Managers, Muckle LLP and Hoult's Yard - were all given brand visibility at the venue with a number of 4X1 metre banners displayed around the warehouse walls. They purchased tickets for their clients and suppliers, and used the day as a corporate event.

We decided to also operate a **token system**, whereby drinks and food could only be purchased using tokens. With tickets priced at just £20, including two free drinks and a food token for the hog roast, this ensured Hoult's Yard tenants and the wider north east business community would attend as it represented great value for money.

The festive atmosphere was also achieved by deliberately penning in the crowd by making the outside area smaller.

All event outsourcing was done **with Hoult's Yard tenants** or local businesses:

- R&B Group, an events production communication company at Hoult's Yard supplied the big screen, lighting, sound system, and terracing.
- The Tony Blair Sports Foundation brought a charity angle to the event with Newcastle United Foundation.
- Shawn Cooper - venue manager.

Local businesses

- Richard Grainger wines – supplied high quality wine.
- Invites done by Muckles LLP.
- Catering – www.bigfatpig.co.uk.
- Baghdaddies – local band.

4. How the event met needs of target audience

A key consideration was how to make the event worthwhile for the guests to take time out of their busy schedule to watch the England match and visit Hoults Yard.

By gaining **sponsorship from UBS Wealth Managers and Muckle LLP** the event was given the status and connections to the business community it required.

The current economic climate makes it difficult for companies to justify corporate events where key partners, stakeholders and employees will be out of the office. The networking angle was an excellent attraction that gave guests the chance to work and play.

5. Evaluation

There was sunshine, a great football match, regional celebrities, a media swarm of TV cameras and photographers, along with a big screen and great live band. The event was a success.

500 guests enjoyed the anguish and the joy of the England vs Slovenia game, where high quality networking met with the creative pool of talent at Hoults Yard.

The strategic sponsorship brought the business realm and leading entrepreneurial community to the doors of the Yard, putting it on their radar. Whilst also not alienating Hoults Yard tenants. The guest list was varied bringing together all walks of life from **Dame Cabinet Minister Hilary Armstrong to Viz founder Chris Donald**.

The collaboration between UBS, Muckle LLP with Hoults Yard was a leap of faith for the firms – which paid off. What was created was an event the like of which Newcastle hadn't seen before, and the press noticed it.

Metro Radio - the North East's number one radio station - conducted a live outside broadcast from the warehouse from 3pm to 7pm for the **Brian Moore Show**.

BBC Look North attended the event with coverage at 18.30 and 22.35 on the day.

Journal reporter John Hill interviewed many guests providing a great page four spread the following day. Chris Tighe **Financial Times** NE correspondent was also present.

Photographers from **Living North, Accent Magazine and ncj Media** came to see what all the fuss was about and were kept snap happy with many photo opportunities.

There was much positive feedback after the event. Many people said they enjoyed it because there have not been any good corporate events in the last few years. And it was really different. There have also been many requests about what the next 'warehouse' event will be.

The event was delivered to an extremely high standard, **on time and under the £10,000 budget.**

What the client says:

"People are constantly asking me how I put Hoult's on the map – and the O Communications team are the key piece of the jigsaw. It's been great that they know the key media and how to involve them at the right moment. They've also held my hand and held me back at the right moments too. To get Metro Radio broadcasting live from the warehouse all afternoon was just fantastic and the pieces on that night's news were superb. People are still saying to me now, weeks later, that they "saw us on the telly" and asking me who organised this fantastic event and when we're having the next one!"

Charlie Hoult, Managing Director, Hoult's Yard

What the journalists say:

"When a sweaty huddle of businesspeople are tearing out their remaining hair watching England lumber to victory, the last thing they need is the added stress of a vox popping reporter prodding them in the ribs.

"O Communications made bosses feel better about leaving the office by turning the game into a "networking event" and also introduced this scribe to several interesting North East figures who made the final piece far more than just a parade of monotonous quotes."

John Hill, business reporter, The Journal

"I'm sorry this thank you is so belated, but nevertheless I wanted to say thanks for a lovely visit to Hoult's Yard the other Wednesday for the football/mingle. It was a wonderful event. Do pass on my thanks to your colleagues too and keep me posted on activity at the Yard."

Chris Tighe, Northern correspondent, The Financial Times**What the guests say:**

"It was superb. There was an interesting mix of van drivers and solicitors. Next to me there were some working class people and in front of them was a bunch of lawyers. It was genius."

Chris Donald, founder of Viz (comics)

"Just wanted to say . . . what a spectacularly good idea. There's watching the footie and then there's watching the footie, while also networking with hundreds of business people. I see you even managed to arrange the sun and a win – does O Communications have a direct line into God?"

Phil Cambers, commercial director, SITS Group

Some feedback from UBS guests (who they did not wish to name):

"Thank you for last Wednesday which was great fun and the pinnacle of English football as we all now know. It was an excellent venue."

"Thank you all for a superb day yesterday. It really was perfect, with the sun, a win (possibly the only one of this campaign) and a great bunch of people. Even all the other lawyers were nice."

"Many thanks for yesterday. It was an excellent event in a surprisingly different but perfect setting and very well organised – even the result."