

Category number: One

Category name: Best Multichannel campaign

Programme/initiative name: The UPS small Business Trade Mission

Agency [if appropriate]: Maxus

Brand or client: UPS

URL or microsite [if appropriate]:

[Summary page]

UPS is seen as the shipper for multinationals, but we struggled to connect with SMEs. One of the biggest challenges faced by SMEs is making connections with potential customers abroad. UPS would differentiate itself by 'doing', demonstrating what it takes to find customers and supplement with export know-how.

Maxus commissioned a partnership between UPS, UK Trade & Investment and The Guardian Small Business Network to guide SMEs through the export process focussing on the US market.

The campaign centred on an SME Trade Mission to Atlanta, Georgia in March 2015, attended by 10 SMEs selected following a UPS competition on The Guardian Small Business Network.

The Trade Mission was amplified through a six month sponsorship of the export zone on The Guardian Small Business Network. Throughout this period both The Guardian & UPS published content around the experiences and practicalities of exporting, as well as experiences from the mission itself.

The content was a balance between the practical knowledge required to export to the US with the real world experiences of ten businesses in market, forming new customer relationships - designed to provide SMEs with real-world guidance to help them make the connection with their potential US customers.

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[Main submission]

About the client company

UPS is the world's express carrier package delivery company. One of the leading global providers of specialised transportation and logistics services, UPS serves more than 220 countries and territories worldwide.

Strategy – broader business issues the company is facing

UPS are a company that's known for getting things anywhere in the world, but research conducted in the summer of 2014 into European SMEs showed that for many businesses the challenge isn't getting their products to abroad, it's finding the customers there to buy them.

We then identified that SME leaders rely on similar individuals who've 'done it' over any other information source. We realised that UPS are good at providing them with the practical advice on the process of exporting, but to really connect UPS had to help them by doing, enable customer connections to be made and really set businesses up for what follows the physical act of exporting, rather than just providing advice like all the other shippers.

In order to establish UPS's reputation for supporting SME exporting we commissioned a study with The Reputation Consultancy which concluded that UPS accounted for only 1.29% of business conversations around 'small business export services' versus 57% for DHL and 34% for Fedex. A statistic that re enforced the need to do something different.

In order to leverage these insights and overcome the reputational deficit, Maxus planned a strategy of 'don't say, do' and devised the idea for a media partnership to deliver a UK SME trade mission to the US. Trade missions are usually the domain of large multinationals in conjunction with the Government; what would a small business trade mission look like and how could other businesses learn from the experiences of the chosen ten that attended?

Objectives of the campaign

UPS had created a hub for their practical export advice (exporttoolkit.ups.com) and that content needed to be amplified but also supplemented with the experiences of businesses attempting to create customer connections. We created a campaign that did both by commissioning a trade mission to the US through a contest powered by the Guardian & UKTI, and positioning UPS's expert content alongside that of the trade mission in the Guardian Small Business Network to provide businesses with a comprehensive view of 'how to do it'.

Our objectives were to create a positive reputation for UPS in supporting SMEs in exporting, to produce compelling and engaging content and to get UPS face to face with 20 successful small businesses with the objective of converting their shipping accounts to UPS.

The target audience

The campaign was targeted at the owners or leaders of small businesses (<£25mill in annual revenue) to drive UPS' position as a leading exporter for SMEs as well as multinationals.
A major issue that is faced within this audience is that the most trusted source of information for small businesses is other small businesses who've done it.
Another challenge is that this audience is very selective in the sources they choose to engage with, relying on personal contact and informed experience over advertising driven content. We needed to blend the two in order to be credible and useful in this space.

Media, channels or techniques used

The core component of the campaign was a partnership with The Guardian, a partner chosen through a pitch process over News UK and The Telegraph because of their audience scale, free digital access, and commercial proposal but perhaps most importantly, their belief in the idea we had presented.
This partnership encompassed 6 months of sponsorship of the small business hub for exports (http://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/exporting-to-new-markets), a range of digital promotional partnerships, social media support, organisation and promotion of the contest, the trip itself (planned in conjunction with UKTI and UPS) and an 8 page wrap up supplement in the main paper. Supplementing this Maxus planned Linkedin and Twitter campaigns (using #gdntrademission) to promote content. Finally international trade thought leadership content partnerships with Quartz and The Economist were used to augment the work of The Guardian.

Timescales of the campaign

Research that led to the campaign theme was conducted by UPS in Spring 2014, the campaign was pitched to media partners in June and planned throughout July and August. In October we commissioned pre research from The Reputation Consultancy

to understand how UPS is perceived versus their competitors in the small business exporting conversations that happen online. The competition went live on the 14th October, the judging day of the shortlisted 20 was on the 15th January, the mission itself was for 5 days from the 2nd March, the 8 page wrap up went into the paper on the 13th April and finally the 2nd wave of reputational research was in market on the final two weeks of April.

Budgets

These details were provided to judges in the original submission but are commercially sensitive and therefore confidential.

Results

UPS were failing to connect with SMEs, wanted to increase share around the topic of 'small business export services' and drive commercial return.
Conversations about UPS in relation to Small Business and Export rose by 82% vs pre campaign research taking UPS from 4th to joint first with FedEx (source: Reputation Consultancy). On mission week there was a 2103% increase in traffic to the campaign hub, which prompted over 10,900 social shares of content.
UPS received detailed shipping lead information on the 162 applicants and three of the finalists have moved their accounts to UPS, already recouping the total campaign investment.
It was fruitful for all involved – The Guardian produced an engaging platform with SMEs, enhanced through the credibility of UKTI and UPS. The project generated over 75 pieces of rich content seen by 150,000 unique users.

Client testimonial

UPS UK Managing Director, George Willis:
"Being a part of the judging day earlier this year and then interacting with the businesses in Atlanta during the mission, was one of the most inspiring and interesting experiences I have had in my 31 years at UPS. The partnership between the Guardian, UKTI, UPS and Maxus was truly unique and the project to date has exceeded expectations."

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Supporting material supplied

#gdntrademission exporttoolkit.ups.com http://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/trade-mission Nb. This video (accessed at the top right) was produced for publication on The Guardian site and as such includes limited mention of UPS or Maxus involvement

Submission ends