



COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING CAMPAIGN EVALUATION

Annual Robin Hood Festival - August 2013

Background

The 29th Annual Robin Hood Festival was held at Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire from Monday 5th August – Sunday 11th August 2013. The festival is the largest event in the authority's calendar and one of the biggest celebrations of Robin Hood in the world, attracting visitors from around the country and globe.

A large and comprehensive marketing and communications campaign took place primarily from July to August 2013 aiming to inform previous visitors and attract new visitors. The campaign's strongly designed creative featured on a range of materials and channels. Key activity included leaflet distribution, banner advertising in Sherwood and Rufford Abbey country parks, various digital activity including an e-shot to last year's visitors, a bespoke Facebook page – which featured the Festival Folk cast, two life-sized Robin Hood's with QR codes and a number of tweets. A heavy-weight PR plan included timed press releases, targeted photo-call opportunities and media interviews with a local, national and international focus underpinned and supported all the activity.

Campaign Objectives and Results

- Objective 1** Increase the number of visitors to the 2013 festival by 10% on off peak days only.
- Result** The seven day festival was attended by 50k visitors, compared to 25k in 2012, and 20k in 2011 (2011 was 5 day event); a 100% increase.
- Objective 2** Increase the number of visits to the website by 10% to 40,018 over an 8-week period from 16 June to 11 August 2013.
- Result** 39,297 visits (compared with 36,380 in 2012 and 27,974 in 2011) – an 8% increase, in addition this year's digital activity for the Festival focussed on the Festival Folk Facebook page which had 2000 likes (204 in 2012) a 880% increase.
- Objective 3** Increase awareness by 10% of Nottinghamshire County Council as the event organiser to 86%.
- Result** Whilst the objective was not achieved this year's survey responses showed a consistently high 73% of visitors surveyed recognised the Festival was organised by Nottinghamshire County Council (76% in 2012).

Budget

- The campaign spend amounted to £7,276.50 (15p per festival visitor attracted) taken from the central communications and marketing budget
- There was a £26.61 return on investment and £3.87 income generated per visitor (£24.32/ £5.63 in 2012)
- Retail income increased 34% on last year, whilst catering income increased by 22%
- A 38% increase in total income was generated (£193,661 compared to £140,866 in 2012 and £116,332 in 2011)
- This year we reintroduced a souvenir festival brochure for visitors to buy for £1, containing detailed information on the festival and also space for children to

autograph hunt. 3,000 were produced at a cost of £1,577, generating £1423 net income

- 90% of survey respondents travelled to the festival by car. The income generated from car parking income was £40,840 (£40,560 in 2012)

Other Campaign Highlights

- 108 visitors completed the Festival Visitor Survey which was carried out over three days, by the communications team doing face to face surveys on Ipads
- 97% of survey respondents rated the event as either 'Very Good' or 'Excellent'
- 56% of visitors surveyed were from outside Nottinghamshire County, compared to 53% last year
- The RSPB who attended the festival were thrilled with the success they had at the festival, meeting over 4,282 people and as a result have requested a double pitch for next years stand

Channel Evaluation

- evaluation of survey respondents indicated visitors became aware of the festival as follows:
 - 40% word of mouth
 - 26% press and media
 - 18% leaflets & posters
 - 16% online
 - 11% lamppost banners

Media

- this year's festival saw high press and media attention; 15 proactive press releases were released with 50 positive and one reactive media enquiry received. A number of guest columns were also secured for Coun John Knight and Ralph Needham (one of the festival folk) As a result, 60 positive features on and offline covered the festival, as well as listings in a range of press and media:

- **pre-festival**

Media interviews included; Simple Tom (Mark Curwood) and Sue McDonald appearing on Radio Nottingham's afternoon show, coverage in a range of listings and What's On magazines locally and nationally including BBC News Online, Nottingham Post, Gem 106FM, and a front cover of the August edition of Nottinghamshire Today.

There were further feature opportunities in the run-up to the festival reporting on a number of the key Festival Folk including the Sheriff of Nottingham and Sir Ralph of Epperstone.

- **during the festival**

There were seven different television broadcasts in the run up to the festival on the Sunday and the Monday, with a lot of interest in the American couple who were renewing their vows and special guests at the festival. There were items on ITV Central Tonight, Calendar TV and BBC East Midlands Today. Other media hits included The Times, Radio Nottingham, Big Issue magazine, Mansfield Chad, Gem 106FM and Mansfield 103FM.

The Festival was attended by international journalists from the Ukraine, America and also the UK's CBeebies, the latter who will be producing a TV programme about the festival and medieval life this autumn.

- **post-festival**

Various local media articles reporting the event with photographs, including several articles in the Nottingham Post, articles in the Mansfield Chad – which included a front page picture, Newark Advertiser, Retford Times and the Worksop Guardian.

Digital activity

Over an eight week period the Robin Hood Festival web page received;

- 39,297 visits (compared with 36,380 in 2012 and 27,974 in 2011)
- 801 visits to the Robin Hood Festival webpage were as a result of Facebook advertising at a cost of £300 (37p per click). A further 1,394 visits were generated from the web banner, 695 from the events tab on the NCC home page. The vast majority of views (36,486) came from a direct link to the URL which was included on the printed materials and lamp post banners
- the Robin Hood Facebook page had 89 posts by the digital team and attracted 1,742 likes (204 in 2012)
- 30 tweets were issued (24 tweets from the digital team and 6 retweets from external sources). Twitter generated 143 visits to the Robin Hood Festival webpage.

Partnerships

Partnership working resulted in a variety of free and reciprocal marketing activity with the following organisations:

- **Nottingham City Homes:** free activity including - article in tenant and leaseholder newsletter circulated to over 30k homes, flyer distribution in eight city housing offices, articles on the website & staff intranet site and messages via Twitter;
- **Nottingham City Council:** reciprocal activity including part of the What's on guide advert in their What's On Guide, re-Tweets of Twitter messages and a note on the staff intranet.
- **Experience Nottinghamshire:** e-shot and website advertising, PR activity aimed at the national and international media, a listing on the Visit England website.
- **Local District Councils:** Promoted to staff and residents via their communication channels
- **Notts County Cricket Club:** advert in their Covered member magazine
- **Edwinstowe Parish Council:** distribution of posters to local businesses and community groups

Robin Hood Festival 2014

This year's festival benefited from a strong integrated marketing campaign, the success will be replicated and built upon next year for the 30th anniversary. Planning has already commenced for the 2014 Festival.