



Category: Regional Campaign of the Year

Company: Barefoot Media

Entry title: Padstow Christmas Festival 2016

Brief and objectives:

Padstow Christmas Festival has grown from grass-roots origins to become one of the most popular food and drink festivals in the South West.

Held during the first weekend in December 2016, the free festival is a not-for-profit venture run by a committee of volunteers. Revenue comes from sponsorship and fundraising by the committee.

Barefoot was appointed to deliver an integrated campaign covering media relations, email marketing, content creation for the festival website and programme, and social media consultancy.

The campaign objectives were to:

1. Encourage attendance at the event at the 2015 benchmark of 50,000 people
2. Generate national and regional media coverage for the event to raise the profile of Padstow as a year-round tourism destination
3. Help produce a return on investment for event sponsors through brand exposure
4. Increase website traffic to padstowchristmasfestival.co.uk
5. Stimulate engagement with the festival's owned media audiences.

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

Padstow is famous for its amazing restaurants, food and drink, and independent shops. With more than 60 high-profile chefs and 100 producers attending the festival, we felt that these themes should underpin our campaign.

We used data from 1,110 visitor questionnaires from the 2015 festival, Google Analytics website statistics, and Facebook Insights to research visitor demographics and motivations for attending.

63% of survey respondents were aged between 30 and 65, and the majority were female. Demographic data for the festival's 3,500+ Facebook followers was consistent, with 75% female, and 78% aged 35 or older.

This shaped our media targets: prioritising women's lifestyle magazines, national news media (particularly weekend editions and magazine supplements), and specialist travel and food publications.

The survey also explored the motivations for attending: chef demonstrations (19%) and Christmas shopping (25%) were top. Data from Google Analytics showed the most popular sections on the website were practical information about the festival and profiles of the chefs and producers. This information was used to shape our content strategy.

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:

Our strategy was to get people excited about experiencing the festival's packed programme of family fun, fireworks, chef demonstrations and the Christmas market.

We devised an integrated campaign with a content-led approach, providing efficiencies and value for money for the client through creating content which could be used across multiple media channels.

Media partnerships - the local audience was vital for turnout, so we set up reciprocal partnerships with media outlets aligned with our target demographic.

Email marketing - campaigns to drip-feed information to prompt accommodation bookings and attendance at the festival, support sponsors and local shops, and drive website traffic.

Media relations - target quality national media titles specialising in travel, food and drink to position Padstow as a year-round destination. Regional news media would be key to reach locals and day-trippers.

Social media influencers - we decided to approach several big-name chefs to become ambassadors for the festival.

Social media - originally our scope was to support a volunteer who had undertaken this role. However they were unable to fulfil the commitment so we took on this work in November.

Website content - create a genuinely useful resource containing recipes, timetables, profiles for 60 chefs, and 100 food, drink and crafts producers.

Event programme - create a high quality 68 page programme as a useful resource for visitors and to generate advertising revenue.

Implementation of tactics:

The six month campaign started in July 2016. We structured our activity so that awareness would build through the six weeks before the festival.

Media partnerships - Cornwall Today ran 12 pages of editorial across three issues. We provided content for a 12 page festival supplement in The Cornish Guardian, which featured the event in 21 stories in total.

Email marketing - we sent three campaigns in the run up, and a post-event "thank you" email announcing the 2017 dates.

Media relations - three press releases were issued during the summer and autumn, alongside methodical pitches for previews and features to a well-researched media list. All pitches featured our strong photography library. At the event we ran the on site press office, managing media requirements. Post-event we made a review press release and images available to reinforce the success of the event, and support the 2017 festival.

Social media influencers - we secured the cooperation of Rick Stein, Paul Ainsworth, and Nathan Outlaw, who provided recipe content, and participated in media interviews. They shared information with their influential personal networks on social media.

Social media - we stepped in at short notice to run the festival's social accounts for the month before the festival. The approach was primarily informative, seeding content for sharing (infographics, daily timetables, photography), and using Facebook Live to stream demos.

Website content - the website was regularly updated with fresh content, including landing pages for social media and email campaigns.

Event programme - we planned, wrote and edited content for the 68 page programme.

Measurement and evaluation:

Summary of campaign outputs and outcomes against objectives:

1. Record visitor numbers of 55,000 (50,000 in 2015). In the 2016 visitor questionnaire 78% said they came especially for the festival; 47% came from outside Cornwall. 99.6% said they were either likely or very likely to recommend the festival to a friend or family member;
2. Generated 173 pieces of coverage across print, online and broadcast (see supporting document for a full breakdown). Achieved a cumulative reach of more than 416 million OTV. Coverage in national media, broadcast, regional, consumer and specialist media;
3. 36 media mentions for lead sponsor Sharp's Brewery, versus 30 in 2015. Two-thirds of people questioned had tried a Sharp's product during their visit to the festival.
4. Website traffic for 1 July and 31 December 2016: - 35,276 unique users, an increase of 31% on the previous year. - 156,794 page views, up 16%. - 83% increase in traffic from social media. - 42% increase in mobile users.
5. Social media reach of 34.9 million on Twitter (20.1 million in 2015). Facebook posts reached 89,056 reach through the festival account. Email campaigns averaged an open rate of 32%, and click-through rate of 23%.