

CIPR PRide Awards 2010

Region: Scotland

Category: 22. Outstanding Small Consultancy

Entrant: Wave PR

Title: Making Waves

Business objectives

"Being big doesn't mean you're better," our Mums told us as children...

Our business model and strategy allows us react effectively, especially through the recent period of economic uncertainty, and to continue to develop and grow.

Our key objectives remain:

- Offer the highest quality advice and service
- Ensure organic and new business growth is controlled and managed
- Maintain a client list that any large consultancy would like
- Be creative, competitive and provide value for money

Our core team remains at our heart and when a more specialist service is demanded we don't hesitate to involve our close network of expert partners that includes digital media, public affairs and event management. These relationships are reciprocal ensuring our 'sales team', is larger than Wave itself!

This collaborative business model continues to bear fruit with new business wins with all of our preferred partners.

Our partnership with one of the country's leading retail marketers dedicated to servicing the shopping centre industry has seen it secure its first new business from south of the border.

Example of a particular campaign

We could tell you about putting a Dalek up against an auctioneer's hammer or about when Hollywood 'A-lister' Oliver Stone came to town or even the nationwide support for Business Gateway, Scotland's business advisory service, but we won't!

Stirling Albion FC is a high profile football team that plays in Scotland's senior leagues.

The objective for the Stirling Albion Supporters' Trust's 'Buy Stirling Albion' campaign was simple:

- raise enough money to buy their financially challenged club and become the 'first senior football club in Scotland to be supporter/community owned'.

Wave was brought in to help develop the PR strategy, the timeline and the media distribution.

Gaining financial support from international football fans and from the local business community were seen as essential business objectives.

It was clear the campaign had to stand out if it was to compete in the extremely competitive football media space. Attracting international interest meant something very special.

Strategy

- 'do things that no-one had done before'

This was achieved on many levels:

- Support secured from superstars Cristiano Ronaldo and Andy Murray and other high profile names like Gordon Ramsay, Nick Nairn and comedian Frank Skinner
- Announced intention to be the first:
 - senior club in the UK to be 100% fans owned
 - senior Scottish club to sell the rights to their club name
 - eco-football club in the UK
- Relaunched the famous 'Spot the Ball' competition in digital form

Timeline

- Used Ronaldo's support to launch the campaign shortly after he was named World Footballer of the Year
- Announced Andy Murray's support on the eve of Wimbledon 2009

- Revealed intention to sell 'naming rights' to the team name with 'CompareTheMarket.com' being one of many major brands who had expressed an interest
- Announced preliminary offer to purchase the club
- Press conference to announce successful acquisition

Evaluation

- Successful acquisition of Club on 2nd July 2010
- 2000 new Trust members from across the world raising £100,000 in less than a year
- £xx worth of media coverage
- Extensive and prolonged media coverage from all major UK broadcasters, print titles including national, local football magazines and online including mainstream international media, football blogs and fans forums
- XX'000 hits on campaign website
- Local businesses commitment to the tune of £60K
- Attracted additional financial benefactors who contributed significant funds

Paul Goodwin, Director of Buy Stirling Albion campaign said:
 "The need for high impact media profile was critical in the success of the campaign. Wave did that by pinpointing areas appealing to news and sports journalists. Wave also generated new ideas with similar impact levels that we hadn't considered. Without this the campaign wouldn't have succeeded."

Note: Copies of our entries to 'Best Use of Photography or Design' and 'Best Event' are included as appendix 1.

List of outstanding achievements and evaluation of those achievements

- Year on year growth in fee income exceeding 5% business plan projections
 - 2008 – 12.5%
 - 2009 – 6.5%
 - 2010 -
- CIPR PRide Awards
 - 2009 and 2008: Gold Winner – ‘Outstanding Small Consultancy’
 - 2008: Finalist – ‘Best Consumer Campaign’
- Created new divisions in the business including:
 - ‘Wave Media’, a training initiative aimed at small businesses without funds to retain a PR consultancy.
 - ‘Wave Sports’, to manage growing exposure to sports clients including Scottish Rugby League, Stirling Albion FC and Scotland’s Homeless World Cup team
 - ‘Wave Digital’ to respond to increasing evolution of digital and social media
- Development of a client evaluation system which integrates seamlessly with their wider research based marketing evaluation.
- Increased staff numbers and expanded into larger offices
- Played integral part in team that won the CIPR’s Award for ‘Communication Partnerships’ across local government in 2007 for its work on The £25 million HELIX Big Lottery Living Landmarks bid.
- Purple Apple Awards (shopping centre ‘Oscars’) with three separate retail clients in past three years.
- Stable and high quality client list over past three years including:
 - Shell UK
 - BMI Healthcare Group
 - Business Gateway (Scottish equivalent of Business Link)
 - ING Real Estate
 - Glasgow Canal Partnership
 - Propinvest t/a East Kilbride Shopping Centre (8th largest in UK)

- Proactive staff development programme:
 - Completion of MSc in Public Relations
 - Regular attendees at CIPR events
 - Monthly training presentations from all staff
 - Regular external 'learning visits' to client, partners and media
 - 6 monthly staff appraisals

What makes the team special?

Despite doing what we do for a living we prefer others to say why we're special! (see appendix 2)

However, if we had to say why we're proud of what we do we'd have to say we:

- are a very close team and we work across clients to ensure the widest skillbase for our clients
- are quick to react to changing circumstances be it the economy or client
- make it our business to be a part of client's business
- offer what we believe to be the right advice even if its not what the client wants to hear
- are ready and willing to roll up our sleeves and get the job done

And we're committed to the PR industry:

- All staff are members of the CIPR including a former Vice Chair of CIPR Scotland
- Guest lecturers at Strathclyde University, Glasgow Caledonian University and the Royal Academy for Music and Drama.
- PR internships from home and overseas

We like to help out others. We've sat on the Board of the Glasgow Film Theatre and done pro bono work for a variety of charities. In 2010, we're working with Scotland's Homeless World Cup team.

We also have an environmental policy that:

- Recycles all office materials
- Offsets travelling costs
- Minimises print wherever possible