

Pride entry 2017

Region: Yorkshire and Lincolnshire

Consultancy: Approach PR

Client name: Airedale Chemical

Category: Community Relations Campaign

Title of entry: Inspiring scientists of the future

Brief

- Set up Airedale Chemical's first educational partnership

Objectives

- Forge links with the local community (specific)
- Share knowledge and expertise with local pupils (realistic)
- Support the school with science classes (timely)
- Bring science lessons to life (achievable)
- Encourage children to take more interest in science (measurable)
- Create a lasting partnership with the school (achievable)

Rationale

- Recommended primary school approach to tackle lack of STEM subject take-up
- Reach young pupils to influence STEM attitudes before considering subject 'options'

Research

- Audit of schools in client's immediate community, including areas of science curriculum being studied
- Identified Sutton-in-Craven Community Primary School Year 4 - studying 'Living Things' module
- Advised Airedale Chemical it could provide significant support for this subject

Planning

To make the teacher's decision really simple, we created a school briefing pack including:

- Week-by-week schedule of activity
- Detailed schedule of school visit
- Outline of classroom talk
- Experiments to be carried out
- Why we approached the school
- What Airedale Chemical could offer
- Planned PR activity

Strategy

Classroom visit

Airedale Chemical chemist, Madeleine, visited the school and wowed pupils with tales of falling in love with science, what she enjoys most about her job and stimulated discussion about how chemicals are used every day. She finished by inviting the class to Airedale Chemical to explore the site and take part in experiments to help bring their 'Living Things' lessons to life.

School site visit

We created a minute-by-minute schedule to host 31 pupils at Airedale Chemical. Half the children were taken to the lab where they were introduced to chemist, Stephen, who performed a fantastically visual experiment which saw a colourless liquid change through a rainbow of colours and then back to clear again to ignite the children's interest. A wonderful introduction to the experiment session which the pupils thought was just "magic". Three different experiments were undertaken.

The other half were treated to a specially-commissioned video taking them on the virtual journey of a chemical from order to despatch. The two groups then swapped activity.

Chemical quiz

We researched and created a child-friendly quiz based on the tour to sustain pupil attention and test if the information had been absorbed. We transformed industry terminology into accessible terms for eight year olds.

Quizzes were marked and top scoring students from each group were awarded a chemistry set.

Survey

To measure whether the partnership had been effective we drafted a survey for pupils to complete in their classroom gauging Airedale's positive impact on their perception of science and interest in STEM.

Creativity and innovation

We demonstrated creativity and innovation in the planning of a day at a chemical company that would be educational, fun and positively impact their views on science. We took the national curriculum theme 'Living Things' and organised three engaging experiments:

- How do penguins stay dry?
- Why do some animals have blubber?
- Grow your own geodes!

Pupils experienced a tour of the laboratory where they watched chemists in action and asked questions.

We commissioned a virtual tour of the site to avoid potential health and safety hazards and ended with a visit to their fleet of lorries allowing children into the driver's cab experiencing their sheer scale as well as their bespoke technical specification.

Implementation of tactics (1 March - 12 June 2017)

Week 1

School research

Partnership plan

Week 2

Approached school and agreed details

Liaised with school over activity schedule

Week 3

'Lesson plan' for classroom talk

Week 4

Partnership launch press release

Launch release photography brief

Week 4

Researched and finalised experiments

Helped organisation of visit

School visit press release

Week 5

Sold in launch release to regional press

Dry run of experiments on site

Week 6

'Lesson plan' for virtual tour session

Quiz for virtual tour

Wrote STEM survey

Week 7

School site visit - including leading 'blubber experiment'

Week 8

Sold in school visit release to press

Week 9

Collated and analysed survey results

Week 10

Survey results press release

Week 11 & 12

Sold in survey release

Benefits to the community

Sharing knowledge and expertise with the community's children to enrich their education and support the local school.

Measurement and evaluation

Survey results were key in the measurement of the success:

- 71% of children decided science was their favourite subject as a result of their visit
- 65% of children want to work in science when they're older
- 97% of children more interested in science as a result of their visit
- 94% of children feel the visit to AC has helped them better understand 'Living Things'
- 100% of children want take part in more visits like the one to AC

All 31 surveys were completed and returned.

Additional written comments from pupils:

- Thank you for letting us come
- Can we come again?
- It was great
- I loved Airedale Chemicals. I hope to visit again (smiley face)
- I loved the visit!!
- Airedale Chemical rules

Feedback from Year 4 teacher, Mr David Horton:

"We're really glad that Airedale Chemical made this link. It's been so worthwhile for the children and has brought their Living Things lessons to life. Year 4 thoroughly enjoyed the talk and site visit, so thank you very much. We're looking forward to making this a regular event that all pupils can participate in."

In addition to the benefits for the school and community, we generated 16 pieces of regional coverage from two releases, reaching an audience of almost 900,000 to date.

Feedback from the school clearly shows our objectives were met:

- Links forged with local community
- Knowledge shared with pupils
- Support for school's science classes
- Teacher acknowledged we brought science lessons to life
- Children overwhelmingly more interested in science after Airedale Chemical events
- Educational partnership formed with plans for more events already progressing

Value for money?

“Fantastic work organising this education partnership and involvement in the site visit. It was a real success and something I'm confident we can now make a regular fixture in the marketing calendar.” - Daniel Marr, head of marketing, Airedale Chemical.