



PRIDE AWARDS 2017

Category: Outstanding Small Public Relations Consultancy

Company: Tricker PR

Date of incorporation, number of employees - including executive / support staff – and annual fee income:

Incorporated in 2001, Tricker PR, one of Aberdeen's most established independent PR agencies, has six members of staff (five fee earners).

Business objectives and analysis of performance against budget over the past three years:

"In the last three years, Aberdeen has experienced the deepest, longest economic downturn [it] has ever experienced... [It] is caught in the grip of a vicious downturn which has wrought financial pain throughout the local economy... As the economic contagion spreads through Aberdeen, so do the anecdotes of its fall from one of the richest cities in the UK to a city in crisis." The Telegraph.

Mid 2014; Aberdeen's economic performance was stellar; oil was \$112 per barrel; businesses in all sectors thrived.

By December 14, oil price was \$59 - and continued downward to below \$30. Even in June 2017, oil remains below \$50.

As some local creative businesses closed their doors, to survive – and to prosper – was our strategy. It was obvious that turnover would drop, but how to become more profitable in the process was key.

In a city dominated by oil-related business the spectacular crash affected the entire market; clients no longer existed and competition for remaining business became intense. Although Tricker PR had never had an 'oil-rich' client list, much of our client base fell within the supply chain. We had to review our objectives and strategy completely. Client retention had always been a strength, but we had to find new clients and new business from existing clients; clients who were not reliant on oil and gas.

A brief overview of business / team strategy:

A review of existing accounts was undertaken. Rather than waiting for the hammer to fall we approached clients and discussed what they needed and how we could match their needs in changed circumstances. This, on a number of occasions, meant that they could not sustain the previous levels of PR but we did not lose a single client with this approach - they appreciated our honesty.

We became even more fleet of foot and, in supporting one of our clients' short term needs, we gained a three-year contract to produce their members' magazine. A totally new business stream for us. As part of our strategy we also targeted business from outwith the north east with some considerable success, finding ourselves working across Scotland from Port Glasgow to Dunfermline from our Aberdeen base.

The team was involved throughout the "hard times" they knew the challenges, they were hugely supportive in all that had to be done. The team is now smaller (from 10 down to six with no redundancies) but much more engaged.

The team is more settled, challenged and productive but the strangest thing is that oil businesses are now seeking us out, they recognise our creative but common sense and flexible approach which suits their new needs.

A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:

We have processes which ensure continuous development of each individual and their knowledge of client sectors:

- Skills matrix - identifying staff skills and team gaps
- Training needs analysis - linked to formal appraisals
- Personal Professional Development – each individual has a plan and annual budget. All training is evaluated by trainee
- Induction procedures - for new recruits to understand our portfolio of client accounts
- In-House Library - providing research materials
- Staff referral schemes - for referring both new business and new team members
- Lunch and learns.

A summary of recent outstanding achievements, including client list growth / retention:

- Creating a company culture which results in staff comments like this:

“20 hours a week; 80 hours a month; 1040 hours a year; 6240 hours in my lifetime – that’s how long I’ve spent commuting to work in the past six years. But, when you have a job that you love and a company that you feel passionate about, that’s what you are prepared to do. I’ve enjoyed every minute of it – the creativity, the way the team bands together to produce results, and the diversity of clients on our books... We’ve emerged stronger than we were when the downturn hit. I think that’s largely down to the team: I can’t recall working anywhere where the staff were so alike in their values and determination to get results for clients.” Leanne Carter

- Finalists in nine awards, winning six and highly commended in two (2014 – 2017)
- Increasing oil and gas clients - 50% of new clients are in oil and gas
- Additional event management contracts including for Food Standards Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council
- Retention rates – current clients
 - o 20% - over 10 years
 - o 20% - 5 – 9 years
 - o 40% - 2 – 4 years
 - o 20% - up to one year.

A summary of a campaign you are particularly proud of, including details of the brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget:

It was bold, it was big and it was totally bananas. Banning bananas from Portsoy boosted tickets sales for the Scottish Traditional Boat Festival and gained media coverage.

We were challenged to dream up a highly creative campaign - on a budget now a quarter of its previous total We delivered ... with a complete ban on bananas; a Portsoy Prohibition - and the media and public loved it. Bananas were historically thought to be bad luck on board ships by superstitious seafarers, so, in order to bring good luck to the Festival, we banned the fruit. Tricker PR even got Police Scotland - not exactly renowned for being a bunch of pranksters - behind the ban with the local bobby appearing in the photos.

We delivered more than 60 pieces of print coverage including a front page in The Herald and pieces in The Daily Mail, Scotsman, Scottish Sun and Sunday Herald. Broadcast included BBC Scotland and Radio 4. There were an estimated 435k digital views of the story and at least 1.75k shares. Online tickets sales increased during the campaign.

Happy clients, happy journalists and happy sponsor (credited in 79% of all coverage.) And, a happy Tricker PR team who scooped a trio of accolades - Scottish Creative, Scottish Event and Northern Star Business awards.