

# **TITLE: BECOMING *EDINBURGH* NAPIER UNIVERSITY – SUCCESSFULLY DELIVERING AND CAPITALISING ON A CHANGE OF NAME**

## **CATEGORY 24: OUTSTANDING IN-HOUSE PUBLIC RELATIONS TEAM**

### **AREA: SCOTLAND**

#### **BUSINESS OBJECTIVES**

The higher education market is very competitive, with all Universities wanting to attract the best students and staff, business consultancy contracts and research funding.

From 2008/09 to the present, the Corporate Affairs department at Edinburgh Napier University has been tasked with growing the profile and reputation of the University as a leading modern professional University in the UK to achieve our strategic objectives.

This submission demonstrates how the team led the successful change of name and rebranding of the University in 2008/09 and, during 2009/10, the Corporate Communications team used a range of PR tools to grow the reputation and exceed targets.

#### **EXAMPLE OF CAMPAIGN:**

##### **UNIVERSITY NAME CHANGE**

In 2008, Napier University, long-established in Edinburgh, was increasingly aware that an opportunity was being missed to achieve a competitive advantage through promoting our location. Our research found that most candidates simply didn't know that Napier was in Edinburgh. Understanding this immediately made prospective students much more predisposed to consider Edinburgh – and our university - as a destination.

A rebranding exercise began in 2008 led by Corporate Affairs and supported by a project board of professional services staff, academics and student representatives. Establishing staff ownership at the outset contributed significantly to the ultimate success of the project.

A range of visual identities were developed and tested with our key audiences via face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, focus groups and an online questionnaire. The research made a clear recommendation about the preferred identity. Following formal approval, *Edinburgh* Napier University was born and officially launched in February 2009.

#### **Outstanding achievements**

##### **Marketing collateral**

The following activities were undertaken:

- new marketing collateral developed and existing materials rebranded
- our Coat of Arms was refreshed
- a new university tartan was designed
- new academic gowns for graduation ceremonies were designed and manufactured.

## Media relations

- To maximise PR opportunities around the name change we hosted a visit to Edinburgh for London-based members of the media in India, Hong Kong and China which led to significant coverage, including an eight minute documentary on Phoenix TV.
- The PR coverage around the name change was extensive and reached over 800 million people in China, Hong Kong and India
- To capitalise on the name change, proactive media relations have been implemented to profile the expertise and achievements of our university. Media coverage has never been higher or more varied with over £3m PR value of media coverage from February 2009-July 2010\*.

Example: A dedicated PR campaign to highlight the expertise of our creative students, including the annual degree show, resulted in 76 pieces of media coverage, 63 million opportunities to see and a PR value of £159,000. This widely communicated our location in Edinburgh to a very wide audience of prospective students and influencers such as their parents and schools.

- A new online media centre was launched in June 2010 ([www.napier.ac.uk/media](http://www.napier.ac.uk/media))

## Internal communications

- Prior to the launch of the new name, we held staff roadshows attended by over 400 staff, to ensure staff understood the rationale for change and this was supplemented with intranet information, staff briefings and updates. Staff are positive and have embraced the change of name.
- To continue awareness of the University's name, messages and ambitions, internal communications have been key:
  - The roll-out of the new University Strategy 2009-15 took place via staff roadshows, intranet information and eye-catching fortune cookies (containing Strategy messages inside) placed in canteens and at events. The most recent Investors in People assessment found that the majority of staff were aware of the new Strategy.
  - Implementation of a new staff intranet.
  - A new suite of 'co-scripts' and facts and figures guides for staff which provide key information about our strengths, expertise and key facts so that we speak a consistent external message.

## Stakeholder communications

- The launch of *Edinburgh* Napier University was held at Edinburgh Castle and attended by over 100 senior politicians, businesses and media.
- To deepen our engagement with our stakeholders and promote our achievements and future ambitions, we have employed new approaches using a central Customer Relationship Management database to increase corporate intelligence. Events have included:
  - Launch of new University Strategy at the Scottish Parliament in October 2009.
  - Stakeholder lunch at House of Lords in April 2010 aimed at increasing our links with the Indian community.

- Launch of nine new Institutes for Research and Innovation. In May 2009, a dinner was held for 100 stakeholders to celebrate the launch of our new business-focused expert Institutes.

## **EVALUATION OF ACHIEVEMENTS**

The budget for the University name change was £250,000. The budget for Corporate Communications outlined above was circa £130,000.

The impact of the initiatives has been startling:

### **Media coverage**

Since the launch of our new name in February 2009 to the end of July 2010\*:

- Over 500 pieces of positive media coverage (print, TV, radio and online).
- PR value of £3m in UK alone\*
- Spend of £100,000 on UK media relations in 2009/10 = return on investment of 30:1\*
- 148m opportunities to see (UK). 800m opportunities to see in China, India and Hong Kong.
- 130% increase in media coverage from 2008/09\*

### **Applications**

- Undergraduate applications up by 49% for 2010/11 on the previous year. This compares with 35% for the Scottish modern competitor group and 14% for the whole of the UK Higher Education sector
- Postgraduate applications are currently up 17%. NB - reliable benchmarking data is not available.

### **Website and intranet usage**

- 24% increase in traffic to the 'courses' section and a 22% increase in visitors to the 'International' section of the site.
- The new staff intranet receives an average of 25,000 visits per month. We have 1800 staff.

**Achievement of Investors in People Bronze status in 2010.** This was the first time we have achieved Bronze status showing that we have developed beyond the standard.

**Stakeholder relationships** – prominent figures are vocal and positive about their relationship with Edinburgh Napier University. This has included positive press articles from the Headmaster of Loretto private school and Merchiston Castle private School and consistent willingness of politicians and business figures, such as the CBI, to partner with us on press releases.

## **WHY THE TEAM IS SPECIAL**

Following a restructuring, the current Corporate Communications team is relatively new and had to get up to speed and deliver results very quickly. The team's enthusiasm and professionalism has won many supporters across the university and the impact of their work is acknowledged by our Court and senior management.

\*Higher PR value figure shown here than in original award submission, following final calculation in August 2010 at the end of University financial year.