Category number: 4

Category name: Best PR Campaign

Programme/initiative name: Launching The Activate Solutions Group & the High Street Happiness Survey

Agency [if appropriate]: Limelight

Brand or client: Activate Solutions Group

URL or microsite [if appropriate]:

Word Count: 1000

[Summary page]

Newly formed, the Activate Solutions Group appointed Limelight to establish a reputation for the group, raise awareness of its products and services, create sales opportunities and position it as an expert in high-street retail.

Limelight devised and implemented a two-step PR campaign, firstly announcing the formation of the group before then launching the High Street Happiness Survey. This strategy allowed Activate to gain a strong reputation quickly, via the generation of consistent and sustained coverage in a wide variety of vertical trade press.

The High Street Happiness Survey was designed to involve group companies, highlight new products and services, and position the group as retail specialists.

As Activate had never used PR before, and with ambitious growth targets to meet, it was vital the campaign demonstrated immediate commercial value. This was achieved by using media coverage as a route into direct engagement with high-street brands, the group's priority prospects.

[Word count:149]

[Main submission]

About the client company

Who are they? What do they do? What industry do they operate in? What's their history?

The group was launched in September 2013, bringing together six marketing and sales companies, all operating in the retail and FMCG sectors. The group specialises in offering complete brand solutions, from sales, to distribution, through to advertising.

Strategy – broader business issues the company is facing

What issues or challenges did the organisation face?

The group was unknown, and needed to quickly establish a reputation in a highly competitive marketplace. Each company in the group is different, and there were a number of new products and services to promote. Success depended on building a cohesive reputation for the group as a whole, via a PR campaign that could effectively reach all of its target audiences within a relatively short timeframe.

The group brand was new, which meant a lack of awareness needed to be overcome as quickly as possible. The campaign outputs also had to give the group credibility, demonstrating retail expertise through media coverage that would interest new business prospects.

Objectives of the campaign

How did this campaign aim to address this and add value to the business on a more general level?

Initially the campaign focused on launching the group itself, ensuring that the marketing, retail & FMCG sectors were aware of its formation and understood the services on offer. The High Street Happiness Survey was then built to position the group as a leading expert in high-street retail and executed in a way that generated coverage across a variety of sector-specific trade media. The strategy was to approach one sector at a time, incorporating a direct brand engagement element. In this way press coverage was generated that gave the group credibility, put them directly in front of key audiences, raised awareness across multiple sectors (building over a number of weeks) and created sales leads, all at the same time.

The target audience

Who was the campaign designed to appeal to? What particular issues are there associated with appealing to this particular audience?

The campaign was designed to appeal directly to high-street brands by mentioning them specifically in the survey results. The chief executives and senior marketers at the top 50 high-street brands were the key target audiences.

These were Activate's key new business prospects and it was vital to reach them however it can be very difficult to engage effectively with such large, high-profile brands, particularly on behalf of a new,

relatively unknown organisation.

The survey was built to gather data these brands would be interested in and approach them in a way they wouldn't normally receive commercial approaches, i.e. via their own communications teams. Results were segmented according to sector – from mobile to convenience - enabling the campaign to reach out to the best performing brands in each using trade media coverage specific to their sector to stimulate interest.

Media, channels or techniques used

This focuses on the campaign itself. What was the mix of media? Why was this chosen? What was the mechanic? Was there an offer? How did this respond to the challenge of communicating with the target audience?

After launching the company to key trade press, and releasing news of the group's new products and services, Limelight used the survey to target the top 50 high-street brands via sector-specific trade media.

The survey saw 60 field agents' survey shoppers at ten high street locations over a two-week period. It measured factors relating to the sites themselves, the level of service being provided and the emotional response being experienced by customers.

The research was conducted using XCell, a new Activate product that captures customer experience data through a Net Promoter Scoring System.

By using XCell, Limelight saved budget by using one of Activate's in-house products, and also showcased the product to the group's key prospects.

The results were analysed to identify trends and establish the top brands in each sector. Limelight crafted tailored press releases for each sector.

Key business prospect engagement worked as follows:

1. Limelight targeted the top brands by contacting press office and PR agencies to initiate conversations. Brands were given the opportunity to provide a quote to appear in the relevant press release, commenting on their position in the rankings.

2. Brands were kept updated on all relevant coverage generated, and were encouraged to engage with Activate's Twitter and Facebook channels as they promoted the survey results and coverage.

3. Finally, using the media coverage to build one-to-one conversations with CEOs of their key prospects, Limelight invited brands to meet Activate to learn more about the research itself and the services the group and its various companies are able to offer, sourcing warm leads and passing them on to the Activate sales team to follow up.

Timescales of the campaign

This section must explain which activities happened when – eg. research, planning, phase one, phase two, follow-up, reporting analysis

The four-month campaign ran from early September 2013 through to the end of the year.

- September – launch of the group plus designing and executing the survey
- October to early December - results were then rolled out one sector at a time

Budgets

Information provided must include break down of media and other marketing resources purchased and agency fees.

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

Results

This section is crucial – if information is commercially sensitive, percentage figures for targets hit and ROI attained are acceptable. Content must explain which measurement technique was being used and why – eg. brand awareness, leads generated, size of pipeline etc.

1. The group launch news and management team profiling generated marketing and business press coverage.
2. Product launches resulted in coverage in marketing, technology and specialist press and thought leadership pieces in key titles.
3. The survey provided Activate's sales team with opportunities to engage with every brand on their prospect list. Limelight also passed on over 20 warm sales leads to the group.
4. Activate has had meetings and conversations with top high street brands, these details were provided to judges in the original submission but are commercially sensitive and therefore confidential
5. Major brand names actively engaged. Five quotes from senior brand spokespeople endorsing the research were secured.
6. Many brands added the relevant Activate press release or survey results to their own website news sections or Wikipedia pages.
7. A specific brand was created for 'High Street Happiness' which now has its own Twitter handle, created and managed by Limelight.
8. Examples of social engagement include The Co-Operative Food (36.4k followers) tweeting its thanks directly to Activate's account.
9. Activate has transformed its internal sales process to work in tandem with the PR campaign.
10. Our idea for the High Street Happiness Survey has now created a new revenue stream for Activate as it secures sponsorship fees from brands seeking to ask specific questions in the survey.

Client testimonial

A direct quote from a marketing decision maker involved in the project, confirm its success and achievement of objectives, and ideally why it is worthy of winning an award.

Richard Hayhoe, MD, Activate Consumer, said: “We were overwhelmed by the response to the campaign. Working with Limelight to launch the group and the survey allowed us to generate amazing levels of press coverage and interest in our services.”

Supporting material supplied

X1 Presentation Board (A2 foam board)



Submission ends